

VC receives courtesy visit by Alumni Executive

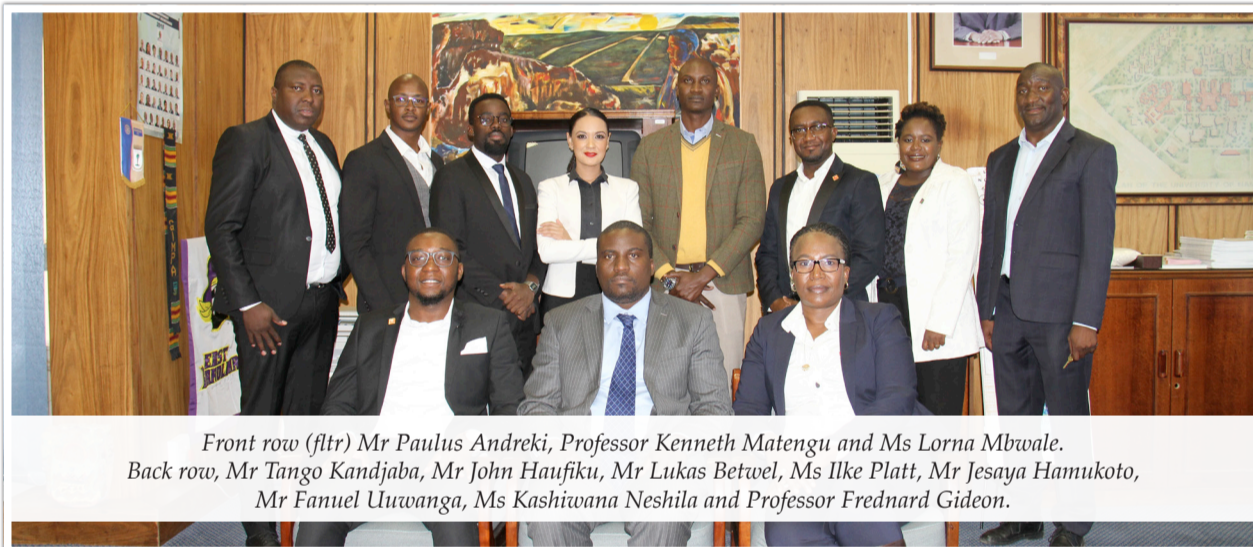
The newly appointed members of the UNAM Alumni Executive Committee gave the Vice Chancellor, Professor Kenneth Matengu, a courtesy visit at the Main Campus, recently.

The Vice Chancellor remarked that he was delighted that the team consisted of young upcoming professionals from various industries. "We should keep it this way", he stated.

The team, lead by the Chairperson, Mr Paulus Andreki, gave Prof. Matengu an overview of their strategic plan, and re-assured him of their support in terms of adding value to the university's strategic initiatives. One of the main objectives mentioned, is the expansion of the Alumni activities across the country by establishing various chapters. In addition, improve the collection of membership fees and activities.

Prof. Matengu, in turn, also shared his ideas about how the Alumni can improve, suggesting international activities wherever UNAM alumni are and not limiting roles within the borders of the country.

The Executive will have bi-annual meetings with the Vice Chancellor, but received assurance that his door is always open to engage on important matters.



Front row (fltr) Mr Paulus Andreki, Professor Kenneth Matengu and Ms Lorna Mbware.
Back row, Mr Tango Kandjaba, Mr John Haufiku, Mr Lukas Betwel, Ms Ilke Platt, Mr Jesaya Hamukoto, Mr Fanuel Uuwanga, Ms Kashiwana Neshila and Professor Frednard Gideon.

Staff sponsor soup kitchen to students

It is an unusual time at the University of Namibia. The corridors are quiet, and the cafeterias are empty. The few visible students mask stern faces with wrinkled foreheads. It is exam time - the most stressful period for students.



With that understanding, staff from the Office of the Dean of Students (ODS) decided to help, by providing students with a meal before they sit for exams.

