



FROM LEFT: Morné du Toit, Acting Vice-Chancellor; Dr Andrew Niikondo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic; and Prof Peter Katjavivi, Chancellor and Speaker of the National Assembly.

Chancellor calls for strengthening research capacity

During the 2020 Academic Welcome, the NUST Chancellor and Speaker of the National Assembly, Prof Peter Katjavivi, urged the University to deepen its research and publication capacity.

"This is especially significant now that the United Nations family has clearly outlined Sustainable Development Goals that every member country, including Namibia, has committed itself to," he said. Katjavivi further emphasised the value of collaboration with sister institutions, saying that this will enable NUST to "benchmark, source external funding, as well as acquire best practices from tested and approved research and applied technologies."

The Academic Welcome event is held annually and serves as a platform for management to welcome staff and set the tone for the year. The theme for the 2020

academic year is 'Innovation for Economic Revitalisation.'

The Acting Vice-Chancellor Morné du Toit spoke extensively about the need for the University to continue taking austerity measures due to limited funding, whilst at the same time offering quality education. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic, Dr Andrew Niikondo, gave an extensive presentation titled 'Making NUST a 21st Century University: Harnessing Science and Technology for the Digital Economy,' in line with the Institution's core mandate of particularly enhancing programmes in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields.

The future is female

Born in Rundu and raised in Windhoek, the new NUST Student Representative Council (SRC) President, Lelian David, is no stranger to leadership roles.

According to David, her leadership skills were acquired at a young age when she was elected as a prefect in primary school. She then became the headgirl in secondary school before she was elected as a student ambassador at NUST.

"From a tender age, leadership has been my most natural and predominant characteristic," said David.

Raised by humble, hardworking parents who made sure that they always had enough money to send her to school, David believes their values are the reason she has grown to become a woman who has a passion for all things leadership.

"I have learnt that in this country if you are not from a privileged background, the only way for you to make it is by being confident, hardworking and by knowing you can do all things through Christ," she said.

Speaking on her future plans to improve the student experience, during her tenure, David said that she hopes to introduce winter and summer schools for students who struggle to pass certain gatekeeper modules.

"Before writing supplementary exams, it is important that students have remedial



Lelian David, SRC President.

classes to ensure they do not repeat past errors. This is not a new concept. Other universities are doing this," she stressed. She added that she also aspires to create a stronger relationship between the student society leaders and the SRC, as it could ensure that the campus population is supported more efficiently to enhance their learning experience. "I am determined to play my part to take the institution to greater heights," she said boldly.

When she is not on duty, David enjoys singing, dancing, and reading the Bible.

NUST partners with NCRST for global inter-cultural project

NUST students from the Faculty of Computing and Informatics are set to take part in a first of its kind learning experience. The students are set to engage in an international interdisciplinary project that involves distributed software development across four continents.



FROM LEFT, Front Row: Prof Anicia Peters, Dean: Faculty of Computing and Informatics; Gernot Piepmeyer, Manager of Policies and Programme Development: NCRST; Morné du Toit, NUST Acting Vice-Chancellor; Prof Manfred Meyer, Westphalian University of Applied Sciences; Prof Heike Winschiers-Theophilus, Faculty of Computing and Informatics; and Thomas Mueller, Project Manager: Global Intercultural Project Experience, Westphalian University of Applied Sciences.

The initiative, called the Global Intercultural Project Experience (GIPE), is funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and coordinated by the Westphalian University of Applied Sciences, Germany. Additionally, universities from Peru and Indonesia are also partners in the project.

Students from NUST will be working with their counterparts from the partner universities to develop a base version for the new nationwide Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) portal. The portal will be used by Namibia's National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST).

"It is of utmost importance that the NCRST has a functionalised information system to effectively capture, monitor and evaluate STI information," said Gernot Piepmeyer, NCRST's Manager of Policies and Programme Development.

Prof Manfred Meyer, from the Westphalian University of Applied Sciences, said excitedly: "This will offer NUST students the opportunity to gain a truly Global Intercultural Project Experience, by working together with fellow students from around the world." The project is

funded for a period of four years, thus enabling four annual student projects to be implemented, giving almost 30 local students the opportunity to travel to Germany.

There they will also work with students from Atma Jaya Catholic University of Indonesia (AJCU) and the Universidad Católica San Pablo (UCSP) in Peru.

After a planning meeting held at Westphalian University in October 2019 and selecting the students to receive scholarships from DAAD, the main activities will kick-off during the course of this month.

At NUST, the project is fully integrated within the Advanced Software Development (ASD) Honours course in the Faculty of Computing and Informatics.

Prof Heike Winschiers-Theophilus from the Faculty, co-designed the GIPE project. "All students from the ASD course will be part of the project, supporting their fellows who will be selected to attend the Spring School," she said.

The base version of the new STI portal will be presented to the NCRST in approximately five months' time.

Next @ NUST

- Agile Leadership Workshop 21 February NUST Hotel School
- NUST Career Fair 12 and 13 March Engineering Basement, Lower Campus

Coronavirus Prevention Tips

- Wash your hands regularly with either alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water
- Sneeze or cough into a flexed elbow, or use a tissue and discard it immediately into a bin
- Thoroughly cook meat and eggs
- Maintain social distancing of at least one metre

Source: <https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus>