

AUGUST 2024



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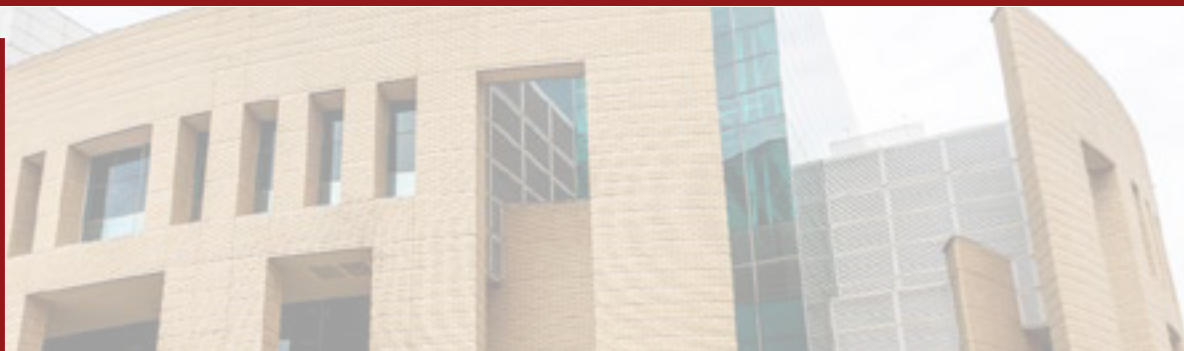
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EDITOR'S NOTE

In recent months, the University of Botswana (UB) has made significant strides in advancing its mission of academic excellence, research innovation and regional collaboration. A running theme across the latest developments is UB's commitment to enhance its infrastructure to foster meaningful student engagement as well as positioning itself as a regional leader in research and education.

One of the key initiatives is the P43 million project aimed at improving campus connectivity. This ambitious investment, announced by the Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, will expand internet access and improve online platforms to ensure both students and staff have the digital resources they need to excel in today's technology-driven world.

Infrastructure upgrades are essential as UB continues to transition towards a more digitally inclusive learning environment.

On another note, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Enterprise, Professor Doreen Ramogola-Masire, underscored the University's renewed focus on research quality and innovation. Thus, UB's strategy places a strong emphasis on research that not only achieves national impact but also garners regional and global recognition. By focusing on cutting-edge research and fostering a culture

of innovation, UB strives to be at the forefront of academic discovery and knowledge sharing.

On the international front, Professor Norris's recent visit to Mbabane, Eswatini, serves as a strategic step in strengthening regional partnerships while addressing student's concerns. His hands-on leadership was further demonstrated by his walkabout on the Gaborone campus, organised in collaboration with the UB Student Representative Council (UBSRC). Going forward, the initiative is envisaged to bridge the gap between the administration and student body to foster a sense of community and responsiveness.

Overall, these developments highlight UB's dedication to creating a modern, connected and student-focused university that is ready to meet both local and global challenges with innovation and collaboration.

I hope you will enjoy immersing yourself in this issue and find it just as engaging and informative as the previous ones.

Thomas Nkhoma



Universities play a vital role in enabling innovation systems through research and commercialisation in robust National System of Innovation, aligned with R2CS

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P43 Million Investment to Upgrade Campus Connectivity

...every space on campus covered...world-class learning & research institution



One of the parents responding to the address by the Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris.

The University of Botswana (UB) Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, has said the University was embarking on a P43 million project to enhance its online platforms and expand internet connectivity across the campus. Professor Norris observed that the project, which was undertaken in collaboration with a

group of investors and Starlink, sought to ensure that every space on campus was covered, aligning with UB's goal of becoming a world-class learning and research institution. To that end, Professor Norris underscored the importance of this investment in supporting academic and research needs of students.

He was speaking during a meeting with parents of Eswatini students in Mbabane, Eswatini on the 10th of August 2024. The meeting was organised to address concerns raised by both parents and University Management regarding the welfare of Eswatini students at UB.

One of the key issues discussed was shortage of student accommodation. With a student population of 16 000 and only 4000 bed spaces available, Professor Norris acknowledged the challenges but highlighted that international students, including those from Eswatini, were given priority. Conversely, he observed that some students missed out on accommodation simply because they failed to apply well on time. To alleviate the situation, he said UB was pursuing Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)

initiative to add 500 new bed spaces hopefully by the end of the year.

