

# UB NEWS

Official University of Botswana Newsletter



*in pursuit of academic excellence*

## OHIO Visit Bears Fruit

Opens Research Opportunities  
for UB Lecturers

Two University of Botswana Biological Science lecturers, Professor Wata Mpoloka and Dr Daniel Loeto, will soon go for a three-month attachment at Ohio University's Edison Biotechnology Institute (EBI) as part of their research projects. While on attachment, Professor Mpoloka is expected to further his research on vaccine development for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). Dr Loeto's research is on Steroid Production from Fungi Isolated from Hypersaline Environment for Biotechnological Applications.

► [Full story on Page 3](#)



2

UB COLLABORATES WITH UPENN

9

GERMAN AMBASSADOR AND POTSDAM UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT  
KEEN ON UB RELATIONS

10

US AMBASSADOR VISITS OKAVANGO RESEARCH INSTITUTE

UNIVERSITY  
BOTSWANA  
40<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
1982-2022  
*celebrating 40 years  
of academic excellence*

# UB Collaborates with UPenn to Build Residency Programme Capacity



Vice Dean and Director of the Centre for Global Health, Dr Glen Gaulton and Professor David Norris discussing issues of mutual interest.

The University of Pennsylvania (UPenn) has reaffirmed its commitment to continue collaborating with the University of Botswana to build capacity and improve the residency programme in internal medicine in the Faculty of Medicine.

Vice Dean and Director of the Centre for Global Health, Dr Glen Gaulton said the plan was to implement the programme over the next four years such that beginning this year, the process would entail planning and then building the programme over the next three years so that at the end it was wholly encompassed within Botswana.

He said this during a meeting with Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, at the University of Botswana this week. Currently, medical students who go into the residency programme do their two years in Botswana and then complete the rest in South Africa. Dr Gaulton said that was because Princess Marina Referral Hospital did not have enough well-trained individuals in cardiovascular field. He regretted that such an arrangement was at a

great expense to Botswana more so that some did not return to practice in the country.

"So, here we go, you got a great medical school, you train medical students, 15 percent of them go into your residency programmes and then they leave the country," he lamented as Professor Norris, concurred that such was a huge drawback to Botswana.

However, this will soon change as Dr Gaulton said together with their partner institutions in the United States of America such as Harvard University, Rutgers University, Johns Hopkins University and Baylor College of Medicine will form a consortium and collaborate with the University of Botswana in the training of health specialists for treatment of organ disease in the country.

In addition, Dr Gaulton explain that another project was to build research capacity so that residency medical students were trained in identifying interesting clinical research problems and such will be done sequential in cardiology, oncology and other related conditions.

Earlier on, Professor Norris had explained that collaboration with the University of Pennsylvania had contributed immensely to the improvement of research at the University of Botswana. As such, he said the collaboration with UPenn must be maintained and sustained especially given that the University of Botswana was striving to become a High-Performance Organisation (HPO) which was people centered.

Professor Norris also underscored the importance of undertaking research with societal impact by creating new knowledge and solving societal problems. In addition, the Vice Chancellor said for UB to transition into an HPO, there was need for restructuring and organisational realignment which were currently underway.

Consequently, Professor Norris said he had impressed upon UB academics and other staff members to embrace the transformation process with vigor and agility if UB were to become relevant to society and lead the country to prosperity.

## Ohio visit... from page 1

The attachment is a sequel to a University of Botswana fact finding mission to Ohio University in the United States of America led by Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, recently. Other members of the delegation were Dean of the Faculty of Education, Professor Lily Mafela, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Professor Edward Dintwa and Dr Tebogo Matome of the Faculty of Business.

Established in 1984, EBI is both an interdisciplinary biomedical research institute of Ohio University and an economic development organisation dedicated to assisting bioscience companies and entrepreneurs in south-eastern Ohio. The institute serves the dual mission of discovery research and development of new technology as well as the transfer of technology to the private sector. Consequently, this means Professor Mpoloka and Dr Loeto will have access to high technology equipment besides the opportunity to learn from other scientists with vast research experience.

Professor Mpoloka and Dr Loeto's research projects underpin the University of Botswana strategic goal of becoming a research-intensive institution of higher learning. Part of the trajectory towards achieving this goal is through partnerships and collaboration with some of the best institution such Ohio University. Such partnerships and collaborations will further add impetus to the University of Botswana's drive to play a leading role in transforming Botswana into a knowledge-based economy.

