

UNISA
WESTERN CAPE REGION

10th Annual Academic
Development Symposium
Cape Town



Unpacking the intersection between academic support, co-curricular activities, and graduateness

Wednesday 11 September & Thursday 12 September 2024

Introduction

Welcome to the 10th Academic Development Symposium, a milestone event where we will explore the intersection of academic support, co-curricular activities, and the concept of gradueness in higher education in South Africa.

In today's rapidly changing educational landscape, discussions on academic support and the role of co-curricular activities have never been more important. The 21st century presents us with unique challenges and opportunities, such as technological advancements, increased access to education, diverse student populations, and changing perceptions of employability. The concept of 'gradueness', as noted by Maxwell and Armellini (2019), is fluid and multifaceted, lacking a universal definition or standardised framework. It encompasses a wide range of competencies that align with the demands of the workforce, with variations across institutions and global contexts (Warwick, 2016).

Co-curricular activities are crucial in developing the attributes needed for gradueness. These experiences, which go beyond the formal academic curriculum, give students valuable opportunities to develop critical skills, perspectives, and attitudes. Regardless of whether it is community engagement, leadership roles, cultural immersion, or entrepreneurial endeavours, co-curricular activities play a significant role in shaping well-rounded graduates who are prepared for the complexities of the modern world.

This symposium provides a platform for sharing insights, best practices, and transformative experiences that enhance gradueness across diverse student cohorts. As we come together to exchange ideas and strategies, let us embrace the opportunity to improve the academic and co-curricular landscapes, ensuring that our students receive not only academic support but also the empowerment to thrive in an increasingly complex global society.

We hope you have a productive and inspiring symposium.

Yours sincerely

John Abrahams



Day One – Wednesday 11 September 2024

Programme Director: Dr Nicky Tjano

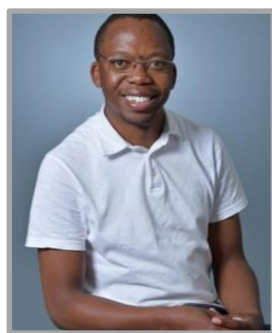
Time	Topic / Item	Presenter / Facilitator
08h30 - 08h45	Welcome	Acting Regional Director Western Cape
08h45 - 09h00	Opening Address	Prof Moroka Mogashoa Acting Deputy Registrar
09h00 - 9h45	Keynote Address 1	Prof Meahabo Magano Executive Director: Tuition and Facilitation of Learning
09h45 - 10h30	Keynote Address 2	Dr Kelebogile Makhetha Senior Director of the Division for Student Affairs at Stellenbosch University
10h30 - 10h45	Questions and Answer	
10h45 - 11h00	Tea	
Parallel Sessions		
Venue: B01	Venue: B02	Venue: B1-41
Chair: Vuyiswa Ngalo	Chair: Nicole Alexander	Chair: Musa Mavundla
Theme	Theme	Theme
Integrating Academic and co-curricular activities in higher education	Community engagement and social innovation	Strategies to empower students for gradueness and global citizenship
Enhancing student professional development through a Student Mentor Programme as co-curricular activity: A Pilot Study at an ODeL environment. Dr Shariefa Hendricks Dr Matome Jack Mashiapata [11h15-11h45]	Community Engagement for Transformation: A pilot outreach programme on the Cape Flats. Dr Bako Nyikun Audu Dr Mark Herbert [11h15-11h45]	Preparing students for a diverse and international working environment: Addressing graduate attributes in the module Intercultural Communication Faika Haroun [11h15-11h45]
A Transformational Multidisciplinary Approach to Postgraduate Development Dr Ghouwa Ismail [11h15-11h45] Venue B03		
Mentor perspectives on the first-year guide that we created for our mentoring programme Prof. Dale Taylor Mohammed Kajee Naseera Moosa Tsatsawini Mnisi [11h50-12h20]	The role of higher education institutions in community engagement and social innovation in South Africa Prof Dumisani Quiet Mabunda [11h50-12h20]	Private Colleges vs Public Academic Spaces: Conversations on the Industry Readiness of Graduates. Dr Carol Edson [11h50-12h20]
How does humanising pedagogy shape the understanding of student leadership development in Higher education? Phumza Khwezilomso Qwaqwa [12h25-12h55]	Evaluating the success of South African Law Enforcement in combating drug and substance abuse: Are we winning the fight? Mokopane Marakalala [12h25-12h55]	'It takes a village to produce a graduate': Creating communities of learning through a first-year developmental course. Bonani Dube [12h25-12h55]
13h00-13h30	Plenary, closing, and word of thanks	
13h30-14h30	Lunch and Networking	

Day Two – Thursday 12 September 2024

Programme Director: Dr Nicky Tjano

Time	Topic / Item	Presenter / Facilitator
08h30 - 08h45	Welcome and Opening Remarks	Acting Regional Director Western Cape
08h45 -9h15	Recapping of Day 1	Dr Nicky Tjano Programme Director
09h15 - 10h00	Keynote Address 2	Mr Kiewet Mhlongo Acting Provincial Manager Small Enterprise Development Agency
10h00- 10h30	Questions and Answer	
10h30- 11h00	Tea	
Parallel Sessions		
Venue: B01	Venue: B02	Venue: B1-41
Chair: Lesego Mothowagae	Chair: Diane Coetsee	Chair: Masegare Phaahla
Theme	Theme	Theme
Learning support strategies in higher education	Community engagement and social innovation	Strategies to empower students for graduateness and global citizenship
The Impact of Covid-19 and lockdown on students' lived realities at a South African University: Adopting a pedagogy of hope to realise the social purpose of higher education Dr Venicia McGhie [11h15-11h45]	Advancing adult learning and development in the red-zone districts of the Cape Flats: Inclusion and educational mobility through an Adult Night School initiative Yumna Alexander [11h15-11h45]	Enhancing Postgraduate Success: Unveiling Innovative Academic Support Strategies in a Residential University Setting Giles Stevens [11h15-11h45]
Enhancing Physics Learning through the Problem Set-Tutorial Test Cycle Dr Mark Herbert Dr Bako Nyikun Audu [11h50-12h20]	Social media platforms as alternate pedagogical spaces: The integration of TikTok to facilitate English language development in formal learning environments Cohen Charles [11h50-12h20]	From Student to Professional: How the Unisa Law Clinic transforms legal education Reckon Beau Mathebula [11h50-12h20]
Creating flexible opportunities in ODeL: Exploring the need for personalised learning experiences through monitoring and staff participation in distance learning Rodney Mabusela Clifford Itumeleng Molefe [12h25-12h55]	Revolutionising Justice: How the Incarceration Nations Network is Pioneering Transformative Prison Reform Kofi Danso [12h25-12h55]	Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Graduate Attributes through Co-Curricular Engagement at a Distance Learning University Chantal Adams [12h25-12h55]
13h00 - 13h30	Plenary, closing, and word of thanks	
13h30 - 14h30	Lunch and Networking	

Programme Director



Dr Nicky Tjano

Dr Nicky Tjano currently holds the position of Director of Teaching & Learning Strategy, Projects, and Portfolio Performance (Secondment) in the office of the Vice Principal: Teaching & Learning at the University of South Africa. Additionally, he serves as a Curriculum and Learning Development (CLD) Specialist in the Directorate of Curriculum Development and Transformation (DCDT). Previously, Tjano worked as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Business Management in CEMS, where he taught research at Honours degree level, students Strategic

Management and Business Management. He was also seconded to the Office of the Deanery under the Tuition and Student Support office as a Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning Coordinator. In this role, he facilitated the development of academic capacity among academics in the use of teaching tools and implemented measures for change management in the College. He played an active role in the Digitalisation of the Teaching and Learning Solution Project, driving the implementation of the (ODEL) program and Moodle rollout in line with Unisa's 2030 Strategic Agenda.

