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2021

28th Annual Conference

of the Southern
African Association for
Institutional Research

SAAIR 2021 Conference

the University of the Free State
Hosted by
the University of the Free State

Adaptable, resilient, and future-centric higher education

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PRESIDENT'S INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Dear Conference Delegates,

The SAAIR conference is one of the major events in our annual calendar as an association. In a way, it summarizes all the SAAIR events which have taken place during the course of the year, with all of the members of the association coming together to share their research and experiences under one platform.

The SAAIR's annual conference is arguably Southern Africa's largest gathering of higher education professionals working in IR, assessment, planning, and related post-secondary education fields. The conference features presentations by delegates representing all sectors of higher education and accommodates exhibition stalls that feature some of the latest tools and resources supporting data use and decision making.

I am pleased to say that this year's conference is finally here and promises to be an exciting scientific event and a conducive platform for exchange of ideas among the delegates. The SAAIR 2021 Conference, which is the 28th installment, is hosted by the University of the Free State (UFS). The UFS team has managed to come up with an interesting and relevant theme for the conference which is "*Adaptable, Resilient, and Future-Centric Higher Education*".

The conference presentations will touch on the various sub-themes which include – *Student success and access; Transformation in higher*

education; Student and Staff well-being; and predictive power of IR. A significant change this year is that high-quality papers will be published as peer-reviewed conference proceedings.

In addition to the submitted papers, we have an interesting line-up of local and international invited key note speakers (*Prof Ahmed Bawa – USAf; Dr Manja Klemenčič – Harvard University; Dr Gina Johnson – NCHEMS*) who will be sharing their extensive research expertise with the conference delegates.

We also have other interesting sessions such as the – Pre-Conference workshop (Day 1); Panel Discussions; Book Launch; Presentation session by our sponsors (IDSC & Quantum Education Systems); and a special session featuring the SAAIR IR Scholars.

I am looking forward to your participation and engagement in this year's conference. Please enjoy the conference sessions.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr Mxolisi Masango
The SAAIR President

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

SAAIR Executive Committee

PRESIDENT: Dr Mxolisi Masango

VICE PRESIDENT: Liile Lerato Lekena

TREASURER: Allison Mlitwa

CONFERENCE CHAIR: Mathole Macwele

MEMBER: Lisa Cloete

MEMBER: Ashton Maherry

MEMBER: Naveena Moodley

MEMBER: Elizabeth Boo

SAAIR OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR/COORDINATOR:
Carin Strydom

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE PLANNING COMMITTEE

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SENIOR DIRECTOR: Liana Griesel

DIRECTOR: Lise Kriel

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: Taabo Mugume

OFFICER: Semira Pillay

OFFICER: Enna Moroeroe

OFFICER: Mathole Macwele

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Manja Klemenčič is a Lecturer on Sociology and Lecturer in General Education at Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University and Associate Researcher at Centre for Educational Policy Studies, University of Ljubljana. She researches, teaches, advises and acts as a consultant in the area of sociology and politics of higher education and international and comparative higher education. Among her latest publications are The Routledge Handbook



Gina Johnson is a Senior Associate at NCHEMS. In this role, she works to help institutions and systems enhance data-informed decisions making. Her work is concentrated most heavily on developing analytics, institutional research, assessment, and evaluation capacity, particularly through strategic partnerships, collaborations, and data and analytics projects.



Previously, Gina served as the Assistant Executive Director for Partnerships & Membership at the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) where she helped IR professionals reimagine and enhance their capacity to provide sophisticated data-informed decision making in their institutions and systems. She also developed strategic partnerships, including collaborative work with EDUCAUSE and NACUBO, bringing together IT, Business and Finance, and IR around the topic of analytics, and with organizations focused on access and outcomes for underrepresented students, particularly students who identify as Latinx, through work with HSIs, and military connected students. Gina has over 20 years of experience in the field of education, including teaching, policy analysis, institutional research, and association management.

Gina earned her Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from the University of Minnesota and holds an M.A. from the University of Minnesota and a B.S. from Winona State University.

of Student Centered Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and thematic section on Elite and Mass Higher Education in The International Encyclopedia of Higher Education Systems and Institutions. Since 2014, Klemenčič has served as Editor-in-Chief of European Journal of Higher Education, and since 2015, as Co-Editor of the Bloomsbury book series Understanding Student Experiences of Higher Education.

PROGRAMME

Ahmed Bawa is the CEO of Universities South Africa. Until 2016, he was Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Durban University of Technology. He also served as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the Durban Centre of the University of Natal (later to be the University of KwaZulu-Natal).



At the City University of New York, he was faculty member in the Department of Physics and Astronomy at Hunter College and a member of the doctoral faculty at the Graduate Center. He was appointed Associate Provost for Curriculum Development. He holds a PhD in Theoretical Physics from Durham University in the UK.

As the Program Officer for Higher Education in Africa with the Ford Foundation he led the Foundation's African Higher Education Initiative. In this portfolio he worked in South Africa, Namibia, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Egypt and Palestine.

He serves on a number of advisory boards such as the South African Institute of Distance Education, the Centre for the Aids Programme of Research of South Africa and the Higher Education Support Programme of the Open Society Foundation.