It is also part of the country's reset agenda hence part of University of Botswana mission to the US was to explore for opportunities for collaboration and cooperation in research, education and training.

To that end, Dr Loeto's study has immense potential to create prospects for development of steroids and other antimicrobial compounds derived from microbes found in extreme environments in Botswana. His study focuses on addressing the current shortage of steroid and draws from lessons learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic in that during emergencies, producer countries prioritized their own needs while



Professor Mpoloka is expected to further his research on vaccine development for Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)

steroid and similar products for pharmaceutical industries in Botswana.

The technology developed utilizes safer and greener alternatives (microbial cell factories), which are sustainable. Industrial up-scaling of this and other similar products has immense economic potential through employment creation (labour), thereby earning the country financial returns if the products are exported. Other benefits can be through industry development, local capacity building and lessening of the country's import bill.

Similarly, Professor Mpoloka's study aims to improve the efficacy of FMD vaccines in a cost-effective manner. Currently, FMD vaccines are produced using live virus, and this requires biosafety level III (BSL III) labs which are very expensive construct and maintain to avoid environmental contamination with the virus.

Conversely, Professor Mpoloka's process uses non-infectious epitopes, meaning production could be undertaken in less expensive facilities. In addition, product will be more scalable as the final product is propagated in plants unlike conventional vaccines that are produced in bioreactors with a finite volume. "The final product is envisaged to have a competitive price that would enable poorer farmers who hitherto could not vaccinate against FMD to

vaccinate," explains Professor Mpoloka

Professor Mpoloka also notes that the technology can be used to produce vaccines for a variety of pathogens. "The technology has potential to lead easy access to FMD vaccines, this will increase vaccination coverage leading to eradication of the disease in certain areas," reckons Professor Mpoloka. In addition, the technology has been successfully used to produce a lumpy skin disease vaccine at the University of Botswana in collaboration with Kirk Graduate Institute and Botswana Vaccine Institute.

Meanwhile, EBI investigators pursue internationally recognized research programmes in growth disorders, Diabetes and obesity, aging, infectious diseases and Cancer. Through EBI, Ohio University achieved a landmark success through the development of a growth antagonist drug Somavert.

Also, through licensing to Pfizer, the Institute has attracted a total of US\$100 million to Ohio University since 2003 when the drug was approved by the USDA. The drug is marketed as a treatment for acromegaly, a form of gigantism marked by excessive levels of growth hormone that result in enlargement of the hands and feet, facial disfiguration, and multiple organ disorders.



# Excellence beyond Lecture Halls

## Celebrating brilliant young minds



Ms Ngwao Ngwako

An academic enthusiast, Ms Ngwako from Bobonong is a fourth year medical student studying Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) with great interest in research and public speaking.

She is an exceptional student of the University of Botswana (UB), having been involved in research since her first year at university part of which was influenced by her first hand experience as a cancer survivor. Her first stint in research was as a research assistant under the supervision of her lecturers. Towards the end of her third year, she would initiate her own research project where she authored a journal article on specialty preference among medical students.

The article was published in the International Medical Students Journal. That was the beginning of her journey as an author. So far, Ms Ngwako has five publications under her belt that have won her numerous accolades and international recognition. In 2021, she was a panelist for the Botswana-UPenn Partnership 20th Anniversary on the topic "Nurturing the

next generation of health leaders and change agents."

During the same year, she would be engaged to review problems expressed by young people living with HIV during counselling sessions at the Botswana Baylor Children's Clinical Centre of Excellence. The research abstract for this project was submitted to the Pediatric Academic Society with Ms Ngwako as the first author and would as a result be invited to do oral presentation in Denver, Colorado in April this year.

Ms Ngwako was further nominated for two awards, the Student Research Award and Trainee Research Award. She scooped position three for the Student Research Award, allowing her an opportunity to present the project at the International Pediatric Conference to be held in India.

Ms Ngwako has also co-authored a research abstract that has been accepted for the World Cancer Conference (WCC) scheduled for Geneva in October this year. "This project is closest to my heart because I am passionate about

oncology and I want to raise more awareness on cancer as well as do more research in the area," says Ms Ngwako.

She has also contributed to student development and support through the UB Medical Students Association (UBMSA). In addition, Ms Ngwako been Class Representative for four consecutive years. Her role involves advocating for a better learning environment for medical students especially in an era where mental health has become more important to deserve special priority.

