



# NUST BRIEF

## Tapping youth employability opportunities



FROM LEFT: Prof Annette Leyener, Vice-Chancellor: Hochschule Wismar University of Applied Sciences; Prof Gordon Zide, Vice-Chancellor and Principal: Vaal University of Technology (VUT); Hon. Dr Becky Ndjoze-Ojo, Deputy Minister: Higher Education, Training and Innovation; Dr Tjama Tjivikua, NUST Vice-Chancellor (Pro Tem); Prof Dzisi Smile, Vice-Chancellor: Koforidua Technical University; Wiseman Jack, Executive Director - International Relations: Vaal University of Technology (VUT); and Regina Krause, Chief Executive Officer, Robert Schmidt Institute: Hochschule Wismar University of Applied Sciences.

A Joint Forces conference co-hosted by NUST, the Hochschule Wismar University of Applied Sciences in Germany, the Vaal University of Technology in South Africa, with the financial support of the Deutscher Akademischer Auslandsdienst (DAAD), took place last week. The conference focused on graduate career development, Work-Integrated Learning, Vocational Education and Training (VET) and entrepreneurship.

The conference is the outcome of a six-year project partnership between NUST and Hochschule Wismar University of Applied Sciences which started in 2012. During its six-year duration, 30 students and 15 staff members from the three partner universities, benefited by participating in different project activities with an international focus.

"A lot of initiatives, projects and programmes, such as on-the-job training, vocational training initiatives, and dedicated entrepreneurship and start-up initiatives have been launched and are running in universities, as well as private and public institutions across the world. All of these have the same aim, which is to raise employability opportunities for young people, thereby enhancing economic performance and competitiveness at national and global levels," remarked Hon. Dr Becky Ndjoze-Ojo, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation.

Research indicates that in most developing countries, graduates unemployment is part of the bigger challenge of youth unemployment.

Dr Tjama Tjivikua, the NUST Vice-Chancellor (Pro Tem) said: "Employability is central to our programmes and thus through entrepreneurship and Work Integrated Learning programmes, it is embedded in the curriculum. We provide students with the appropriate preparation and practice to enhance their understanding of the business environment and the world-of-work. This has necessitated that we examine and create the knowledge-base that informs our teaching ethos with the research we conduct. To this end, evidence-informed approaches in higher education have increasingly become essential."

The event was hosted by NUST's Cooperative Education Unit (CEU).

### Taking research and innovation to the next level

Prof Pramanathan Govender is the new Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation at NUST. This is the first appointment in this position at the Institution necessitated by the collective drive of the university to give momentum to research and innovation.

Prof Govender holds a Doctorate in Entomology from the University of Pretoria. He has more than three decades of experience in higher education, particularly in research and innovation, having worked in various positions at leading universities in South Africa.

"Traditionally, the core functions of universities rest on three pillars, namely, teaching and learning, community engagement, and research. Now, if you look at all leading universities, their status and rankings are strongly driven by research. This is not to say that the other areas are of less value, but to generate knowledge and innovation, a university must have a robust research approach. Ultimately, meaningful and relevant research should contribute to socio-economic development of the country," remarked Prof Govender.

His new position requires that he oversees areas of institutional planning, international relations, communications and marketing, project services, amongst others. Prof Govender is excited about this new engagement and placed emphasis on NUST's research priority areas.

"Whilst the University promotes the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), we must be mindful that even if we are addressing a STEM problem, we can do so from a multidisciplinary perspective, so all disciplines or specialisations are important in research," he said.

Prof Govender acknowledged that a global challenge facing academics is research funding. However, he cautioned that exceptional performance attracts better incentives; therefore if researchers develop



Prof Pramanathan Govender, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation.

a competitive edge, funding will become more accessible. "Awards attract awards," he said.

Prior to this appointment, Prof Govender was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (de facto): Research, Postgraduate Studies and Innovation, at the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University in South Africa.



FROM LEFT: Nico Smit, International Relations Officer (NUST), pictured with B360 Experts; Dominique Strauch, Marianne Egli, Corinne Gantenbein, Thomas Kilchor, Lea Proulx and Florence Pivert.

### 23 Swiss industry experts hosted

The partnership between NUST and the B360 Education Partnerships grew from strength to strength in 2018 as to date 23 experts have been hosted on campus. Through this partnership Swiss industry experts undertake short teaching assignments at NUST, and students from the Institution are placed in businesses in Switzerland for internships. The B360 Experts undertake their assignments at NUST on a voluntary basis, while the Institution's students receive scholarships for their travel to Switzerland. These experts cover a wide range of fields from environmental health, biomedical sciences and nutrition to marketing and logistics and supply chain management. "We are very happy with the partnership and an increasing number of our experts visit NUST annually and the areas of engagement are constantly expanding," B360 President, Sabina Balmer, said recently. She added that through knowledge and skills transfer, B360 and NUST collaborate towards equipping Namibians with the tools to thrive as members of society.

### INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH WEEK

NUST is hosting its Annual Institutional Research Week 2018 from 21 to 23 November 2018. The event serves as a platform for academics to present their research findings, exchange ideas and share experiences across disciplines.

Theme: "Building a World-class University through Innovation and Research Excellence"

Date: 21 - 23 November 2018

Time: 08:00 - 13:00

Venue: Mining Auditorium

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"Building a World-Class University"