



## Senior Management Engages Minister of Higher Education

Discussion provides opportunity to share challenges and propose solutions to improve operations



Minister of Higher Education, Hon Prince Maele with Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, during a meeting with UB Senior Management.

The University of Botswana (UB) Executive Management on the 6<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 engaged the newly appointed Minister of Higher Education (MoHE), Honorable Prince Maele, during a courtesy visit where the Vice

Chancellor, Professor David Norris, along with Deans and Directors from various faculties and departments, presented the University's strategic goals, achievements and areas for growth. During his address, Professor Norris highlighted

UB's High Performance Agenda, emphasizing the importance of global recognition and external engagement.

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Chemistry Department Hosts Inaugural Global Women's Breakfast to Promote Gender Equity in Science



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## EDITOR'S NOTE – JANUARY 2025

Happy New Year and welcome to the first edition of the UB Newsletter for 2025!

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As we return from the festive break, we hope you are recharged and ready to embrace the new year with vigour, fresh energy and renewed hope. The beginning of the year always brings with it a sense of possibility, a chance to set new goals, confront fresh challenges and build on the progress we have made as a university community.

This issue captures that spirit of renewal and action. We open with a story on the recent engagement between the Minister of Higher Education and UB Senior Management. The meeting provided a timely platform to highlight both the challenges we face and the opportunities that lie ahead, thereby reinforcing the need for stronger collaboration and shared vision as we chart the course forward.

Also featured is a compelling dialogue that brought together academics, religious leaders and activists to explore the intersection of religion and inequality in Southern Africa, a critical conversation that reflects the University's role as a hub for thought leadership and social inquiry. Our students continue to make us proud, with three (3) exceptional UB students selected to represent Botswana in a

prestigious US leadership programme.

Their success is a demonstration of the calibre of our student body and the global relevance of the skills nurtured here at UB. On the science front, the Chemistry Department hosted its inaugural Global Women's Breakfast, a vibrant initiative aimed at promoting gender equity in science. Meanwhile, our commitment to holistic student development is also reflected in the story of 27 students who graduated from a Basic Lifesaving Course, a vital skillset with the potential to save lives.

And in sports, we celebrate the UB Boxing Club for its outstanding performance at the 2024 National Championship. Their triumph not only brings pride to the University but also speaks to the power of discipline, perseverance and teamwork. As the year unfolds, we invite you to stay engaged, stay inspired and stay connected. UB remains a place of ideas, impact and infinite potential. We look forward to sharing more of such stories with you throughout 2025.

Warm regards,

**Thomas T. Nkhoma**

## Highlights...



### Three UB Students to Represent Botswana in Prestigious US Leadership Programme

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# Academics, Religious Leaders & Activists Explore Religion and Inequality in Southern Africa

- » Professor Norris underscores transformative potential of religion and culture.
- » Professor Shoko sheds light on the intersection of religion and gender inequality in southern Africa



Some of the participants of the conference on the role of faith in addressing inequality.

The University of Botswana (UB) recently hosted a “Religion and Inequality in Southern Africa” conference which brought together academics, religious leaders and

activists to examine the complex interplay between religion, social justice and inequality in the region. Organised by the Faculty of Humanities, the conference aimed at fostering

critical dialogue on how religion can address systemic injustices and promote equity particularly in the context of colonial legacies, gender disparities and economic inequality.

In his opening remarks, Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, underscored the transformative potential of religion and culture. Professor Norris stressed the importance of understanding how such forces contributed to inequality while also acknowledging their role as agents of change. “This conference seeks to provide a platform for exploring how religion can be harnessed to address systemic injustices

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## Minister of Higher Education....Continued from page 1

“If you are a University, what you do must be recognised everywhere. The products and services must also be consumed by those outside Botswana, not only internally,” he stated. He underscored that UB’s performance would be the measure of its progress and achievement given that the University was committed to meeting its strategic objectives.

Professor Norris also pointed out the instrumental role that government played in UB’s development. He stressed the importance of a productive partnership.

The discussion provided UB’s Senior Management with an opportunity to share the challenges faced by the institution and propose solutions to improve the University’s operations and impact as a centre for higher learning.

In response, Minister Maele expressed enthusiasm for building a strong partnership with UB.