She is currently Youth-lead Ambassador for Botswana, a programme aimed at training young people to become world-renowned leaders and to initiate projects in their communities to improve the lives of young people through education and creativity.

Ms Ngwako says she also has plans of branching into pediatric oncology, a field she developed passion for following a personal experience fighting cancer in 2018 and ultimately losing her right eye. She believes that her experience can change people's lives especially children.

For this reason, her most cherished project is the survivor's narrative, a project aimed at recording cancer survivor's stories. "Some of their videos were used in a study titled, "Baseline distress and analysis of the utility of cancer survivor video narratives in Botswana," reckons Ms Ngwako.

Ms Ngwako is also a research fellow at Association of Future African Neurosurgeons. Through this platform, she wants to gain exposure, learn from other young researchers and pursue her aspirations in Neuro oncology.



Ms Lorraine Arabang Sebopelo

A passionate researcher, Ms Lorraine Arabang Sebopelo, is a bright young woman from Mahalapye in the Central District. Ms Sebopelo is one of many brilliant young minds of the University of Botswana who have distinguished themselves from other students through commitment and dedication towards research and publications.

She currently boasts more than 14 publications in prominent international peer-

reviewed journals, and eight verified peer reviews. Ms Sebopelo says she developed the love and passion for publishing journal articles during her second year of medical school.

She has also written opinion pieces on global surgery in Africa, presented at multiple conferences including at United States Ivy League universities such as Harvard, Brown and the University of Pennsylvania. Given her hard work and the desire to create new knowledge,

she has been presented with the opportunity by UB to travel abroad to Belgrade, Serbia to present a research abstract at the European Congress of Neurosurgery in October.

Ms Sebopelo is a fourth-year medical student in Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) at the University Botswana. She is an aspiring medical practitioner and scientist with a special interest in neurosurgery. She says her vision is for Africa to overcome the unmet need for neurosurgeons driven first by nurturing neurosurgery interest among medical students.

In addition, Ms Sebopelo is currently the Vice President (External Affairs) for the Association of Future African Neurosurgeons (AFAN) as well as research fellow. Her interest includes Neurosurgery, Global Surgery, Global Neurosurgery and Clinical Research.

She is also the student Editor and Ambassador for the International Journal of Medical Students (IJMS) of Botswana. Furthermore, she a member of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies (WFNS) Global Neurosurgery Committee, Reviewer and Association Editor for Pan African Medical Journal (PAMJ), and a member of the Society for Neuro-Oncology (SNO).



*celebrating 40 years  
of academic excellence*



## Lenovo and Tarsus hand over First of its kind Digital Entrepreneurship Pod



Lenovo General Manager for southern Africa, Mr Thibault Dousson, with Professor David Norris, cutting the ribbon.

Lenovo Southern Africa, a leading producer of personalized computers together with TARSUS Botswana, a leading digital and technology distributor in southern Africa, has handed over a digital entrepreneurship pod, the first of its kind, to the University of Botswana. The digital pod was handed over during a ceremony held at the University of Botswana on May 11, 2022.

Thus, the partnership between Lenovo and the University of Botswana aims to aid and drive the institution's strategy of Creating a Future for a Knowledge Generation. This is the first stage of a shared vision to upskill future generations of graduates.

In his welcome remarks, Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, stated that while institutions of higher learning had talented,

creative, and innovative students, they were not creating an environment that could nurture such individuals. The Vice Chancellor observed that youth unemployment was a global problem, hence institutions of higher learning should create an environment that nurtures young talent and equips them with skills that can help them with innovative ways of improving their lives.

Consequently, Professor Norris said the partnership with Lenovo would serve as a co-creation platform where existing and aspiring entrepreneurs were empowered with digital tools and skills, as well as the required ecosystem that enables creativity and innovation to create opportunities for the youth. He added that UB was therefore creating a Center for Business Development and Entrepreneurship to

support student start-ups.

Lenovo General Manager for southern Africa, Mr Thibault Dousson, said Lenovo education technology inspired and empowered the future of learning and innovation. Lenovo believes smarter and better education for all starts with connectivity and smarter technology for all, observed Mr Dousson. Furthermore, he explained that for the generations of youth that were growing up with technology as a natural extension of their lives, personalized computing in education and entrepreneurship could enable them to engage, learn and create like never before.

