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Business



(<https://youtu.be/NtGzWQ6Jxwg>)

Dear Colleagues

Welcome
to the 2020 March Newsletter.

Enjoy the journey!

- Prof Jan van Romburgh

Internationalisation is key for progress

**“The conference
also provided
valuable contacts
with international
academia. ”**

Prof Christo Bisschoff attended the annual “Winds of Change” Australian and New Zealand Marketing Conference (ANZMAC) in the first week of December last year. The conference was held at the University of Victoria in Wellington, New Zealand and was officially opened with an earthquake drill!

Prof Christo delivered a competitive paper on the specialized topic of Sales-Marketing Interface. In essence, his topic specifically dealt with the discrepancies between the planning and execution of the marketing strategy between the Marketing department and the Sales department.



“The conference also provided valuable contacts with international academia. Here Prof Stephen Fanning from the Business School of Edith Cowan University proves to be valuable contact. Prof Fanning has progressed far with his project to supply marketing students

(globally), at no cost, with his marketing textbook and the supplementary study material,” Prof Bisschoff added.

Prof Christo also met with the Director of the triple crown accredited Business School of Canterbury University, Prof Paul Ballentine, and secured a follow-up meeting. He also had the opportunity to say goodbye to a longstanding friend and international contact of the Business School, Prof Tony Lobo from Melbourne University. Prof Tony is retiring and plans to “travel extensively”. This is bad news for the school as Prof Tony is now lost as international examiner and reviewer.

Prof Christo soon discovered why Wellington has also earned the title as the windiest city in the world. “On my afternoon off,

I struggled against 100-120 km/h winds for four kilometers to visit the Westpac rugby stadium, only to find that the stadium was off limits because of renovations and rebranding it as the Sky stadium for the new season. During this windy struggle it dawned upon me why the local rugby team is called the “Hurricanes”.”

Travelling via Singapore, Prof Christo managed to secure a research meeting with the Director of the Marketing Research Centre of Excellence, Prof Srini Ready, at the Singapore Management University. The Lee Kong Chiang Business School is a Top 15 School in the Europe and Asian ratings and has a triple crown accreditation. “In typical Asian precision, my meeting stated exactly on time, and ended exactly on time, all within one-minute precision. This also



applied for students ordering food at the cafeteria. The big television screen informs students, to the second, when their order will be ready for collection. I watched this process of food ordering for a duration of four orders, and found that the largest deviation was only 22 seconds! These trips were fascinating and learn full experiences,” Prof Christo concludes.



Google South Africa has appointed Alistair Mokoena as its new country director - and we are proud to say that he is one of ours!

Mokoena previously served as Ogilvy South Africa CEO and has a long history in the South African advertising sector.

He holds an LLB, an MBA, and is working towards a PhD from the NWU Business School.

Alistair, we wish you all the best and are very proud of you!



NWU among top 5 SA universities



The North-West University's (NWU's) continued good performance in rankings has been further cemented with a top 5 spot among local universities ranked in the latest Emerging Economies University Ranking of Times Higher Education (THE).

This follows after the NWU was also placed in the top 5 and top 7 of local universities in the THE World University Rankings for law studies and business economics respectively in November last year. The THE announced the newest rankings on 18 February.

Overall, the NWU is placed in position 109 out of the 533 universities from 47 countries. Apart from the NWU, nine other South African universities were also ranked.

Although the THE uses the same 13 carefully calibrated performance indicators in their

Emerging Economies University Rankings as they use in their World University Rankings, the weightings are different to reflect the development priorities of universities in emerging economies. This provides the most comprehensive and balanced comparisons, trusted by students, academics, university

leaders, the industry, and governments.

These performance indicators are grouped into five areas: Teaching (the learning environment); research (volume, income and reputation); citations (research influence); international outlook (staff, students and research); and industry income (knowledge transfer).

Although China's performance dominates the rankings, South Africa is the top performer among institutions in the top 200 based on countries' average overall score. South Africa achieved an average score of 41,3 out of 100. Saudi Arabia, a first-time participant in the rankings, is second with a score of 40,3.

