

HWSETA joins Forces with UP Faculty of Veterinary Science in skills development initiatives

3 February 2016



From left to right: Mr Mabuza Ngubane (DHET: Director: SETA Performance Management Directorate), Prof Darrell Abernethy (Dean: Faculty of Veterinary Science), Ms Yvonne Mbane (CEO HWSETA), Dr Confidence Moloko (Chairman of the HWSETA board). Front middle: Ms Ayanda Manqele (Postgraduate student and bursary holder)

The marked growth in South Africa's human and animal populations within an environment characterised by climate change, emerging pathogens and toxic releases has resulted in increased health risks for humans and animals alike. To address this, the perspective on public health should be expanded beyond a single species to detect and manage emerging public health threats.

The link between animal and human health, combined with the need for skills development and transformation within the animal health sector, has resulted in the Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA) placing focus on programmes to meet these critical needs.

“The HWSETA has made extensive inroads into partnerships with institutions of higher learning to meet its mandate within the animal health sector and the R15 million committed to a number of key projects with the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Veterinary Science is set to establish this as a flagship project,” comments Yvonne Mbane, CEO of the HWSETA.

The funding made available by the HWSETA to the University of Pretoria (UP) will cover eight key projects, including: 20 undergraduate student bursaries for first year students; work integrated learning for final year students; undergraduate research bursaries; 42 postgraduate student bursaries; skills laboratory teaching aids; training of 20 learners for manufacturing of teaching aids ; ‘Adopt a School’ pilot project; and articulation with agricultural colleges.



20 learners who started their training in the Skills laboratory on Tuesday, 2 February 2016, are starting their own cooperative to develop teaching aids for the skills lab and other markets

The Faculty of Veterinary Science has wasted no time in setting up partnerships with agricultural colleges and by the end of 2015, discussions between management at the Faculty of Veterinary Science and Tsolo Agricultural and Rural Development Institute (TARDI) in the Eastern Cape were well underway. The support for TARDI by the Faculty of Veterinary Science has been made possible through HWSETA funding and will further supplement HWSETA funding of 50 full bursaries for learners at TARDI to become animal health technicians.

“The HWSETA funding will make a significant contribution to our training and research programmes and we are very grateful for the HWSETA support,” comments Prof Darrell Abernethy, Dean at the Faculty of Veterinary Science. “And, it will also assist us in networking with institutions that train veterinary technicians and agricultural students.”

“As the only veterinary faculty in South Africa we have a unique responsibility to train all veterinarians and veterinary nurses in the country,” continues Prof Abernethy.

“We also conduct cutting-edge research on a wide range of animal-related diseases and issues that affect people. This is because of the close relationship between people, animals and the environment and the crucial role that veterinarians play in reducing the risk of diseases passing from animals to people, ensuring food safety and promoting food security.”

A progressive increase in student numbers, the availability of teaching animals, as well as animal welfare issues, have resulted in a massive shift internationally in veterinary clinical teaching methods through the introduction of veterinary simulators and models. Having recognised the value that a skills laboratory could add to its teaching and learning processes prompted the UP’s Faculty of Veterinary Science to invest heavily in a world class skills facility. Two of the projects funded by the HWSETA support the skills facility that directly impacts every student within the Faculty of Veterinary Science.

“The partnerships with TARDI and UP’s Faculty of Veterinary Science are just a beginning, yet we consider them important steps in addressing the country’s need animal health and transformation in the veterinary sector,” concludes Ms Mbane.

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