Dr Tjano holds an M.Com degree from the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and a PhD from Unisa. He currently supervises Masters and Doctorate candidates in the areas of corporate governance and sustainability, entrepreneurship, technology-mediated learning, and artificial intelligence (AI) in education. He has received several awards, including Best Employee in 2011, the Chancellor's Award in 2012, and CEMS' Excellence Award in 2021.

He serves on a number of committees responsible for reviewing institutional policies, such as the Assessment policy, Policy on students with disabilities, the AI policy, and the Policies on academic integrity.

Furthermore, Tjano co-chairs the Unisa AI Task Team, which is responsible for integrating AI policy and guidelines into teaching and learning, as well as research. He has also developed the University's position statement on the use of AI and Big Data in promoting research integrity.

In addition to his academic contributions, Dr Tjano has authored two book chapters on AI and Big Data for UJ Press, which are currently awaiting publication.

Welcome

It is with great pleasure that we welcome you to the 10th Annual Academic Development Symposium of the Western Cape Region. Since its inception in 2015, this symposium has served as a vital platform for both experienced and emerging professionals in higher education, not only from the Western Cape but also nationally and internationally, to share best practices and foster meaningful connections.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to those of you who have consistently supported this symposium over the years, and a special warm welcome to our first-time participants.

This year's symposium is dedicated to exploring the intersection of academic support, co-curricular activities, and the concept of graduateness. Our discussions will focus on the holistic development of students, preparing them for both their graduateness and their roles as global citizens.

I encourage all participants to engage meaningfully with each other around this theme. It is my wish that this symposium will interrogate the value of focused and intentional strategies towards cultivating graduateness and global citizenship amongst our students within an African context of Ubuntu.

Yours sincerely,

Shahieda Jansen



Dr Shahieda Jansen

Dr. Shahieda Jansen currently serves as the Acting Regional Director of the Unisa Western Cape region. She joined Unisa in October 2016 as the Deputy Director responsible for Academic & Technology Support. In this role, she oversees Career Counselling, Library Services, and Academic Support.

Before joining Unisa, Dr. Jansen managed the HPCSA-accredited student counselling centre at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). From 2008 to 2016, she oversaw counselling services for students and provided clinical supervision to Master students, both national and international psychology interns.

Dr. Jansen's scholarly interests include relational models of human nature (the Umoya self), male-focused development for boys and men, and the transformative power of small group dynamics. For over a decade, she has facilitated men's groups, father-son interventions, and individual therapy with boys and men.

Additionally, she is the principal researcher of the Unisa Western Cape's Community Engagement Project: School Belonging for Boys at two pilot schools in the Western Cape. In late 2022, her book, "Masculinity Meets Humanity: An Adapted Model of Masculinised Psychotherapy," was published by Unisa Press.

Opening Address



Prof Moroka Mogashoa

Acting Deputy Registrar, Unisa

Dr Moroka Humphrey Mogashoa is the Acting Deputy Registrar at the Acting Deputy Registrar (Unisa). He holds a PhD in Theology, specializing in the History of Christianity from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. His academic research interests are centered around Church History, Church and Land, Missions, and Colonisation. Dr Mogashoa's expertise in these areas highlights his profound understanding of the intersections between religion, society, and historical contexts.

With extensive experience in higher education leadership, Dr Mogashoa has held several key executive positions at Unisa, including Executive Director of Academic Planning, Tuition Support & Facilitation of Learning, and Academic Quality Assurance & Enhancement. In these roles, he has significantly contributed to advancing the university's academic mission, ensuring that the institution maintains high standards in education delivery, curriculum development, and quality assurance.

As the Acting Deputy Registrar, Dr Mogashoa plays a pivotal role in supporting the Registrar in fulfilling the obligations set by the Higher Education Act and the Statute of the University of South Africa. His responsibilities encompass overseeing critical administrative functions such as student admissions and registrations, student assessment administration, graduations, and student inquiries. Under his supervision, these key operations align with Unisa's Open Distance and e-Learning (ODEL) 2016–2030 strategy, ensuring the university meets its strategic goals and objectives.

Dr Mogashoa is deeply involved in the university's initiatives as determined by the Registrar, contributing to the development and execution of Unisa's academic and administrative strategies. His leadership in these areas demonstrates his commitment to enhancing the student experience and supporting the university's mission of providing accessible, high-quality education in an open distance learning environment. His work continues to impact both the academic and administrative landscapes of Unisa.

Day One

Keynote Address 1

Centering Students' Graduateness and Employability through Co-curricular Activities



Prof Meahabo Magano

Executive Director: Tuition and Facilitation of Learning

Professor Meahabo Dinah Magano currently serves as the Executive Director of the Department of Tuition Support and Facilitation of Learning at the University of South Africa (Unisa). She is a full professor in Psychology of Education, specialising in teacher education. With over two decades of experience as a high school educator, department head, and deputy principal, Professor Magano is dedicated to education. She supervises Masters and PhD students and mentors post-doctoral fellows and junior academics.

Professor Magano is actively involved in research, particularly leading projects within South Africa's correctional facilities. Her research focuses on promoting the well-being of juveniles, teachers in correctional schools, and learners with disabilities. She is also committed to community engagement and received the Woman of the Year award for Community Service in 2014.

In addition to her academic leadership, Professor Magano served as Chairperson of the Education Association of South Africa from 2016 to 2017. She has authored numerous books, chapters, and articles on wellness in education. With a passion for enhancing learning experiences, she continuously seeks innovative methods to support distance education and improve the well-being of educators and learners. Professor Magano was a top ten finalist in the Higher Education Women Leaders Awards HERS-SA in the Social and Human Sciences category. She also received the Unisa Engaged Scholarship division's Unisa Nation Builder and Knowledge Mobilizer Faithful Service Award in 2023. In 2024, Professor Magano received the Transformative Leader award from the Unisa Women's Forum.

Day One

Keynote Address 2

Learning goes beyond the confines of the classroom, equipping students with essential skills that are applicable in both their personal and professional lives. At Stellenbosch University, we place a strong emphasis on the significance of experiential learning and co-curricular activities in the development of these skills. In order to create deep and meaningful learning experiences, it is crucial for students and staff to collaborate and work together. By purposely designing co-curricular programmes and providing the necessary resources and support, we empower students to effectively demonstrate the competencies they have acquired.

Student Affairs is dedicated to gathering "practice-based evidence" through a wide range of programmes that offer transformative experiences. These experiences are further enriched by fostering curiosity, embracing the possibility of making mistakes, and drawing upon indigenous knowledge systems and nature. By establishing intentional partnerships throughout the university, we are able to build sustainable networks that enhance the overall experiential learning process.

This presentation aims to showcase our collaborative approach at Stellenbosch University, where the journey of the student remains at the heart of our teaching and learning philosophy.



Dr Kelebogile Choice Makhetha

Stellenbosch University

Dr Kelebogile Choice Makhetha has served as Senior Director of Student Affairs at Stellenbosch University since August 2019, bringing over 20 years of experience in South African higher education, including 17 years in senior and executive roles. She earned her Ph.D. in Political Science in 2003 from the University of the Free State, specialising in Elections and Electoral Systems, with support from the Mellon Foundation.

Dr Makhetha has held key positions such as President of the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Practitioners (SAASSAP) and is a member of the Institutional Audits Committee of the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC). Before joining Stellenbosch, she was the Transformation Advisor to the Vice Chancellor at the Central University of Technology and Vice Rector for Student Affairs and External Relations at the University of the Free State. A participant in prestigious leadership programmes, Dr. Makhetha's leadership philosophy emphasises empowerment and humility, inspiring effective leadership and service.

Day One

Enhancing student professional development through a Student Mentor Programme as co-curricular activity: A Pilot Study at an ODeL environment.

The speaker's presentation, "Exploring Holistic Entrepreneurship: Empowering Communities and Individuals," delves into the multifaceted world of entrepreneurship from a holistic perspective. The discourse investigates stakeholder roles in fostering communal growth and nurturing valuable economic contributors. It emphasizes the often-overlooked role of non-profit entities as vital bridges within entrepreneurial initiatives, spotlighting their contributions to sustaining a thriving ecosystem.

The presentation further explores the intricate interplay between entrepreneurship and psycho-social development, acknowledging the psychological and social influences entrepreneurs encounter. By weaving personal experiences and empirical insights, the speaker aims to enrich the understanding of how entrepreneurial ventures and psycho-social dynamics intertwine. Additionally, the discourse acknowledges the impact of Family Strengthening Programs on fostering resilient entrepreneurs through familial support. In conclusion, the essence of holistic entrepreneurship is encapsulated through a comprehensive narrative. This narrative highlights diverse stakeholder roles, the contributions of non-profits, psycho-social intricacies, and the significance of familial influences. The presentation invites attendees to embark on a journey of insight, reflection, and scholarly exchange, shaped by the mosaic of community stories. reflection,



Dr Matome Jack Mashiapata

Dr. Matome Jack Mashiapata, a certified Clinical Psychologist with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), brings over three decades of experience in psychology, education, and higher education. As the Director of Counselling and Career Development (DCCD) at the University of South Africa (Unisa), he oversees career development, academic projects, community engagement, and e-counselling in the Unisa ODeL environment.

Dr. Mashiapata is actively involved in professional groups, serving as the Regional Director for Africa in the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) and holding affiliations with SAACDHE and CPSC. He has presented and published scholarly work on topics including career guidance, pastoral counselling, and mentorship, and contributed a chapter on trauma debriefing to the book "Life Skills – My Journey, My Destiny."

His extensive knowledge and passion are dedicated to supporting the intellectual and personal growth of individuals, particularly students.

Day One

Enhancing student professional development through a Student Mentor Programme as co-curricular activity: A Pilot Study at an ODeL environment.



Dr Shariefa Hendricks

Shariefa Hendricks began her career as a Clinical Psychologist at GJ Crookes Hospital in 2004 before moving to Addington Hospital, where she also served as a lecturer at the Behavioural School of Medicine in KwaZulu-Natal. In 2009, she joined the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) as a Senior Student Counsellor, managing the Retention and Throughput portfolio for four years to enhance student success and wellbeing. Currently, Hendricks is the Manager/Head of Counselling and

Career Development (CCD) section for the KwaZulu-Natal Region, leading initiatives to support student mental health and career development.

Hendricks earned her Ph.D. from UKZN in 2018, receiving the Golden Key award for her doctoral work. Her research focuses on clinical supervision, particularly the experiences of psychology interns and supervisors. She has presented her work internationally and conducted CPD-accredited training workshops for psychologists and interns. Additionally, she chairs the Disability Committee, advocating for student support and wellbeing, while mentoring Clinical Psychology Masters students and interns.

Day One

Mentor perspectives on the first-year guide that we created for our mentoring programme

To assist first-year students in successfully navigating university, we have created a digital book. The content has been co-created with students through writing workshops. While the book is primarily intended for science students, it is openly licensed with a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license, allowing for adaptation in other contexts. Starting in 2024, the book will be utilized as the core material for the science faculty's structured mentoring programme. In this programme, mentors meet weekly with groups of first-year students.

We briefly compare our book to other first-year guides, specifically Ruda Landman's guide and two books from the USA: OpenStax's 'College Success' and Barbara Oakley's 'Mind for Numbers'. These books cover topics such as time management, study techniques, mental health, brain function, and the significance of a healthy lifestyle. However, our book also includes chapters on culture shock and decolonization.

We present the findings of an online survey and focus group discussions with the mentors. Additionally, we have collected survey and focus group data to gain insight from first-year students. The combined results of these studies will inform the revisions for the 2025 edition of the book. We are grateful for the support in this project from UCT's Digital Open Textbooks for Development (DOT4D) unit and a University Capacity Development Programme grant.

The chapters are publicly available at:

https://zivahub.uct.ac.za/projects/Science_is_Tough_But_So_Are_You_/198274

Dale Taylor, Mohammed Kajee, Naseera Moosa and Tsatsawini Mnisi

University of Cape Town

Assoc Prof Dale Taylor, a physics lecturer, has been teaching on UCT's BSc Extended Curriculum Programme since 2011. She is a member of the science faculty's academic development unit and the physics and astronomy education research group.



Mohammed Kajee, who recently submitted his PhD in biology, has been serving as the science faculty's student development officer for the past 18 months.



Naseera Moosa, a junior lecturer, is currently completing her PhD in applied mathematics.



Tsatsawini Mnisi has just earned her BSc degree in computer science. Together, they form the editorial team of the first-year guide, 'Science is Tough (But So Are You!)'.



Day One

How does humanising pedagogy shape the understanding of student leadership development in Higher Education?

This abstract summarises a Masters research study on the first-year foundation programme offered by the Department of Student Affairs at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Traditionally, student leadership at UCT has focused on elected roles such as the Student Representative Council (SRC) and faculty councils. However, this innovative programme introduces incoming students to various leadership styles, challenging the notion that leadership is linear. It empowers students to make informed decisions about their leadership paths and emphasises the value of knowledge beyond academics.

The programme serves as a platform for students to explore self-leadership, fostering a sense of agency and encouraging engagement with leadership opportunities that align with their values and aspirations. By promoting co-curricular activities, it helps students think broadly about their environment and the potential contributions they can make to society. Ultimately, the foundation programme nurtures a more flexible and inclusive understanding of leadership, preparing students to engage with diverse leadership opportunities throughout their university experience.



Phumza Khwezilomso Qwaqwa

Phumza Khwezilomso Qwaqwa is a Student Leadership Assistant at the University of Cape Town. She holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences in Social Development and Gender Studies, an Honours degree in Gender and Transformation, and is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Higher Education Studies. Her research focuses on Paulo Freire's humanising pedagogy, with the goal of developing student programmes that prioritise care and recognise students as active contributors to their

own learning. Phumza has a strong background in community engagement and is passionate about how knowledge is conceptualised and made accessible. She advocates for the recognition of diverse forms of learning and the value of lived experiences. In addition, Phumza serves as the Advocacy Lead for Kwela Brews, a social business that supports homebrewers of traditional African beer. In this role, she works to promote women's voices, encourage storytelling, and facilitate meaningful collaborations to support brewing as both a cultural practice and an economic activity.

Day One

Community Engagement for Transformation: A pilot outreach programme on the Cape Flats.

