



dethos

DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, HOSPITALITY & SPORT MANAGEMENT

NEWSLETTER

MAY 2026



**We are building
an evolving and active
department through
inspiring a future
focused vision**



iYunivesithi

Walter Sisulu

In pursuit of excellence

**Catering for graduation
Students competes in Dubai
2026 Orientation and Tours**

Vision and Strategic Priorities of the Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Management



Professor Takalani Ramukumba
HoD: Tourism, Hospitality and Sports Management

The Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Management (DETHOS) from iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu is committed to embarking on a transformative five-year journey aimed at positioning itself as a leading centre of excellence in Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Management education.

Anchored on the principles of innovation, collaboration, accountability and student success, the department's vision is to deliver industry-responsive and student-centred academic programmes that produce graduates who are globally competitive, socially responsible, and capable of contributing meaningfully to sustainable development.

Over the next five years, the department will focus on strengthening transformational leadership, promoting collaborative governance, and cultivating a culture of continuous

improvement across all academic and support functions. Strategic emphasis will also be placed on staff development through research excellence, industry exposure, and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to ensure that teaching practices remain relevant, innovative, and impactful within a rapidly changing global environment.

Moreover, the department aims to establish and maintain strategic affiliations and partnerships that will assist in attracting funding opportunities, investments, and industry support towards the effective delivery and advancement of its academic programmes. These collaborations are expected to strengthen institutional capacity, enhance student development opportunities, and contribute to sustainable programme growth.

Furthermore, the department seeks to enhance programme excellence and curriculum

“The department will focus on transformational leadership, collaborative governance and continuous improvement over the next five years”

innovation through the implementation of clear performance management systems, measurable academic goals, and evidence-based decision-making aligned with university policies and governance principles.

By fostering a high-performing academic culture built on inclusivity, professionalism, innovation, and accountability, the department remains committed to creating an enabling environment where both staff and students can thrive. In doing so, the department aims to strengthen its contribution to community engagement, research advancement, and the broader socio-economic development agenda of South Africa.

Through these strategic priorities, our department seeks to position itself as a dynamic and forward-thinking academic unit that continues to empower students while building sustainable partnerships and be able to respond effectively to the evolving needs of in the tourism, hospitality, and sport industries respectively.

From Classroom to Culinary Excellence: Hospitality Division Shines During Graduation Week



The Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Department proudly and successfully provided catering services for the university graduation ceremonies held from 13–15 May 2026. The department was honoured to be entrusted with the responsibility of catering for graduation breakfasts, lunches and afternoon tea sessions during this important occasion.

The event showcased the dedication, professionalism and teamwork of both third-year Hospitality students and staff members, who worked tirelessly throughout the week. From early mornings to late evenings, the team ensured that every meal was prepared and served with excellence which reflects the high standards of the department and the university.

The opportunity to provide catering services was made possible through the support and confidence shown by the Marketing and Communication Division. This collaboration created a valuable experiential learning opportunity for students which allowed them to apply

their theoretical knowledge and practical skills in a real-life hospitality environment.

Students demonstrated exceptional commitment in food preparation, presentation, customer service and teamwork. The experience not only strengthened their practical competencies but also prepared them for the demands of the hospitality industry.

Positive feedback was received from various stakeholders such as university's executive management, VIP's, university community who attended the graduation ceremonies.

Mrs Yonela Tukwayo (MCD Senior Director) commended the

department for the quality of the food and the professional service rendered throughout the event. In her own words *"we enjoyed the food, as for the hot chocolate, colleagues felt like it was done with almond milk which tasted very nice"*.

Members of the university community also expressed their appreciation for the warm hospitality, efficient service and excellent catering experience provided by the team. The success of the graduation catering once again highlighted the department's ability to combine academic learning with practical industry experience. It also reflected the passion, resilience and dedication of both staff and students in representing the university with pride and professionalism.

The Hospitality division extends its sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed to the success of the graduation catering services and looks forward to continuing to provide quality hospitality experiences in future university events.





