

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

STUDENT LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT (SLD)

**COLLOQUIUM
REPORT
2023**

UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES (UADS)

31 AUGUST 2023 - 01 SEPTEMBER 2023

CONCEPT NOTE

The Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS) has entered into a collaborative work with the Chair: Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET) that is supported by the office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC): Engagement and Transformation portfolio (ETP). Nelson Mandela University is re-orientating itself as a transformative, responsive university in service of society. This re-orientation includes the important and often neglected transformation imperative of universal accessibility. The Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS) has been doing significant work in supporting students at the university who have disclosed their disabilities.

This colloquium concept aims to showcase UADS transformative work within the university, inviting other stakeholders within and beyond the university space for conversations that will advocate for persons with disabilities and create awareness of significant issues. This colloquium will develop and strengthen collaborative opportunities with stakeholders that support the advancement and promotion of the university agenda on transformative issues such as universal accessibility and learning. Furthermore, this colloquium concept will allow, promote, and encourage student-led initiatives that will stimulate conversation on the employability of graduated students with disabilities in the working space.

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INTRODUCTION

The Universal Accessibility and Disability Services under the portfolio of Student Life and Development at Nelson Mandela University hosted its first colloquium that was themed 'Advancing Universal Access' in partnership with the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation. The main purpose of the colloquium was to spark enabling conversations around disability and engage different stakeholders in pushing the agenda of providing universal access for all. Some subthemes were presented by different participants in the two days of the event. There were more than 60 delegates who attended this in-person event, with a few online attendees. The invitation was extended internally to Nelson Mandela University management, academics, supporting staff and all students. The colloquium was attended by sister universities such as Fort Hare University, Walter Sisulu University, University of KwaZulu Natal and University of Johannesburg. Eastern Cape TVET colleges also attended this colloquium. In this report, we capture summaries of experiences and presentations shared by delegates.



PROGRAMME

DAY 1 | THURSDAY, 31 AUGUST 2023

FACILITATOR: Mr Olwethu Deliwé & Ms Miso Mbuli

TIME	ITEM	SPEAKER
08:30 - 9:00	REGISTRATION	Mrs Tinita van Aardt & Ms Siwe Nawe
09:00 - 09:30	Welcoming	Dr Nosiphiwo Delubom; (Head of Department - Universal Accessibility & Disability Services)
09:30 - 10:00	Setting the scene	Mr Luthando Jack; Dean of Students
10:00 - 10:30	Engagement & Transformation	Dr Bruce Damons; Director - Engagement Office
10:30 - 10:50	National policies and legislation: inclusion and accessibility	Ms Trudy Van Wyk; Chief Director - Social Inclusion Equity Dr Sareesha Pillay; Senior Lecturer - Public Management & Leadership
	Q&A	
11:15 - 11:30	TEA BREAK & EXHIBITIONS	
11:30 - 11:45	Transformation and inclusion at Nelson Mandela university	Dr Ruby- Anny Lavendal (Director: Transformation M& E)
11:45 - 12:00		Ms Babalwa Timakwe; Student - Faculty of Health Sciences
	Q&A	
12:15 - 12:25	UADS Services in response to student demands	Ms Keisha Ruiters Student - Faculty of law
12:25 - 12:35		Ms Ncebakazi Siziba; Senior student - Faculty of Humanities
12:35 - 12:45		Ms Yolokazi Mthi; NMU - Bussiness and Economics Sciences
	Q&A	
13:00 - 13:50	LUNCH	

14:00 - 14:10	Neurodevelopmental disabilities in students	Ms N Ntlokokwana : Director - Emthonjeni
14:10 - 14:20		Mr Vuyo Ndodana: Intern - UADS
	Q&A	
14:30 - 14:45	Current research within Mandela University (UADS/ CrISHET)	MR O Deliwe
14:40 - 15:00	Q&A	
15:00 - 15:20	Creating Pathways: Equality through Accessibility	Dr N Delubom (AUDS HOD) Principal 1: Special School Principal: Mainstream school Walmer Principal
15:20 - 15:30	Q&A	

PART FOUR

15:40 - 16:10	Inclusive Education: Empowering Minds, Shaping Futures prof Diale (Deputy Dean of Education: UJ)	Dr Muki Moeng (DVC: Learning & Teaching: MandelaUNI) MS Carol Boshoff (Student)
16:10 - 16:20	Q&A	

16:20 CLOSURE & AFTERNOON TEA

DAY 2 | FRIDAY, 01 SEPTEMBER 2023

FACILITATOR: Mr Olwethu Deluwe & Ms Miso Mbuli

TIME	ITEM	SPEAKER
08:00 - 8:30	REGISTRATION	
	PART ONE	
	Breaking the silence: Amplifying Disability Voice	
08:30 - 09:30	Day 1 Recap facilitators	
09:30 - 11:00	Student Voice: MandelaUni	
	Self- advocacy and disability activism by students with disabilities Junior (George Campus Student)	
	Mainstreaming disability/ Inclusion Street talk- Mandela uni students Transformative and inclusive Leadership Boitumelo Wesi (MandelaUni SRC Rep: Disability & Special needs)	
	Involvement of students living with disabilities in co- curricular activities Mr Luyanda Mkasibe Ms Sinalo Matwa Q & A	
11:15	MORNING TEA	
	PART TWO	
11:30 - 12:30	Student voice First year transition into universities South African Union of Students (SAUS) President Student WSU Ms Z Mbuli (Access & enrolment: MandelaUNI) Disability Activism in TVET colleges speakers	
12:30 - 13:00	Employability of people with disabilities	Mr Xolani Sandlana (NMU Alumni) Dr Jakoet - Salie (Acting HOD: Public Management & Leadership) Ms S Gunusa (Information Access officer UADS)
13:00 - 13:30	Q&A	
13:30	CLOSURE & LUNCH	

FOREWORD



Dr Nosiphiwo Delubom
Head of Department

The colloquium Opening Address was presented by the Head of Department, **Dr Nosiphiwo Delubom**. In her opening remarks, Dr Delubom outlined the core aim of the colloquium – to showcase UADS transformative work within the university and invite stakeholders within and beyond the university space to engage in conversations that will advocate for persons with disabilities and create awareness on significant issues that impact them. In this regard, the colloquium would develop and strengthen collaborative opportunities with stakeholders that support the advancement and promote the university agenda on transformative issues such as universal accessibility and inclusive learning and teaching. Furthermore, the colloquium would allow, promote, and encourage student voices that will stimulate conversation on the employability of graduated students with disabilities in the working space.