The Faculty of Natural Science at the University of the Western Cape collaborates with stakeholders to improve high school learner retention, access, and success in the education system. Specifically, the Department of Physics and Astronomy, in partnership with the Metro South Education District, focuses on engaging high schools in the Cape Flats. Together, they design community-level interventions to increase learner interest, participation, and achievement in Mathematics and Physical Sciences. These efforts aim to prepare students for careers in STEM fields and motivate them to reach their full potential.

The department's outreach programs have had a significant impact on pass rates. Notably, there was an increase of over 10% in mathematics for grades 8 and 9 in 2018. However, data protection issues have affected the analysis of grade 11 results in 2019 and grade 12 results in 2022. The engagement plan for 2023 is almost complete and will be included in the presentation. The study will outline the intervention goals, factors influencing learner retention, and the challenges and successes faced during the process.



Dr Bako Nyikun Audu

Dr. BN Audu holds a BSc (Hons) in Physics from the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. He then pursued a PGDE and an MEd in science education at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. During this time, he worked at the Teachers' Training College. While his interest in radiation physics led him to study Radiation and Environmental Protection in the UK (Surrey), his passion for Physics Education drove him to pursue a PhD in 'Physics Education' at the University of the Western Cape.

His thesis serves as a significant foundation for the investigation of the curriculum and graduate preparedness at the Faculty level. With over two decades of academic engagement, he has been involved at all three tiers of the education system (Primary, secondary, and tertiary). His research in Physics Education Research (PER) focuses on physics graduate preparedness, physics education, and academic development. He also has a keen interest in teaching pedagogies and the use of technology in the classroom.

Day One

Community Engagement for Transformation: A pilot outreach programme on the Cape Flats.



Dr Mark Herbert

Dr Mark Herbert is a senior lecturer in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). He obtained his PhD in Experimental Nuclear Physics from the University of Cape Town. However, his true passion lies in teaching and learning. Dr. Herbert joined UWC in 2008 as a lecturer in the Extended Degree Programme for Physics. His primary focus within the realm of teaching and learning is to foster student engagement and create curricula that actively promote student learning.

Currently, Dr Herbert teaches a first-year mainstream undergraduate physics module. In this role, he has made significant strides in designing a learning environment that encourages active student participation and success in physics. His dedication to improving student outcomes through innovative teaching practices reflects his commitment to both education and the advancement of science. Dr. Herbert continues to contribute to the academic community by combining his expertise in experimental nuclear physics with his enthusiasm for nurturing the next generation of scientists.

Day One

The role of higher education institutions in community engagement and social innovation in South Africa

Higher education institutions in South Africa play a significant role in driving community engagement and fostering innovation. In the past, higher education institutions focused mainly on researching communities without involving them or contributing to their development. However, the landscape of education now requires community development and joint problem identification and solution.

To understand the current role of higher education institutions, and its impact on communities, a convenient sample of twenty (20) participants from a local South African community was engaged in focus group discussions as well as one-on-one interviews. The results revealed that while higher learning institutions serve as hubs for knowledge creation, there is still a major challenge in disseminating this knowledge and bridging the gap between institutions and communities. By collaborating with communities, universities can address social, economic, and environmental challenges together, leading to sustainable development. This collaboration also brings opportunities for innovation, technological advancements, entrepreneurial initiatives, and skills transfer.

Furthermore, higher education institutions provide platforms for dialogue and partnership among stakeholders, which enhances social cohesion and empowerment. This study highlights the multifaceted contribution of South African universities to community engagement and innovation. It presents case studies and best practices that illustrate their impact on local and national development.



Prof Dumisani Quiet Mabunda

Professor Dumisani Quiet Mabunda is a Senior Lecturer in the Police Practice Department at Unisa. He holds a Ph.D. in Police Science and has published extensively in peer-reviewed journals. Additionally, he has supervised PhD and Masters students and presented papers on traditional leadership in community policing at international conferences. With 26 years of service in the South African Police Service, he retired as a Lieutenant-Colonel, specialising in

criminalistics. He received advanced training in fingerprint analysis and photogrammetry in the UK and USA.

Mabunda's expertise is widely recognised and valued. He also contributed a chapter on South African prison challenges to the book "Contemporary Issues in Criminology in Africa" published by Nova Publishers in 2021. In addition to his academic work, Mabunda has held leadership positions, including Chair of the Unisa Police Practice Department. He is also an esteemed member of various professional associations, such as the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, CRIMSA, POLSA, and the International Fingerprint Association.

Day One

Evaluating the success of South African Law Enforcement in combating drug and substance abuse: Are we winning the fight?

Research shows that higher education can be an asset for social justice in South Africa and Africa, particularly in combating drugs and substance abuse. The Youth-Network Engaged Scholarship Project (Youth-Network ES Project) conducted a site visit across various South African communities in 2024. The purpose of this project is to engage community members in discussing the effectiveness of law enforcement awareness in the fight against drugs and substance abuse. Specifically, the project aims to explore the impact of substance abuse on young participants' lives, both during and after their matriculation. For the 2024 academic year, the Youth-Network ES Project plans to collaborate with various stakeholders in Limpopo (Mokopane and Polokwane) and the Western Cape (Cape Town) to address drugs and substance abuse, as well as post-matriculation challenges faced by young people. Substance abuse among youth in the Western Cape (Cape Town community) has serious consequences. Persistent substance abuse can lead to a range of problems, including academic difficulties, health issues (including mental health), and poor peer relationships. Law enforcement involvement is crucial in addressing the question of whether they are winning the fight against drugs and substance abuse in South African communities.



Mokopane Marakalala

Mokopane Marakalala began his career as a Junior Investigator for Forensic Services at SNG Grant Thornton. He spent three years managing investigations, risk management, and corporate governance for clients in both the public and private sectors. After that, he made the transition to academia and joined the University of South Africa (Unisa) as a Postgraduate Research Assistant. As a result of his dedication and expertise, he was appointed as a permanent lecturer in the Department

of Police Practice within the College of Law in 2021. He was then promoted to Senior Lecturer in 2022.

Marakalala's research interests are focused on Forensic Science and Criminal Investigation. He has published extensively in reputable journals and has presented his work at international conferences, with a specific emphasis on forensic investigation. In addition to his research, he is actively involved in advancing the field through his roles as a Project Leader for the Youth-Network ES Project and the SLP and Textbook-Online Financial Fraud and Commercial Crime Investigation. Currently, Marakalala is a PhD candidate in Criminal Justice, specialising in Police Science, Forensic Science, and Technology. He continues to make significant contributions to his field.

Day One

Preparing students for a diverse and international working environment: Addressing graduate attributes in the module Intercultural Communication

In 2022, Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Engineering received accreditation from the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) which focused on how the university's programmes addressed graduate attributes. Specifically, the module Intercultural Communication 113 was reviewed. This module covers three of ECSA's graduate attributes (GA): GA 6: Professional and Technical Communication, GA 7: Sustainability and Impact, and GA: 8: Individual, Team, and Multidisciplinary Working. The purpose of this presentation is to highlight the methodologies used to address GA 8 in this review, which emphasises the importance of intercultural communication skills in both the university community and the workplace.

The main goal of the module is to help students move from ethnocentrism to intercultural competence. This concept involves effectively engaging with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Initially, students' intercultural competence is observed rather than assessed. The module includes project work in diverse groups, and the assessment includes qualitative reflections to gauge students' intercultural competence, which is defined as the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for effective interaction with others.