START	END	DURATION	ACTIVITY
DAY 1			
TUESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2021			
08:00	08:50	00:50	Registration Main Room (Blackboard Link)
08:50	09:00	00:10	Welcome - Mathole Macwele, UFS
PARALLEL PRE-CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS			
Room 1 (Blackboard Link)		Room 2 (Blackboard Link)	
09:00	11:00	02:00	Workshop 1: Article writing for institutional researchers - Dr Pamela Makati, UFS
			Workshop 3: The POPIA balancing act in higher education - Mikhael Cain, Novcon
11:00	11:15	00:15	BREAK
11:15	13:15	02:00	Workshop 2: Data literacy for institutional researchers - Innocent Mamvura, Wits
			Workshop 4: Getting started with Learning Analytics - George Siemens, Society for Learning Analytics Research
13:15	13:30	00:15	Closure - Mathole Macwele, UFS
DAY 2			
WEDNESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2021			
07:30	08:00	00:30	Registration Main Room (Blackboard Link)
PLENARY SESSION			
08:00	08:15	00:15	Welcome - Dr Mxolisi Masango, SAAIR President
08:15	08:45	00:30	Opening address - Prof Francis Petersen, UFS
08:45	09:30	00:45	Keynote address - Prof Ahmed Bawa, USAf
09:30	10:30	01:00	Panel discussion - Student success and access: assessment, pedagogy, digitalisation - Prof JF Strydom, UFS, Prof R Osman, Wits
10:30	10:45	00:15	BREAK

START	END	DURATION	ACTIVITY
PARALLEL SESSIONS			
Room 1 (Blackboard Link)		Room 2 (Blackboard Link)	
Chair - Liile Lekena, MUT Understanding transformation through the lenses of student success and access		Chair - Lise Kriel, UFS Institutional researchers as agents of change and transformation in higher education	
10:45	11:15	00:30	R Lottering - TUT The impact of lock down on student performance: a case study
11:15	11:45	00:30	M. Joubert, R. Posthumus - UFS When machine learning meets literacy testing: levelling the playing field.
11:45	12:15	00:30	Dr. L Maciko - UKZN, L Kondlo - UFH Measuring Factors affecting graduation and student dropout rates at the University of KwaZulu-Natal
12:15	12:45	00:30	Dr F Petersen, R Arendse - UWC Lessons learnt from piloting the data-free Moya Messenger application in a large class
12:45	13:00	00:15	BREAK
PLENARY SESSION			
13:00	13:45	00:45	Closure - Dr Mxolisi Masango, SAAIR President
13:45	14:15	00:30	Special session: Book launch - Prof Jan Botha, SUN (Blackboard Link)

START	END	DURATION	ACTIVITY
DAY	3	THURSDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2021	
08:00	08:45	00:45	Registration Main Room (Blackboard Link)
PLENARY SESSION			
08:45	09:00	00:15	Welcome - Taabo Mugume, UFS
09:00	10:00	01:00	Panel - Student and staff wellbeing in the changing higher education landscape - Dr M Madiope, T Mahlatsi, UFS

START	END	DURATION	ACTIVITY
10:00	10:15	00:15	BREAK
10:15	11:15	01:00	AGM
PARALLEL SESSIONS			
Room 1 (Blackboard Link)		Room 2 (Blackboard Link)	
Chair - Dr Mxolisi Masango, SAAIR Understanding transformation through the lenses of student success and access (<i>continued</i>)		Chair - Mathole Macwele, UFS Students and staff well-being in the rapidly changing higher education landscape	
11:15	11:45	00:30	A Maherry, Dr K Parker - DUT An Institutional Approach to identifying Programmes at Risk as part of the Moving the Middle project at the Durban University of Technology
11:45	12:15	00:30	V Dwayi - WSU Re-imagining effective management of student academic performance, engaging the systems that keep on backfiring!
12:15	12:45	00:30	L Mangena, V Makananise, A Mafhara - UNIZULU Enhancing Student Success Through Foundation Programmes: Zooming into the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) Foundation Programme
12:45	13:15	00:30	Dr Z Masuku, UKZN, Dr M Nhlapo - DUT Student Evaluations' Response Rate in times of COVID-19 is a Concern. How should Student Evaluations be conducted to enhance access and success?
13:15	13:30	00:15	BREAK
PLENARY SESSION			
13:30	14:15	00:45	Keynote - Dr Manja Klemenčič, Harvard University
14:15	14:45	00:30	Sponsor session - IDSC and Quantum Education Systems
14:45	15:00	00:15	Closure - Taabo Mugume, UFS

PANELISTS BIOGRAPHIES

START	END	DURATION	ACTIVITY
DAY	4		FRIDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2021
07:30	08:00	00:30	Registration Main Room (Blackboard Link)
PLENARY SESSION			
08:00	08:15	00:15	Welcome - Liana Griesel, UFS
08:15	09:00	00:45	Keynote - Dr Gina Johnson, NCHEMS
09:00	10:00	01:00	Panel - Future of higher education in Southern Africa - Prof Lis Lange, UCT, Dr Engela van Staden, UFS
10:00	10:15	00:15	BREAK
PARALLEL SESSIONS			
Room 1 (Blackboard Link)		Room 2 (Blackboard Link)	
Chair - Elizabeth Booi, UWC The predictive power of institutional research		Chair - Allison Mlitwa, SUN Open theme	
10:15	10:45	00:30	Dr L Maciko, S Nguna - UKZN The Role of Institutional Research on integrating Students Voice in Reimagining Teaching and Learning at UKZN
			Prof L Archer - UWC Big Brother is watching: Orwellian warnings of online-proctoring
10:45	11:15	00:30	J Viljoen, M Grobler - NWU Enabling Data Science: Scoping projects towards achieving insights
			F Mdluli, L Makuapane, RG Wagner, T Muloiwa, T Kaneli - Wits, Dr M Masango - UP Challenges and opportunities of teaching online: Reflecting on ERT in 2020
11:15	11:45	00:30	Dr M Kebalepile - UP The development of a classification model that describes attributes of first-generation student with a likelihood to remain in their program and progress to the next academic level 1
			Prof M Smith, Prof M du Plessis, Prof J Frantz, E Wagener - UWC Global citizenship in higher education institutions during COVID-19 in the SADC region
11:45	12:15	00:30	Dr SY Dockrat - TUT Empowering student support practitioners to optimize a tracking system
			M Macwele - UFS The effects of COVID-19 on graduate employability at a South African university
12:15	12:30	00:15	BREAK
PLENARY SESSION			
12:30	13:00	00:30	Special session - SAAIR Young IR Scholars, SAAIR
13:00	13:15	00:15	Closure - Liana Griesel, UFS