In response to concerns regarding service delivery, Professor Norris briefed the parents on UB's ongoing transformation into a High-Performance Organisation (HPO). The Vice Chancellor said the transformation was aimed at enhancing service delivery to create a more conducive environment for learning and work besides addressing inefficiencies that were raised by both students and parents.

Professor Norris also spoke about the University's infrastructure, acknowledging existing challenges as well as stating that UB remained one of the best-equipped institutions in the world. He assured parents that the University was committed to maintaining and upgrading its facilities notwithstanding the financial constraints posed by reduced government funding (subvention). As a result, Professor Norris noted that UB was exploring alternative income streams to ensure sustainability of its operations.

To further demonstrate UB's commitment to stay ahead of global trends, Professor Norris outlined some of the new academic programmes in cutting-edge fields that such as robotics, artificial intelligence and machine learning. He also highlighted ongoing initiatives such as the recently established UB Innovation Centre. He said UB was working with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to establish an innovation pod where students could develop and commercialise prototypes to create new employment opportunities.

Meanwhile, Professor Norris appealed to the parents to support their children and encourage them to participate actively in student activities and interact with peers from different nationalities. He observed that such engagement was crucial for developing a global perspective which was essential in today's interconnected world.



Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris (standing middle) with the parents after the meeting.

New Strategy to Strengthen Research and Innovation for Global Impact

Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Enterprise, Professor Doreen Ramogola-Masire, says the new University of Botswana (UB) strategy focuses on enhancing research quality and innovation to achieve national impact and gain regional and global recognition. Professor Masire was speaking at a workshop under the theme, Amplifying Research Commercialisation Through Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Transformative Societal Impact held at the UB Conference Centre recently.

She said the recently implemented organisational structure sought to make research the cornerstone of UB. She also noted that the previous University strategy was primarily focused on teaching and learning.

Professor Ramogola-Masire further observed that the new strategy was influenced by societal and economic factors at the national, regional and



Professor Norris with Koya Capital Chief Executive Officer, Ms Handiza Magoro.

international levels. She also highlighted that UB was developing a comprehensive research-to-commercialisation system aimed at translating publicly funded research into successful commercial ventures. Koya Capital Chief Executive Officer, Ms Handiza Magoro, stated that a knowledge-based economy was

characterised by structures that provided incentives for entrepreneurship, utilisation of knowledge, availability of skilled labour as well as a robust education system. Ms Magoro said access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as well as a vibrant innovation landscape that comprised the academic world, private sector and civil society also contributed towards a knowledge economy.

She also observed that for Botswana to achieve a paradigm shift from a resource-based to a knowledge-based economy, it must invest in education and training, encourage innovation and entrepreneurship, build robust infrastructure with a focus on technology and digitisation, attract and retain talent as well as implement supportive government policies and regulations.

World Bank Botswana Office Country Representative, Mr Liang Wang, stated that the World Bank has praised Botswana for sustaining one of the world's longest economic booms. He noted that Botswana's economic growth since the late 1960s had been at par with some of Asia's largest economies such as China. He further explained that the Botswana Government had consistently maintained budget surpluses and held extensive foreign exchange reserves.



Professor Doreen Ramogola-Masire stressing a point on the importance of research.

Office of the First Lady and Ministry of Education Embark on an Inspiring UB Campus Tour

The diversification agenda. The Office of the First Lady of Botswana in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Skills Development recently organised an enriching tour of the University of Botswana (UB) campus for 40 young female students from junior schools in the Kgalagadi, North-West and Kweneng regions. The aim of the visit was to ignite a passion for higher education and STEM

fields among the students.

The tour commenced at the UB Library, where the students explored its facilities and learnt about its various functions. They then visited the Health Science and Pharmacy Departments, gaining insights into laboratories and pharmaceutical technologies. At the Faculty of Engineering and Technology (FET), the students witnessed how creativity and research

lead to groundbreaking innovations, emphasising the importance of pursuing careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). The tour concluded with a broader view of the campus, leaving the students inspired and motivated to envision a future in higher education and STEM disciplines.