"We have many students with financial challenges - a meal and a hot drink in this cold weather, makes a small difference", remarked Ms Margreth Mainga, the Dean of Students. Students at the Main Campus and Khomasdal Campus are being given breakfast and lunch for the entire exam period.

"We simply prepare the food and leave it on the table, whoever is hungry is free to come", remarked Assistant Dean for Professional Services, Mr Tangeni Vellkoshi.

"There isn't a budget for this type of thing, but we know how hard it is for some students, so we did what any parent would", remarked Ms Mainga. In addition to the staff from the ODS, Mr Gert van Rool from the Multi-Disciplinary Unit has also been a staunch supporter of the cause.

Since the initiative, which is wholly sponsored by ODS staff, the office has witnessed a decrease in the number of students who get anxiety attacks and faint during the examination period. ODS encourage anyone who would like to help, by contacting their Office by dialing 061 206 3111 and asking for the Dean of Students.

International lecturer narrates UNAM experience

Marika Matengu, a teacher by profession, has served in various developmental projects in Namibia and is currently working as a lecturer at the Khomasdal Campus and a doctoral scholar at the University of Oulu, Finland.

As the first semester of 2019 is coming to an end at the Khomasdal campus, she is also wrapping up her office in preparation for relocating back to Finland this month.

This is her story.

Two and a half years ago, I joined a dynamic team of teacher educators at the University of Namibia, Khomasdal campus, which is situated in the suburb of Khomasdal, Windhoek, in a previously marginalized area. With this campus the University was brought closer to the community of Northwest Windhoek. It is centrally located, just within walking distance from the Medical campus, and other medical facilities.

According to the Assistant Pro-Vice Chancellor, Dr. Amaambo, the campus is known as "the beacon of hope for many aspirant teachers and educators" who have interest in early childhood and primary education.

Three different educational programmes are hosted by the Khomasdal Campus: the Diploma in Junior Primary Education, Honours Degree in Junior Primary Education and Honours Degree in Upper Primary Education. There are also students with disabilities and from marginalized/ethnic communities to whom specialized services are provided. The high number of students makes the teacher training programmes some of the biggest programmes of the University.

Currently, Khomasdal campus has been training teachers as part of the University of Namibia for nine years. During these years, several changes in the field of education have taken place: free education system has been expanded, pre-primary education

has been made as part of the public education system, education act and various policies tackling educational inequality have been put in place, curriculum has been revised and emphasis placed on learner-centered approach and importance of play in early learning.

These are great successes and important milestones in reaching the most vulnerable children. However, many challenges remain. The high number of student teachers make it challenging to provide transformational teacher training that equips students with strong theoretical and practical skills of education.

Regardless of the challenges, there are many exciting developments at the Khomasdal campus. International experiences and expose have played an important role in bringing innovative and fresh ideas to the teacher training programme. Mr. Gustaf who is a music lecturer and Mr. Andre who is a drama lecturer, are just two of the teacher



Cultural and linguistic diversity is celebrated at Khomasdal campus (left to the right). Ms. Marika Matengu, lecturer, Dr. Amaambo, Assistant Pro-Vice Chancellor, Ms. Richardine Poulton-Busler, lecturer

trainers who have graduated recently with their Master's in Education from the University of Eastern Finland. Both of them acknowledge that the Finnish teacher training has given them a strong foundation to teach at Khomasdal.

Teacher training in Khomasdal serves a unique community of Namibians. Its programmes are interwoven to the culturally and linguistically rich environment for which the campus has been training teachers for years. As part of the University, lecturers

are now involved in the international collaboration, research and material development through which the educational needs of the nation can be met. Early childhood and pre-primary education is certainly at the core of the future directions. Teachers play a vital role in national building. One can say that teacher is a maker of man. He is the foundation of all Education, and thus the whole civilization of mankind, present and future. This is certainly true, in any given country or context.