Opening Doors to Success: Department Orientation Day Inspires New Students

The orientation programme was not only educational but also engaging and interactive

The Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Management successfully hosted its First-Year Orientation Day on 12 February 2026. This event was a warm welcoming of new students into the academic community. The event coordinated by Dr Pitso and Mr Ndzoyiya, provided students with valuable information, motivation and guidance as they begin their higher education journey.

The department's warm welcoming of the students came from Mr Mboyi, who outlined the purpose of the orientation and encouraged students to embrace the opportunities ahead of them. Throughout the day, students were introduced to departmental staff members and various student support services such as LTWT services. These sessions were designed to ensure that first-year students understand the academic support available to help them succeed during their studies.

One of the key highlights of the orientation was the informative presentations on curriculum understanding, career opportunities, and Work Integrated Learning (WIL). Lecturers from Hospitality, Tourism, and Sport Management provided students with insights into their respective qualifications and future career paths. This helped students gain a clearer

understanding of the professional opportunities available within their chosen fields.

Students also received practical advice on timetabling, managing academic responsibilities, and dealing with challenges they may encounter during their studies. Dr Goliath-Ludic's presentation on "What to do when you have a problem?" emphasised the importance of seeking assistance and using available support systems.

The orientation programme was not only educational but also engaging and interactive, with entertainment sessions included throughout the day to create a welcoming and vibrant atmosphere for the students.

The event concluded with a message from the Acting Head of Department, delivered by Prof Nongogo, followed by departmental tours led by academic staff members.

The tours gave students an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the department and campus environment.

Orientation Day plays a vital role in helping first-year students transition into university life.

It provides students with important academic information, introduces them to support structures and helps them build confidence as they begin a new chapter in their lives. Most importantly, orientation creates a sense of belonging and prepares students for success both academically and professionally.

The Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Management's orientation demonstrated its commitment to student development, support and excellence by ensuring that first-year students begin their academic journey informed, inspired and motivated.



A gallery of departmental orientation in action and welcoming new students on board.

A visual exchange delivery and information sharing by staff members to students.

PICTURES: Supplied by the department





An international platform that brings together institutions offering tourism and hospitality programmes

The Department of Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Management at iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu continues to make remarkable strides in developing future industry leaders through its participation in the prestigious Middle East Africa (MEA) Future Leaders Challenge.

The Future Leaders Challenge is an international platform that brings together institutions offering tourism and hospitality programmes to identify and select top-performing students to participate in industry-focused challenges. The initiative aims to

professional relationships with industry leaders.

The department has proudly participated in the competition since 2014, consistently showcasing the talent, creativity, and leadership potential of iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu students.

In 2025, the department reached another important milestone through its participation in the first-ever Tourism Hackathon driven by the National Department of Tourism. Following the competition, selected candidates were invited

and contribution to the tourism industry on both national and international platforms.

Furthermore, the department was invited to participate in the Future Leaders Challenge Finals held in February 2026 in Dubai. Two outstanding students, Zandile Ntola and Mpumelelo Tsulo, proudly represented the institution after making the final list of participants. The students were guided and supported by Mr Mashexa and Professor Ramukumba, whose mentorship played a significant role in the students' success.

A major spin-off from the competition saw Mpumelelo Tsulo securing an opportunity to pursue an Advanced Diploma in Hospitality through Central University of Technology as a result of relationships and networks established through the Future Leaders Challenge programme. The Head of Department views the programme as an important opportunity to strengthen and promote the university's brand to audiences that would otherwise be difficult to reach collectively.

Furthermore, several memorandum of understandings were discussed.



encourage innovation and positive change within the tourism and hospitality sectors while also creating opportunities for students to establish networks and build

to participate at Kruger National Park as part of the G20 Summit activities held last year. This achievement highlighted the department's growing influence

The department remains dedicated to empowering students with practical exposure, leadership opportunities, and global experiences



In 2024, an MOU was concluded with Hilton Hotel Group – Doha, Qatar.

This MOU is for five years with the potential of extension for another five years and to date seven students have benefitted from this MOU.