Prof Linda du Plessis, deputy vice-chancellor for planning and

Vaal Triangle Campus operations, says a higher-education institution is an enabler for economic growth.

"It is therefore of the utmost importance that the public funding of students is seen as a good investment. The relevance and quality of qualifications are critical for the survival of universities in the 21st century." She says international recognition serves

as an indicator that we are on the right track.

Prof Dan Kgwadi, vice-chancellor, emphasised that although ranking is not a goal the university wants to pursue, the rankings confirm that the NWU is realising its dream of being an internationally recognised university in Africa.





Supercharging their careers. The NWU way!

MBA Summer
Study School 2020

The end of January saw the start of many aspiring MBA students' journey to success when the North-West University's (NWU's) Business School once again hosted a very successful Summer Study School in Potchefstroom.

An exciting and insightful five-day programme was presented from 27 to 31 January to approximately 170 students in their quest for progressive management and

leadership enrichment. The study school consisted of academic building blocks, which included a number of academic lectures, guest lectures, research, and meetings with study leaders. This study school engaged with a number of guest lecturers who provided the students with the best advice and expertise to make the most of their studies. During the opening day of the Summer Study School, students

were welcomed by the Business School's director, Prof Jan van Romburgh. "It is overwhelming to see so many MBA students in one venue. I wish you all the best with your studies, and my advice is to use this wonderful opportunity to gain knowledge from the lecturers and guest speakers."

Students were privileged to be lectured by Dr Pali Lehohla, the former statistician-general of South Africa. Dr Lehohla is

notorious for calling a spade a spade, and said when it comes to the recent matric pass rate, the government should stick to the facts.

“There is no way that our Grade 12 pass rate exceeds 80%.

That is a lie, and it is alarming, because we are failing our youth. My advice to the youth of this country is to equip themselves with skills and further education to the best of their abilities.”

He congratulated every MBA student for their ambition and their aim to make a positive impact in our economy.

The topics lectured on and discussed in these sessions included:

Prof Jonathan Calof:

International expert on competitive intelligence

Martin Botha: The role of the financial manager

Dr Chris Lombard: Strategy management

GP van Rheede van Oudtshoorn: Senior marketer, NWU Department of Marketing and Student Recruitment

Theunis Dreyer and Reece Alberts: Environmental management

Yoke van Dam: The power of persuasion

Paul Malherbe: Facets of corporate operations

Mihan Louw: Operations management

Prof Raymond Parsons: Managerial economics

Boitumelo Loate: Financial management



Herewith, a few video interviews with the guest lecturers:



*Dr Pali Lehohla in discussion with Theo Venter.
(<https://bit.ly/2vjNWDA>)*



*Ms Yoke van Dam in discussion with Prof Tommy du Plessis about the power of persuasion.
(<https://bit.ly/39K8wMr>)*



*Mr Mihan Louw in discussion with Dr Johan Jordaan.
(<https://bit.ly/2Q7ZNMc>)*



*Prof Jonathan Calof in discussion with Prof Ronnie Lotriet on competitive intelligence.
(<https://bit.ly/3cRmCNH>)*



*Mr Paul Malherbe in discussion with Prof Tommy du Plessis about the facets of corporate operations.
(<https://bit.ly/3aSY7xN>)*