PROF FRANCOIS STRYDOM

Senior Director: Teaching and Learning
University of the Free State

Prof. Francois Strydom is currently the Senior Director of Teaching and Learning at the University of the Free State. He has been the project leader of the South African Surveys of Student Engagement (SASSE) since 2007. The SASSE project, sponsored by the Kresge Foundation, currently works with 17 public higher education institutions across the country. The SASSE has influenced national quality assurance practices and is a key component of the Siyaphumelela (We succeed) network focused on improving student success in higher education through the use of data analytics. Prof Strydom has collaborated on various higher education initiatives related to access and success with higher education consortiums. He is the recipient of various research grants and has published several articles focused on higher education issues. His research interests include student engagement and success, improving the quality of teaching and learning, and evidence-based change in higher education.

PROFESSOR RUKSANA OSMAN

Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic
University of the Witwatersrand

Professor Ruksana Osman is the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic at the University of the Witwatersrand. Prior to this appointment, she served as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Advancement, Human Resources and Transformation, as the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, and as the Head of the School of Education. Her experience in higher education spans the full range of roles at all levels of institutional management, governance, and leadership. A Professor of Education, Osman

has extensive teaching and research experience in the field of teacher education and higher education. She has an established reputation for impactful scholarly work in the broad fields of higher education policy, pedagogy and students' lived experiences of equity and access to higher education. She is known for the connections she has made between research-centred and research-led approaches to learning and teaching and the transformative practices of learning contexts such as schools and universities. Professor Osman holds the UNESCO Chair in Teacher Education for Diversity and Development and has established a global network to support the research and development work of the Chair. She is widely published in the academic and popular press, and is the author or co-author of multiple papers, journal articles and books. She is the co-editor of *Research-led teacher education: Case studies of possibilities* (2012); *Large class pedagogy: Interdisciplinary perspectives for quality higher education* (2013); *Service learning in South Africa* (2013); *Transforming teaching and learning in higher education: Towards a socially just pedagogy in a global context* (2017); and *Teacher education for diversity: Conversations from the Global South* (2018), amongst others. An elected member of the Academy of Sciences of South Africa, Professor Osman is recognised for the quality and relevance of her work in higher education as a teacher and researcher in pursuit of socially just education

DR MARINKIE MADIOPE

South Campus Principal
University of Free State.

Marinkie Madiope is the Campus Principal of the Distance and ELearning Campus at the University of Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. She graduated from the University of the North with a BA; BED; University of Johannesburg Masters in Computer Based Instruction; PHD at the University

of South Africa Her studies focussed on using Mobile technology for research proposal writing . Marinkie also holds the following certificates; Staff Development Technology in an Integrated Curriculum from the National School Board Association, Alexandria, USA; Online Education and Training course through the University of London. She is a certified assessor and moderator; she is also a certified Ethics officer.

Her research interest area is ICT, Curriculum design and development and Gender based violence. She has presented and published papers locally and internationally. She has supervised both Masters and Doctoral students. Expertise in ELearning is also one of her strong points; she has designed the Unisa Online Ethics course, which was launched in Geneva in 2015.

As part of community engagement she is visible among the little-humans in the Africa Crèche Project to empowering women through the role she plays serving as the Chairperson of the Unisa Women's forum, where she has grown the membership of UNISA women from 300 to 550. Marinkie is always there to care for women big and small. Dr **Madiope** is the **winner** of the Gender Activism: Advocacy and Promotion of Women's Rights and 2013, University of South Africa Woman of the Year awards 2013. She is also the recipient UNISA 2013 Best performer. Dr Madiope also lunched the University of Free State women forum in 2021.

Dr Madiope have also worked on several projects within the African Union, to name a few she was a task team member of the Virtual University of Africa, Task team member for design and development of the transformative leadership course for the AU etc. In seeking to build a cadre of policy and decision-makers who would champion STI and emerging technologies, AUDA-NEPAD and APET in collaboration with the African Union Commission, established the

Calestous Juma Executive Dialogue on Innovation and Emerging Technologies (CJED) in 2018 and Marinkie have been appointed as one of technical team members for the 2020 Innovation and emerging technologies by NEPAD. Dr Madiope is also the Vice- President for the Calestous Juma Executive dialogue on Innovation and Emerging Technologies. Dr Madiope is also an editorial board member for the African Peer Review Mechanism.

DR ENGELA VAN STADEN

Vice Rector Academic

University of the Free State

Dr Engela van Staden is the Vice Rector Academic at the University of the Free State. Preceding this position, she was the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Community Engagement at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University. She was also the Chief Director in the Department of Higher Education and Training responsible for inter alia human resource development for the higher education system, enrolment planning, establishing the new universities and new entities such as the SA Maritime Institute, academic programme management, planning the national information and application service known as the CAS, distance learning, demerger of the University of Limpopo, establishing SMU as the third new University, developing the reporting regulations and analyzing the universities financial annual reports and annual performance plans. One of her responsibilities as a project manager was the planning of the function shift of the Agricultural colleges and the Nursing Colleges. She was involved in various National and International projects, either as a member or project leader, where the projects contributed to Middle Management Capacity Building, Institutional restructuring, Curriculum development, Quality assurance, Strategic planning, and Information

Technology Improvement and the development of performance indicators for the UoT sector.

