

New Executive Elected to Lead SAAPAM Mpumalanga Chapter



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MBOMBELA — The SAAPAM Mpumalanga Chapter Conference concluded its second and final day at the University of Mpumalanga on 31 July 2026 with the election of a new Executive Committee to lead the Chapter forward.

The election formed part of the Chapter's Annual General Meeting, held on the sidelines of the conference and attended by delegates, academics and public sector practitioners from across the province, alongside members of SAAPAM's national leadership, including Executive Director Prof John Molepo and SAAPAM President Prof Kgothatso Shai.

The following members were elected to serve on the SAAPAM Mpumalanga Chapter Executive Committee:

- **Mr Joseph Mudau — Chairperson**
- **Dr Thandi Ngomane — Deputy Chairperson**
- **Dr Tando Rulashe — Secretary**
- **Ms Perseverance Mculu — Deputy Secretary**
- **Dr Bonga Mdletshe — Treasurer**

The results were met with applause from delegates, marking the start of a new term for the Chapter's leadership.

Addressing delegates shortly after the results were announced, newly elected Chairperson Joseph Mudau said the Chapter's progress should be measured not by time but by substance. "The gravitas of scholarship is not found in the age of the scholar but in the ingenuity employed to navigate uncharted epistemological terrain," he said, describing it as the principle that would guide the incoming Executive.

He said the outgoing leadership's focus had been to establish the Chapter's academic identity within the province by drawing in scholars committed to strengthening SAAPAM's standing locally. Central to that effort, he noted, has been the growth of SAAPAM's student chapters, which serve as the pipeline through which young scholars are introduced to the discipline of public administration and management. Student chapters give emerging academics an early platform to engage with research, policy debate and the ethos of public service that SAAPAM represents and Mudau framed their continued development as essential to the province's academic identity and to the Association's long-term sustainability.

Looking ahead, he committed the new Executive to two priorities: deepening collaboration across institutions and preserving the Chapter as a space for open intellectual debate. "The beauty and the liberty of this space is intellectual curiosity," he said.

Mudau also emphasised SAAPAM's standing as a non-partisan professional association, saying this distinction was central to the Chapter's integrity and independence.

Closing his address, he struck a note of humility, telling members that "a good dancer must know when to leave the stage" when the time comes, and pledged that the new Executive would engage members individually to ensure the Chapter continues to serve its community of scholars and remain "at the cutting edge of ideas."

The election closes out a conference that reaffirmed the Mpumalanga Chapter's role within the broader SAAPAM family, built on scholarship, ethical public service and collaboration between government, academia and civil society. Attention now turns to the new Executive's task of translating the ideas raised over the two-day conference into sustained programmes for the Chapter, with the strengthening of student chapters expected to remain a cornerstone of that work.