Mr Dousson mentioned that the partnership with the University of Botswana was part of Lenovo's belief that industry collaboration with educational institutions was key in nurturing students' ambitions. He said the use of technology in education was becoming more prevalent. He added that schools and higher education institutions must ensure that students have the skills needed in the workplace upon graduation and that continuing education in the form of reskilling and upskilling was readily available.

Mr Dousson said the handover of the Digital Entrepreneurship Pod did not only support Lenovo's brand vision of providing Smarter Technology for All but also aligned with the University's vision of Creating a Future for the Knowledge Generation.

Mr Thabang Molapisi, Tarsus Sales Manager, said Lenovo was not only looking to sell in Botswana but also fulfilling its corporate social responsibility role. He noted that the project marked the beginning of a noble journey between the two institutions. Giving closing remarks, Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Professor Richard Tabulawa, thanked to all the Lenovo for the noble gesture. The ceremony was also graced by the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Mrs Motsei Rapelana, Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, Mr Lopang Masupi, Senior Executive Assistant to the Vice Chancellor, Mr Moeng Segatsho, Deans and Heads of Department, together with the Lenovo southern Africa team.

## Dr Dipesalema Joel Receives Global Educators Award

Academic Head of the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Health, Dr Dipesalema Joel, has received an Association of Paediatric Programme Directors (APPD) Global Educators Award. Dr Joel received the award during the APPD annual spring meeting held in San Diego, California in the United States of America on May 17, 2022.

The Global Educator Award is bestowed upon a clinician scientist who resides in low or middle income countries who has made outstanding contribution to the field of Paediatrics around the globe. Consequently, the award is testimony to the advancement



Dr Dipesalema Joel receiving the award.

of medical education in Botswana and acknowledgment of the University of Botswana in producing internationally recognised doctors who serve the needs of humanity both locally

and abroad. Thus, it is clear testament that the University of Botswana medical degree is recognised internationally.

▶▶ to page 13





# UB and UNESCO complete training on developing Heritage Place Lab



Kgosi Kebinatshwene Mosielele of Bahurutshi (right), UNESCO Chairholder, Dr Susan Keitumetse and Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, visiting a heritage site in Manyana.

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Chair on African Heritage Studies and Sustainable Development at the University of Botswana recently completed training on developing a Heritage Place Lab through development of research practice teams for a world heritage leadership programme.

The programme is run by ICCROM in collaboration with IUCN and the World Heritage Centre. Launched May 2021, the Heritage Place Lab is a capacity building activity focused on strengthening networks across research and site management within the context of implementing the World Heritage Conversation. It aims at facilitating and supporting research practice teams in defining practice-oriented research agendas for World Heritage properties.

The teams comprise of university of Botswana staff and Botswana National Museum staff working on the Okavango Delta World Heritage site as their Heritage Place Lab.

UNESCO Chair holder, Dr Susan Keitumetse, responded to a call for participation in 2021 and submitted a proposal that saw the birth of the Okavango Delta team comprising colleagues from the University of Botswana and Botswana

National Museum. The proposal was successful and the Okavango team was selected to take part in this training (2021-2022).

The University of Botswana group comprised UNESCO Chair holder, Dr Keitumetse, Dr Katlego Mwale from the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Dr Kgosietse Velepini from the Department of Education and a member from community, Mr Mambo Ntema, from Matsaudi village in Maun.

The Botswana National Museum group comprised its Director, Mr Stephen Mogotsi, Mr Vasco Baitsweng, from Archaeology Division, Department of Environmental Affairs Coordinator, Mr Jobe Manga and member of the Basarwa community, Mr Gasemotso Satau.

The team was deliberately established such that it was representative of stakeholders engaged in conservation and management of the Okavango Delta World Heritage Site. Dr Keitumetse emphasised that the engagement in the training was one way through which the UNESCO Chair on Heritage at the University of Botswana was building international networks for heritage conservation knowledge and skills development in Botswana.

She further noted that the UB strategy required impact of academia by engaging with policy makers such as Botswana National Museum and ICRCROM, the University of Botswana UNESCO chair on Heritage in creating opportunities for research.



# German Ambassador and Potsdam University President Keen on UB relations



German Ambassador Margit Hellwig-Bötte at the Faculty of Engineering and Technology.

A delegation from the Germany Embassy on May 13, 2022 visited the University of Botswana in Gaborone on a mission to establish relations between the two institutions. The delegation was led by Ambassador Margit Hellwig-Bötte accompanied by the President of the University of Potsdam in Germany, Professor Olive Gunther.