She presented various keynote addresses and papers at national and international conferences with specific focus inter alia on Globalization of Higher Education; Planning within the transformation phase of higher education; Funding and resourcing higher education, Quality risks in the merger process; Transformation from a Teaching and Learning perspective. She started her career as a high school teacher in Physical Science, Biology and Mathematics in Mogali city / Krugersdorp and was seconded as Acting Deputy Principal to the Johannesburg College of Education – Gifted child centre during this period. She became a Senior Lecturer in Natural Science Education at the then Technikon Northern Gauteng in Soshanguve and later the Dean of the Faculty of Education. Thereafter her career changed to Strategic and Institutional Planning which was necessary in terms of the merger of Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North West and Technikon Pretoria, which became the Tshwane University of Technology. Many plans, strategies, policies and technical reports, from an academic, national and institutional perspective have been produced through her leadership and pen.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR LIS LANGE

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning

University of Cape Town

A/Prof Lis Lange is currently Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning at the University of Cape Town. Until January 2018 she was Vice-Rector: Academic at the University of the Free State (UFS) a position she held since 2014. Before this, she was Senior Director heading the Directorate for Institutional Research and

Academic Planning at the same university. Before joining the UFS in 2011, she was the Executive Director (2006-2010) of the Higher Education Quality Committee of the Council of Higher Education (CHE), and Acting CEO of the same organisation between August 2007 and April 2008. She has been involved in the development and implementation of science and technology and higher education policy in South Africa for a decade and a half, working in different capacities at the Human Sciences Research Council, the National Research Foundation and the Council on Higher Education.

A/Prof Lange has served as a member of the board of the International Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) and has participated in several international initiatives on quality assurance. She was the editor of an academic journal focused on the humanities, *Acta Academica*, and is a board member and reviewer of other South African academic journals focused on higher education. She has undertaken research and published in the fields of history, higher education and quality assurance both locally and internationally. A/Prof Lange's research interests are focused on the philosophy and politics of education. She has done research on change in higher education as well as on the meanings and possibilities of the notion of transformation, especially at curricular level. Her current work explores the vitality of Hannah Arendt's thinking to understand higher education. Prof Lange studied in Argentina, Mexico and South Africa, where she obtained a PhD in South African history from the University of the Witwatersrand in 1998.

TSHEPANG MAHLATSI

Student

University of the Free State

Tshepang Mahlatsi (He/him/his) holds a Bachelor of Laws (LL.B) degree from the University of the Free State, and He is currently enrolled for a Master of Laws (LL.M) specialising in Mercantile Law (Labour) at UFS. His masters' dissertation is a legal response to excessive stress leading to depression in frontline-workers during the covid-19 pandemic.

As an undergraduate student at the University of the Free State, because of his personal experience with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and Depression, Mahlatsi established, and student mental health advocacy NPO called Next Chapter. This organisation aims to raise mental health awareness amongst the students, advocate for better student support, and de-stigmatise mental health within the student communities and University spaces.

As a speaker and an activist, Mahlatsi is interested in law and social justice, mental health, leadership, and advocacy of the rights of the marginalised groups, including the LGBTQI communities and people living with specific disabilities in the higher education sector.

PRESENTER ABSTRACTS

Title: An Institutional Approach to identifying Programmes at Risk as part of the Moving the Middle project at the Durban University of Technology

Presenters: A Maherry, Dr K Parker - DUT

ABSTRACT

Universities of Technology (UoTs) are traditionally linked "with workforce development" and have long been constrained by a tightly prescribed technical/vocational curriculum with very little or no social science component. The demand that students must graduate with skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that will enable them to participate fully both as citizens and professionals requires a critical paradigm shift in the way in which we envisage our mandate as a UoT in South Africa. DUT's curriculum and pedagogy has been intentionally designed to prepare our graduates for employment, while simultaneously preparing them for critical citizenship in an emergent and still fragile democracy. Programmes within DUT offer a rigid curriculum with few options for electives. As a result students often are forced to repeat modules in the curriculum structure until they pass and are

able to progress. The Moving the Middle project used a full-time equivalent approach to identify programmes where students are at risk of not graduating in minimum time and are stuck in the "middle". The approach was also successful in taking an institutional deficit view rather than a student "deficit" and shifted the discourse to focus on the institution and how the institution is not sufficiently prepared for the students it is accepting.

Keywords: *at-risk; full-time equivalents; university of technology*

Title: Enabling Data Science: Scoping projects towards achieving insights

Presenters: J Viljoen, M Grobler - NWU

ABSTRACT

Data Science is an essential part of higher education, and data science techniques are vastly applied. Data Science projects, however, cannot effectively be carried out without essential role players' input and key criteria being identified. Picking suitable techniques and models to apply to data comes second to a proper scoping of

the project at hand; understanding *what* is truly required of the project and *why* it is important should be given priority over the *how*.

The aim is to provide a framework that facilitates the process of Data Science Project Scoping to increase the likelihood of project success by addressing various areas in the scoping process that might be overlooked.

Title: The effects of COVID-19 on graduate employability at a South African university

Presenter: M Macwele - UFS

ABSTRACT

One of the major motivations for students to get into an institution of higher learning is improving their employability. However, over the past decade, South Africa has seen a large increase in the number of unemployed youth both matriculants and tertiary-level graduates. Unemployment reached 34.40% in the second quarter of 2021. Moreover, South Africa has struggled with low economic growth in the past several years. However, the situation was made worse by the stubborn Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore, the current economic environment concerning graduate employment is extremely turbulent and thus, it is a difficult time to enter the labour market for the first time. Regarding the case study university, a survey conducted from December 2020-April 2021 reveals that only 34% of the 2020 graduates were able to acquire jobs. This is a notable drop from the previous years. Further, unemployment affected young, African, female undergraduates from social science-related studies