Some of the students during a tour of the UB Library where they explored its facilities and learnt about its various functions.

Minister Segokgo Challenges Students to Innovate Solutions

Minister of Communications, Knowledge and Technology, Mr Thulagano Merafe Segokgo, has challenged University of Botswana (UB) Industrial Design and Technology students to tackle pollution and waste management issues at landfills.

Speaking at the UB Department of Industrial Design and Technology Degree Show held at the UB Conference Centre recently, Mr Segokgo lamented the growing challenge of managing landfills and the potential for business opportunities in converting waste into products. He underscored the importance of promoting circular resource usage and encouraged students to use innovative ideas to create jobs rather than seek them. In addition, he urged students to take advantage of the Government's diamond beneficiation initiative.

UB Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, commended Industrial Design and Technology students for their creativity and innovation. Professor Norris explained that UB had talented students capable of making significant contributions in transforming the country's economy. He noted that economies thrived on innovation, making it essential to leverage student talent. He also pointed out that the University's new strategic direction focused on enhancing the research and innovation value chain.

UB's Innovation Centre is actively engaged and open to the community, with innovative products ready for mass production. To that end, Professor Norris stressed the importance of building a viable ecosystem to drive innovation while commending the Ministry of Communications, Knowledge and Technology for investing over a billion pula to support research and innovation.

He appealed for additional funds to develop infrastructure to support research. Ms Sethunya Molosiwa from Okavango Diamond Company (ODC) noted that the Government's mindset change campaign encouraged integration of concepts such as design thinking into traditionally mind-design professions.

Ms Molosiwa advocated for promotion of such an approach in

public institutions given that it fostered new ways of thinking and problem-solving, essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

She emphasised that harnessing the power of design required collaboration between designers, public service and business. She observed that integrating design thinking with economic diversification was crucial for sustainability and driving the economic diversification agenda.



Minister Thulagano Segokgo addressing the students.



Minister Thulagano Segokgo touring some of the inventions that the students embarked on.

Taking Charge in Shaping a Knowledge-Based Economy

-
- » UB making significant strides
 - » R2CS set to pave way for significant economic transformation
-

The University of Botswana (UB) is making significant strides in its mission to foster a knowledge-based economy through cutting-edge research and innovation. Recently, UB hosted two pivotal workshops aimed at reinforcing its commitment to transforming Botswana into a high-income knowledge-based society. The events marked a major milestone in the UB's Strategy to enhance research quality, drive innovation as well as achieve national and global impact.

On the 25th of July 2024, UB held an interactive workshop titled *"Enabling Research to Commercialisation – A Paradigm Shift from a Resource to Knowledge-Based Economy."* The workshop was designed to explore and affirm the role of universities in enabling Botswana's innovation ecosystem. The session gathered a diverse group of stakeholders from academia, government, private sector and society, collectively affirming the critical role universities play in shifting the economy from resource dependency to knowledge-based growth.

During the workshop, participants discussed the development of a sustainable Research to Commercialisation System (R2CS) at UB which is set to pave the way for significant economic transformation. The R2CS aims at positioning UB as a key player in Botswana's transition by enhancing its focus on research and commercialization. Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research and Enterprise, Professor Doreen

Ramogola-Masire, who spearheaded the workshops, underscored the importance of stakeholder engagement and adoption of the R2CS framework. The event was marked by enthusiastic participation and meaningful discussions, with participants providing valuable insights that will inform future policy and strategy developments. Highlights from the presentations by R2CS partners, including Koya Capital and the World Bank Botswana Country Representative, emphasised several key points. A crucial element for effective change is a shift in mindset and execution while research and development are essential drivers of economic productivity and the transition to a knowledge-based economy.

Further, universities play a vital role in enabling innovation systems through research and commercialisation in that a robust National System of Innovation, aligned with R2CS, is necessary for building a strong foundation for long-term sustainability.

Collaboration among government, private sector and educational institutions, guided by the spirit of Ubuntu, is crucial for driving the call to action. The discussions overspilled into the second workshop, held from the 29th to 30th August 2024, titled "Reimagining, Reinvigorating the University of Botswana Research and Innovation Enterprise: Building Robust Structures and Systems through Policies and Strategy Implementation." The

purpose of the workshop was to delve deeper into policies and strategies required to support the R2CS framework, focusing on the Research and Innovation Policy, Intellectual Property Policy as well as the necessary strategy and implementation plans.