The German delegation met with Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Professor Richard Tabulawa together with faculty Deans.

In his welcoming remarks, Professor Tabulawa briefed the delegation about the University of Botswana's transformation process towards a research-intensive institution of higher learning. Professor Tabulawa said the process would, among others, entail restructuring and realignment of the organisational structure to create a more interdisciplinary university. He further stated this would result into a more engaged and responsive university critical to the developmental needs of the communities it served.

Speaking at the same meeting, Dean of the Faculty of Science, Professor Ishmael Masesane, gave an overview on the faculty and the research projects it was involved in as part of its mandate to generate new knowledge as well as development of new products and services.

He explained that the research undertaken was anchored on the principle of adding value and sustainable use of natural resources found in Botswana. Professor Masesane said most research projects were multidisciplinary, having a strong reliance on indigenous knowledge systems.

He said the Department of Biological Sciences and Chemistry has embarked on research that has benefited immensely from the German government, adding that in collaboration with the Technical University of Dortmund they managed to train a number of scientists through exchange programmes.

Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology, Professor Edward Dintwa, said the faculty's particular interest in research

was on renewable energy especially solar energy and production of Biodiesel using low grade food material such as waste oil, plant seeds and animal bio waste. With regard to solar energy, Professor Dintwa said UB was collaborating with the Austrian Development Agency.

In response, Professor Gunther explained that the purpose of visit was to establish International networks, targeting southern Africa with Botswana as a major part of this network. He said there was a huge potential to learn from the University of Botswana particularly on climate change.

Professor Gunther further said the University of Potsdam's was keen on collaborating with the University of Botswana because both were young universities with common interests of growth through staff and student exchange programmes. Professor Gunther further encouraged both universities to establish startup companies to penetrate markets in both Germany and Africa. On research, he said the University of Potsdam's focal area of interest was on environmental sustainability and computer Science.

Ambassador Margit Hellwig-Bötte appreciated the warm welcome from the University of Botswana more so that it was her first time visit to the institution. The German delegation was later taken on a guided tour UB facilities.



German Ambassador Margit Hellwig-Bötte with some members of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology staff.



## US AMBASSADOR VISITS OKAVANGO RESEARCH INSTITUTE



US Ambassador to Botswana, Mr Craig Cloud.

United States Ambassador to Botswana, Mr Craig Cloud accompanied by Regional Environmental Officer for Southern Africa, Ms

Suzanne Yountchi, recently visited Okavango Research Institute (ORI) for a meet and greet session. The Ambassador and his delegation met with ORI Director, Professor Joseph Mbaiwa and Deputy Director Prof Michael Murray-Hudson.

Mr Craig Cloud undertook a tour of ORI facilities where he was shown laboratories, library, Peter Smith University of Botswana Herbarium and other facilities. Professor Michael Murray-Hudson welcomed the delegation and briefed them on the history and mandate of ORI. He noted that the institution was established in 1994 as a response to the need for research in the wetlands especially the Okavango Delta.

Professor Michael Murray-Hudson noted that ORI has a total of 33 academic staff members, 40 support staff members and 30 graduate students. For his part, Professor Mbaiwa, explained that ORI conducts research in five thematic areas, namely: climate change,

water resources management, ecosystems dynamics, ecosystems services and sustainable tourism.

He also noted that ORI offered an MPhil/ PhD programme on Natural Resources Management, a six-credit undergraduate programme on Research Methodology for Wetland Research. Professor Mbaiwa further appreciated collaboration between ORI and NGOs, government ministries and international universities and organisations.

He said ORI collaborated with government on projects such as the eradication of Tsetsefly in the Okavango Delta, Okavango Delta Management Plan, as well as several other management plans in the country. In response, Mr Craig Cloud emphasized the need for collaboration between ORI and US institutions on issues of wildlife conservation and training in the country.



United States Ambassador to Botswana, Mr Craig Cloud (left) accompanied by Regional Environmental Officer for Southern Africa, Ms Suzanne Yountchi.