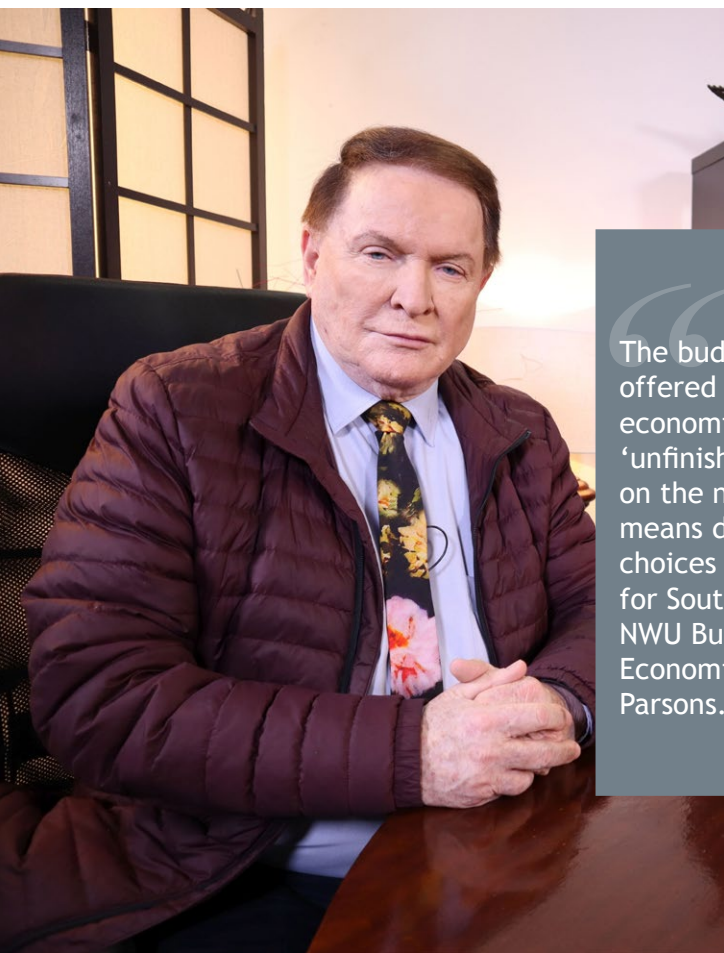
*Ms Boitumelo Loate in discussion with Prof Wedserai Musvoto.
(<https://bit.ly/2w1xAzB>)*

Training the leaders of tomorrow

The NWU Business School recently trained 23 representatives of **Cosatu** in the Middle Management course. This was in follow-up of the Fundamental Management course which these individuals underwent in 2018. Prof Ronnie Lotriet acted as the programme leader.

We are proud to be a partner in strategic thought leadership!





2020 Budget Speech

“The budget speech offered some positive economic remedies but ‘unfinished business’ on the national agenda means difficult policy choices still lie ahead for South Africa, says NWU Business School Economist Prof Raymond Parsons.”

*Prof Raymond Parsons,
NWU Business School
Economist*

The Budget confirms the extent to which the SA economy still finds itself in a bad space, requiring a strong emphasis on measures to boost job-rich growth. The 2020 Budget Speech given to Parliament by Finance Minister Tito Mboweni was seized with a greater sense of urgency about the critical economic and fiscal challenges faced by SA and offered a difficult balancing act for addressing them in what have become very stressful economic circumstances. It also highlighted the need for collaborative leadership among government, business and labour.

Given the consequent pressure on state revenues, the substantial Budget commitment to

reduce the public sector wage bill is a very important economic and political step towards creating a better balance between government current spending and its investment outlays.

The emphasis was on fiscal consolidation as the way forward, rather than increasing the overall tax burden at this stage. It is welcome that there have been no personal or corporate tax increases, and in fact some tax reductions, as a recognition of the fact that diminishing returns have set in from expecting more revenue from yet higher taxes.

Both on the revenue and spending sides of the Budget it is again evident that further pro-growth reforms must be urgently implemented to put the SA economy put on a higher growth path and to relieve the fiscal strain. The economy must now

break out of its 'low growth trap' of about 1% in the foreseeable future. The impact of the various proposed Budget remedies will continue to depend heavily on successful and tangible implementation of the planned policy steps, including the turnaround in key dysfunctional state-owned enterprises such as Eskom. Lack of security in energy supply is recognized by the Finance Minister as a major constraint on growth.

The downside risk in the Budget nonetheless remains the growth in public debt and the need for continued fiscal discipline, given the deteriorating debt arithmetic strongly reflected in the Budget numbers. This trend continues to present policy makers with difficult choices, but choices that cannot be avoided or easily postponed. The roles of

the State Bank and the Sovereign Wealth Fund respectively will also require to be further interrogated to see what value they could play in promoting economic development and how they should be capitalized.