The objectives of the workshop included highlighting the importance of policies and their alignment with national goals. The workshop was aimed at clarifying the roles of key stakeholders such as UB, government, researchers and the private sector. It sought to educate participants on essential policy elements and successful implementation strategies. Further, the workshop showcased the future of research, with a focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in economic transformation. An interactive, consultative process was facilitated to gather diverse feedback and insights.

The workshop entailed a range of engaging formats, including guest speakers, panel discussions on overcoming innovation barriers, digital quizzes as well as group discussions. Notably, a panel discussion on the "Valley of Death" addressed the main challenges of discontinued innovation such as lack of funding and support.

VC Engagement Fosters Regional Collaboration

- » visit reinforces historical & cultural connections...
- » fosters supportive & inclusive environment



Professor David Norris engaging with parents in Eswatini on the importance of maintaining strong regional collaboration of SADC member states.

University of Botswana (UB) Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris's visit to Mbabane, Eswatini on the 10th of August 2024 not only served to address pressing student concerns but further provided a strategic opportunity to enhance regional collaborations.

Thus, beyond addressing specific issues, Professor Norris's visit demonstrated the importance of maintaining and strengthening regional ties between Botswana and its neighbouring countries. Engaging with Eswatini parents went beyond resolving students' concerns given that it reinforced the historical and cultural

connections between the two (2) nations. It was somehow part of a broader initiative to sustain and enhance relationships with the University's regional constituents especially given the increasing student population and evolving educational demands. As such, the engagement underscored UB's commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive environment for students from across the region.

In addition, the involvement of former UB students Siyabonga Ngcotheni, Vuma Motsa, and Lwandile Mamba, added valuable perspectives to the discussion.

Their personal experiences at UB provided insights into the University's impact on academic and personal growth.

Professor Norris's visit to Eswatini underscored UB's efforts to improve its educational environment and contribute towards a broader regional development. As UB continues to evolve and expand its global reach, maintaining strong connections with neighbouring countries and engaging meaningfully with the University's international community is key to achieving its vision of becoming a leading world-class institution.■

Aligned Curriculum Prepares Students for Industry Exposure



Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor Teaching and Learning, Professor Richard Tabulawa with his Assistant Executive Secretary, Ms Matshediso Zungu and one of stakeholders.

University of Botswana (UB) Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, Professor Richard Tabulawa, has said that aligning the curriculum with industry standards equips students with essential skills and knowledge, ensuring they were well-prepared to meet industry demands.

Professor Tabulawa was speaking at a stakeholder meeting between UB and Debswana Diamond Company at UB Council Chambers on the 6th August 2024. The purpose of the engagement was to provide an update on progress to date and share insights on training opportunities aligned to underground skills enhancement (occupations in demand within the mining sector) and obtain suggestions, views and input from university academia. Professor Richard Tabulawa highlighted

the importance of designing university programmes that were closely aligned with industry needs, particularly in sectors such as mining to address the gap in mining skills and expertise. He noted that mining technologies evolved rapidly, making it crucial for students to stay updated and technically proficient to ensure they were market ready.

Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology (FET), Professor Edward Dintwa, echoed the same sentiments, stating that the recent engagement meeting was timely given that the University was currently undergoing restructuring and aligning its curriculum to better meet industry demands. He also urged Debswana to collaborate with the University in developing programmes tailored to the current needs of the

mining industry. Debswana Diamond Company's Social Performance Manager, Ms Elsie Tolani Mvimi, gave insights into Jwaneng Mine's transition from open pit to underground mining, a project expected to be completed by 2033.

Ms Mvimi identified shortage of underground mining skills and expertise as a significant risk to the project. She also highlighted the global shift towards underground mining, which has intensified competition for skilled resources.

She further noted that Debswana has recognised UB as a key partner in addressing this skills gap and is eager to share insights on training opportunities that align with the demands of underground mining but they did not cite the main presenter from Debswana.