Title: Building resilience in the Higher Education Sector, Case of Mauritius

Presenters: Prof R Mohee, Dr A Durbarry – Mauritius Higher Education Commission

ABSTRACT

Mauritius had successfully stamped out the community spread of COVID-19 in June 2020 but a resurgence of local cases struck the island in March 2021. As the regulator for the sector, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) conducted surveys to assess the state of higher education pre-lockdown and during the lockdown period. To complement the quantitative data collected through the online survey, the Commission concurrently conducted a focus group meeting after the first lockdown. Participants from both public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), shared insights on the challenges emerging from the pandemic, measures undertaken in response thereto and the new approaches to adapt to make higher education more resilient in future similar circumstances. HEIs in Mauritius exhibited flexibility and innovations as they pivoted operations and communications to online platforms and fully conscious of the need for an adapted and sustainable National ODL Policy, the HEC initiated national consultations with selected stakeholders in the Higher Education Sector as part of the SADC ODL Strategic Plan 2021-2030. Based on the challenges and opportunities derived from the COVID-19 pandemic, five key enablers were identified to build resilience in the Higher Education Sector and a framework was developed for the Higher Education sector of Mauritius. It represents a phased reform process that allows a gradual progress in a new normal.

Title: Knowing, Doing and Transforming: Developing an implementation framework for building institutional capacity towards a data-informed culture at Durban University of Technology

Presenters: A Maherry, Dr K Parker, N Muller - DUT

ABSTRACT

Our journey of creating and maturing Institutional Research at DUT, through the Siyaphumelela 1.0 project and the Siyaphumelela bonus grant project, lead us to the realisation that the key impacts we sought would evolve from *knowing* our data (accessibility and ability to use data), *doing* (being guided in our daily decisions and work by our data) and *impacting* (which we later changed to *transforming*) the lives of staff and students (through effective decision-making and policy implementation). Our ultimate goal is to create impact, and hence the design, implementation and evaluation of our activities must be impact-focused. The objective of this study is to propose an implementation framework for Higher Education Institutions who want to foster and develop a data culture at their institutions. This framework integrates the facets of Implementing, Evaluating and Impacting. Finally, we use the results of DUT Data Day, the reimagined DUT Institutional Research conference, to validate our framework, and evaluate the development of an evidence-based culture at the University.

Keywords: *culture change; evidence-based decision making; implementation framework*

Title: Challenges and opportunities of teaching online: Reflecting on ERT in 2020

Presenters: F Mdluli, L Makuapane, RG Wagner, T Muloiwa, T Kaneli, M Masango

ABSTRACT

Background: In response to challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of emergency remote teaching (ERT) on staff, we examined the impact of COVID-19 on teaching and learning (T&L) and Wits' staff's experiences with ERT.

Methods: Anonymized data were collected in 2020 using online survey and focus group discussions to understand staff experiences with ERT during lockdown. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis.

Results: 505 staff responded to the survey (9% response), 51% were teaching staff. Prior to ERT, only 34% of staff incorporated learning management systems (LMS) into their teaching. Staff highlighted heavy workloads, and the lack of technical support as key challenges. These challenges, coupled with other pandemic related stresses, resulted in a noted deterioration of the mental health in 31% of respondents.

Discussion: Reliable technical support and adequate planning are essential. Mental wellbeing and support services available to staff should be promoted.

Title: Global citizenship in higher education institutions during COVID-19 in the SADC region.

Presenters: E Wagener - UWC

ABSTRACT

Global Citizenship (GC) entails the capacity to engage society in a respectful, considerate and solution-focused approach. The evaluation of HEIs along domains of global citizenship remains a focus of research. This online survey assessed HEIs from seven SADC countries across 9 domains of GC as measured by the GC Scale. A sample of 242 participants was recruited from four subgroups: management/administration (staff), researchers/academics, undergraduates and postgraduates. Relevant ethics principles were applied (HS20/5/2). Continuous domain scores were recoded as low, medium, or high. Most participants reported high scores across domains. Staff scored highest across domains. ANOVAs reported that undergraduate students perceived their normative environment as significantly less prescriptive of global citizenship values and practices than postgraduates and academics ($F_{3,232} = 4.437, p < .05$). Null findings were reported on the other eight domains. Increased exposure to the HE learning environment seems to impact on global citizenship identification and values.

Title: Evidence based strategies to manage vaccine hesitancy among students at Higher Education Institutions: A literature review

Presenters: Dr N Naranjee, Dr V Naidoo - UKZN

ABSTRACT

Background: Vaccine hesitancy can be termed as the delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines

despite availability of vaccine services. Vaccination has become one of the most successful and cost-effective interventions to improve health outcomes. Development of informative, cohort-driven vaccination campaigns requires proactive assessment of factors influencing vaccine hesitancy, access, and uptake.

Aims and objectives: The study will review published reviews on evidence based strategies to address vaccine hesitancy and, more broadly, to increase vaccine acceptance among students of Higher Education Institutions.

Methods: A narrative or traditional literature review will be conducted

Results: The review will summarize effective strategies that will address COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy and to support efforts to increase vaccine acceptance among students of Higher Education Institutions.

Conclusion: The study findings will inform the decisions at Higher Education Institutions aimed at reducing vaccine hesitation and the evidence based strategies that can be adopted to trigger the intention of COVID-19 vaccination.

Title: Academic burnout among ODeL students during the COVID-19 pandemic

Presenter: Dr A Fynn - UNISA

ABSTRACT

This project arose out of the need to understand how the transition to online learning, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, impacted on student wellbeing and study engagement. The transition to online learning at Unisa marked a time of intensive efforts to ensure that the academic project continued under the trying conditions brought on by the pandemic. Burnout is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and physical stressors on the job or study.

There is growing recognition that while students may not be formally employed, their studies include coercive activities, such as submitting assignments, class attendance, etc., that can be considered work. Research into academic burnout among university students show that burnout is associated with poor academic performance. The findings of this study show relatively low levels of burnout and high levels of study engagement among respondents. Furthermore, the relationship between dropout intention and burnout was weak but significant.