Faika Haroun

Faika Haroun, a lecturer and presenter at the Stellenbosch University Language Centre, is dedicated to enhancing students' professional and academic literacy. With over 15 years of experience in education, she has been managing and teaching Intercultural Communication for the past three years and has a longstanding tenure in teaching Professional Communication. Faika holds a Master's degree in Sociolinguistics and is currently pursuing a PhD with a focus on inclusive pedagogical methods. Her expertise and research interests reflect her commitment to fostering effective communication skills and promoting inclusive teaching practices within higher education.

Day One

Private Colleges vs Public Academic Spaces: Conversations on the Industry Readiness of Graduates

Industry readiness has long been a challenge, as graduates need to be marketable in order to enter the workforce. Factors such as demographics, cultural aspects, and adaptability all play a role, but academic support is crucial. This paper explores the concept of "graduateness" in the context of private colleges versus public universities in South Africa's higher education system.

The paper evaluates the role of academic support in both the private and public sectors, as well as comparing degrees and diplomas in terms of their suitability for developing "graduateness". Traditionally, most degrees have focused on theory, while private colleges often prioritise practical skills that are directly applicable in various industries. The paper aims to measure the projected practical value of different qualifications.

Additionally, the well-being of staff at both public and private institutions can impact students' development of "graduateness" and industry-ready skills.



Dr Carol Edson-Ashley

Carol Edson-Ashley has extensive experience in higher education as a senior lecturer in the private sector. In addition to her teaching experience, she has spent ten years working as an examiner. Carol also develops short courses, study guides, and provides freelance editing for postgraduate students. Her academic background includes undergraduate studies in literature and political philosophy, as well as postgraduate studies in linguistics, neuroscience, and philosophy.

Carol is passionate about education, special needs, and the welfare of students and academic staff. She has served as a tutor at Unisa, and has conducted research in neuropsychology, learning, and cognitive neuroscience at the University of Granada, Spain. Carol's diverse expertise reflects her strong commitment to advancing educational practices and supporting academic development.

Day One

'It takes a village to produce a graduate': Creating communities of learning through a first-year developmental course

Academic support, co-curricular activities, learning strategies, and gradueness are crucial for student development in higher education. At the University of Cape Town, the Educational Development Unit in Commerce offers DOC1103H, a developmental course that integrates these elements. This course provides academic support and learning strategies to all first-year students, helping them actively engage with their learning and prepare them for success from the beginning.

The primary goal of DOC1103H is to enhance student retention and success by fostering effective learning communities and support structures. Research shows that first-year retention is a key predictor of future success. The course emphasises the importance of building meaningful relationships with peers and staff, creating a sense of belonging that is essential for thriving in a new academic environment. A reflective teaching approach is central to the course, encouraging students to actively participate in their learning and personal growth, thus supporting their development beyond graduation.



Bonani Dube

Bonani Dube brings over a decade of experience as a Student Development Officer in the Commerce Educational Development Unit at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Her main responsibility is coordinating developmental courses for first-year students. With a Master's degree in Clinical Social Work, Bonani is passionate about the holistic well-being of students, particularly focusing on mental health.

Outside of her professional role, Bonani is a wife and mother of two boys. She also serves as a warden in one of UCT's residences. Additionally, she is a founding member of the Braids Initiative, a small organisation dedicated to inspiring young women. The organisation provides tools for self-development, which empowers these women to envision and pursue greater personal and professional growth. Bonani's commitment to mentoring and empowering others reflects her dedication to fostering positive change.

Day One

A Transformational Multidisciplinary Approach to Postgraduate Development

At the Unisa Institute for Social and Health Sciences (ISHS), we offer an ideal environment and opportunity for post-graduate students to enhance their research skills and engage critically with community-centred knowledge creation and praxis. In this presentation, I will describe the ISHS's transformational, multi-disciplinary approach to postgraduate development. Our Institute aims to foster advanced research skills and the ability to address global challenges through cross-disciplinary collaboration among scholars. By participating in our core programmes, students are exposed to a wide range of knowledge that integrates diverse academic fields, promotes innovative thinking, and encourages problem-solving.

Experiential learning is a key emphasis at our Institute, enabling post-graduate students to collaborate on real-world projects with external stakeholders, including industry and community partners. This hands-on approach ensures that students develop both theoretical expertise and practical skills in the research sector.

Through our transformational and multi-disciplinary model, we encourage innovative exploration across the social sciences, public health, and planetary studies, strengthening post-graduate students' capacity to generate solutions to real-world problems. Committed to promoting sustainability, equity, and innovation, our Institute seeks to cultivate leadership, intellectual curiosity, and societal impact through a flexible and collaborative postgraduate programme.



Dr Ghouwa Ismail

Dr Ghouwa Ismail is a senior researcher and registered research psychologist with the Health Professions Council of South Africa. She is based at the ISHS at Unisa. Her research focuses on violence, which plays a significant role in South Africa's burden of disease. Specifically, she examines the complexities, measurement, and prevention of child and youth violence. This type of violence has wide-ranging impacts on individuals, families, communities, and societies as a whole. Dr. Ismail is highly regarded by her peers for her contributions to research and publications in the field of instrument development and child safety interventions. She currently serves as the managing editor of the Social and Health Sciences Journal (SaHS) and is actively involved in Unisa's Engaged Scholarship committee and the College of Human Sciences Research Ethics committee. In 2018, she earned her PhD in Psychology from Unisa.

Day One

Recap of Day 1



Ms Adèle Blacker

Adèle Blacker is a respected leader in higher education and community development, particularly in the area of community-based learning in marginalised and resource-constrained environments. Her current research focuses on understanding how living in rural areas, being deeply embedded in the community, and facing compounded marginalisation affect the quality and relevance of education, especially in distance learning frameworks. Through her work, she has become a leading advocate for addressing the educational challenges faced by underserved communities.

Blacker's leadership extends beyond academia. She actively drives initiatives to empower communities in the Western Cape. For instance, she has led projects that provide marginalised women with income-generating skills such as bread-making and sewing, demonstrating her commitment to fostering economic independence and uplifting the community. Her dedication to social change has earned her widespread recognition and respect in the field of educational leadership.

As a leader and coordinator at Unisa, Blacker has played a crucial role in establishing strategic partnerships with local municipalities, educational institutions, and NGOs to enhance the university's community outreach efforts. One notable achievement under her leadership is the implementation of a groundbreaking robotics programme for inmates at Pollsmoor Prison. This initiative exemplifies Unisa's commitment to engaged scholarship and expanding educational opportunities for marginalised populations. Additionally, Blacker has been instrumental in organising workshops focusing on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics), youth development programmes, and entrepreneurship seminars. Many of these initiatives have become integral parts of Global Entrepreneurship Week activities in the Southern Cape.

Throughout her career, Blacker has consistently demonstrated her unwavering commitment to education, leadership, and community engagement. Her efforts have played a pivotal role in shaping inclusive and sustainable educational practices.

Day Two

Keynote Address 1

Universities have a critical responsibility to prepare graduates for the ever-changing world of work. To fulfil this responsibility, institutions of learning must create an environment that includes a curriculum that is future-proof and a wide range of co-curricular activities that nurture graduates comprehensively. By providing students with opportunities to engage in real-world settings, such as work-integrated learning, service learning, and civic engagement, they can apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts. This exposure not only bridges the gap between theory and practice, but also enhances the development of graduate attributes and essential skills. These experiential learning methods help students acquire competencies that are crucial for success in professional environments. By integrating workplace and community experiences into the educational framework, universities significantly contribute to preparing graduates who are versatile and adept at navigating the complexities of the modern workforce. This approach ensures that students are well-equipped to effectively meet future challenges and opportunities.



