The foyer is filled with chatter and laughter as students stand in lines to register for the 2020 academic year at NUST. Sounds of giggling and excited first-year students take over the room as they talk about their expectations for their new university journey, while at the same time anxiously anticipating what awaits them on the road ahead.

It has been a long journey for many. From waiting for their Grade 12 results not knowing whether they will pass or not, to struggling to secure funding.

According to statistics provided by the Department of Institutional Planning, this year, more than 12 500 students have registered to date, which is a significant increase of over 600 students, compared to last year during the same period.

Of the 12 500 students, there are slightly more male students than females. In 2017, a total of 11 922 students registered, majority of them being male.

The following year, 11 235 students were registered, with males still in the lead. As registration is still ongoing, it is still too early to tell if this trend will continue.

**NUST wins more PMR Awards**

Once again NUST has received recognition at the annual Professional Management Review (PMR) Africa Awards. For 2019, the University received three Diamond Arrow Awards in the following categories: Best Institution of Higher Learning; Best Institution offering Executive Education; and Institution doing the most for Arts and Culture in Namibia. An independent nationwide survey is conducted annually, where the perceptions of respondents are evaluated and measured, based on their customer service experiences. The Institution has won PMR awards for 18 consecutive years.

A student being assisted by a staff member from the Office of the Registrar.

The smooth process

Speaking on her experience, first-year Economics student, Daisy Silva, said that in comparison to her previous institution, registering at NUST was efficient and well organised.

"My experience was one for the books. I was blown away by how easy it was and how friendly the staff were, especially with the way they spoke to me," she said.

Silva expressed that another highlight she could recall from her experience was how she received all her documents on the same day.

Another thing she enjoyed was the fact that everything was done in the right order," he said.

Usiku emphasised how grateful he was for the friendly staff that ensured that all of the fees allowed to register.

Students pictured uploading and verifying their details online.

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For of love of pangolins, student studies this rare mammal

A few weeks ago, wildlife conservationists around the globe commemorated World Pangolin Day, a day set aside to raise awareness about these unique mammals. Back at NUST, Kelsey Hauptfleisch, an Associate Professor in the department of Natural Resources, recently answered a couple of questions for The Tech.

Q: What is your area of expertise?
A: My career so far has been a broad and interesting one. My areas of specific expertise are thermodynamics, heat transfer, fluid mechanics, aerodynamics, process modelling and process design and natural gas combustion. After working at Atlas Aircraft, I was appointed Associate Professor at North-West University in South Africa. From there I moved to Melbourne, Australia, as Head of the Mechanical Engineering Department at Swinburne University of Technology. After 15 years in academia, I was lured back to industry and I had a short stay at Rio Tinto Aluminium before I joined my most recent employer – Gasco Pty Ltd, a company in the oil and gas industry where I was the Principal Thermal and Process Design Engineer. Now I am back in academia, and back in my homeland.

Q: What brought you back to Namibia?
A: I have been looking for an opportunity to come back for quite some time. I spent 25 years overseas and while it was great seeing the world and experiencing life in a few other countries, there is just something about being in your own country.

Q: What lessons do you think Namibia can learn from Australia, if any?
A: I think it is quite difficult to draw comparisons between Namibia and Australia as they have very different histories and backgrounds. However, tertiary education in Australia has become one of the largest industries in that country, even larger than tourism. In Namibia, tourism is a very significant industry, creating many job opportunities and resulting in large sums of foreign revenue flowing into our country. However, tertiary education also has the potential to follow suit and this is an area that can be explored.

Q: As the new head of the Faculty, what are some of the areas you will be focusing on right away, to contribute to the growth of Namibia’s engineering sector?
A: Right from the start, the engineering staff was quite open about possible areas of improvement. Some of the most critical issues are recruiting more staff, scaling-up on industry engagement, renovating some of our laboratory facilities. Moreover, as a Faculty, we need to continue seeking ways to deal with the inadequate quality of Maths and Science of learners coming from secondary schools. Lastly, we need to enhance our efforts in coordinating our research foci on areas critical to Namibia’s specific needs.

Dr Hauptfleisch applauds the postgraduate student for collecting valuable information to help understand the species better, for through knowledge, there is a better understanding of the value of conserving pangolins.

NUST Nature Conservation students are playing their part in spreading the word through awareness campaigns, coordinated by the Namibian Chamber of Environment, and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. Currently, the parties are running an incentive-based campaign to get informants to step forward and report suspicious activity, in exchange for a reward. The compensation is however, only given if the tip-off leads to an arrest.

He is back home - meet the new Dean in the Faculty of Engineering

Prof Johannes van der Walt, joined NUST earlier this year, as the head of the Faculty of Engineering. Having worked across different institutions globally, he has decades of experience in the engineering public and private sectors. His qualifications include a Bachelor in Engineering. Having worked across different institutions globally, he has decades of experience in the engineering public and private sectors. His qualifications include a Bachelor in Engineering.

As part of the university’s curriculum, Prediger, along with other students conducted field work at a lodge populated with pangolins. For the purposes of protecting the endangered species, the students did not disclose the name of the lodge.

Their study identified that though these mammals are harmless many see them as a threat. “People kill them out of fear of not knowing what they are. Also, there are beliefs that pangolins possess spiritual or medicinal value. These ideas come from traditional beliefs that are not backed by any factual studies,” Prediger said.

Dr Hauptfleisch added that this is rather unfortunate, and explained that “pangolins provide valuable ecosystem services because they eat a large number of ants and termites, therefore they play a role in the ecosystem.” Of the eight different species of these mammals, Namibia and Southern Africa as a whole, are home to the Temminck’s ground pangolino and smutsia temminckii species. They are found in areas which receive over 250mm of rainfall, a crucial element for their survival.

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