What clearly again shines through the fiscal gloom of recent years is the need for a dramatic and sustainable rise in SA's flagging growth rate by boosting investor confidence and turning the economy around. Taking the Budget decisions as a whole it remains an open question as to whether enough has been done to fend off a Moody's investment downgrade, which is likely to be a close call in the light of the economic and fiscal cross-currents reflected in the Budget.

Pension plan is our ‘only option’



Panelists of the Rapport Regstreeks discussions, were Prof Raymond Parsons, Theo Venter, Ebrahim Fakir and Waldimar Pelser.

Cosatu's proposal to use R250bn from pension funds to prevent Eskom from collapsing - and with it the country's economy - will have to be accepted in one form or another.

This was the view of Theo Venter,

political expert of the North-West University's Business School, in the first of the annual Rapport Regstreeks talks in the Brooklyn theatre in Pretoria.

Prof. Raymond Parsons, an economic analyst at the same Business School, and Ebrahim

Fakir, political analyst and program director of the Auwal Socio-Economic Research Institute, broadly agreed with Venter, but also warned about the enormous risks.

Finance Minister Tito Mboweni told journalists before his budget speech that if pension money was used to assist Eskom, "it must be all of us - it can't just be government officials' pensions."

Venter pleaded that such proposals should be considered with care and caution rather than simply firing them, as Eskom's debt levels are an existential

"Recent appointed CEO of Eskom, Andre de Ruiter is undoubtedly the right man for the job." - Theo Venter

crisis for the entire country.

He argued that pension funds - from public servants as well as private individuals - would have to make provision for at least R250bn in debt in a negotiated settlement, leaving Eskom with "manageable" debt of R200bn.

It is not a strange

phenomenon that pension funds invest voluntarily in infrastructure and long-term projects. Venter referred to economist Mike Schüssler's calculations that the South African pension fund industry - those managed by the Public Investment Corporation

and all private funds - is the eighth largest asset in the world in dollar

"By withdrawing money from South Africa and investing abroad now, is not necessarily the right solution. Remember, the USA is currently experiencing a 2% growth, China 0% and Germany is in recession. Get the South African economy up and running. That's the right answer!" - Theo Venter.

pension funds. What you receive at the end of your working life is to some extent compensated by the younger employees who pay. So, there is a constant flow of money through the system. "

In question, Pieter Kruger, a



value.

"So we really have very large and strong

retired investment industry consultant, said Eskom's debt relief was extremely important.

"The state pension fund is a defined benefit fund. No matter how much money is in the fund, the government is obliged to replenish the deficit. "There are two alternatives: to save Eskom through the R250bn of the pension fund, or to increase taxes. And we saw that taxes were not increased in the budget."



He said that technically no one would suffer damage at this stage if the Public Service Pension Fund (GEPF) joined Eskom, because in the long term the R250 billion would be made up again.

Parsons said financing for Eskom is a serious problem, but really only a short-term problem.

“In the medium and long term,

“To be a leader, means that one should take lead, whether one is a first-time president or not. President Ramaphosa was elected to take charge and to make certain decisions. He should get to it.” - Prof Raymond Parsons.

Eskom needs to be restructured so that debt levels do not grow astronomically again.”

Fakir said he also believed using pension funds could be a good idea; yet he warned of the danger that Eskom would continue to bleed money despite such a rescue buoy and not be able to repay the debt, in which case the value of pensions would not be protected.

He said if the defined benefit fund - which means the pensions are guaranteed - is in short supply, the treasury will just have to stand again, and by implication taxpayers.

If the state continues to borrow money to save Eskom and the South African Airways, as well as bankrupt municipalities, “where will the bottomless pit end?”.

The NWU Business School is a proud sponsor of the Rapport Regstreeks discussions.

To view a video of the discussion held in Pretoria, click [here](#).