Chief Finance Officer, Ms Peo Pillar and Director Human Resources, Mr Emmanuel Maite, listening to the proceedings.

“My visit today is to meet you, establish relations and ensure that my door is always open,” he assured the Senior Management team. Furthermore, he encouraged open communication and collaboration thereby reinforcing his commitment to addressing issues affecting the University.

In relation to UB’s pivotal role in societal

development, the Minister stated, “I understand the role of a university in shaping the society we live in. I have come to UB to meet the people who will help me find solutions for our country.” The stakeholder engagement marks the beginning of what promises to be a fruitful relationship between the University of Botswana and the Ministry Higher of Education ■

## Three UB Students to Represent Botswana in Prestigious US Leadership Programme

Once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to expand horizons, connect with global leaders



The three students before departure at the Sir Seretse Khama International Airport.

Three (3) exceptional students from the University of Botswana (UB) have been selected to participate in the highly regarded Study of the United States Institute (SUSI) for Global Student Leaders programme. The students - Boago Mosweu, a final-year law student; Mandipa Amantle Hlabano, a fourth-year Law student and Louis Bahlomi, a third-year Arts and Humanities student - have travelled to the United States for this prestigious five-week programme.

The SUSI programme, themed "Civic Engagement," aims to deepen the participants' understanding of leadership while fostering cultural exchange. Over the course of the

and support marginalised communities across Southern Africa," he said.

For her part, German Ambassador to Botswana, H.E Gabriela Bennemann, underlined the urgent need to address gender inequality in the region particularly within the framework of religious and cultural systems. Ms Bennemann called for the dismantling of colonial-era structures to create gender-inclusive practices within religious institutions to empower women socially, politically and economically.

Delivering the keynote address, Professor Tabona Shoko from the University of Zimbabwe shed light on the intersection of religion and gender inequality in southern Africa. Professor Shoko noted that post-colonial dynamics and historical forces had shaped how religion intersected with gender roles especially in areas such as land ownership and economic participation. He also highlighted the growing movement within religious communities to challenge traditional norms and advocate for gender equality.

On the second day, Prof Gabriel Faimau of Social Sciences explored the relationship between religion, digital ethics and inequality. He noted how religious values could guide ethical behaviour in digital spaces, fostering justice and respect while addressing disparities in access to technology. Dr Esther Nkhukhu-Orlando of the Faculty of Social Sciences,

University of Botswana further enriched discussions by advocating for decolonising Christianity in Southern Africa. She called for reinterpretations of Christian practices that resonated with local cultures and histories, challenging colonial impositions and reclaiming indigenous traditions.

The conference also spotlighted the value of indigenous knowledge and traditional healing practices thereby underlining their role in complementing modern medicine while preserving cultural heritage. Participants explored how such practices, deeply rooted in spirituality and ancestral wisdom, contributed to holistic well-being and empower communities to maintain control over their health systems. Ultimately, the conference underscored the importance of interdisciplinary dialogue and practical collaboration. It provided a platform for academics, religious leaders and community activists to address systemic issues such as poverty, gender inequality and racial discrimination. The event also strengthened the connection between academic research and grassroots initiatives, laying the groundwork for more inclusive and equitable frameworks to tackle inequality across southern Africa.

As Professor Norris aptly concluded, "This is more than a conference, it is a call to action to use the power of religion and culture to create a more just and equitable society" ■



Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany, Her Excellency Ms Gabriela Bennemann (right) with some of the participants listening to the proceedings.

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# Jindal Resources Botswana Partners with University of Botswana to Develop Future Industry Leaders

Agreement paves way to nurture graduates into highly skilled, industry-ready professionals



Jindal Resources Botswana representative, Mr Neeraj Saxena (left) being welcomed by UB Chief Operations Officer, Mr David Katzke.



Mr Saxena and Mr Katzke signing the MoU while witnessing are Deputy Vice Chancellor Research and Enterprise, Professor Doreen Ramogola-Masire, Director Public Affairs, Dr Faith Rapuleng-Tuelo, UB Council Member, Ms Bontle Elang Mugabe and a Jindal representative.