TITLE: Enhancing Student Access and Success Through Foundation Programmes: The Case Study of the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) Foundation Programme

Presenters: L Mangena, A Mafhara, V Makananise - UNIZULU

ABSTRACT

The Foundation Programme was introduced in 2004 by the University of Zululand. It provides students with a year of study prior to transitioning into the Mainstream programme. It also addresses the issue of transformation imperatives by providing access to students from previously

disadvantaged economic backgrounds. The Foundation Programme provides students with the opportunity to study at a higher education institution, even though they did not meet the entrance requirements. The data in this paper is based on a strong empirical and practical basis as students are tracked as part of a cohort, with a particular focus on the 2010 to 2021 cohorts. It provides evidence of student success by means of completions of their undergraduate qualifications. Thus, the paper highlights on the success story of the programme, stressing the fact that access remains the same even in the phase of the pandemic, and access must be enhanced for better quality.

Title: Lessons learnt from piloting the data-free Moya Messenger application in a large class

Presenters: Dr F Petersen, R Arendse - UWC

ABSTRACT

There is an increased need for more inclusive technological options for students. The literature indicates a prevalent digital divide due to the exclusion of students based on their socio-economic status and their ability to access the internet. Using ethnographic research, the data-free South African mobile instant messenger, Moya Messenger application, was piloted in a large Accounting class of 495 undergraduate students

and 5 tutors. Qualitative data was collected via an online survey from the tutors and analysed using thematic content analysis. The Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 model was used as a theoretical basis. The dominant themes from the UTAUT2 model were performance expectancy, effort expectancy and facilitating conditions. Recommendations for implementing this application in other large classes are to provide a training guide to students and encouraging Apple users to use the web version of the application. The implementation of Moya will aid students' learning more if the sending of attachments were also data-free. We appeal to mobile network operators to also reverse bill the use of attachments for institutions in our aim to provide more inclusive learning options for all students.

Keywords: data-free; Covid-19, student inclusion; mobile instant messenger; zero-rated; Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT 2)

Title: Towards a conceptual framework for communicating library training to students at the University of the Free State Libraries: A Literature Review

Presenters: MJ Molepo, S Blose - UFS

ABSTRACT

Developing conceptual frameworks to improve library training among librarians in South African university libraries is not common. The purpose of this article was to assess and critically analyse available knowledge to determine the extent to which librarians in University of the Free State libraries could reflect on their practice and synthesise relevant theories and models that

can assist develop a conceptual framework for communicating library training. The integrated literature review adopted a holistic qualitative approach informed by social constructivism as one of the alternative worldviews that require advocacy. It was found that the existing knowledge base in the form of journal articles, books, research reports, and websites across various disciplines is significant and relevant for the reconceptualization of library training. It is recommended that future research should explore alternative worldviews to develop a conceptual framework for communicating library training.

Keywords: academic libraries; COVID-19; blended learning; holistic worldview; social constructivism

Title: The Role of Institutional Research on integrating Students Voice in Reimagining Teaching and Learning at UKZN

Presenters: Dr L Maciko, Miss S Nguna - UKZN

ABSTRACT

Often, in higher education institutions, during reforms, it is assumed that students' voices are automatically integrated into the new vision. What is overlooked is a systemic way of incorporating the student voice in reforms of teaching and learning. Institutional research has an important responsibility to develop mechanisms that reflect the broader student voice spectrum and reimagine teaching and learning at UKZN. To navigate this, the institutional research office has to intensify the institutional data by meaningfully including student voice in the data collection, which reflects institutional stakeholders and

can be used effectively by University leaders in decision-making. The article seeks to identify ways of integrating the student's voice in reshaping teaching and learning at UKZN in a meaningful and standardized manner. The transformative framework for student voice inclusion was adopted for the study. A survey was conducted with the UKZN SRC to capture perceptions of the student's voice in teaching and learning activities. From the survey results, it was discovered that although most of the participants were generally satisfied with communication aspects of engagement, they also believed that their voice as students was not valued nor heard within the processes of the institution. The findings raise further questions on which modes of student voice inclusion should inform and inspire new approaches to formulating unique teaching and learning strategies in UKZN.

Keywords: Student Voice; Institutional Research; Teaching & Learning

Title: Creating a Tiktok Wellness Hub: A digital arts-based approach in promoting wellness in higher education institutions

Presenters: Mr R Pillay, Dr JL Thornton, Mr C Pieterse - Nelson Mandela University

ABSTRACT

With the onset of the COVID-10 pandemic, higher education has been marked by unprecedented pressure on wellbeing in having to contend with a drastically altered teaching and learning landscape. This, in turn, has seen the increase of wellness programmes promoted in the institutions with a great focus on using technology and automated routine task and performance management. However, the focus on wellbeing

needs to extend past the traditional since wellness ideas by themselves are just perks and unless properly implemented will be limited in both scope and nature. By finding new approaches to promote wellness, better care and performance can be achieved. This paper argues that by adopting a digital arts-based approach in higher education in the form of a TikTok Wellness Hub will allow for a holistic view in promoting wellness amongst all levels in four dedicated categories of Nutrition, Fitness, Life advice, and Mindfulness.