Prof Lalini Reddy

Director of Community Engagement and Work-Integrated Learning,
Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Professor Lalini Reddy began her academic career at Durban University of Technology in 1987 in the Department of Biotechnology and Food Science. She has a Doctorate in Biotechnology and was appointed as the Associate Director of Biotechnology in 2004.

In 2013, she joined the Cape Peninsula University of Technology's (CPUT) Faculty of Applied Science as the Faculty Work-integrated Learning Coordinator. In 2020, she became the Head of the Department of Biotechnology and Consumer Science. In 2022, Prof Reddy was appointed as the Director of the Centre for Community Engagement and Work Integrated Learning at CPUT. She believes that engaging with our quintuple helix partners is crucial for academics to effectively prepare students for the future world of work. Currently, she is working with the THENSA Entrepreneurship Education SLP (TEEP) for academics and representing CPUT on the Erasmus+ UNIICo-Create Project, which promotes entrepreneurial universities in the SADC region.

During her 26-year tenure at DUT, Prof. Reddy gained extensive experience in Curriculum Renewal, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL), Community Service Learning, General Education, International Education, and Programme Quality Audits. As a researcher in plant medicine, bioenergy, and work-integrated learning, she has supervised numerous postgraduate students and three post-doctoral fellows. Her work has been published in high-impact biotechnology peer-reviewed journals. Currently, Prof. Reddy is focused on developing future-proof curricula for higher education.

She also remains passionate about community engagement and has provided value-based education as an international teacher trainer (SSEHV) in South Africa and 11 other African countries since 2007.

Day Two

Keynote Address 2

Exploring the Role of Academic Institutions in Supporting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)



Mr Kiewiet Mhlongo

Kiewit Kuhle Mhlongo is the Acting Provincial Manager, Seda Western Cape. Born and bred in Gauteng Province, coming from a family that has embraced and lived the concept of community entrepreneurship made him to be a well networked and a seasoned technocrat in the SMME development space. Kiewit has in excess of 30 years' experience in various industries, and established conglomerates which includes, the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) in the Listing Division, and Executive Director at Master Plan Pty Ltd, and PRO Origin Business Development respectively. He has previously hosted a show on SABC TV, Vukuzenzele that featured and promoted SMMEs, giving insights on new trends in different sectors. Through this show, he was able to profile many SMMEs to access funding and markets.

Day Two

The Impact of Covid-19 and lockdown on students' lived realities at a South African University: Adopting a pedagogy of hope to realise the social purpose of higher education

Covid-19 has undoubtedly transformed the way we think about and carry out learning and teaching on a global scale. With lockdowns implemented worldwide, there has been a shift from traditional face-to-face and in-person learning to online and remote learning. This paper aims to address three key questions: (i) How did Covid-19 and the national lockdown impact students? (ii) What can we learn from this impact on students? (iii) How can we apply these lessons to create inclusive and socially responsive higher education institutions?

In 2020, a group of first-year students at a historically Black university in South Africa were asked to reflect on how Covid-19 and the lockdown affected their studies. We obtained permission from these students to share their stories and experiences. Building upon the work of Kuh et al. (2005), we argue that focusing on student engagement and adopting Freire's (2005, 2014) Pedagogy of Hope can help universities fulfil the social purpose of higher education in a post-Covid-19 era. Freire's teachings challenge us to transform oppressive conditions and create opportunities for social justice by being agents of change, reimagining and reshaping the future of higher education to enhance students' overall readiness for graduation.



Prof Venicia McGhie

Prof. Venicia McGhie is a seasoned academic with extensive experience in higher education, serving since 2002 as an academic development practitioner in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at the University of the Western Cape (UWC). She began her academic career teaching Communication Studies at the Central University of Technology in Bloemfontein before transitioning to her current role. Dr. McGhie holds a DPhil in Education from the University

of Stellenbosch, with specialisations in Education, Sociolinguistics, and Literacy.

A Fulbright Post-Doctoral Scholar, Dr. McGhie spent more than a year in the United States, contributing to academic communities at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and the University of Kentucky in Lexington, where she served as a visiting professor. Her research focuses on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, with particular emphasis on student development, support, and community engagement. As an esteemed writer, mentor, and motivational speaker, Dr. McGhie is dedicated to educating, uplifting, and empowering students, families, and broader South African communities.

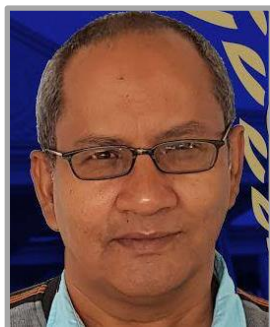
Day Two

Enhancing Physics Learning through the Problem Set-Tutorial Test Cycle

To enhance students' learning experience in physics and reduce exam stress, I implement a teaching method known as the "Problem Set-Tutorial Test Cycle," which is derived from Carl Wieman's "Two-Stage Exam" and guided by Bigg's theory. This method aligns all classroom activities and assessments with the course learning outcomes and, when applicable, UWC graduate attributes. Through a cyclical framework, I incorporate both formative and summative assessments into my teaching strategy.

The cycle begins with students completing a problem set, which they submit at the end of the cycle. This is followed by a tutorial test, designed to reinforce their understanding of the physics topics covered. To promote a flipped classroom approach and assess students' prior knowledge, pre-class tasks are assigned at the beginning of each cycle. During class, students engage in in-class tasks and receive immediate feedback. The problem sets and tutorial tests are carefully aligned with the course learning outcomes and UWC graduate attributes, thereby enhancing students' problem-solving abilities, critical thinking skills, and their ability to effectively communicate their solutions. This approach fosters both individual and collaborative work, both inside and outside the classroom.

To evaluate the effectiveness of this teaching method, a mixed-methods study was conducted involving both students and tutors. Quantitative data was collected through exam scores, while qualitative data was obtained from open-ended survey questions. Based on the feedback received from the students, it is evident that they are highly satisfied with this assessment cycle. The timely grading of problem sets and tutorial tests, coupled with immediate feedback, underscores the significant role of assessment in driving their learning progress.



Dr Mark Herbert

Dr Mark Herbert is a senior lecturer in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at the University of the Western Cape. (UWC) He obtained his PhD in Experimental Nuclear Physics from the University of Cape Town. However, his true passion lies in teaching and learning. Dr. Herbert joined UWC in 2008 as a lecturer in the Extended Degree Programme for Physics. His primary focus within the realm of teaching and learning is to foster student engagement and create curricula that actively promote student learning.

Currently, Dr Herbert teaches a first-year mainstream undergraduate physics module. In this role, he has made significant strides in designing a learning environment that encourages active student participation and success in physics. His dedication to improving student outcomes through innovative teaching practices reflects his commitment to both education and the advancement of science. Dr. Herbert continues to contribute to the academic community by combining his expertise in experimental nuclear physics with his enthusiasm for nurturing the next generation of scientists.