The University of Botswana (UB) and Jindal Resources Botswana have embarked on a transformative partnership to advance human capital development in Botswana. The collaboration was formalised through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2024 at the UB Council Chamber. The agreement paves the way for a strategic initiative to nurture UB graduates into highly skilled, industry-ready professionals.

Jindal Resources Botswana, a multinational giant specialising in steel, coal, mining and power plant engineering, recently acquired a license to operate a coal mine and power plant in Mmamabula. As part of its commitment to local capacity building, the company identified UB graduates as key contributors to its operations.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Jindal's Country Representative, Mr Neeraj Saxena,

underlined the importance of incorporating Botswana into such transformative projects. "A newly graduated student is like a blank canvas. Our responsibility at Jindal Resources is to train, hone and instil essential industry competencies," he said.

Mr Saxena revealed that eleven (11) graduates from UB's October 2024 Graduation Ceremony had been selected for induction into the company, with the MoU formalising this collaborative vision.

UB Chief Operations Officer (COO), Mr Dawid Katzke, announced that the shortlisted graduates would begin their career training in January 2025. He added that Jindal Resources, in partnership with UB's Faculty of Engineering and Technology (FET), planned to induct top-performing graduates annually to ensure a pipeline of skilled professionals.

FET Dean, Professor Edward Dintwa, elaborated on the scope of the agreement which focuses on recruiting graduates in science and technology disciplines. These include computer science, information technology and engineering fields such as mechanical, electrical, electronics, telecommunications, mineral mining and civil engineering. He noted that the collaboration not only facilitated graduate placement but also held potential for curriculum development to meet industry demands.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Doreen Ramogola-Masire, lauded the partnership as a model for bridging academia and industry. "This collaboration is about creating 'graduates fit for purpose,' fostering innovation and research while generating socio-economic impact for Botswana," she said.

In his closing remarks, FET Deputy Dean, Dr Olefile Molwane, said he was happy to see the culmination of long-standing deliberations. "This MoU marks the beginning of new opportunities for both UB graduates and the broader community," he said, underlining its potential to unlock further collaborations. ■

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# Gambling Authority Hosts Orientation for 2024 'Motshameko O Phepha' Scholarship Recipients

Scholarship fosters innovation, excellence and sustainable development in Botswana's gambling sector

The Botswana Gambling Authority (BGA) hosted an Orientation Day on the 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2025, at its headquarters to welcome six (6) PhD and five (5) Master's degree recipients of the 2024 'Motshameko o Phepha' Scholarship. The event marks the beginning of their academic journey at the University of Botswana for the 2024/2025 semester.

Established through a 2024 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between BGA and UB, the scholarship aims to foster innovative research, academic excellence, and sustainable development in Botswana's gambling sector.

Speaking at the event, Gambling Authority's Director of Responsible Gambling and Corporate Affairs, Mr Moruntshi Kemorwale, emphasised the significance of research in addressing industry challenges. "Solutions can only come from within. This scholarship reflects our commitment to higher education and industry sustainability through innovative research," he said, urging the scholars to excel in their studies.



Some of the Motshameko O Phepha Scholarship recipients.

Statistics Botswana representatives highlighted the importance of sound data practices in research. National Statistical System Coordinator, Mrs Elizabeth Mantswe, emphasised ethical data collection standards, noting their role in decision-making for a sustainable gambling sector. She encouraged scholars to utilise Statistics Botswana's resources.

Senior Documentation and Dissemination Officer, Mrs Nametso Kgosiyame, underscored the value of collaboration with Statistics Botswana, advising students to submit their research data to the National Repository for future citations. Methodologist, Mrs Kebotsamang Daniel, echoed the call for precision in data collection, noting its role in driving accurate insights and fostering industry growth.

Acting Dean of the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) at UB, Dr Philip Bulawa, expressed



Acting School of Graduate Studies Dean, Dr Phillip Bulawa, addressing the recipients.

gratitude to the Gambling Authority and Statistics Botswana for their partnership in advancing research and higher learning. "This collaboration strengthens academia and propels Botswana's industry forward," he stated, urging the students to maximise the scholarship and available resources.

## Solar...Continued from page 5

programme, the trio will explore American institutions and values, engaging with peers and leaders from around the world.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for these students to expand their horizons, connect with global leaders and bring back valuable insights to benefit their communities in Botswana.