Dr Delubom welcomed with appreciation external stakeholders in attendance. Among the attendees were stakeholders from Walter Sisulu University, Fort Hare, Lovedale, and East Cape Midlands TVET colleges and Universities of Johannesburg and KwaZulu Natal. She also acknowledged internal stakeholders in attendance, including the Directors from the Engagement & Transformation portfolio, Engagement Office; Transformation Office; Madibaz Sport, Dean of Learning Teaching and Academics from the Faculty of Humanities and Govan Mbeki Mathematical Development Centre. The presence of an official from the Department of Higher Education and Training, Social Inclusion Directorate was also acknowledged.

SETTING THE SCENE

Mr Luthando Jack, who was the Dean of Students within the Portfolio of Student Life and Development, set the scene for the ceremony.



Mr Luthando Jack
Dean of Students

After the welcoming speech, **Mr Luthando Jack**, the Dean of Students, set the tone by stating that the reason humans are unable to move forward is because they are mentally oppressed. He believes that universal access is a struggle for re-humanisation and that if we were truly a 'normal' society, we should not have to talk about inclusivity and accessibility for all. The notion of inclusive education and accessibility is an international concept with specific aims and goals to achieve; hence, it requires partnerships and collaboration.

ENGAGEMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

The Engagement Office is a unit under the portfolio of the DVC: Engagement and Transformation of the Nelson Mandela University. The office's primary focus is to create and manage academic engagement partnerships with the wider community of Nelson Mandela Bay. They were invited as internal stakeholders to present their roles and functions within the university, with a specific emphasis on supporting students with disabilities.



Dr Bruce Damon
Director – Engagement Office

The Director of the Engagement Office expressed his excitement about collaborating with UADS to deepen and broaden their partnership. He stressed the importance of making a significant impact within the institution before it is possible to make a difference in the world. He drew inspiration from the core strategic values of Nelson Mandela University, suggesting that these serve as guiding principles for achieving universal access, with every staff member contributing. **Dr Bruce Damon** proposed that principles of convergence, reciprocity, and multiple forms of output should guide the engagement. He also outlined seven key factors that should be considered in moving this work forward. These include context, language, operations, relationships, time, communication, and resources.

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Department of Higher Education was invited to provide input and share experiences on national policies and legislation related to disabilities in higher education.



Ms Abigail Munene-Baloyi

During the discussion on national policies and regulations, **Ms Abigail Munene Baloyi** from the Department of Higher Education and Training highlighted the challenges faced by persons with disabilities when they complete their education in special schools. She advised that students must be the primary focus and be included in the strategic policy framework for post-school education and training. Ms Munene Baloyi further explained the policy framework is designed to take a human rights approach, promote mainstreaming and inclusion, and change attitudes towards persons with disabilities. She concluded her remarks by stating, **“We are duty-bound to recognise the uniqueness that everyone brings.”**



Dr Sareesha Pillay

Dr Sareesha Pillay, a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Humanities, Department of Public Management and Leadership, shared her thoughts on the role that national framework policies play. She emphasised that institutions do not operate independently but rather alongside other institutions within the national and international framework. Dr Pillay explained that “To be included is one thing, and to have access is another.” Persons with disabilities must have access to various environments, careers, social development, courses, and other opportunities while we strive for inclusivity. This requires universal accessibility and collaboration among disability services and other stakeholders to address gaps in the employability of persons with disabilities.

TRANSFORMATION AND INCLUSION AT NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY

The Department of Higher Education was invited to provide input and share experiences on national policies and legislation related to disabilities in higher education.



Dr Ruby-Ann Levendal
Director - Transformation M&E

The Director of the Transformation Office at Nelson Mandela University emphasised the importance of transformation and inclusion. According to her, the main purpose of the transformation agenda is to serve society, and each person has a part to play in achieving this goal. To attain this agenda, Ideas and resources must be shared and integrated. While acknowledging the significance of access for all, she pointed out that access alone does not guarantee success, and support is crucial. Additionally, she reiterated the importance of aligning with the university's values to ensure equal access and opportunities.



Ms. Babalwa Timakwe

Ms Babalwa Timakwe, a student from the Faculty of Health Sciences, stated that she feels the University has made some progress in terms of accessibility and transformation, thanks to the support she has received from Universal Accessibility and Disability Services. However, she also acknowledges that there is still a long way to go in this regard. In her concluding remarks, she urged the Department of Social Development and other relevant stakeholders to take responsibility for ensuring that courses and training are made available to address issues related to disability.

UADS SERVICES IN RESPONSE TO STUDENT DEMANDS

Three students responded to the theme, highlighting the invaluable service and experience provided by the unit to support students with disabilities within the university. They shared their lived experiences, as they are experts in disabilities and the services required to cater to their needs. The students' perspectives were captured as they responded to this broad theme.



Ms Keisha Ruiters

Student

Faculty Of Law



Ms. Ncebakazi Siziba

Student

Faculty Of Humanities



Ms Yolokazi Mthi

Alumni

The programme also incorporated a session that focused on the opinions and experiences of students with disabilities regarding the services provided by UADS. **Ms Ncebakazi Siziba**, a senior student from the faculty of humanities who is registered with UADS, mentioned that UADS plays a crucial role in motivating students with disabilities to be independent and actively participate in university activities. According to **Ms Keisha Ruiters**, UADS helped her realise her potential, work on her self-confidence, and accept herself for who she is. Lastly, **Ms Yolokazi Mthi**, an Nelson Mandela University alumni, confirmed that UADS has a successful track record when it comes to the academic achievements of students with disabilities. She concluded her presentation with a powerful statement: being a student with a disability is better than being an employee with a disability.

NEURODEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IN STUDENTS



Ms Nomalungelo Ntlokwana
Director - Emthonjeni

Ms Nomalungelo Ntlokwana, a director at Emthonjeni Student Wellness, provided a brief explanation of some common invisible disabilities that they deal with at Emthonjeni. These disabilities include ADHD, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Dyslexia, and other intellectual disabilities. However, diagnosing these disorders can be challenging due to various reasons, including “late or missed diagnosis, heterogeneity of symptoms, lack of awareness, stigma and denial, resource constraints, high academic expectations, co-occurring conditions, and legal and ethical considerations.” Some ways in which these can be mitigated, as Ms Ntlokwana explained, are “increasing awareness projects, psychological screening, and assessments, and providing support services.”

MENTAL HEALTH & SUCCESS AMONGST STUDENTS



Mr Vuyo Ndodana
Student Intern - UADS

During his presentation, **Vuyo**, an intern, shared some of the struggles experienced by students with invisible disabilities and difficulties faced by these students during the process of being diagnosed. He highlighted the lack of available resources and support for students with invisible disabilities, which is a common challenge that they often encounter.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: INCLUSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES



Dr. Phumeza Kota-Nyathi

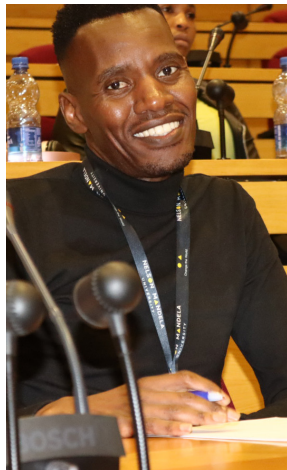
Dean - Learning & Teaching Nelson Mandela University

Dr Kota-Nyathi serves as the Dean of Learning and Teaching at Nelson Mandela University. During her notable address, she made the following statement: "We are now talking inclusion because somewhere, somehow, someone has been excluded. The exclusion happens when we make ill-informed and short-sighted decisions." She echoed how we need to "keep pushing the 'humanising' until everyone understands and gets it." She is of the opinion that it is possible to make necessary adjustments for persons with disabilities without compromising on the standard. She emphasised the importance of assessing the abilities of the students so that their needs can be accommodated accordingly, thereby promoting inclusivity.



Ms Carol Boshoff
Student – Faculty of Education

Ms Carol Boshoff, a student in the Faculty of Education, shared her struggles from a young age and emphasised how having adequate support can make a significant difference for individuals with disabilities. She also highlighted the importance of disclosing one's disability to the appropriate persons. She stated, "Having a disability means having to face people who will look at you with judgment." During her address, she expressed appreciation for the support services provided by UADS. She suggested that continuous assessments be considered as part of their policies for academic accommodations. In closing, she noted that individuals with disabilities have good and bad days and emphasised the importance of persevering through challenges.







SELF-ADVOCACY AND DISABILITY ACTIVISM



Ms Bongive Daniels

Principal – Khanyisa Special School for the Blind

Mrs Bongive Daniels, a principal from Khanyisa Special School for learners with visual impairment, recounted the story of one of Khanyisa's top learners who was denied admission to Nelson Mandela University for not meeting the requirement for Maths Literacy. She expressed dismay that the student had to relocate all the way to the Western Cape instead of being provided with suitable accommodation by Nelson Mandela University. She describes accessible and inclusive education as having students and learners who have disabilities feel welcomed and belong in all spaces of learning. She emphasised the need for holistic development of learners who have disabilities to ensure the establishment of their strengths. It is important to continuously capacitate those who collaborate with persons who have disabilities in order to better understand and support those learners in their development. In her conclusion, she briefly spoke about Khanyisa Schools' various programmes, resources, and collaborations with various institutions and departments to support learners who have disabilities and provide them with growth opportunities while bringing inclusivity and access.



Mr Nevil Balakrishan
UKZN Disability Coordinator

Mr. Nevil Balakrishna, a disability coordinator at the University of Kwazulu-Natal, emphasised the importance of self-advocacy for individuals with disabilities. He explained that “The rights of a student with a disability to access higher education also comes with the responsibility of being actively engaged in the process. Though we all have a contribution to make to the inclusivity and accessibility agenda, it must start with the students advocating for themselves.” It is important to consult students with disabilities to understand what changes need to be made in order to accommodate them better. He concluded: “Together, we can do so.”



Mr Ndivhuho Junior Malimagovha
Student – Business and Economic Sciences

Mr Ndivhuho Junior Malimagovha, a student in Economics and Business Sciences, highlighted self-advocacy as the key factor to realising an inclusive environment. It helps students to express their desires and aspirations while embracing their identity.

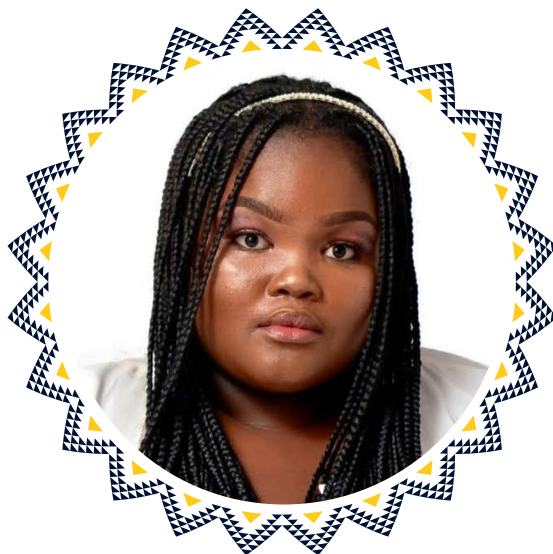
TRANSFORMATIVE AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP



Ms Boitumelo Wesi
Nelson Mandela University SRC member- Disability

The topic of transformative and inclusive leadership was explored, and **Ms Boitumelo Wesi**, a member of the Student Representative Council (SRC), exclaimed that people need to understand that individuals who have disabilities are capable of so many things. They, too, should be seen and heard for who they truly are as members of society. She encouraged those living with disabilities to assume leadership roles to better advocate for themselves.

INVOLVEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



Miss Sinalo Matwa
Student – Business and Economic Sciences

Miss Sinalo Matwa, is a student in the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences, focused on the involvement of students with disability in co-curricular activities. According to her, when she joined a society at Nelson Mandela University, she had to call them every time they had an event to find out where it would be taking place and if the venue was wheelchair accessible. She felt like she had to remind people of her existence constantly. Miss Matwa emphasised the importance of involving persons with disabilities in decision-making, especially with regard to the structure and operations of events and spaces. This would ensure that spaces are easily accessible for persons with disabilities and that they are included in all activities.