International MBA Business Tour in Saint-Petersburg, Russia

Annually MBA students, as part of the total development offer, are invited to participate in the formally organised business tour. We are very excited to announce, that this year, the annual business tour will be to Russia (Saint-Petersburg).

The focus of the tour is doing business internationally: Opportunities for BRICS companies. The total formal engagement is 25 hours which includes lectures, company visits and cultural activities. The participants shall after completion, be awarded with a certificate.

Key aspects to be discussed during the tour:

- Russia as a BRICS Member
- The innovative center of Russia
- Preliminary Analysis of the Russian Market

- Developing Marketing Strategy for Russian Market Entry
- Company's visit: Various aspects of doing business internationally

The MBAs will be lectured by experts in the following fields:

- Ruslan Segedi; PhD, Operational Experience – Expert Panel of Marketing and Production Management in IIBN
- Nikolai Lukichev; Operational Experience- Counsellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation
- Pavel Shilo; PhD, Operational Experience-Board Member of Several Top Russian Companies, etc.

Date of Tour: 15-22 June 2020

The costs of the tour is 2800USD excluding return flights

Only limited seats are available and will be selected on a fully paid basis

This is a well organised business tour with exposure to top notch business activities and experienced business school lecturers and practitioners, to experience business opportunities; to learn from the Chamber of Commerce and industries, the state of Committee for Entrepreneurship, Export Centers, etc.

No VISAS are required for SA citizens. We are looking forward to have you on board!

For more information, contact Prof Ronnie Lotriet at ronnie.lotriet@nwu.ac.za

SA no longer has the biggest economy in Africa

As if a recession wasn't enough bad news for South Africa, it's now confirmed as the continent's second-largest economy.

The answer to the question of whether South Africa or Nigeria, the two countries that account for almost half of sub-Saharan Africa's gross domestic product, is the biggest economy on the continent has long depended on which exchange rate you use for the West African nation. But now both the official naira rate of 306 per dollar and the weaker market exchange rate of around 360 that almost all investors use put Nigeria tops. Nigeria's economic growth beat forecasts in the fourth quarter, helping its

economy to expand the most in four years in 2019 as oil output increased and the central bank took steps to boost credit growth. GDP in the West African country stood at \$476 billion or \$402 billion, depending on the rate used.

South Africa's economy went the opposite direction. It slumped into a second recession in consecutive years, contracting more than projected in the fourth quarter as power cuts weighed on output and business confidence. For the full year, expansion was 0.2%, the least since the global financial crisis, and even less than the central bank and government estimated. Based on a average rand-dollar exchange rate of 14.43 for the year, GDP was \$352 billion.

Projections show Nigeria's economy will continue to grow faster. While the International Monetary Fund cut its forecast for Nigeria's 2020 growth to 2% from 2.5% last month due to lower oil prices, South Africa's GDP is forecast to expand only 0.8%.

-BusinessTech-



North West Chamber of Commerce and the NWU Business School Research of Township Economy

The NWCoCI in conjunction with the NWU Business School, has just concluded Phase I of their Project to establish the state of the Township Economy in the North West Province.

“The preliminary findings do not make for good reading”, Prof Ronnie Lotriet, the team leader, said on Thursday in Pretoria. He was presenting the findings of Phase 1 to the senior management of the Economic Development Department who commissioned the project.

“We have only done a small sample in 18 municipalities in the four districts and already found that foreigners own most of the economy in villages, townships and small dorpiess. A lack of data of how many shops, formal and informal, there are in the Province is also disturbing.

“The empirical study and analysis

done in Phase 1 found thus far that the profile of the sample was predominantly male. Interestingly the age profile was more towards the millennial generation. The majority of the owners were foreigners. Most of the start-ups seemingly were to create means to survive and a large number of the shop-owners were found not to register with the local municipality.

“A lot of stock procurement took place through consortium sourcing from outside the province. The number of employed people in this sector was worrying in the sense that almost all of them are micro-enterprises that would have a survivalist orientation in any case”, Prof Lotriet said. The preliminary findings of Phase 1 of the research have already been discussed with the Deputy President, Mr. David Mabuza.