The programme is renowned for equipping young leaders with the skills and knowledge to drive positive change in their communities. Participants will engage in a series of workshops, site visits and discussions centred on leadership, democracy and civic participation.

This milestone is not only a personal triumph for the students but also a significant moment for

the University of Botswana and the country at large. By participating in the SUSI programme, the young leaders will contribute to Botswana's global presence and strengthen ties between the two (2) nations as well as laying the groundwork for future collaboration.

# University of Botswana School of Nursing Conducts Leadership Training for Nurses and Midwives

Programme designed to address critical gaps in leadership within nursing and midwifery professions



Participants of the Global Women's Breakfast held at the UB Conference Centre posing for a group photo after the event.

The University of Botswana (UB) School of Nursing in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO) Collaborating Center, conducted a four-day leadership training programme for nurses and midwives from the 2nd to 5th of December 2024. The initiative brought together healthcare professionals from across the country with the aim of strengthening leadership in education, practice, research and policy-making to improve healthcare delivery in Botswana.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Dr. Gaonyadiwe Lubinda outlined the importance of the training programme in clarifying the roles and responsibilities of nurses and midwives to equip them to integrate leadership skills into their work and advance universal health coverage. Furthermore, she said the programme was designed to address

critical gaps in leadership within the nursing and midwifery professions to cultivate a culture



Some of the participants listening attentively.

of innovation and excellence in service delivery. Meanwhile, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Health, Professor Oathokwa Nkomazana, highlighted the urgent need for sustained leadership development, noting that many senior leaders in the field were nearing

retirement. She stressed the importance of establishing mentorship systems to ensure that future generations of nurses and midwives were well-prepared to take on leadership roles.

"Leaders are made, not born," said Professor Nkomazana, adding that leadership programmes should be continuous instead of one-time events to ensure their lasting impact.

The training entailed a wide range of topics presented by experts including the role of WHO in the development of the nursing and midwifery workforce, global leadership policies in Africa and approaches to research and

quality improvement. Participants engaged in knowledge exchange and skill-building activities designed to empower them to drive transformative changes in Botswana's healthcare system. ■

# Twenty-Seven Students Graduate from Basic Lifesaving Course

Participants encouraged to collaborate with rescue teams and community organisations to enhance aquatic safety standards

The University of Botswana (UB) Department of Sports, Culture and Recreation recently hosted a Basic Lifesaving Course graduation ceremony at the UB Swimming Pool. Twenty-seven (27) participants successfully completed the course, gaining essential skills in swimming, water rescue, emergency evacuation, first aid, aqua-survival, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and fitness.

The graduates represented a diverse range of institutions, including the Botswana Police Service (BPS), Botswana Fire Department, Water Utilities Corporation (WUC), Botswana Prisons Service (BPS), UB Swimming Club, and UB Sports Science.

The course aimed at equipping participants with knowledge and skills to prevent, recognise and respond to aquatic emergencies. Training

was facilitated by UB lifeguard experts in collaboration with lifeguard examiners from Lifeguard Services South Africa.

Delivering the keynote address, Director of the UB Department of Sports, Culture, and Recreation, Dr Comfort Mokgothu, underscored the numerous health benefits of swimming, including improved endurance, cardiovascular fitness and muscle strength. He observed that learning to swim provided individuals with vital water safety techniques to reduce the risk of drowning and saving lives.

Dr Mokgothu encouraged the graduates to apply their skills by promoting water safety, responding to emergencies and offering consultation services to education, recreation and health agencies across Botswana. He also urged them to collaborate with stakeholders such as the Botswana Defence Force (BDF), WUC rescue teams, disaster management teams, Red Cross Society and community organisations to enhance aquatic safety standards nationwide.

UB Sports Manager, Mr Nelson Bodilenyane, commended the graduates for their dedication and perseverance throughout the course. He urged them to foster a culture of excellence in lifeguarding and to take pride in their newfound skills.



Department of Sports, Culture and Recreation Director, Dr Comfort Mokgothu and Sports Manager, Mr Nelson Bodilenyane, in deep thought watching the proceedings.



Participants proudly displaying their certificates after graduating.