FIRST-YEAR TRANSITION INTO UNIVERSITIES

The colloquium took a spanning landmark where input and experiences of students who have disabilities from other universities were invited to talk about their transition in the university. This theme has been influenced by a number of challenges experienced by students at Nelson Mandela University from high school/grade 12 to university. In light of students from these sister universities sharing their experiences and how they navigate the university space, it was hoped that they could learn from each other's experiences. Walter Sisulu University and the University of Fort Hare were represented.



Ms Babalwa Mqwengana
Student – Walter Sisulu University

During a discussion on the challenges of transitioning into university, Ms Mqwengana shared her experience at Walter Sisulu University. Despite knowing that the university did not have the resources to accommodate a blind student, Ms Mqwengana was determined to study there and pave the way for future students with disabilities. She said, *"I wanted to study there so that the university should learn on how to provide reasonable accommodations for a student who is blind"*. Having been a top achiever in special schools, she urged others with disabilities to believe in themselves and strive for success. Ms. Mqwengana's story is a testament to the importance of perseverance and determination in the face of adversity.



Mr Zukisa Xokwe
Student – University of Fort Hare

Mr Xokwe, a student from the University of Fort Hare, said, *"It only takes one week for a student with a disability to know if they are included or excluded in a university setting."* He went on to respond to a statement by one of the panellists who said, *"It is better to be a student with a disability than being an employee with a disability"* by saying, *"It is even better to be a student or an employee with a disability than being just a person with a disability who is rejected by others"*.

DISABILITY ACTIVISM IN TVET COLLEGE

When it comes to issues of disability, students in TVET colleges are often neglected. Therefore, it is important to extend invitations to these colleges and allow students to share their experiences. Lovedale TVET College responded to this call.



Ms. Afika Mvume Mkhapha
Student – Lovedale TVET college

Ms Mkhapha, a student at Lovedale College, also gave credit to her college for its attempt to accommodate the small population of students with disabilities. The college was able to assist her in obtaining a new wheelchair, which significantly improved her mobility.



Ms Lelihle Tose
Student – Midlands TVET college

Ms Lelihle Tose from the East Cape Midlands TVET College spoke on the progression of the college. Midlands has an SRC leader with a disability and serves as an example that persons with a disability can make a meaningful contribution to society and take on leadership roles.

EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Persons with disabilities are often neglected and marginalised. They are typically overlooked when it comes to employment opportunities despite having qualifications. Various internal and external stakeholders were invited to discuss this theme and their experiences pertinent to the topic.



Prof. Tumi Diale

Deputy Dean – University of Johannesburg

According to **Prof Diale** from the University of Johannesburg, persons with disabilities often struggle to cope in the workplace because they do not receive the same level of support they did during their education. It is important for individuals, especially those with invisible disabilities, to be diagnosed early so they can get the help they need to succeed. She concluded: "Equality is not enough, equity is not enough, we need to strive for liberation."



Mr Xolani Sandlana
NMU Alumni

A Nelson Mandela alumni referred to the language used in reference to those who have disabilities, stating that “it is persons with disability, not people with disability.” His focus was on life after university for persons with disability. Deciding whether to disclose a disability or not can be a tough call. There are pros and cons to both options. Disclosing can sometimes lead to accommodations, but it can also put the person at a disadvantage. It is the responsibility of leaders to use their voices to promote inclusivity and accessibility for all.



Dr Amina Jakoet-Salie
Acting HOD – Public Management & Leadership

Acting HOD in Public Management and Leadership emphasised the importance of affording all students equal opportunities. For students requiring additional support, such support must be made readily available to them. She articulated that the university is still lacking multidisciplinary teams that can assist students holistically when applying for academic accommodations—this is a cause for concern.



Ms Karen Synman

Student Governance and Development

Under the topic of employability of persons with disabilities, **Ms Karen Synman**, a Student Entrepreneurship specialist at Nelson Mandela University, suggested that students who have a disability may also consider entrepreneurship due to the high unemployment rate in South Africa and discover the endless opportunities that could offer them. Some of the benefits of entrepreneurship include accessibility, networking, and support; it builds resilience and helps in adapting to change.



Ms Unathi Nyangwa

Principal Psychologist – Department of Employment and Labour

During the panel discussion, **Ms Unathi Nyangwa** from the Department of Employment and Labour mentioned that the Department defines disability as including physical disabilities and mental impairments but excluding chronic conditions that could cause permanent disability. This creates gaps in the system that prevent people from receiving necessary accommodations.

CONCLUSION

The objectives of this colloquium were successfully achieved. The attendance of more than 60 participants to this event was one of the indicators. There were different stakeholders within and beyond the university that came to interact and have conversation that were advocating for persons with disabilities. Through the stimulating conversations from various speakers, awareness was created, and specific relevant and significant issues were raised. There were sister universities and TVET colleges that attended this colloquium, along with other governmental departments and students. This meant that a collaborative network was developed and strengthened with these stakeholders that support the advancement and promotion of the university transformative agenda. Most attendees were students, including students that have disabilities. The experiences and conversations shared by these students allowed, promoted and encouraged student-led initiatives for different platforms but most importantly for employability of graduated students with disabilities. In this space, conversation around transformative work that UADS does within and beyond the university was showcased and feedback and areas of improvement were noted.

