

Innovation programme launches at WSU



EMBRACING THE FUTURE: WSU's Dr Thobekani Lose and Samsung Lenhle Khoza at the launch of the programme. Picture: SUPPLIED

University among first to become part of global skills transfer initiative

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Global electronics giant Samsung has launched its Innovation Campus programme at Walter Sisulu University, only the second higher education institution in the country to be part of the programme.

The programme promises students an exciting 12-month journey.

They will be taught critical skills such as coding and programming, artificial intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IOT) as part of a student skills transfer programme.

Speaking at the launch, Samsung transformation manager Lenhle Khoza said: "As Samsung we thought that in our initia-

tives we have not yet ploughed anything into the Eastern Cape. We are grateful that when we approached WSU, they easily accepted our offer."

WSU's short learning programmes acting director, Dr Thobekani Lose, said: "We don't build programmes, we build people and networks. The new net worth is your network."

Lose said according to a 2022 State of ICT Sector in SA report, the information and communication technology sector was showing signs of growth, recording R243.6bn in revenue in 2021, up from R243bn in 2020.

This showed an overall increase of 0.3% in total sector revenue at a time of extremely high unemployment among young people.

In the first quarter of 2022, the unemployment rate was 63.9% among those aged 15 to 24 and

42.1% in the 25-34 age category.

Samsung Electronics' director of operations, Hlubi Shivanda, said: "This is the first Samsung Innovation Campus in SA.

"We hope that this cohort of students is not our last cohort as we hope for future partnerships with the institution."

Shivanda said Samsung knew WSU was committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research, and this had inspired them to enter into the partnership.

WSU Institutional SRC president Batandwa Mangisa said: "This partnership speaks a lot about the image of the university."

Mangisa said because the university's vision was to be a technology-infused institution, the partnership would drive WSU to achieve its 2030 vision.

WSU deputy vice-chancellor for institutional support Dr Prince Jaca said a university was all about skills development, and WSU's strategy and purpose spoke to that.

"We thank Samsung for being among the first to assist us in putting our strategy into action."

Jaca said the university would not lose sight of Samsung's own strategy.

"You have your own goals and objectives and as the university we will do our part to assist and support you to achieve these.

"I was glad to hear that your goals are to empower [people] through education and I saw us aligning and coming together."

The launch ended with students attending a workshop on the year-long programme that will be piloted at the Buffalo City and Potsdam campuses.