Title: Big Brother is watching: Orwellian warnings of online-proctoring

Presenter: Prof E Archer - UWC

ABSTRACT

Online Proctoring has increased our perception of the validity and reliability of our assessments. While it is a lucrative industry, online proctoring is prone to increase the digital divide (Hussein et al., 2020; Visser-Knijff, 2020). It increases anxiety and leads to behavioural changes (Chin, 2020; Swauger, 2020; Visser-Knijff, 2020). One study (Alessio et al., 2017) found that, students achieved at least 17 points less if video proctored. The technological intrusion complicates the Protection of personal information (Visser-Knijff, 2020) and introduces a new level of technological intrusion (Chin, 2020; Visser-Knijff, 2020). Automated proctoring algorithms are prone to reinforcing structural inequality, particularly socio-economic adversity, sexism, racism and non-binary phobia (Swauger, 2020). Online assessment provides the opportunity for a shift from recall to assessing higher learning taxonomy levels (O'Neill & Murphy, 2010). The opportunity for student-centred, constructivist approaches to assessment (Reyneke et al., 2021) should not be ignored

Title: Institutional research as proactive and consequential knowledge(s) towards accelerating transformation in South African higher education

Presenter: T Mugume - UFS

ABSTRACT

Institutional Research (IR) continues to support and inform decision making in universities. Webber, Muller and Botha (2016) argued that IR practitioners need to be proactive in order to champion institutional change and ensure that evidence should be consequential for changes in policies and practices. Evidence from interviews conducted with eight (8) Directors of IR departments in South African universities shows that transformation is not just intertwined with IR, but rather, IR drives transformation in these universities. IR projects emerge in most cases from research needs highlighted by institutional committees. These can be deliberate requests by committee members or decisions made in the IR department on relevant research projects after reviewing committee discussions. Additionally, consultation from the beginning of the project to the end is important for institutional acceptance of IR findings and the respective recommendations. Finally, in some institutions, stakeholders have a final decision on the implementation of IR recommendations, while in other institutions successful implementation of IR recommendations is only achieved through monitoring KPIs of managers.

Title: The impact of lock down on student performance – a case study

Presenter: R Lottering - TUT

ABSTRACT

The arrival of COVID-19 on the world stage had a profound impact on countries as documented

in literature. Institutions of higher learning was not spared from the devastation that followed from the various lockdowns implemented to curb the spread and reduce its impact. Traditionally, institutions of higher learning delivered course material through contact sessions in lecture halls with attendance, compulsory. This model of content delivery became impractical during the hard lockdown and universities switched to online content delivery.

Five modules from two qualifications were selected at a University of Technology for a comparative analysis with a supervised test before lockdown and at lockdown level one. The researcher found that not all students were ready for the change on content delivery and therefore had compromised performance.

Keywords: Student performance; Covid-19 impact; Learner analytics; Student resilience; Lock down

Title: The development of a classification model that describes attributes of first-generation student with a likelihood to remain in their program and progress to the next academic level 1.

Presenter: Dr M Kebalepile - UP

ABSTRACT

Decision trees (DTs) were used to describe the attributes of successful first-generation students. DTs form part of the discovery methods, in data mining paradigms where the predicted outcome can be either a classification based on similar attributes or a regression in continuous variables.¹ In the current study, we performed a classification to identify the attributes of success. Predicting attributes for successful students will enable the institution to develop proactive

interventions towards support students classified as unsuccessful. Two cohorts of students were studied in a retrospective study exploring the retention, progression and success of first-generation students over four academic semesters from 2018 to 2019. In 2018, 381 students (54% Male and 46% females, met the inclusion criteria. About 99% were African, 0.7% Colored, and 0.3% were White). In 2019, 261 students, 61% female and 39% males met the inclusion criteria. Of those students included in 2019, 98% were African and 2% Colored). The inclusion criteria were based on the institution's definition of first-generation. The definition according to the institution included that: a) students were the first in their family to enroll at an IHL, b) students were from rural backgrounds or from township communities, and c) students had no accommodation at the time of enrolling at an IHL.

Keywords: Classification and regression trees; retrospective study; successful first-generation students; retention; progression and success

Title: Empowering student support practitioners to optimise a tracking system

Presenters: Dr SY Dockrat, TUT

ABSTRACT

Over a decade ago, a Student Tracking System (STS) was introduced at a South African University of Technology. The primary users of the STS are student support practitioners. The system has been underutilised since its implementation and has had limited impact. It was postulated that the reasons therefor included difficulties with digital adoption and a lack of a readiness to use learning analytics. This paper focuses on a programme that was developed to facilitate the adoption of the STS by student support

practitioners at the institution. The product development paradigm ADDIE was used to steer the research and development process of the STS Adoption Programme. A five-stage model was conceptualised to serve as a framework for the programme. The programme was evaluated using the guidelines stipulated in Kirkpatrick's Four Levels of Training Evaluation Model. Overall, the programme complied with the criteria stipulated in the model.

Keywords: student tracking system; digital adoption; change management

Title: Student Evaluations' Response Rate in universities a Concern. How should Student Evaluations be conducted to enhance access and success?

Presenters: Dr Z Masuku, Dr M Nhlapo - UKZN

ABSTRACT

Scientific literature shows a significantly low participation of students in programme evaluations, which results in low response rate. This study aims to provide solutions: "How should student evaluations be conducted to enhance access and success? Data was collected from two universities in KwaZulu Natal. Focus group interviews were conducted with 120 students in 12 focus groups. Students were asked whether they: understood the purpose of student evaluations, knew how to evaluate online programmes, preferred to evaluate programmes online or on paper, why they absent themselves from online learning? The results revealed that very few students attend online lectures. Most students did not understand the importance of student evaluations. Students were not equipped to respond effectively to questions asked. Most students preferred SE evaluations conducted online. On poor

attendance, responses ranged from poor internet connectivity, demotivation, ill-health to lack of skills. Universities need to: capacitate students to evaluate programmes effectively, motivate and incentivise online learning and attendance, where the driving force is directed towards curriculum transformation, access and success.

Keywords: *student-evaluations; online learning; university programmes; curriculum transformation; quality assurance*

Title: Re-imagining effective management of student academic performance, engaging the systems that keep on backfiring!