## THE INAUGURAL WOMEN'S SUMMIT QUOTABLE QUOTES



A Blow by Blow account from UB twitter page

Gender based violence doesn't respect color, race or creed. We need to have a serious conversation around it - **UB Chancellor Ms Tebelelo Seretse @TheWomen's Summit**

Our journey as women cannot be complete without men. We need to educate and tag them along instead of trashing their egos - **UB Chancellor Ms Tebelelo Seretse @TheWomen's Summit**

Share your stories because all of us have stories to share - **UB Chancellor Ms Tebelelo Seretse @TheWomen's Summit**

Let's start writing about women who are unsung heroines of our nation- **UB Chancellor Ms Tebelelo Seretse @TheWomen's Summit**

Now we are called as mothers to understand the challenges our children go through, to understand that our children are not us- **UB Chancellor Ms Tebelelo Seretse @TheWomen's Summit**

Here we are. This is ourselves brought up by phenomenal women who were not educated themselves - **UB Chancellor Ms Tebelelo Seretse @TheWomen's Summit**

My role as Chancellor is to promote education, not only education but degreed education - **UB Chancellor Ms Tebelelo Seretse @TheWomen's Summit**

When I was growing up I wanted to be an artist but my mother wanted me to be an accountant. We are who we are because of our mothers - **UB Chancellor Ms Tebelelo Seretse @TheWomen's Summit**

If you do things with right intentions, the results will be great. No truancy in the workplace - **Ms Segolame Thaga @TheWomen'sSummit**

Let's put technology to use. Why do you queue to pay utilities when you can use technology to do that - **Ms Segolame Thaga @TheWomen'sSummit**

Our role in business should not be the short-term gratification but long-term sustainable ventures - **Ms Segolame Thaga @TheWomen'sSummit**

Delayed gratification play a role in my success - **Ms Segolame Thaga @TheWomen'sSummit**

Let us make UB a gender equitable space. Let us stop sweeping issues under the carpet e.g sexual

harassment - **Dr Godisang Mookodi @TheWomen'sSummit**

Let us understand the role of fatherhood and give men the chance to play their role as well - **Dr Godisang Mookodi @TheWomen'sSummit**

Gender equity means fairness and equal treatment between men and women - **Dr Godisang Mookodi @TheWomen'sSummit**

Let us espouse gender equity as part of our values and not undermine the input we make in other people's lives as women - **Dr Godisang Mookodi @TheWomen'sSummit**

Let's inspire our young women and create that connection as women - **Acting Vice-Chancellor Mrs Motsei Rapelana @TheWomen'sSummit**

Let's make physical fitness a part of our work - **Acting Vice Chancellor Mrs Motsei Rapelana @TheWomen'sSummit**

# UB Community Bids Rathedi Farewell



The University of Botswana staff and students bid farewell to the Department of Culture, Sports and recreation, Director Mr Raj Reuben Rathedi following his retirement after 22 years of service.

Mr Rathedi retired on (Friday 13, May) after joining UB in 2000. Speaking at the farewell ceremony held at UB VIP Lounge on Friday 13, May, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Ms Motsei Rapelana, described Mr Rathedi as a humble person who was well versed in sports issues. She also described him as exemplary because of his high work ethics. Ms Rapelana also commended Mr Rathedi for his commitment and dedication to the development of sports and young athletes from grassroots level within UB and the country.

"Throughout his tenure, he grew to be an iconic brand well recognised in the country that has worked closely with

young talented athletes and mentored icons such as Tshotlego Morama. He also helped develop the talent of athletes such as Amantle Montsho, Otukile Lekote and Eddie Moalosi," said Ms Rapelana.

Ms Rapelana also commended him for advocating for UB sports facilities to be utilised by national athletes and the public. She also noted that Mr Rathedi further encouraged national athletes to be afforded scholarship at UB to study sports programmes of their choice.

Botswana Tertiary Student Sports Association (BOTESSA), President Mr Keorapetse Setlhare, wished Mr Rathedi a happy retirement. He also noted that as the association, they would continue to tap into his rich knowledge. Similarly, UB Staff Sports and Recreation Association (UBSSRA) President, Ms Molly Bothole, was filled with gratitude as she reminisced on the memories they made during UBSSRA games training and tournaments.

"You were a source of inspiration and you have set forth an example of hard work, brilliance and perseverance which always paid off," said Ms Bothole.

In response, Mr Rathedi expressed gratitude for having served UB and the unwavering support and attention from colleagues and students. He also noted that the university staff and students related with him as a friend and father to them.