The NWU Business School and the NWCoCI had a briefing session at the offices of the Economic Development Department in Pretoria last week on the outcome of Phase 1 of research into the township economy in the North West Province. At the briefing were: Front: Josephine Dambudzo (EDD Researcher), Andrew Matjeke (EDD), Dr. Takalani Mashabela (DDG EDD). Standing back: Ben Mabule (NW DEDECT) Moleje Pule (NW DEDECT), André Coertzen (NWCoCI) and Prof Ronnie Lotriet (NWU Business School).

According to the CEO of the NWCoCI, André Coertzen, much have to be done to help people to set-up their own businesses and to compete with the foreigners. “Government is looking at small - and micro enterprises to create jobs, which is an international expectation, but we need to get our house in order before we even think about that”, he said.

Prof Parsons awarded in his community

The Breede Valley community has recently celebrated the 200-year existence of the town of Worcester in a week-long festival where the NWU Business School's Prof Raymond Parsons was presented with a prestigious award.

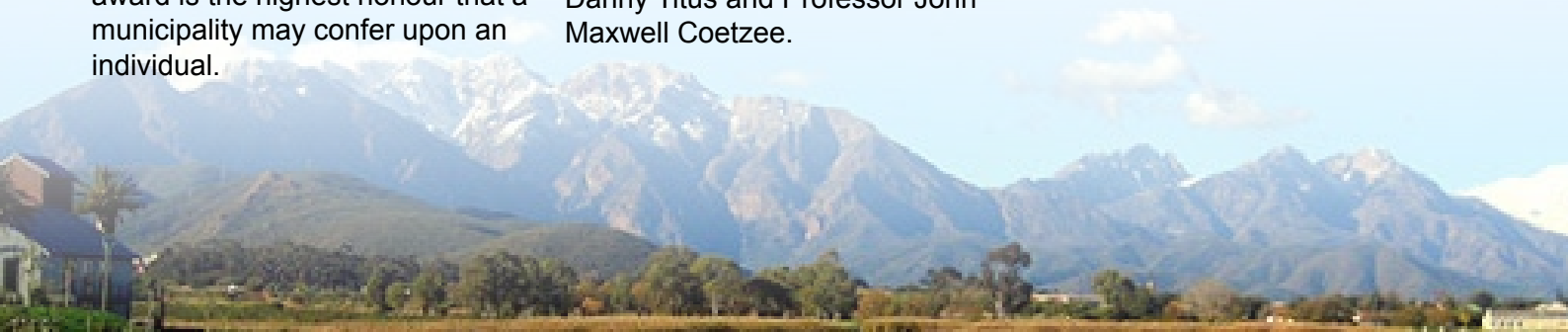
The "Freedom of the Town" award recognises prominent individuals from Worcester for their performance excellence of regional and national impact. This award is the highest honour that a municipality may confer upon an individual.

This accolade aims to be a source of inspiration for the community as it will not only celebrate the town, but is representative of the growth, diversity and advancement towards a South Africa that is unified in strength and cohesion.

Other recipients of this award includes David Kramer, Dumile Feni, Diana Ferrus, Cecyl Esau, Justice Thembile Skweyiya, Ayesha "Bibi" Dawood, - Dr Danny Titus and Professor John Maxwell Coetzee.



Prof Raymond Parsons and David Kramer receiving their awards.



We're strengthening our team

As we would like to see the Business School strengthening our potential even more, we are welcoming three new staff members to our team.



Marli Moolman

Administrative Team

Marli Moolman is a current employee of the NWU, who has joined our Business School's Administration team on 17 February. Previously, she was tasked as Manager: Administration and Projects at the Centre for Governance within the School of Social and Government Studies. Marli is a result-driven individual with 9 years' experience at supervisory level. She has extensive exposure to project planning, implementation and administration. She holds a Bachelor of Technology degree and a National Diploma in Commercial Administration.