During the finals in Dubai and MOU was discussed with Queen Elizabeth 2 hospitality academy and to date the draft MOU is with the Acting Executive Dean for consideration and implementation. During this competition the HOD meets with industry leaders and discuss possible collaborations including Work Integrated Opportunities for our students and staff members.

Most recently, the department once again participated in this year's Future Leaders Challenge held in Sandton at NH Hotels. Students who represented the department this year were



Bonga Myandlu, Indiphile Skeyi, Sibabalo Nogwavu, and Sinovuyo Mpinzi. Although the team did not secure the winning position, the students gained valuable knowledge, industry exposure, and meaningful learning experiences through the programme. The event provided another important opportunity for students to engage with industry professionals, exchange innovative ideas, and further strengthen the university's presence within the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The continued participation and achievements of iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu at the Future Leaders Challenge demonstrate the department's commitment to academic excellence, industry engagement, and student development. The department remains dedicated to empowering students with practical exposure, leadership opportunities, and global experiences that prepare them for successful careers in tourism and hospitality.



An unforgettable educational tour through the heart of the Western Cape



The students embarked on an unforgettable educational tour through the heart of the Western Cape's vibrant culinary and beverage industry — a journey filled with flavour, innovation, culture and inspiration. From chocolate artistry to wine excellence and indigenous cuisine, every stop offered students a hands-on opportunity to connect classroom theory with real-world hospitality experiences.

At the renowned Honest Chocolate, students explored the fascinating journey of chocolate “from bean to bar.” The immersive tasting experience introduced them to the history of cacao, ethical sourcing practices, and the intricate chocolate-making process. Guided by expert chocolatiers, students unleashed their creativity by dipping, decorating and wrapping their own handcrafted bonbons — a sweet highlight of the tour.

The educational experience continued at Fairview, where students participated in an engaging food and wine pairing session hosted by CWP Wine

Brands. Through guided tastings, they gained practical knowledge about wine varieties, flavour profiles, and the science behind pairing food and wine to elevate the dining experience. This activity sharpened their understanding of fine dining service, menu planning and guest satisfaction — critical skills for future hospitality professionals.

A powerful moment of inspiration came during the motivational engagement with Paul Siguqa of Kleine Goederust in Franschhoek. As an internationally acclaimed young Black winemaker and entrepreneur, Paul shared his journey of resilience, passion and entrepreneurship in the wine industry. His story motivated students to dream boldly, embrace innovation and pursue excellence within the hospitality and culinary sectors.

At the historic Van Ryn Distillery, students stepped into the world of brandy production. They witnessed the craftsmanship behind traditional copper pot stills, learnt about barrel-making techniques from an experienced cooper, and experienced the

rich aromas of the maturation cellars — famously known as the “angels’ share.” The tour provided valuable insight into heritage beverage production and artisanal excellence.

The journey concluded with an authentic Indigenous Food and Township Tour at Rands, where students experienced the richness of local culinary traditions. Through indigenous cuisine and community storytelling, students gained a deeper appreciation for cultural heritage, sustainability and township entrepreneurship. The experience reinforced the importance of preserving traditional food knowledge while embracing innovation in modern hospitality.

This educational tour was more than just a learning experience — it was a celebration of culture, creativity, entrepreneurship and service excellence. Students returned inspired, empowered and better prepared to become the next generation of leaders in the hospitality and culinary industries.

Educational Tour to Cape Town: A Memorable Learning Experience



Students recently embarked on an exciting and educational tour to Cape Town, where learning extended far beyond the classroom walls. The trip offered a perfect combination of history, culture, adventure, and team-building activities, making it both informative and enjoyable for everyone involved. The educational tour aimed to expose students to real-world experiences, broaden their understanding of South African heritage, and encourage personal growth through interactive learning opportunities.

One of the most valuable aspects of the tour was the opportunity for students to connect what they learn in lecture halls with practical, real-life experiences. Concepts discussed during lectures became more meaningful as students witnessed history, tourism, business operations, and cultural heritage firsthand. The tour demonstrated how academic knowledge can be applied outside the classroom, helping students better understand the relevance of their studies in everyday life and future careers.