Highlighting on some of his achievements, Mr Rathedi said throughout his tenure he played a leading role in the establishments of sports games in UB and Botswana. He further stated that he was the first and only coach ever in Botswana to bring gold medals from Paralympics and Olympic Games.

"UB allowed me to coach several teams and to travel around the world. And that has made me arguably one of the few coaches to have coached at the Olympics, Paralympics, Commonwealth Games, Special Olympics Games and World Students Games," reckoned Mr Rathedi.

...Dr Dipesalema ◀ from page 7

This year's APPD annual spring meeting attracted over 3000 delegates from across the world. The APPD is a professional organisation whose mission is to serve paediatric programmes by leading the advancement of education to ensure the health and wellbeing of children.

Upon receiving the award, Dr Joel thanked Vice Chancellor, Professor David Norris, for the support to the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Health. "Thank you for being supportive to our work, we appreciate. I dedicate this award to all our learners, my faculty, Botswana Paediatric Association and our patients. I am truly humbled and honoured," said Dr Joel. Meanwhile, in addition to leading the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Health, Dr Joel is senior lecturer and Consultant Paediatric Endocrinologist in the Faculty of Medicine. As a Leader, Dr Joel believes in strong teamwork, inspired by the ancient African proverb that "If you want go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together".

"In the face of the COVID - 19 pandemic, our team work and collaboration, through innovation, inspiration and in-person, is the major key to our success in reducing infection and its associated mortality," reckoned Dr Joel.

In his 20 years as a clinician and a medical educator, Dr Joel has successfully led the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Health at the University of Botswana to ensure quality training of medical students, pediatric residents, nurses, and allied health professionals. Since 2015, UB has graduated 28 pediatricians, who are currently serving in various parts of Botswana, including working as lecturers within the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Health. Of the 28 paediatricians, Dr Joel has served as research project supervisor for 12 paediatricians. The University of Botswana Faculty of Medicine has graduated an average of 50 medical doctors per year since 2014.

At international level, Dr Joel is the current President of the Union of National African Paediatric Societies and Association, (UNAPSA),

Botswana Paediatric Association (BPA), board member of the International Paediatric Association (IPA) and International Consortium of Pediatric Endocrinology (ICPE). Dr Joel has served as the President of the African Society for Paediatric and Adolescent Endocrinology (ASPAE) from 2018 - 2020.

He also served as the Chairman of Diabetes Association of Botswana for 10 years from 2011 - 2021. He has published extensively in high impact factor international journals and further published 92 pieces of scholarly work - (book chapters, peer reviewed journals, conference abstract, oral and poster presentations). Dr Joel's scholarly work has 914 citations in google scholar and the H index of eight in scopus. He has been invited to give lectures and training to health care professionals in 32 countries across the globe in the last 20 years.

Dr Joel graduated from the National University of Ireland in the Republic of Ireland with Bachelor of Medicine (MB), Bachelor of Surgery (BCh), Bachelor of Arts in Obstetrics (BAO) and Bachelor of Medical Science (B Med Sc) in June 2002. He did his speciality training in Paediatrics in the Republic of Ireland and is a Member of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (MRCPI). He did sub-speciality training in the Paediatric Endocrinology Training Centre for Africa (PETCA) in Nairobi, Kenya and graduated with distinction, top of his class in March 2011.



Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Mrs Motsei Rapelana and Mr Reuben Raj Rathedi.



Former Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Botswana to Sweden, Ms Bernadette Rathedi, Kgosi Mosadi Seboko of Balete, and Mr and Mrs Rathedi.



# UNIVERSITY OF BOTSWANA OKAVANGO RESEARCH INSTITUTE (ORI)

*The Okavango Research Institute (ORI) in Maun is a research institute of the University of Botswana. ORI is a centre for the study and conservation of one of the world's largest and most intact inland wetland ecosystems -the Okavango Delta- as well as other southern African wetlands, riverbasins, watersheds and surrounding drylands. The research institute was founded in response to plans to use the Okavango for a large scale water supply programme.*







*in pursuit of*  
academic excellence

FOLLOW & LIKE US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



## 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.

[www.ub.bw](http://www.ub.bw)

Graphics: UB Publications

Published by the University of Botswana - Public Affairs, P/Bag 0022 Gaborone BOTSWANA  
Direct enquiries and contributions to: The Editor, UB Newsletter, Tel: 3555645, e-mail: [nkhomatt@ub.ac.bw](mailto:nkhomatt@ub.ac.bw)