UNESCO Chairs launched at NUST

Dr Hilma Amwele, from NUST was chosen as the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Water Research for Climate Adaptation and Saline Agriculture in Arid Environments, while Prof Dharm Singh Jat, was chosen as the UNESCO Chair on Secure High-Performance Computing for Higher Education and Research.

Addressing Prof Jat, Dr Kandjii-Murangi highlighted that “avenues for understanding and the use of state-of-the-art technologies at our disposal” be facilitated through this chair. Dr Naomab further elaborated that NUST’s Strategic Plan is premised on three core success factors which are people, systems and sustainability, showcasing that NUST is taking bold steps to ensure institutional relevance.

Left to right: His Excellency Prashant Agrawal, High Commissioner of India to Namibia; Honourable Dr Itah Kandjii-Murangi, Minister of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation; Dr Erold Naomab, NUST Vice-Chancellor; Prof Dharm Singh Jat, UNESCO Chair on Secure High-Performance Computing for Higher Education and Research; and Dr Hilma Amwele, UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Water Research for Climate Adaptation and Saline Agriculture in Arid Environments.

NAMPORT awards NUST Marine Engineering students with scholarships

Eight NUST students pursuing double degrees in Marine Engineering will finally commence their studies at the Satakunta University of Applied Sciences (SAMK) in Finland.

What started as an idea to close a funding gap for NUST recipients, who were the only company who responded positively for them to be at the threshold of a functional technologically inspired ecosystem, is indeed a moment of great pride to see the HTTPS concept growing and embracing opportunities that create strategic alliances of like-minded institutions. The physical and virtual space has become a shining example of a functional technically inspired ecosystem, NUST Vice-Chancellor, Dr Erold Naomab, said.

Left to right: Jan Sturesson, International Strategy Advisor; Nangula Uaanda, CEO at Namibia Investment Promotion and Partnerships Directorate; Dr Anna Matros-Goreses, NUST Executive Director: Research, Innovation and Partnerships; and Melvin Angula, Chief Commercial Officer at MTC.

HTTPS celebrates first anniversary

Exactly one year ago, the High-Tech Transfer Plaza Select [HTTPS] was a concept which came to fruition after NUST secured a N$51-million partnership with Namibia’s largest mobile telecommunications company and internet service provider, MTC.

The HTTPS offers a long-term strategic initiative to enable future innovations that can be taken from academia to market by start-ups, entrepreneurs, and industry. “It is indeed a moment of great pride to see the HTTPS concept growing and embracing opportunities that create strategic alliances of like-minded institutions. The physical and virtual space has become a shining example of a functional technically inspired ecosystem,” NUST Vice-Chancellor, Dr Erold Naomab, said. The initial idea for the HTTPS was for the building to become an office space for staff with a post-graduate centre and a parking garage. However, the initiative was revised with the aim to transform the facility into a space that drives the competitiveness through transdisciplinary research co-creation, co-development, application and transfer of specialised knowledge and technology aligned with NUST signature programmes. Current partnerships with the HTTPS include the Southern African Science Service Centre on Climate Change and Land Management (SASSCAL), a tripartite agreement with MTC, and Huawei, and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) through financing the operational framework of the HTTPS.

Left to right: Jan Sturesson, International Strategy Advisor; Nangula Uaanda, CEO at Namibia Investment Promotion and Development Board (NIPDB); Dr Erold Naomab, NUST Vice-Chancellor; Francois van Schalkwyk, Director of Ceremonies; Dr Anna Matros-Goreses, NUST Executive Director: Research, Innovation and Partnerships Directorate; Dr Collin Stanley, NUST Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Partnerships; and Melvin Angula, Chief Commercial Officer at MTC.
HTTPS hosts Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality Hackathon together with Namdeb

One of Namdeb’s judges testing out one of the competing team’s Virtual Reality design.

The Augmented Reality (AR)/Virtual Reality (VR) Hackathon was initiated by NUST’s High–Tech Transfer Plaza Select (HTTPS) and the NDC. The platform afforded students an opportunity to network and get hands-on experience with AR/VR design and development. “Participants were able to develop VR applications in less than 24 hours,” Dr Lameck Amugongo, a lecturer from DCS, said. The judges, which included two representatives from NDC, selected two winning teams – the Eagles and GEN-I. “The winning teams will have two more weeks to finalise their virtual design. Each team member will then be awarded with ‘tech’ prizes by NUST and NDC,” Delia Maasdorp, a Project Analyst at NUST said. She also added that the winning teams will showcase their final design at the Namibia Mining Expo. A Hackathon is a co-creation activity that aims at bringing developers and designers together to improve or build a new solution within a short period of time. “Benefits include the exploration of the viability of ideas while strengthening technical and soft skills of participants,” Dr Amugongo added.

NUST’s Department of Computer Sciences (DCS) hosted a two-day hackathon aimed at creating an interactive platform that virtually illustrated the unique Namdeb Diamond Corporation (NDC) mining process in Oranjemund.

Former NUST graduate manufactures own cleaning products

A former NUST Applied Chemistry honours degree student, Johannes Shiwombolo, started manufacturing cleaning products and opened his own company, Absolute Cleaning Solutions. After being retrenched as a graduate in training from Rosh Pinah for four months, Shiwombolo initiated his venture by manufacturing dishwashing liquid. “My inspiration was prompted after reading an article in a newspaper stating that Namibia imports cleaning products worth N$250-million each year,” he explained. Absolute Cleaning Solutions produces more than ten different cleaning products. Shiwombolo also said that mixing and handling chemicals professionally is not a daunting task since he acquired the relevant skills and knowledge from being an Applied Chemistry student at NUST. “As a chemist, NUST educated me effectively on how to handle chemicals, thus my interest lies in the manufacturing of cleaning products,” he elaborated. Shiwombolo concluded with an inspirational message to all young graduates to be persistent in reaching their goals, even throughout discouraging times. “Not all of us are going to get employed, some of us were meant to create employment,” he said.

Johannes Shiwombolo, owner of Absolute Cleaning Solutions.

NUST implements the JICA Employability Improvement Programme

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Employability Improvement Programme (EIP) kicked off with its Training of Trainers programme at NUST through the Cooperative Education Unit (CEU). The training focused on the introduction and intermediate components of the EIP Training of Trainers programme to capacitate lecturers from various NUST faculties, departments and centres.

The EIP is tailored towards developing and enhancing the employability amongst students before they are placed for Work Integrated Learning (WIL). The training is made up of theoretical components and includes a practical aspect of simulating a car assembling workplace. “The training demonstrates critical thinking skills, continuous improvement and patience. It also touches on elements of interpersonal skills and how to effectively work in a team,” one of the participants explained. CEU is working together with faculties to implement the EIP as a compulsory aid for WIL preparation, and for all students to undergo the programme before they are placed for employment. “The EIP is not only fit to prepare students for the labour market but is also suitable to capacitate employees with the necessary skills to function as a team,” CEU Acting-Director, Martha Namutuwa elaborated.