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COLLOQUIUM SCRIBES: Ms. Siphokazi Gunusa & Mrs Lusanda Latola (UADS)

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• Student Life and Development Portfolio

- Mr Luthando Jack – Dean – Students
- Dr Nosiphiwo Delubom – UADS Head of Department
- Ms Vuyo Bongela - Director Madibaz Sport
- Dr Sefoko Ramoshaba – Deputy Director SLD (George)
- Residence Managers – Gqeberha Campuses
- Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS) Team
- Student community

• Chair: Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation office

- Prof Andre Keet: DVC – Engagement and Transformation
- Dr Jenny du Preez: CriSHET coordinator

• Engagement and Transformation Portfolio

- Dr Bruce Damons: Director – Engagement office
- Dr Ruby-Ann Levendal – Transformation office

• Faculty of Humanities: Public Management and Leadership

- Dr Amina Jakoet-Salie: Acting HOD
- Dr Sareesha Pillay: Senior Lecturer

• Internal and External Partners

- Dr Phumeza Kota-Nyathi: Dean – Teaching and Learning (NMU)
- Professor Tumi Diale: Deputy Dean – University of Johannesburg
- Mrs Bongjwe Daniels: Principal – Khanyisa Special School
- Mr Nevil Balakrishna: Disability Coordinator – University of KwaZulu Natal
- Ms Karen Syman: Student Governance Entrepreneurship (NMU)
- Ms Unathi Nyangwa: Principal Psychologist – Department of Employment and Labour
- Nelson Mandela University students and staff
- Sister universities students and staff (WSU, Fort Hare, UKZN & UJ)
- TVET colleges students and staff (Lovedale & East Cape Midlands)

UNIVERSAL ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY SERVICES: TEAM PROFILE



Dr Nosiphiwo Delubom

Dr Nosiphiwo (Nosi) Delubom is the Deputy Director and leading the Nelson Mandela University's Universal Accessibility & Disability Services (UADS) Unit. She has over thirteen years' experience as an educator. Dr Delubom joined the university in 2018 transitioning from the TVET sector, where she was a Senior Education Specialist working within the Student Support Services; she was more involved in advocating access for students with disabilities and special needs. One of her vision statements is to see students with disabilities mainstreamed into the universities without discrimination. In response to her vision, four months after she joined the university, she advocated for the change of the name of the unit from the 'Disability Unit' to Universal Accessibility & Disability Services, heralding an inclusive trajectory. When she was interviewed on why she advocated for the name change, she said, "The Disability Unit carries the stigma on its own and it seemed to be the special school within the university".

Her doctoral degree is on Inclusive Education. Her research thesis focused on the perspectives of TVET college managers on the implementation of inclusive education. Generally, her research niche focuses on access and mainstreaming of students with disabilities in institutions of higher learning, employability of persons with disabilities and decolonisation of the system that is exclusive.

As UADS head, she formed partnerships with nine special schools in the Eastern Cape Province providing integrated services to enhance access of learners with disabilities to the institutions of higher learning. She is one of the officials who started the Eastern Cape Regional Disability Collaboration, where she served as a chairperson from 2017 to 2023. She is currently serving as the chairperson of the Higher Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA).

COLLOQUIUM FACILITATORS



Mr Olwethu Deliwé

Olwethu Deliwé is a Research Assistant in the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET). He is a liaising partner in the collaborative work between CriSHET and Nelson Mandela University's Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS).

He holds a Bachelor of Social Work degree (majoring in Psychology) from the University of Cape Town (UCT). He has a Bachelor of Social Science in Clinical Social Work, specialising in Substance Abuse from UCT. He has recently obtained a master's degree in clinical social work (coursework) programme at Nelson Mandela University, focusing on the "resilience of social workers that are working within the health care system in the Nelson Mandela Metropole, South Africa". His research interests are in mental health, disabilities, and previously disadvantaged communities.

Olwethu has been practising as a Social Worker for different non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and public hospitals in Cape Town. He joined Nelson Mandela University in 2019 as a part-time assistant lecturer (facilitating and supervising first to third-year modules) in the Department of Social Development Professions. He also worked as an interim coordinator and manager for UADS.



Ms. Miso Mbuli

Miso Mbuli is a passionate advocate and catalyst for change, committed to breaking down barriers and championing inclusivity for individuals with disabilities. As the Student Access Coordinator for UADS at the George campus, she has been instrumental in championing inclusivity and accessibility for students with disabilities, ensuring they have equal opportunities to thrive academically and socially. Her journey to advocacy did not start here; in her earlier years as a student, Miss Mbuli was a fervent activist, fearlessly raising her voice for various social causes close to her heart. Her unwavering dedication led her to play a pivotal role in the MEMEZA GBV campaign on campus, where she fought tirelessly against Gender-Based Violence (GBV), working to create a safer and more respectful environment for all members of the university community. With a wealth of experience as an activist and now as a coordinator, her passion for fostering an inclusive and compassionate campus community is contagious, and her journey is a living testament to the transformative power of advocacy and resilience.

Miss Mbuli's educational background is a testament to her commitment to excellence and personal growth; she holds a Diploma in Public Management, a Btech in Public Management, and an Honours degree in Public Administration. Her academic journey has not only equipped her with the necessary theoretical foundations but has also fuelled her desire to translate academic insights into tangible societal change. At the core of her academic pursuits lies her Honours thesis impact titled "An Assessment of the Employability of People Living with Disabilities – A Case of Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality," a substantial undertaking that underscores her dedication to contributing to a better society for all. Her research is a testament to her understanding of the intricate challenges faced by persons with disabilities in the realm of employment; under the expert guidance of Dr Jakoet-Salie, a renowned authority in the field, Miss Mbuli's thesis is poised to contribute valuable insights to the public administration discourse and, ultimately, to inform policies that promote equitable access to the job market.

Miss Mbuli's role as the Student Access Coordinator for UADS reflects her tireless advocacy for equal opportunities. She has emerged as a beacon of support for students with disabilities, ensuring they have the tools, resources, and accommodations necessary to thrive in an academic environment. Through her efforts, she has fostered a culture of empathy, understanding, and accessibility within the university community. As a woman of integrity, determination, and compassion, Miso Mbuli continues to elevate the discourse surrounding disability rights, education, and public administration. Her journey serves as a source of inspiration, reminding us of all that by advocating for the rights and inclusion of marginalised communities, we enrich our society and move one step closer to a world where every individual can realise their full potential.

COLLOQUIUM SCRIBES



Ms Siphokazi Gunusa

Ms. Siphokazi Gunusa holds the position of Information Access Officer at Universal Accessibility & Disability Services (UADS). She has obtained the following degrees: MPhil in Human Rights, BA Honours in Public Administration, and Bachelor of Administration. Her role at UADS requires her to apply herself through organising and supervising the creation of accessible learning materials for students with visual impairments in Braille or any other transcription, training them on software, and organising orientation and mobility training.