Superintendent Alfred Woto, representing the BPS, also encouraged the graduates to practice their skills diligently and use their knowledge to serve their communities. He underlined the importance of promoting public awareness of aquatic emergencies to reduce water-related incidents.







# UB WINS SILVER IN TABLE TENNIS AT SAUSSA GAMES



The University of Botswana (UB) recently clinched a silver medal in the men's table tennis category at the Southern Africa Universities Staff Sports Association (SAUSSA) Games held in Harare, Zimbabwe, on the 4th of December 2024.

The University of Zambia emerged as champions, taking the gold medal while Botswana Open University settled for the bronze.

In addition to table tennis, UB participated in various sporting disciplines, including volleyball, tug of war, pool, football, darts and cheerleading.



# UB Hosts UNDP UniPOD Makeathon to Drive Sustainable Commercialisation of Indigenous Knowledge

The University of Botswana (UB) in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) hosted the Botswana UniPOD Makeathon 2024 aimed at fostering sustainable commercialisation of indigenous knowledge through technological innovation.

The event which ran from the 26<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2024 at the UB Library Auditorium, attracted a diverse group of entrepreneurial participants tasked with developing innovative models aligned with this year's theme: Sustainable Technology and Indigenous Knowledge.



The Makeathon follows the groundbreaking ceremony for the UB Innovation Centre in October 2024, furthering UB's commitment to supporting entrepreneurship and advancing green technology solutions.

UNDP Youth and Innovation Project Coordinator, Ms Kago Kgosietsile, gave insights into the UniPOD initiative, describing it as part of the broader UNDP Africa Timbuktu

initiative. She explained that UB and Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) were among 15 UniPODs across Africa designed to bridge the gap between research and development, product creation and market growth. The initiative focuses on nurturing innovative, scalable and impactful entrepreneurship through facilitation and funding.

Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) Manager for Graduate Research and Innovation, Dr Oabona Nthebolang, underscored the importance of integrating indigenous knowledge with green technology to drive sustainable innovation. He lauded the Makeathon as an opportunity for participants to draw inspiration from the rich wisdom and practices of local communities, weaving them into technology-driven solutions that honor traditional legacies. Dr Nthebolang commended the participants for their willingness to collaborate with indigenous communities, emphasising the value of cross-cultural learning in crafting impactful solutions.



## BUILDING A GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT DATABASE TO EXPAND THE UNIVERSITY'S HUMAN CAPITAL

The University of Botswana wishes to build a database of Botswana citizens who intend to seek employment with the University in future. Such aspirants must be in possession of a doctoral degree or a Masters.

Master's degree holders who submit their qualifications to the University should be in the middle of their PhD studies or be prepared to embark on a doctoral study should they be appointed by the University.



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*\*Botswana citizens only.*



UniPOD Makeathon

### UniPOD Makeathon...Continued from Page 12

UB Director of Office of Research and Development (ORD), Ms Kimberly Cornfield, highlighted the vital role of university-driven innovation in promoting local economic growth, creating employment opportunities and supporting sustainable livelihoods. She encouraged participants to embrace

collaboration and bold thinking, stating that such initiatives connected academia, entrepreneurs and industry to achieve local, national and international impacts. Officially opening the Makeathon, UB Lecturer in the Department of Industrial Design and Technology, Professor Patrick Dichabeng,

challenged participants to step out of their comfort zones. He observed that the event provided a platform for discourse across industries, exploration of bold ideas as well as formation of potential business partnerships.

# UB Boxing Club Shines at 2024 National Championship

Secures Three (3) Gold Medals and Top Honours.



Cedric Baroma showing off the trophies he won.

The University of Botswana (UB) Boxing Club, in collaboration with the Botswana Boxing Association (BBA), successfully hosted the 2024 National Boxing Championship semi-finals and finals at the UB Indoor Sports Centre from 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> December 2024.

UB Boxing Club's Cedric Baroma delivered an outstanding performance, winning two (2) prestigious awards. The fourth-year Bachelor of Nursing student claimed victory in the Bantamweight category, earning a gold medal and the title of 2024 Bantamweight National Champion. Baroma triumphed over Katlo Kgowe of Prisons Boxing Club in the finals, securing a hard-fought 3-2 win. The bout was also voted the "Best Bout" in the male category.