Campus Walkabout Promotes Closer Student-Leadership Interaction

- » fosters more connected, responsive campus environment
- » offers Vice Chancellor firsthand look at student life

The University of Botswana (UB) Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, recently took a hands-on approach, embarking on an insightful walkabout across the University's main campus in Gaborone.

The aim of the walkabout, organised in collaboration with the University of Botswana Student Representative Council (UBSRC), was to bridge the gap between the University's top leadership and its student body to foster a more connected and responsive campus environment. Accompanied by UBSRC President, Mr Maatla Magibisela and other SRC members, Professor Norris engaged directly with students in various campus settings, including the cafeteria, dormitories as well as popular outdoor hangout spots. Such interactions offered the Vice Chancellor a firsthand look at student life, allowing him to listen to their concerns and discuss issues affecting their academic and social experiences.

To that end, Professor Norris expressed gratitude to the UBSRC for facilitating such an engagement. He described the experience as both eye-opening and invaluable. The Vice Chancellor observed that such direct exposure to student life would significantly inform his decision-making process at the executive level. By understanding the day-to-day realities of the students, Professor Norris plans to implement changes that will not only enhance the comfort and well-being of students but also positively impact their academic performance.

UBSRC President, Mr Magibisela, echoed the same sentiments, stressing the



Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, addressing some students during his walkabout.



Professor Norris with SRC President, Mr Maatla Magibisela (2nd left) during his campus walkabout.

importance of maintaining an open and continuous dialogue between students and university management.

Mr Magibisela noted that the walkabout was an essential step in identifying areas that required attention and exploring practical solutions to improve the overall

student experience at UB. The initiative underscored a shared commitment to creating a more vibrant and supportive campus environment with student voices at the forefront of decisionmaking.

Chinese Ambassador Urges Students to Seize Job Opportunities

The newly appointed Chinese Ambassador to Botswana His Excellency, Mr Fan Yong, commended the University of Botswana Confucius Institute (UBCI) for creating platforms that connected students with potential employers, thereby contributing significantly to the fight against youth unemployment.

Ambassador Yong was speaking at the Chinese Companies Job Fair held at the University of Botswana (UB) on the 9th of August 2024. Organised by the Confucius Institute in collaboration with the UB Careers and Counselling Centre and the Chinese Enterprises Association, the Job Fair, brought together eight (8) Chinese companies operating in Botswana. The purpose of the event was to offer students direct access to job opportunities besides building stronger ties between Botswana and China.

Consequently, Ambassador Yong urged the students to seize employment opportunities presented by the job fair to uplift their livelihoods. He commended the Confucius Institute for its instrumental role in strengthening relations between Botswana and China.

Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, Professor Richard Tabulawa, applauded the Confucius Institute and the careers and Counselling Centre for their efforts in enhancing student employability.

Professor Tabulawa noted that the institutions were integral to the University of Botswana's mission of preparing students for successful careers. Standing Vice Chairman of the Chinese Enterprises Association, Mr Li Qing, welcomed the participants and underscored the association's commitment to creating

employment opportunities and promoting sustainable development in Botswana. Mr Li encouraged students and companies to actively engage with one another to secure potential employment. Giving a vote of thanks, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Professor Thapelo Otlogetswe, expressed gratitude to the Confucius

Institute for organising the Job Fair and acknowledged the support of the Careers and Counselling Centre. Professor Otlogetswe also appreciated the Chinese Enterprises Association, highlighting the event's significance in advancing career prospects for UB students.



Professor Richard Tabulawa (left) with Chinese Ambassador, Mr Fan Yong and Professor Thapelo Otlogetswe.



Some students visiting stalls at the Job Fair to learn about job opportunities.

Eswatini Parents Applaud Vice Chancellor

Parents of Eswatini students at the University of Botswana (UB) have expressed gratitude to the Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, for proactively addressing and clarifying their concerns regarding their children's well-being and academic experience.

The meeting, held in Mbabane on 10th of August 2024, was convened in response to mutual concerns raised by both parents and University Management about the welfare of Eswatini students. In a candid and open atmosphere, Professor Norris and the parents discussed the challenges faced by students at UB and explored potential solutions.

The parents acknowledged the rare honour of having someone of Professor Norris's stature travelling from Botswana to engage directly with them, valuing his willingness to leave the comfort of his office to address their concerns and exchange ideas.