Mrs Lusanda Latola

Lusanda Latola currently works as an ad hoc Psychometrist at Nelson Mandela University in the Universal Accessibility & Disability Services (UADS). She is professionally registered with the HPCSA and specialises in psychological assessments. She is interested in all mental health matters and is invested in making psychological services available to members of the community in a culturally fair manner.

COLLOQUIUM SUPPORTING STAFF



Mr Athi Nqikashe

Athenkosi Nqikashe obtained his Master's degree in Development Studies at Nelson Mandela University (NMMU then) in 2009, and his thesis focussed on investigating structural socio-economic factors stifling the performance of rural schools in the Eastern Cape. He has more than ten years of diversified work experience in student support services, specialising in management, facilitation, and coordination of work-integrated learning, career guidance, academic support, and advocacy of disability services. In October 2019, he joined Nelson Mandela University as the Operational Manager of Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS).



Mrs Siwe Nare

As the Student Access Coordinator for Universal Accessibility & Disability Services (UADS), **Mrs Siwe Nare** helps students achieve their academic needs and is in charge of organising projects that promote disability awareness and advocacy. Siwe has a Bachelor of Psychology with a focus on Counselling.



Mrs Tinita van Aardt

Mrs Tinita van Aardt holds a BA in psychology and works as the Administrative Assistant and Secretary for the Universal Accessibility & Disability Services (UADS).



Mr Mzukisi Malgas
Transport Facilitator



Mr Ross Dakin
Student Assistant



Miss Achumile Mngese
Student Assistant



Mr Asekho Toto
Student Assistant



Mr Bongani Momoti
Student Assistant



Mr Vuyo Nnodana
Student Assistant



COLLOQUIUM DELEGATE PROFILES



Mr Luthando Jack

Luthando Jack has about 20 years of senior leadership and management in higher education and in the public sector. He is presently the Dean of Students at Nelson Mandela University, Gqeberha, Eastern Cape, South Africa.

He has successfully facilitated various strategic planning and organisational development initiatives, conversations and bosberaads at diverse levels of decision-making covering various subject matters and has written and co-written various strategic documents including plans, policies, and reports. He has also led as an anchor of the governance and institutional capabilities working group of the Eastern Cape Planning Commission and contributed to the writing of the provincial cabinet and legislature-approved Eastern Cape Provincial Development Plan (Vision 2030). He has a master's degree in Commerce from the University of KwaZulu Natal and is currently reading for a PhD. His research interests are in the areas of student development, student-centredness, higher education transformation, knowledge economy, strategy, and complexity.



Dr Bruce Damons

The Engagement Office falls within the portfolio of the DVC: Engagement and Transformation of the Nelson Mandela University and is the umbrella unit whose focus is on forming and regulating academic engagement partnerships with the broader community of Nelson Mandela Bay. **Dr Damons** holds a PhD in education centred around a participatory action research approach towards contextualising a framework of understanding and supporting the work of community volunteers in a community school. He has also held the Directorship position for the Centre for Community School at Mandela University, which endeavours to interact with multiple stakeholders through collaborative teaching and learning, engagement, and scholarship processes. Dr Damons is also a member of the Mandela University Food Systems secretariat.

Before being appointed Director of the Engagement Office, Dr Damons had led the institution's Hubs of Convergence (HoC) programme within the Engagement and Transformation Portfolio (ETP). The HoC endeavours to co-create "physical spaces where the University meets the community to engage on common platforms to find solutions to problems that affect our immediate communities" (VC's inaugural speech – 2018). He is a co-founder of the Manyano School Network and held lecturing responsibilities at the university. Before his appointment at Nelson Mandela University, he held the position of Principal at Sapphire Road Primary School (SRPS), Port Elizabeth, for 15 years.



Dr Ruby-Ann Levendal

Dr Levendal has been working within the Higher Education sector for nearly 30 years, working specifically for the then University of Port Elizabeth since 1996, then the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (renamed from the merger in 2005) and now for the Nelson Mandela University (renamed since 2017), with a concomitant change in the name and mandate of her portfolio. She holds PhD in Chemical Pathology (Wits) and a Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Management (University of Bath, UK). Her current position is Director of Transformation, and she reports to the DVC Engagement and Transformation. The Transformation Office is responsible for the promotion of equality, including reporting of gender-based violence and equality-related advocacy and complaints as well as the implementation of the Institutional Transformation Plan.

Dr Levendal continue to serve on various institutional committees (including the Institutional Forum) as well as the management committee and advisory board of the Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (CANRAD) and the HIV and AIDS Research Unit. She serves as a Board member of Innovolve (a commercialisation company established by the university to facilitate research-related high-tech initiatives). External to the university, she is a Trustee on the Board of the Unity in Africa Foundation, responsible for the implementation of iGEMS (INCUBATING GREAT ENGINEERING MINDS) programme, focused on scholars from under-privileged communities interested in careers as engineers. She is an elected member of the steering committee of the USAf Transformation Managers' Forum.

She had supervised and co-supervised a total of 21 postgraduate students at honours, master's and doctoral levels and continue to supervise postgraduate students in the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology as a Research Associate within the Faculty of Science with a specific focus on cannabis and its medicinal uses. She supports the use of cannabis for medicinal purposes (not for recreational use).



Ms Babalwa Timakwe

Ms Sive Timakwe, born in Butterworth outskirts of the Eastern Cape, is a chef by profession. In 2020 she followed her calling to study Bachelor of Social Work and is currently doing her final year at Nelson Mandela University; she has been a member of the Golden Key Award 3 years in a row, working as a student social worker at Dora Nginza hospital, under Thuthuzela where she offers therapeutic support to rape victims and those who are affected by gender-based violence. She has been involved in off-campus student leadership, holding positions of House comm and Residence Student Assistance officer, to name a few.

She is a social activist, acutely sensitised to students' complex issues; she believes it is important to advocate for the marginalised students and to address structural issues students face in their quest for academic excellence. Understanding that access to a university does not automatically guarantee nor translate into success. Ms Timakwe is committed to being a catalyst and an enabler in leading transformation, student development and success, especially with students grappling with a myriad of issues at the university. She lives by the African proverb Umntu ngumntu ngabantu, and I am because we are.