Day Two

Enhancing Physics Learning through the Problem Set-Tutorial Test Cycle



Dr Bako Nyikun Audu

Dr. BN Audu holds a BSc (Hons) in Physics from the University of Maiduguri, Nigeria. He then pursued a PGDE and an MEd in science education at the University of Ibadan, Nigeria. During this time, he worked at the Teachers' Training College. While his interest in radiation physics led him to study Radiation and Environmental Protection in the UK (Surrey), his passion for Physics Education drove him to pursue a PhD in 'Physics Education' at the University of the Western Cape.

His thesis serves as a significant foundation for investigating the curriculum and graduate preparedness at the Faculty level. With over two decades of academic engagement, he has been involved at all three tiers of the education system (Primary, secondary, and tertiary). His research in Physics Education Research (PER) focuses on physics graduate preparedness, physics education, and academic development. He also has a keen interest in teaching pedagogies and the use of technology in the classroom.

Day Two

Creating flexible opportunities in ODeL: Exploring the need for personalised tuition and student learning experiences in a distance learning environment

As education evolves, open, flexible, and distance learning models are leading the transformation. This article examines support structures critical to the future of distance education, with a focus on personalised learning experiences, early alert systems, and reward systems.

Personalised learning will be central to future education, as technology allows for tailoring experiences to individual needs. By analysing learner data, institutions can design customised pathways that address strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. This will enhance engagement, retention, and academic success.

Early alert systems are essential for academic monitoring, with the goal of maximising student success. Staff and students share the responsibility for this. Staff must make informed admissions decisions, provide effective coaching and evaluations, and offer continuous performance assessments and support. Students, on the other hand, are expected to commit to their studies, use available resources effectively, and complete their qualifications within the prescribed timeframe.

Lastly, reward systems serve as extrinsic motivation, encouraging students to engage in both academic and social learning experiences. This is crucial in the evolving landscape of distance education.



Rodney Mabusela

Mr Madumetja Rodney Mabusela is a distinguished academic and community leader with a strong background in community development and development studies. He holds a BA in Community Development and an Honours in Development Studies. His leadership is notable, having served on the National Student Representative Council (SRC) and as a member of the senate of Unisa. In these roles, he advocated for student rights and academic excellence.

Currently, Mr Mabusela is a PR Councillor in the Tshwane Municipality. In this position, he addresses community needs and drives local development initiatives. Additionally, he is a lecturer in Development Planning, where he fosters critical thinking and supports student success through his work with the Student Retention Unit. Mr Mabusela's dedication to education and community service underscores his significant impact in both fields.

Day Two

Creating flexible opportunities in ODeL: Exploring the need for personalised learning experiences through monitoring and staff participation in distance learning



Clifford Itumeleng Molefe

Mr Clifford Itumeleng Molefe is an esteemed educator and community leader who has a remarkable track record of service and academic success. His leadership journey began with his involvement in the Regional and National Student Representative Councils (SRC) at Unisa, where he also served on the Institutional Forum. Mr Molefe's dedication to youth development is evident through his work as a LoveLife educator, where he implemented programmes in schools and established youth-friendly clinics.

He further demonstrated his commitment as a Unisa Peer Helper, where he provided guidance to students on career and subject choices, and as an Administration Officer, where he assisted with NSFAS applications and tutorial classes. As a Career Guidance Officer at the National Youth Development Agency, he offered crucial career advice and support. Academically, Mr Molefe obtained a BSc in Dietetics, a BA in Health and Social Services, and a BA Honours in Psychology at Unisa. Currently, he is pursuing a Master's in Psychological Research and lectures in the Department of Psychology at Unisa, teaching PYC1501 and PYC3705. Additionally, he serves as a Student Retention Practitioner.

Day Two

Advancing adult learning and development in the red-zone districts of the Cape Flats: Inclusion and educational mobility through an Adult Night School initiative

The Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown have drastically affected socio-economic conditions globally, with the Cape Flats in South Africa experiencing severe repercussions. These include job losses, business closures, increased mortality rates, and heightened school dropouts, exacerbating poverty and marginalisation. The psychological toll on households, especially in already vulnerable communities, has been immense, as once viable livelihoods have become unattainable.

While educational and leadership theories provide some insight, they fall short of addressing the lived realities of crime, violence, and persistent inequality. In response, the Hopeful Leaders Night School was founded in 2020 at the height of the pandemic. This initiative offers a holistic approach to adult education, emphasising the link between education and poverty alleviation. By engaging adults in formal education, particularly in red zone areas of the Cape Flats, the programme has positively impacted not only the individuals but also their families. Many alumni have successfully transitioned to universities and TVET colleges, demonstrating the initiative's success in fostering social mobility.



Yumna Alexander

Yumna Alexander is an inspiring educator and community leader dedicated to transforming lives through education, particularly in the vulnerable red zone areas of the Cape Flats. With a degree in Education from the Two Oceans Graduate Institute, she has pioneered various co-curricular literacy programs, including in-class reading clubs, Spelling Bee and Vocabulary Competitions, and academic reflection initiatives. These programmes encourage learners to approach education holistically,

helping them to thrive academically and personally.

In 2020, Alexander's entrepreneurial spirit led her to establish the Hopeful Leaders Night School, which helps adults achieve their school leaving certificates. Operating in seven areas of the Cape Flats, the school attracts thousands of applicants annually, reflecting her belief in lifelong learning.

As a staunch advocate for education, Alexander serves as an ambassador for organisations that champion transformative change in underserved communities. Her work has significantly impacted individuals and fostered a culture of continuous learning and empowerment.

Day Two

Social media platforms as alternate pedagogical spaces: The integration of TikTok to facilitate English language development in formal learning environments

New media technologies have transformed teaching, creating digital spaces that enhance learning through the integration of textual, aural, and visual elements. Social media applications like TikTok are increasingly used to complement formal education, offering transformative digital spaces that address logistical issues and reshape student interaction, communication, and learning. TikTok, a video-sharing platform, has become highly popular since its 2016 launch, with over 2 billion mobile downloads and 17.46 million active users in South Africa alone.

This study explores the use of TikTok in English language education, examining how it supports academic language skills development among high school learners in a hybrid learning setting. The research focuses on the relationship between conventional classroom practices and the role of digital identity among Generation Z and Generation Alpha in learning via social media. The findings suggest that social media applications like TikTok offer accessible, innovative, and creative methods for students to enhance their academic language skills, better preparing them for classroom success.



Cohen Charles

Teacher and Education Consultant, Hopeful Leaders Night School

Cohen Charles is an educator from Cape Town with a B.A. (Hons) in Media Studies and Linguistics from the University of the Western Cape (UWC), where he graduated summa cum laude. He further specialised in Generative Syntax and intercultural studies at the University of Oslo, Norway. Cohen also holds a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) from UWC.

Cohen's impact extends beyond academia to social media, where his TikTok education channel in English studies has garnered a substantial following. Since 2020, he has been dedicated to adult education at the Hopeful Leaders Night School on the Cape Flats, providing educational opportunities in high-crime and red zone areas of the Cape Flats.

Currently pursuing a Master of Education degree at the University of Cape Town, Cohen focuses on integrating social media into education, aiming to bridge gaps in motivation and opportunity while enhancing connections between communities and educational environments.

Day Two

Revolutionising Justice: How the Incarceration Nations Network is Pioneering Transformative Prison Reform

The Incarceration Nations Network (INN) is a global network that supports and popularises innovative prison reform and justice, reimagining efforts around the world. As part of its commitment to transnational solidarity, this network actively raises awareness about mass incarceration and addresses the challenges of a prison-based system of justice in mainstream international contexts. In South Africa, INN has started to change the narrative about prisons and the people in them by producing informative and accessible content related to incarceration and community safety.