They underscored the significance of maintaining strong bilateral relations and the familial ties between the citizens of Botswana and Eswatini, echoing the spirit of the former University of Botswana and Swaziland (UBS).

Among the challenges discussed, parents admitted to their tendency to overextend themselves in managing their children's affairs which may hinder their children's self-actualisation and assertiveness.

» for Proactively Addressing Student Issues

They emphasised the importance of allowing students to become self-reliant and responsible members of society. In addition, they called on the University to take disciplinary actions when necessary to guide wayward students towards responsible behaviour.

The meeting also featured insights from UB alumni in Eswatini, Siyabonga Ngocheni, Vuma Motsa, and Lwandile Mamba, who shared their enriching experiences at the University. They advised parents to remain actively engaged with their children's academic progress and to manage financial support cautiously to prevent exposure to potential temptations.

On concluding the meeting, Professor Norris expressed appreciation for the parents' initiative in organising the event and their collaborative approach to resolving pressing issues. He provided an update on UB's ongoing transformation into a High-Performance Organisation (HPO), aimed at enhancing service delivery and creating a supportive environment for work and learning. Professor Norris further encouraged parents to motivate their children to participate in student activities such as the Living and Learning Communities



Some parents of Eswatini students at UB taking notes during the meeting.

(LLC), which offer valuable mentorship across disciplines.

LLCs are designed to connect students living in residence who share common interests and to extend opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. They provide opportunities for students to get involved within their residence community, while connecting with peers, faculty and staff. Consequently, Professor Norris also urged the parents to encourage their children to freely interact with students from diverse nationalities, emphasising that such interactions were key to developing a global perspective and broader mindset.



UB alumnus, Mr Siyabonga Ngocheni, deliberating on the achievements and challenges they encountered as students at UB.

UB Champions Innovation & Collaboration for Economic Growth

The University of Botswana (UB) Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, says global economies are driven by knowledge to achieve the developmental goals of nations. Speaking at the 17th National Business Conference (NBC) in Francistown on the 26th August 2024, Professor Norris addressed the panel on the topic *"Towards an Export-Led Economy: Empowering Botswana Firms for Global Expansion"*.

He highlighted the critical role universities play in fostering innovation and economic growth. The conference, themed *"Invigorating Economic Transformation through the Private Sector,"* was officially opened by His Honour, the Vice President of the Republic of Botswana, Mr Slumber Tsogwane. It brought together over 500 thought leaders being delegates from diverse sectors to engage in high-level discussions aimed at driving economic transformation.

Professor Norris pointed out that the success of companies such as Google, Facebook, Whatsapp and various smart technology products was rooted in knowledge and innovation, which are often the outcomes of partnerships between universities and industries. He stressed that innovation thrived on collaboration among universities, the private sector, government and industry, underscoring the importance of such partnerships in driving economic and technological advancements.

He also observed that knowledge had increasingly become a vital tool for value creation in the modern economy. Professor Norris stated that UB was actively engaged across the entire value chain, from basic and

...knowledge, a vital tool for value creation in modern economy



Part of the audience at the 17th National Business Conference in Francistown.



Professor David Norris participating in a panel discussion at the National Business Conference

applied research to product development and commercialisation. He noted that research and innovation were essential for countries to remain competitive and achieve their developmental objectives. Through such initiatives, UB is committed

to playing a leading role in powering Botswana's economy and contributing to global economic progress, demonstrating that knowledge is indeed a key driver of growth and development. ▀

Research & Enterprise Division Unlocks Value Chain

...research must serve society, address real-world Challenges



The University of Botswana (UB) is taking bold steps to strengthen its role in fostering innovation and development through research. Speaking at a Research Strategy Development Workshop held in Gaborone from 29th to 30th August 2024, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research and Enterprise, Professor Doreen Ramogola-Masire, emphasised UB's commitment to driving research that creates social impact, productivity and development.

Professor Ramogola-Masire underscored the University's responsibility to spearhead innovation in ways that unlocked value chains to align with the country's shift from a resource-based to a knowledgebased economy.

The workshop was part of UB's efforts to align its research agenda with national policies to ensure that academic work contributed to the broader goals of societal advancement. Professor Ramogola-Masire highlighted the need for research and development to serve society and not merely focus on commercialisation, pointing to the imperative of addressing real-world challenges through academic innovation.