Ms Ncebakazi Siziba

Ms Ncebakazi Siziba was born in Mqanduli, Eastern Cape. She did her primary and secondary education at Efata School for the Blind in Mthatha, and she completed matric in 2013. She graduated with a Bachelor of Social Work degree from Nelson Mandela University. She is currently doing her Masters in Anthropology.



Ms Keisha Ruiters

Ms Keisha Ruiters is a student in the Faculty of Law pursuing her LLB degree. She is an active member of the Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS).



Ms Yolokazi Matika

Yolokazi Matika is an entrepreneur, strategic marketer, and social media specialist who is self-taught in graphic design. She is deeply committed to entrepreneurship, youth development, and women empowerment. Yolokazi is a good leader with strong leadership, project management, organisation, problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication abilities. This talented, creative, and brilliant young woman has a hearing impairment disability, but she never allows it to hold her back from achieving her dreams.

She is holding Master of Commerce in Marketing. She had the honour of being mentored by Dr Sharon Munyaka, Founder and Executive Director of Sharon Munyaka Inc and President of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology South Africa, during the Unity in Africa Mentorship Programme (SIOPSA).

Yolokazi Matika worked at Nelson Mandela University as a Marketing and Public Relations Intern in the School of Engineering, a Coordinator for the Women in Leadership Association (WELA), and an Academic Administrator for the MSc programme in the construction and quantity surveying departments. Yolokazi is constantly on the lookout for educational opportunities that will help her grow and develop. After attending a 5-day business training hosted by Masinyusane Youth Development in 2021, she was also chosen for business coaching. She also participated in a business training hosted by the National Youth Development Agency in 2016 (NYDA). While studying at Nelson Mandela University, she participated in the Beyond Leadership Programme (BtC), Global Studies Programme, Unity in Africa Foundation Mentorship, Enactus, Vodacom Ambassadors Programme, and Mandela 67 Minutes. She was chosen as a deserving academic student to attend the winter school in 2016, which primarily focused on marketing, accounting, and logistics with students from Germany.



Ms Nomalungelo Ntlokwana

Ms Ntlokwana joined the university in 2005. In 2008, she was appointed as a Counselling Psychologist and progressed to a Senior Psychologist position in 2011. As a Senior Psychologist, she coordinated the Missionvale Centre and managed the career core competence, building strong relationships with industry and school communities through career outreach programmes and expanding access to the university.

She holds an MA in Counselling Psychology from Nelson Mandela University and her Psychology Honours and BA Ed, both from the former Vista University. Lungsi is registered as a Counselling Psychologist with the Health Professions Council of Southern Africa (HPCSA) and is a Level II International Peer Educator Trainer of Trainers.

She joined the university from the Department of Education (DoE), where she was a Head of the Department and formed part of the school's Senior Management Team. She has served on the National Executive Management Committee of the Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE) and was its Eastern Cape Regional Chairperson.



Dr Phumeza Kota-Nyathi

She is responsible for leading the work of the LT Collab and the conceptualisation and implementation of key strategies to enable success and development for students and staff. To date, she has been serving the University as Director of Emthonjeni Student Wellness. **Dr Phumeza Kota-Nyathi** has been registered as a Counselling Psychologist since 1999. Her lecturing career extends over 12 years at the University of Port Elizabeth, Vista University, and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Her experience within the different fields of Psychology ranges from employee assistance work and HIV coordination (NMBM), student counselling services (CPUT), Human Resources (Telkom SA), student development (Coega Development Corporation) and private practice.

When asked about her new role, Phumeza commented as follows - *"As we move our learning and teaching agenda forward in a volatile and complex environment, we need to continually reflect on our practices and advance towards transformative learning and teaching. This process is not necessarily a smooth one as we might need to be disruptive, allowing for critical evaluation exploring varied ways of awareness raising, knowing, and doing. As co-constructors in learning and teaching, we will achieve success when we take our students and colleagues along with us in the spirit of collaboration."*



Prof Diale Boitumelo

Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology and Vice Dean of Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Education at the University of Johannesburg. **Prof Diale Boitumelo** is also a registered Educational Psychologist with the HPCSA and an Employee Wellness Practitioner. Prof Diale is passionate about career development across the lifespan and believes in approaching career development from a life design framework. This has sparked her interest in the career transitioning of youth in general and, in particular, youth with neurodiverse needs. Her keen interest in children and youth with autism has seen her presenting in various forums, both nationally and internationally. Prof Diale's secondary interest is in the fields of gender and sexuality studies and violence and bullying in schools in relation to career development. Prof Diale is currently a Visiting Professor at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka.



Ms Unathi Nyangwa

Senior Psychologist – Department of Labour

Ms Unathi Nyangwa is a skilled Counselling Psychologist with experience ranging from various settings, including health care. She has also worked in an educational-related field and a special school with learners with severe intellectual disabilities, supporting learners, parents and teachers to ensure that the learners reach their full potential. Ms Nyangwa has recently joined the Department of Employment and Labour as a Principal psychologist and is based at a Provincial Level.



Ms Caroline Boshoff

Ms Caroline Boshoff was born and raised in the beautiful, windy city of Gqeberha. At the beginning of her school career, nobody could understand why a child who talks so intelligently could not read and write. Originally, the teachers thought that she was just lazy until she was diagnosed as having severe Dyslexia.

At a young age, she decided that her disability would not disable her. Her disability would be her ability to inform the world about the feelings and opinions of children with disabilities. She became an activist for the rights of children with disabilities while she was still in High School. To spread her message, she used platforms like Social Media, YouTube, TV, Radio, Newspapers and Magazines.

With hard work and the use of computer-assistive devices to read and write for her, she achieved the first position in the Special Needs Schools Category in the Eastern Cape in her Matric year. She is currently studying BEd (Foundation Phase) at Nelson Mandela University and is in her 3rd year. She is also currently tutoring and assisting 1st year students who are struggling with their work through the 1st Year Experience Programme of the Faculty of Education.

Her dream is to help children who would struggle with schoolwork as she did, but they will be able to overcome their challenges if they get the right stimulation at an early age because she believes that every child in South Africa can be successful at home, at school and in the community, if they get the right foundation and the right opportunities.