Throughout the trip, students had the opportunity to explore some of Cape Town's most iconic attractions while gaining valuable knowledge about the country's history, economy, and tourism industry. The tour also allowed students to interact with one another outside the academic environment, strengthening friendships, promoting teamwork, and creating a positive learning atmosphere beyond campus life.

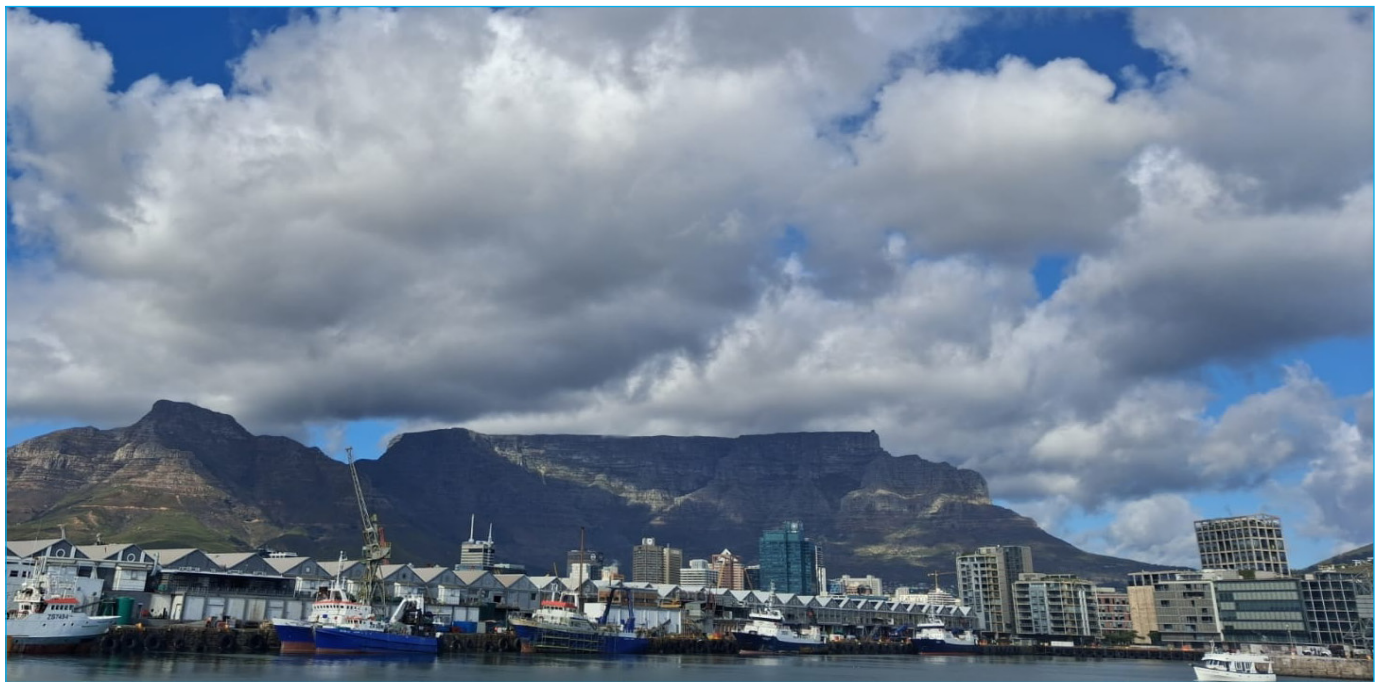
One of the most impactful experiences during the tour was the visit to Robben Island. Students had the opportunity to explore the island's rich historical background and learn more about South Africa's

struggle for freedom during the apartheid era. The guided tour gave students insight into the life and imprisonment of former President Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, Robert Sobukwe and other political prisoners, who spent many years imprisoned on the island. Students were guided through the prison facilities and viewed Mandela's prison cell, which served as a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made during the fight against oppression and inequality.