She expressed gratitude to the participants of the workshop by emphasising that the knowledge acquired represented a step forward in ongoing learning and awareness. She noted that insights gained on strategies and policies would aid in creating frameworks applicable on both national and global scales. Co-founder of Koya Capital, a learning transformation consultancy, Ms Hadzi

Magoro, elaborated on the importance of research commercialisation and intellectual property. She explained that intellectual property was a key component in turning research work into commercial products or services. According to Ms Magoro, having a robust policy framework governing commercialisation and intellectual property was crucial for achieving productivity and contributing to both societal development and economic growth. Addressing the National System of Innovation agenda, Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Communications, Knowledge and Technology, Mr Ambros Makgonatsotlhe, highlighted that research and innovation played a critical role in economic growth and solving societal problems.

Consequently, he said the Ministry was establishing partnerships with institutions such as UB to align ideas with national priorities and goals. By providing a conducive environment for innovation and technology commercialisation through funding and support, such efforts helped catalyse productivity.

Head of the Academy for the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO), Dr Outule Rapuleng, spoke on intellectual property governance, highlighting its significance as a global phenomenon. He explained that ARIPO, an intergovernmental organisation, facilitated cooperation among member states on intellectual property matters, offering skills training, research and collaborations. Such efforts aim at strengthening the protection of African-origin intellectual property to foster the growth of research and innovation across the continent. ■



Students Gain AI Insights at I'Connect Conference

Forty (40) University of Botswana students recently attended the I'Connect Conference, themed "Solving Together: Growing Africa Through Innovation and Technology."

This year's event was an excellent opportunity for students to connect with industry experts and explore the forefront of technological advancements. The conference brought together leading thought leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators in a collaborative setting, focused on the transformative impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education and the workplace.

Through insightful discussions, students gained practical knowledge on how to leverage and integrate AI into their learning processes and prepare for future careers in an AI-driven world.

Presentations by Motheo Monti Kgengwenyane, Founder of GreyEd, and Mthabisi Bokete, Group CEO at Digital Natives, underscored the significant impact of AI in reshaping learning environments and driving business



Some of the 40 UB students who attended the I'Connect Conference.

innovation. The speakers illustrated how AI was creating personalised and adaptive learning experiences, which are transforming educational landscapes and improving student outcomes.

As Botswana embraces technology for growth, insights gained at the I'Connect Conference offered students a valuable perspective on how AI and other innovations can shape various sectors, including education. To that end, the University of Botswana's ongoing

initiatives in digital transformation reflect the broader regional and global trends discussed at the conference, highlighting the institution's commitment to staying at the forefront of technological advancements.

The conference underscored the critical importance of innovation and technology in shaping the future, inspiring students to actively engage in Botswana's development through education, research, and community involvement.



Some of the students who embarked on insightful discussions that helped them gain practical knowledge on how to leverage and integrate AI into their learning processes and prepare for future careers.

UB Rhinos Claim Silver in scintillating Botswana Rugby League Final

University of Botswana (UB) Rhinos rugby teams (Men and Women) both claimed Silver at the Botswana Rugby League Finals held at the Touchdown Grounds on the 3rd of August 2024.

UB Rhinos men's team were not so lucky as they faced the toughest challenge against Gabs Hogs, eventually succumbing to a 35-15 defeat and handing Hogs the championship.

In the women's final, Rhinos also settled for silver after a 17- 5 defeat to rivals Botswana Defence Force Cheaters.

UB Rhinos Coach (men), Tshoganetso Katse said it was a tough game for his charges especially in the first half in that they only managed to recover late in the game. He cited lack of confidence, motivation and physical fitness as factors that contributed towards poor performance.



It was a tussle for the ball as UB rugby teams faced tough competition from their rivals and eventually settled for silver medals.



In Pursuit of Academic Excellence

VISION

To be a leading centre of academic excellence in Africa and the world

MISSION

To improve economic and social conditions for the Nation while advancing itself as a distinctively African university with a regional and international outlook.



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Graphics: UB Publications

Published by the University of Botswana - Public Affairs, P/Bag 0022 Gaborone BOTSWANA

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