Mrs Bongwiwe Daniel

Mrs Bongwiwe Daniels has been a principal at Khanyisa School for the Visually Impaired since 2013. She has a senior primary teachers diploma that she obtained at Algoa College. She got a BA degree from the University of South Africa. She obtained her honours in Psychology from Nelson Mandela University. She has a further diploma in Education (Remedial Education).



Mr Ndivhuo Junior Malimagovha

Mr Ndivhuo Junior Malimagovha is a second-year student studying Marketing at George. He is pursuing skills in Graphic Design and Web Development separately. He was diagnosed with multiple disabilities in October 2022.

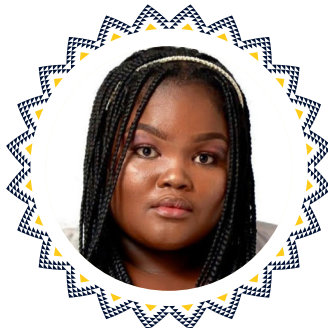


Ms Boitumelo Wesi

My name is **Boitumelo Tumi Wesi**. I am a Student Representative Council: Disability and Special Needs officer. I am using a wheelchair and striving to have the greatest life possible on wheels. I was diagnosed with an illness around my teenage years ago that caused me to be impaired. This altered every perspective I had about life. I had to dust myself off after my healing process in those moments. Since that time, I have not turned back.

I have been embracing my situation and eradicating myths about disabilities and societal conventions.

I am a third-year Nelson Mandela University student.



Ms Sinalo Matwa

Sinalo is a second-year student in Inventory and Stores Management at Nelson Mandela University. Along with many achievements like getting provincial colours consecutively, two achievements stand out for Sinalo: While battling with COVID-19, she made an appearance on national television advocating for ending period poverty. She has also addressed an international audience. She has also been involved in a panel with the Chair of the Council, the vice-chancellor, and the late awesome Eusebius Mckaiser.

Sinalo was born with a genetic disease called Spinal muscular atrophy type 2, which has resulted in her using a wheelchair. She always says that she has it, but it does not have her because she is striving regardless of the limitations it is supposed to cause her. It is also not the worst thing that has happened to me. She is larger than life. She can read the room very well. Sinalo is also the one who addresses the issues that other people are avoiding. She is very objective. She says, " I am the quietest, loudest person ever."



Mr Nevil Balakrishna

Mr Nevil Balakrishna works as the Disability Coordinator at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and has worked on the Howard College and Medical School Campuses since 2009. He is the Vice Chairperson of HEDSA (Higher Education Disability Services Association). Nevil is a qualified Social Worker and has worked in several fields of Social Work practice at both the case management level and in the positions of management of professional staff: as a visually impaired person, Neville advocates for a rights-based approach to disability. He served as Manager at the KZN Blind and Deaf Society and the KZN Society for the Blind and later was elected to serve on the Board of the KZN Blind and Deaf Society as Chairperson of the Rehabilitation and Development Committee. In 2023, Nevil was elected as the Provincial Chairperson of the South African National Council for the Blind in KZN. Nevil is passionate about the empowerment of persons with disabilities and has expanded Disability Equality Training to ensure its relevance in the South African context to deal with the multiple layers of oppression that confront persons with disabilities.



Dr Amina Jakoet-Salie
NMU Public Management and Leadership

Dr Amina Jakoet-Salie is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Public Management and Leadership and is currently Acting Head of Department since August 2020. She is also the Programme Leader for the Diploma in Public Management and the Advanced Diploma in Public Administration and Management. She has worked in the healthcare industry in the Western and Eastern Cape prior to joining Mandela University as a Contract lecturer in 2010.

She holds an undergraduate degree in Bachelor of Social Science and BSoc Sci (Honours) from the University of Cape Town. She obtained a MA (Research) (Cum Laude) and a PhD from Nelson Mandela University in 2018. Her research niche areas are co-production, trust in government, leadership and good governance. She has published articles in local and international accredited journals in her discipline and has also edited a research textbook that was published by Van Schaik Publishers. She examines and reviews academic manuscripts for various other universities. She also participates in various committees at Mandela University, including the Reasonable Academic Committee, Secundus to the Chairperson for the Institutional Learning and Teaching and Research Ethics Committees.

She has presented Conference papers at local, national and international conferences and has just returned from a conference in Manila, Philippines where she presented a paper on Good Governance, Sustainable Development Goals in South Africa

She has received the Faculty of Arts Emerging Researcher of the Year, Emerging Teacher of the Year as well as the Faculty Excellent Teacher Awards. She has been instrumental in the recirculation of the Diploma programme so that the curriculum is aligned with the Vision 2030 of the university, decolonisation of the curriculum and as well as being aligned to the Revitalisation of the Humanities directive. Dr Jakoet-Salie teaching philosophy has always been to cultivate a practice of including all students and developing graduates who are problem-solvers and critical thinkers. In this way, all her students should possess the traits of an employable graduates.



Dr Sareesha Pillay

NMU Public Management and Leadership

Sareesha Pillay has mild cerebral palsy (Right hemiplegia) and is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Public Management and Leadership at Nelson Mandela University.

She lectures on both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. She is currently the Eastern Cape Chairperson for the South African Association for Public Administration and Management. In addition, her postgraduate supervision spans Honours, Master and Doctoral research in the disciplines of Public Administration and Development Studies. Her research areas include Disability Studies, Ethical Leadership and Social Transformation. She has published on Local Economic Development, disability rights, Monitoring and Evaluation and Citizenship to date. She is passionate about mentoring and disability-inclusive development.

PLEASE NOTE

We would like to acknowledge the following individuals for their contributions. Unfortunately, we did not receive their profiles in time for design and layout:

Ms. Karen Syman from Nelson Mandela University's Student Governance and Development.

Ms. Abigail Munene-Baloyi for her valuable contribution to the colloquium. She is from the Department of Higher Education and Training.

Ms Babalwa Mqwengana from Walter Sisulu University.

Mr Zukisa Xokwe is a student from the University of Fort Hare.

Ms Lelihle Tose from East Cape Midland College for stepping in when one of the panellists from TVET College could not make it.

Ms. Afika Mkapha from Lovedale College.

Mr Xolani Sandlana, a Nelson Mandela University alumnus, for his contribution to the colloquium.