Oarabile Manyapelolo

Senior Lecturer

Oarabile Manyapelolo's duties will commence in April as a senior lecturer in Managerial Accounting. His previous employment was with Naledi Ringrollers (Pty) Ltd and Composite Brake Components (Pty) Ltd as their Chief Financial Officer. He is a Chartered Accountants (SA) and also a registered auditor.

Dr Kaizer Ndlovu

Senior Lecturer



Dr Kaizer Ndlovu joined us in January. He holds a PhD in Computer Science and an MBA and is an IT specialist with a track record of success in managing complex IT modernization and system integration projects in industry. Previously, he has lectured at the University of Limpopo's Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership. Kaizer's research interests include ICT4D, Big Data and Wireless sensor networks and his current role at the NWU Business School includes lecturing and supervising of both MBA and PhD students.

Human Interest @ NWU Business School



Climbing the ladder

A huge congratulations to four of our staff members who recently graduated. Anthea Gaanakgomo, Lizanné Smit, Rentia Conradie and Janine Erasmus successfully completed the Post Graduate Diploma in Management. On the photo is Anthea and Lizanné.

Making an International footprint

A huge congrats to our very own Prof Ravinder Rena who was featured in a national newspaper in India. The article was published in a daily newspaper in Hindi language and is one of the largest circulated daily newspaper which reaches millions of readers.



Our pivotal role in business



We wish to congratulate Prof Ronnie Lotriet for being elected to serve on the North West Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Executive Committee (NWCOCI).

During a recent Annual General Meeting of the NWCOCI, delegates from organisations such as the National African Federated Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chambers' of Commerce for Potchefstroom, Matloana, Mahikeng, the IDC, PWC, CSS Security, Standard Bank, Nashua NW, NWK and North West Woman in Tourism attended.

During the meeting, Prof Lotriet also gave a lecture to delegates about "understanding of the township economy".

The North-West University's Business School proudly hosted the AGM as one of its initiatives in strengthening the local and provincial economy and addressing challenges through expertise.



A Healthy Body

Prof P.A. Botha from our Business School in Mahikeng recently participated in the gruelling Tour of Good Hope cycle challenge in the Cape province. Presented in the week leading up to the Cape Town Cycle Tour and based in the Paarl valley, the race format comprises four race villages over 5 days. The beautiful Boland Landbou Skool, Goudini High, Bridgehouse and the Taal Monument have played host in 2020. 5 stages, 5 days and over 5500m of ascent through the Cape Winelands.

Monday's shift was 105.44km and started at Bridgehouse in Franschhoek and ended at Goudini High School in Rawsonville. Day two, we did a 45km time test on the Rawsonville and Slanghoek road and day three we cycled 141km from Rawsonville over Du Toitskloof pass, Wellington and Riebeeck Kasteel to Boland Agricultural School. Day four's shift was 162km from Boland Agricultural School in Paarl across Bainskloof, Goudini and Slanghoek and back to Boland Agricultural School. Friday's 67km shift started in Paarl to Stellenbosch, Helshoogte and Wemmershoek and ended in Paarl. It was my second multi-day tour and although it was very challenging and difficult, it was a wonderful

experience and privilege to be able to cycle in some of the most beautiful environments in the country. I am grateful to finish 19th overall in my age category."

As if that was not enough, Prof P.A. participated in his first Cape Cycle Tour (Argus) – only two days later! "It was an incredible experience but at the same time frightening because there were so many cycling rides in the bundle and I saw a number of serious traps and experienced some close escapes myself. I cut it very finely and ended with a time of 2 hours 59 minutes and 9 seconds. My goal was to drive a sub 3 hour which I made with 51 seconds. Overall, I was 43st out of 2122 riders in my age category. After the week I realized that I will never be a top cyclist, but it does not quench my love for the sport. I thank the Father that I am still healthy and at my "old age" still have the privilege of practicing my sport."

