

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

**Vice-Chancellor's
(Staff) Excellence
AWARDS** 2021



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VC'S EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Excellence is a core value of Nelson Mandela University. It should undergird all that we do as an institution in the service of society.



This is why annually we celebrate excellence by recognising those staff members and teams who have delivered exceptional work. This time, they also did so in exceptional circumstances - the COVID-19 pandemic. Mandela University was able to continue its core business of producing civic-minded graduates committed to changing the world because of such staff members.

In adapting to new ways of studying, lecturing, researching, working and indeed, living, colleagues showed tremendous fortitude. They navigated uncharted waters, overcame tremendous challenges, learnt new skills and still managed to excel.

We salute these colleagues across both the academic and professional, administration and support services (PASS) divisions of the university, and thank them for their tenacity, talent and their commitment to excellence.

Your leadership and example does us proud.

Thank you, *enkosi, baie dankie.*

Professor Sibongile Muthwa
Vice-Chancellor

*“We salute these colleagues
across both the academic and
professional, administration
and support services divisions
of the university ... ”*

CREATIVE OUTPUT AWARDS



• Creative Output Award •



David Bester

Musical performance and musical direction.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the creative work of David Bester, a senior lecturer in Music, provided an outlet for the collective angst of musicians in their need to create and connect. He adapted music for smaller ensembles, and reimagined concert venues and the way people interact with audiences for a series of concerts.

“Through music, so much is revealed that ordinarily remains hidden, and so much can be communicated without a single word.”

• Creative Output Award •



Erika Bothma

Musical composition, arrangement, recording and performance.

Erika Bothma says that the power of music never ceases to amaze her. This senior lecturer in Music created, together with organist Prof Albert Troskie, an unusual CD titled Serenata, combining organ and piano duets in both the religious and secular genres. It has been widely welcomed due to a lack of suitable repertoires for the organ and piano combination.

“Music is a therapy and a communication far more powerful than words, far more immediate and efficient.”

• Creative Output Award •



Rudi Bower

Musical composition, arrangement, recording and performance.

Rudi Bower, a senior lecturer in Music, composed a first original Afrikaans song cycle for classical guitar and mezzo soprano comprising selected poems of Gqeberha poet Vincent Olliphant. The 12 poems explore universal human themes from hope to discovery, loss, adversity, healing and renewal.

"I am privileged to work in a field at the very confluence of creativity and academia."

• Creative Output Award •



Marius Crouse

Creative writing: Afrikaans poetry.

Marius Crouse says that when writing these poems, he never imagined that the final one in the collection, "The Sixth Extinction", dealing with the impending doom and destruction of our planet, would coincide with the COVID-19 pandemic. This professor in language and literature's work also takes a satirical look at modern art and relationships.

"While writing a poem, it becomes a process of figuring out the 'whys' and the 'what ifs'."

• Creative Output Award •

Tarryn Rennie

Community Engagement: Illustration Design.



Tarryn Rennie, a lecturer in Media and Communication, and her design students Amy de Raedt and Lara van der Walt, inspired by research about building resilience in children, visually introduced the Book Bag and distributed reading material to 10 000 primary school children in the Eastern Cape, providing families with literary skills and improving academic performance.

"Creating meaningful designs through research and collaboration with visual messages that speak volumes can truly make a difference."

• Creative Output Award •

Ulagh Williams

Musical direction, conducting and performance.



Musically directing the University's first online "Isisusa" event shared with a global audience, Ulagh Williams, of Arts, Culture and Heritage, curated a programme debuting original jazz compositions by local students and community artists, and collaborated with an internationally recognised artist.

"I am passionate about developing musical talent through inclusive practices that celebrate creativity, diversity and individuality."

ENGAGEMENT AWARDS





Hennie van As

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
E4J Programme - Advancing of Sustainable
Development Goal 16 Project.