This presentation will focus on progressive programmes that have taken place in South Africa and internationally, and how radical imagination can reshape our approach to justice on a global and local level. Additionally, this presentation will highlight how this international platform can support higher education institutions in building more understanding communities and reducing recidivism.



Kofi Danso

Incarceration Nations Network (INN)

Danso is the Reintegration Leader at the Ubuntu Learning Community (ULC), a partnership between Brandvlei Correctional Centre and Stellenbosch University, launched as part of the Prison-to-College Pipeline-SA initiative. In this role he works with students coming home from prison, supporting them in all aspects of their reintegration and their continued studies. Danso was himself enrolled in this programme while incarcerated and is now completing his LLB law degree with Unisa. He is also a curator for INN's The Writing on The Wall installation, and a sought-after public speaker and moderator.

Day Two

Enhancing Postgraduate Success: Unveiling Innovative Academic Support Strategies in a Residential University Setting

This presentation focuses on the important role of comprehensive academic support in promoting success among postgraduate students. Recent research has shown that integrating systemic, affective, and cognitive support mechanisms tailored to the unique challenges faced by postgraduates are crucial. By exploring these strategies in detail, the presentation highlights how taking a holistic approach to support can greatly improve academic outcomes and student well-being. Additionally, it stresses the value of co-curricular activities as essential tools for developing graduate attributes such as leadership, critical thinking, and adaptability.

By connecting academic support with these co-curricular opportunities, the presentation offers practical insights for educators and administrators who want to create a strong, supportive environment that not only addresses the academic needs of postgraduate students but also prepares them for success in their future careers.



Giles Stevens

Giles Stevens began his educational journey at the prestigious Camphill School in England, where he gained expertise in providing specialised support to students with unique academic needs. He then moved to Camphill in Hermanus, South Africa, before he joined the learning support team at Unisa in Cape Town. At Unisa, he became a facilitator on academic literacies and the integration of digital learning tools to first year students.

Currently, at UWC, Giles assists in shaping the academic success of postgraduate students by offering comprehensive academic administrative support. His focus includes graduate readiness, career advising, and promoting co-curricular activities to enhance the student experience. Giles also collaborates with the Faculty Representative Council to improve online support services, showcasing his forward-thinking approach to modern education. With an unwavering passion for student success and innovation in education, Stevens continues to make a significant impact in his field.

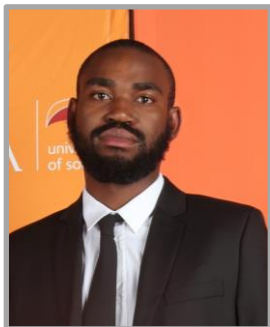
Day Two

From Student to Professional: How the Unisa Law Clinic transforms legal education

The Unisa Law Clinic plays a pivotal role in transforming legal education by providing hands-on experience and professional exposure to both undergraduate and postgraduate students. It offers affordable legal aid services, providing representation to individuals who cannot access private legal practitioners, thus addressing gaps in access to justice.

The Law clinic is staffed by qualified attorneys and candidate attorneys, making it an invaluable training ground for aspiring legal professionals. In addition to its core legal services, the Clinic enriches the academic experience through co-curricular activities such as Moot Court, Student Debates, Indabas, and Street Law initiatives. These activities allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios, develop critical legal skills, and gain insights into the practical workings of the legal system. By bridging academic learning with professional practice, the Unisa Law Clinic significantly enhances students' preparedness for the legal profession and contributes to their overall career readiness.

This presentation focuses on the roles of the Unisa Law Clinic and how it has transformed legal education for distance learning students since its inception.



Reckon Beau Mathebula

Beau Mathebula is a dedicated legal professional currently working as a Legal Messenger at the Unisa Law Clinic in Cape Town. He has been employed there since 2022. Mathebula holds an LLB degree, which he obtained in 2022, and he is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Law with a specialisation in Comparative Labour Law. In addition to his academic achievements, Mathebula has also demonstrated a strong commitment to the legal field through his previous role as a union

official from 2019 to 2022. During this time, he actively participated in various committees, including the UWC Readmission Committee in 2021. Mathebula's diverse experience showcases his passion for advancing legal practice and his unwavering dedication to justice and labour law.

Day Two

Bridging the Gap: Enhancing Graduate Attributes through Co-Curricular Engagement at a Distance Learning University

This paper examines the significant role that co-curricular engagement plays in developing the graduate attributes of distance learning students in an open and distance learning environment. It specifically focuses on the initiatives led by the Student Counselling department at the Unisa Western Cape campus, which aim to equip students with the skills and competencies necessary to excel in a competitive job market. A key aspect of these initiatives is the bi-weekly, hour-long lunchtime sessions facilitated by the career counsellor. During these sessions, undergraduate and postgraduate students gain valuable insights into career readiness. Not only do these sessions introduce students to employer expectations, but they also offer personalised guidance on aligning their academic accomplishments with professional opportunities. By promoting an understanding of crucial graduate attributes like leadership, career-forecasting, problem-solving, and effective communication, these initiatives aim to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world applications. The paper emphasises the importance of co-curricular awareness in empowering distance learners to unlock their full potential and smoothly transition into their chosen careers.



Chantal Adams

Chantal Adams holds a Masters degree from the University of Cape Town and works as a career counsellor at an Open Distance Learning (ODL) university. In her role, she provides both career and personal counselling services, with a particular emphasis on study skills, career readiness and academic wellness. Adams plays a pivotal role in preparing students for the job market by offering guidance on aligning their academic pursuits. With professional goals in mind, she collaborates with high school educators on career forecasting projects. Her aim is to help them develop credible online footprints, which in turn enhance their career prospects. Adams' work is driven by her strong dedication to fostering success for both students and educators.

Day Two: Closing Remarks and Word of Thanks



Mr Jacques Du Toit

Unisa Western Cape

Jacques du Toit is a former Chairperson of the Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of Southern Africa (HELTASA) Writing Centres (SIG), former Unisa Regional and National Research Committee Chairperson, former Unisa Regional Quality Chairperson, national Quality Secretariat Chair, former Deputy Chairperson of the

Performance Arts Network of Southern Africa (PANSAs) and former Chairperson of the Board of the Association for Visual Arts (AVA). In addition, he held various positions in Higher Education including Chairperson of Open Distance e-Learning Research in Regions, Academic Literacies Task Team Executive for Student Support, Researcher in Student Success Programmes and research mentor to postgraduate students across various universities.

Socially, he has extensive experience in activism and e-activism, focusing on human and language rights, gender and class inequalities, academic and social literacies and social justice. He is a former academic, who now serves as an academic coordinator and works with a variety of organisations locally, transnationally and globally in both advisory and focus-driven capacity, concentrating on strategic leadership and change management, research, sustainability, and in quality managing the impact of change in marginalised and poor communities whilst advocating equality. He has worked as an MC for both local and international events as is devoted in steering ways to eliminate social dissonance in modern day society.

For over 20 years, Jacques has dedicated himself to projects that empower first-generation university students. He uses writing as a powerful tool to encourage critical thinking, foster social and political discourse, and create strong community connections among youth and professionals in rural and township areas.

THANK YOU

Thank you for your attendance and participation at this year's Academic Development Symposium. We trust that you have found these presentations relevant and stimulating. We look forward to seeing you at our 2024 symposium.