Tour guides shared emotional stories about the harsh conditions political prisoners endured and explained the significance of Robben Island as a symbol of hope, resilience, and democracy. The visit encouraged students to reflect on the importance of human rights, equality, and leadership in modern society.

Many students described the experience as emotional, inspiring, and educational, as it brought historical lessons discussed in lectures to life in a meaningful and unforgettable way.





The group also visited KWV, where students learned about the wine-making process and the important role the wine industry plays in the South African economy. During the visit, students were taken through the different stages of wine production, from grape harvesting and fermentation to packaging and distribution. They also learned about the history of KWV and its contribution to South Africa's agricultural and export industries.

The visit exposed students to the agricultural and tourism sectors (Agri-Tourism) while providing valuable knowledge about production, marketing, and business operations within the industry. Students gained insight into career opportunities within the hospitality, tourism, and manufacturing sectors, making the experience both educational and career-orientated. Seeing these processes in action helped students understand how theories and concepts discussed during lectures are implemented in professional environments.

In addition to the educational visits, students participated in

fun recreational activities such as quad biking. This thrilling outdoor activity encouraged teamwork, confidence, and social interaction among students while allowing them to enjoy the beautiful scenery of Cape Town. Riding through scenic trails and natural landscapes gave students an opportunity to relax, build stronger relationships, and appreciate the city's natural beauty.

The tour also included sightseeing opportunities around Cape Town, where students admired famous landmarks, breathtaking coastal views, and vibrant city life. These experiences helped students appreciate the cultural diversity and tourism appeal of one of South Africa's most visited cities while exposing them to the realities of the tourism industry discussed in their academic programmes.

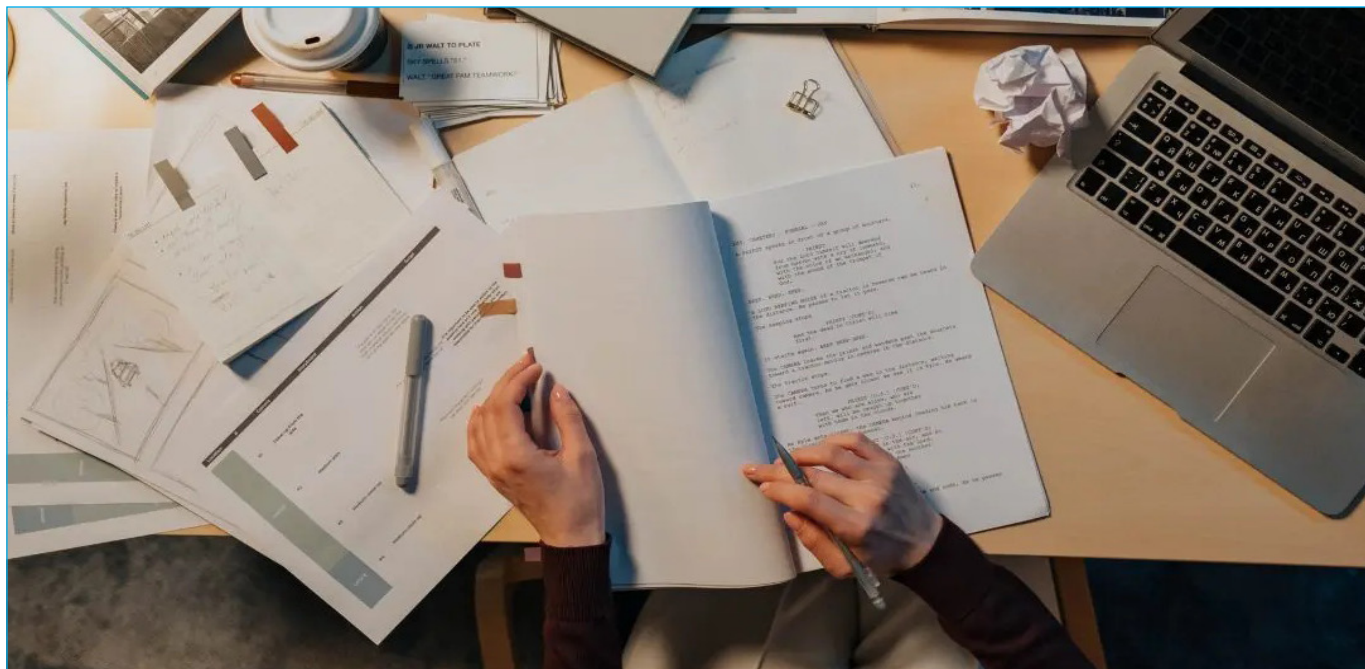
Beyond the educational and recreational activities, the trip also taught students important life skills such as time management, responsibility, discipline, communication, and cooperation. Travelling together required students to work as a team, follow