Prof Ravi continues to internationalise our expertise

As you might have read thus far, it is evident that the Business School's academics are on a mission to get our name out there – on a national and international level. As is the case of Prof Ravinder Rena, a professor in Economics at our School.

During January, he was invited to deliver two keynote speeches in India. First up, was his address at the Presidency College (Autonomous) in Chennai, India, which got three Nobel Prizes and is one of the three national premier institutions of educational excellence, ranked 3rd under National Institutional of Ranking Framework in 2019.

As part of its Centenary Celebrations, the Presidency

College's Department of Economics has organised an International seminar on the theme of "Perspectives of Indian Economy aftermath Global Financial Crises" on 9 January 2020. On this auspicious occasion, Prof Rena was invited to deliver a Keynote Speech on "Global Financial Crises and Its effect on Indian Economy".

The Jaipuria Institute of Management, Jaipur has also in January successfully organized the 7th International Conference in the series Youth 2025, on the broad theme "Re-Imagining Leadership for a Global Workforce" at its campus in Jaipur, India. Prof Rena was invited as a keynote speaker for this conference. The conference brought together academics,

industry experts, and policy makers on a single platform to carry out intellectual deliberations, discuss the current scenario, share best practices, set direction and suggest strategies and policies towards development and empowerment of youth in the age of digitization.

The conference organisers applauded the presence of Prof Rena and stated that "it was a pleasure to have him as an esteemed guest of their International Conference."



Spreading our expertise *with Thinking Fusion*

Over the past seven years, academics from the North-West University's Business school have been closely involved with Thinking Fusion AFRICA, a company which specialises in the offering of various short courses. Our role, amongst other things, is to certify the quality of the academic quality presented in these courses.

During the months of February and March, Prof Jan van Romburgh, Prof Anet Smit and Prof Tommy du Plessis was involved yet again. Thinking Fusion designs and delivers packaged as well as customised programmes and processes using their recognised intellectual property in the areas of strategy and culture, development and research. Their models and frameworks embrace science whilst challenging conventional thinking.



Prof Jan van Romburgh was involved at Thinking Fusion's first programme in Leadership Academy for Agriculture.



Prof Anet Smit was involved at Thinking Fusion's second programme in Leadership Academy for Agriculture.

Prof Stephan sharpens his pencils in the USA

Prof Stephan van der Merwe, a lecturer in Entrepreneurship and Project Management at the NWU Business School, visited America in January following an invite to act as a judge at an international family business case study competition, and subsequently, visited several universities in the Boston area.

The case study competition was hosted by the University of Vermont, Grossman School of Business in Burlington which was arranged by Prof Pramodita Sharma, editor of the Family Business Review, a world leader in family business research. The competition consisted of two courses, namely undergraduate and postgraduate students. Business Schools from 10 universities in six countries enrolled undergraduate teams, while eight business schools from five countries enrolled postgraduate student teams (MBA students). These business schools all have the distinction of majoring in family businesses.

Prof Stephan said it was incredible to see how smoothly the competition went. “The knowledge of the students, who often represented the younger generation of family members of well-established family businesses, was an experience. I also had the privilege of acting as chief judge for the postgraduate leg during the final day.”

Stephan then travelled by bus to Boston, where he visited some of the top universities in the world, including Harvard University, Harvard Business School, MIT, Boston University and Boston College. He also visited Babson College, a private university in Boston with the distinction of being considered, for decades, as one of the top-rated educational institutions in Entrepreneurship.

Prof Stephan is a Babson College alumnus, after attending the Price-Babson Symposium for Entrepreneurship Educators in 2014. Babson College took the lead in entrepreneurship education with the

philosophy that entrepreneurship can be learned. He also had the privilege of visiting the Arthur M. Blank Centre for Entrepreneurship in Babson – the lifeblood of entrepreneurial activity at Babson.

“What gave me peace of mind, is that our approach to entrepreneurship training at the NWU is a blueprint of Babson’s approach. However, their approach to the training is very intense and it is as if the buildings speak this language to you. My visit to America was very informative, and I can not wait to share this knowledge with the students again during the second semester.”