Presenter: V Dwayi - WSU

ABSTRACT

This article is reporting on a particular case of the institutional research project which has been ongoing for quite some time as part of integrated quality management systems in the idea of university education as the public good. As such, the project partly reflect on the previous national quality enhancement project while also motivated by the advent of the second phase of Institutional Audits/Reviews in South Africa. The project focused on what was the role of academic management, leadership and governance in having the values of equity of access for the quality of success more as enacted than as espoused. At the time of this project report, the article zoomed into the particular case of de-registered students in 2020 as part of the G 7 Rule (academic exclusions) in order to advance the main argument that, the cited cases of de-registered students could have been better and effectively managed if what should be the common thread in management of student

academic performance had been vigorously identified and maintained. Such a thread should have been based on the basic principles of impact tracking and sustainable value creation about quality enhancement, taking care both of vertical and horizontal articulation, and further of institutional value chain in managing the academic project.

Keywords: *Covid-19; Student Academic Administration; HEMIS; ITS; PowerHEDA; Walter Sisulu University*

Title: The see-saw effect: Increase in vaccine hesitancy causes a decrease in a country's Health Economy

Presenters: Dr V Naidoo and Dr N Naranjee - UKZN

ABSTRACT

Vaccine hesitancy can be termed as the delay in acceptance or refusal of vaccines despite availability of vaccine services. Notably, vaccine hesitancy is complex and context specific, varying across time, place and vaccines and it can be influenced by factors such as complacency, convenience and confidence. The catastrophic COVID-19 pandemic has taught the world and produced evidence demonstrating the benefits of immunization. As a strategy in response to the ongoing "war" against the pandemic, it has become one of the most successful and cost-effective interventions to improve health outcomes.

However, for vaccines to save countless lives and improve health and well-being around the globe whilst preventing the morbidity and mortality associated with vaccine preventable diseases communities, high uptake rates must be achieved. While no vaccine is 100% effective, several vaccine preventable diseases could be eliminated Despite high vaccination uptake rates

in certain parts of the world, vaccine hesitancy in other parts is undermining individual and community protection from vaccine preventable diseases. Literature search has revealed that most studies have examined the interventional impact on general vaccine uptake or its acceptance. However there is still a paucity of knowledge and evidence related specifically to the COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy in South Africa. This presentation will illustrate the importance of vaccines for individual and collective health, whilst demonstrating that by a crisis of acceptance, vaccination uptake has improved the world's health economy.

Title: When machine learning meets literacy testing: levelling the playing field

Presenters: M Joubert, R Posthumus - UFS

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic threw Higher Education into the deep end, forcing literacy testing to go online. The UFS uses a literacy test to place incoming first-year students into its English Academic Literacy modules. Our major concern was that online proctoring required equipment and capability that many of our students did not have access to and would be forced to take the module. In a move towards social justice, the Academic Language and Literacy Development (ALLD) section of CLT decided to deploy predictive analytics in determining students' performance on the language portion of the NBT. The algorithm was run on 7 370 eligible students and students without an NBT score who were predicted to be proficient were exempted from taking the literacy modules. We aim to share the results and experience of the use of predictive analytics and to highlight the pandemic's opportunity in terms of social justice in student placement.

Title: Measuring Factors affecting graduation and student dropout rates at the University of KwaZulu-Natal

Presenters: Dr L Maciko, Mr L Kondlo - UKZN

ABSTRACT

At University of KwaZulu- Natal, graduation rates have not complemented the increased access on enrolments. This is concerning since increased access with low graduation rates suggests that entry equity has not translated into observable equity of outcomes. This potentially works against the transformation plan with enormous cost implications such as waste of taxpayers' money. The article explores student success at UKZN by investigating the factors that affect student graduation and dropout rates. This retrospective study extracted data from institutional intelligence database and filtered to only render the first- time entering undergraduate students. The results show that increase in graduation rate is associated with the increase in the number of students who received NSFAS loans. Fluctuations are also observed in dropouts with funding being a factor. The more students received funding the less the dropped out. The findings raise awareness on the importance institutions taking data analytics to identify interventions to ensure greater efficiency in the system and identify ways to improve throughput in minimum time.

Keywords: *Graduation Rate; Dropout Rate; Transformation Plan; Efficiency*

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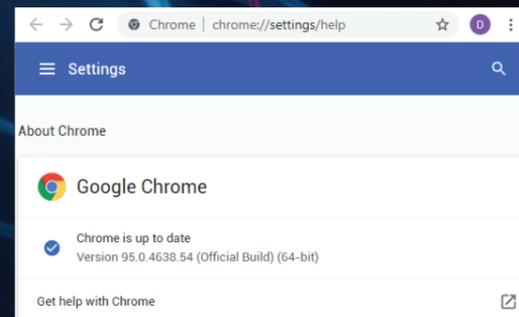


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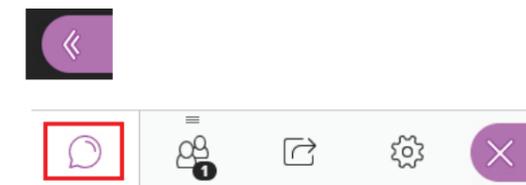
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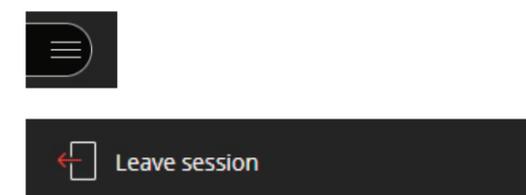
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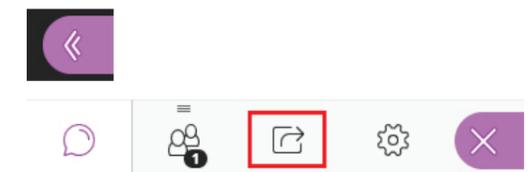


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