Adding to his accolades, Baroma was named the tournament's Best Male Boxer. His journey to the championship included a 3-2 semi-final victory against Maxwell Sechi of Police Boxing Club and an impressive 5-0 quarterfinal win over Ogone Koodirile of Francistown Boxing Club.

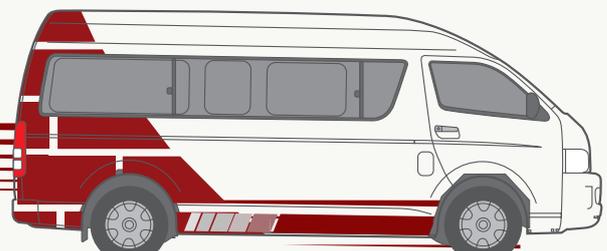
Overall, UB Boxing Club achieved an impressive

second-place finish, amassing three (3) gold medals, one (1) silver and one (1) bronze. Despite earning the highest cumulative score of 20 points, the club ranked second due to the medal system used in the 2024 Championship which featured competition from 11 clubs.

The other gold medals were secured by 2019 Africa Champion and 2020 Olympian Rajab Mohammed in the 51kg category following an abandonment (ADB) by his opponent in the third round and by rising star Karabo Motshwarakgole in the 63.5kg category. Motshwarakgole defeated veteran boxer, Treasure Moremi, with a commanding 4-1 victory.

Kaone Gaobotlhoko won a silver medal in the 57kg category, narrowly losing 5-0 to Mmoloki Sekwaipe of Eastern Military Garrison. Meanwhile, Keaoleboga Mokokwe, the only female competitor in the UB Boxing Club, earned a bronze medal after a determined effort against Jennifer Sechi of Police Boxing Club.

*In Pursuit of Academic Excellence*





UB Boxing Team put up a splendid performance to win three Gold medals and top honours.

The UB Boxing Club Technical Team, administrators and Department of Culture, Sports and Recreation expressed immense pride in the achievements of their youthful and predominantly freshman team. The Department, as the custodian of UB sports, plays a crucial role in supporting the ambitions of both the club and its individual athletes. Through its guidance, Mmadikolo continues to make a significant impact on Botswana's boxing scene and other sporting disciplines.

The club recognises the exceptional contributions of its technical team led by Head Coach, Lechedzani "Master" Luza, of Master Fitness Centre along with coaches Joshua Kgamone, Nthaba Wangu Nlanda, Oteng Oteng, Monthusi Moitsoi, Mooketsi Lekgetho and Samodimo Rabatho. The dedication and volunteerism of the technical team and administrators remain pivotal to the club's success.

UB Boxing Club also appreciates the continued

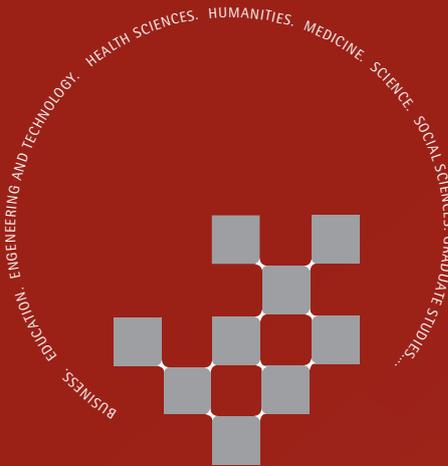
support of its strategic partner, Tsholofelo Boxing Club, led by France Mabiletsa.

The club extends heartfelt gratitude to its sponsors: SmithShine (Pty) Ltd for providing event refreshments through Nutro Charge Energy Shake, Mmoloki Medical Laboratories as the club's pathology sponsor, and Master Fitness Centre as the club's technical sponsor. The partnerships and contributions have been instrumental in the club's success and growth ■



## BRAND VALUES

- PROFESSIONALISM
- EQUITY AND DIVERSITY
- ACCOUNTABILITY
- CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION
- BOTHO



## In Pursuit of Academic Excellence

### VISION

By 2029 the University will be a distinctive centre of academic excellence in Botswana, Africa and globally.

### MISSION

The University provides quality education, research, innovation and engagement for sustainable national development and global impact.



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