schedules, and support one another throughout the journey. These experiences contributed positively to their personal growth and development.

The educational tour proved to be a valuable experience that successfully combined academic learning with practical exposure and personal development. Students returned inspired, more knowledgeable, and appreciative of South Africa's history, culture, and tourism attractions. The tour not only enhanced their understanding of classroom topics but also demonstrated the importance of experiential learning in preparing students for the real world.

Overall, the Cape Town tour was a great success and will remain a memorable highlight for all who participated.

The experience created lasting memories, strengthened relationships among students, and demonstrated the importance of combining lecture hall learning with real-life experiences in shaping well-rounded, informed, and career-ready individuals.



PUBLISHED ARTICLES

Ramukumba, T. (2026).

Tourism and the environment in rural South Africa: Conflict, coexistence, or symbiosis?

African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure

Sifumba, S. Q., & Ramukumba, T. (2026).

Determinants of Customer Loyalty Among Domestic Tourist Shoppers: An Analysis of Price and Service Quality in East London. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*

Mxunyelwa, S. (2026). Rural entrepreneurship success factors for sustainable tourism ventures: Evidence from the Wild Coast. (2026). *International Journal of Business Ecosystem & Strategy*

ACCEPTED PAPERS FOR PUBLICATION

Mxunyelwa, S. (2026). The role of rural tourism entrepreneurship businesses in rural economic development. *African Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (AJIE)*

Pitso-Mbili, A. R. M. & Molokwane, R. M. S. (2026). Connectivist-informed framework

for the adoption of e-learning in the practical component of consumer studies in rural school environments. *Journal of Consumer Sciences*, 54

ACCEPTED CONFERENCE PAPER FOR PRESENTATION

Titled “The Dynamics of Trust in Rural Tourism Collaborative Governance: Evidence from Nqileni Village, South Africa” has been recommended for acceptance as a stand-up presentation at the *13th Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Marketing and Management (AHTMM) Conference*, to be hosted at the School of Liberal Arts and the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Macau University of Science and Technology in Macau, China, from June 22 to 26, 2026.

Presenter: Prof T. Ramukumba

Titled: “Preparing Future Leaders: The Role of Emerging Technologies in Sustainable Hospitality Education”, has been accepted for presentation at the *13th Advances in Hospitality*

and Tourism Marketing and Management (AHTMM) Conference, scheduled from June 22 to June 26, 2026, at the Macau University of Science and Technology – School of Liberal Arts & Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Management in Macau.

Presenter: Dr. A. Mbili

Titled: “Integrating digital tools into community engagement to expand access to hospitality skills training in disadvantaged communities”, has been accepted for presentation at the *1st EWIRA-FIRE Conference*, scheduled to take place from 19–21 August 2026 at the *Blue Lagoon Hotel, East London, South Africa*.

Presenter: Dr. A. Mbili

PUBLISHED BOOK CHAPTER (S)

Pitso-Mbili, A. R. M. (2026). Sustainable mentorship practices: Designing frameworks that blend AI efficiencies with human intuition. In I. Kariyana & W. Sinkala (Eds.), *Artificial Intelligence and Postgraduate Supervision in Higher Education* (pp. 168–191). ERRCD Forum.