Mandela University was the only African university to assist the United Nations (E4J) initiative, thanks to Hennie van As, a professor in Public Law, who designed a methodology to reach 300 academics and students in South Africa, Kenya and Mauritius, on the following critical issues: integrity and ethics, corruption, organised crime, wildlife, forest and fisheries crime, crime prevention and criminal justice.

“There are enough ideas; the secret is making them happen.”



Darelle van Greunen

Harnessing ICT Innovation and Engagement to
support the fight against COVID-19.

ICT has been enabling global efforts to diagnose and treat patients, track and control the spread of the disease and keep communities informed. Darelle van Greunen, a professor in the School of ICT and head of the Centre for Community Technologies, says that their work includes remote health monitoring, contactless temperature guns, virtual doctor visits, chatbots, mobile apps, hospital robots, drones, and streaming services.

“The essence of innovation is being willing to reinvent yourself with what you have available.”



Julien de Klerk

eNtsa COVID-19 Pandemic - Innovative Health Support.

Julien and his Engineering Department team sought innovative methods to improve healthcare readiness with ventilator component design and UV sterilisation evaluation. They also distributed more than 14 000 3D-printed face shields to public hospitals and medical centres and collaborated with start-up "Provolution" and the Eastern Cape 3D printing community.

"Every challenge is an opportunity to act and make a difference."



Jean Greyling

Tanks & Boats Coding.

Under the leadership of Jean Greyling, professor in Computing Sciences, over 25 000 learners and 1000 teachers have been introduced to coding without the use of computers, through apps and kits, at TANKS workshops. In addition to the first TANKS coding app developed in 2017, two more coding apps, BOATS and RANGERS, have been developed.

"A good teacher can convey knowledge, and an excellent teacher inspires students to perform at their best."



Glenn Holtzman

Transformation of Music Curriculum Initiatives.

Glenn Holtzman, a lecturer in Music, has steered the design of a brand-new Diploma in Music curriculum for graduates to be more holistically developed in the broader performing arts and better prepared for industry needs. He is active as a musicologist, social scientist, and social justice activist, and regularly presents his research at conferences and seminars.

“Performing your identity is the highest form of artistry.”



Babalwa Magoqwana

Building of a Gender Intellectual Corridor.

The collaborative Eastern Cape university project to recover and remember women’s intellectual histories in Southern Africa is led by Babalwa Magoqwana, a senior lecturer in Sociology and Anthropology. The Centre for Women in Gender Studies initiated the project, sharing African Women’s biographical histories, generational knowledge transfer and indigenous languages.

“Great scholarship comes when one starts taking one’s own context seriously.”



Karl du Preez and Russell Phillips

Riemvasmaak Solar Energy project.

The Riemvasmaak project of principal lecturer Karl du Preez and professor in Mechanical Engineering, Russell Phillips, showcases how correctly implemented renewable energy systems can assist a rural community to flourish in a remote, harsh environment. They believe their solar water pumping and fully off-the grid power supply systems could become the blueprint for a mass rollout.

"We select, refine and package technologies to make life a little easier for those who don't have what we take for granted."



Blondie Ntsiko and the Library and Information Services Team

Envisioning Community Engagement and Outreach project.

Productive relationships between communities and institutions make community engagement necessary and worthwhile. Blondie, who was the project team leader, believes that they lead to more manageable community decisions and improvement for local communities.

"Empower and integrate people from different backgrounds. Groups feeling ignored can gain greater control over their lives and communities."



Bruce Damons

Hubs of Convergence Project.

The Hubs of Convergence under the leadership of Bruce Damons played a critical role as part of the University's response to the pandemic. Collaborating with stakeholders, the Community Convergence Workstream's work included that of coordinating PPE support to communities and organisations, providing sustainable food relief, GBV prevention, journalism support and economic activities.

"It is ok not to be ok. It is ok not to know. It is NOT ok to do nothing."

LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS



• Nelson Mandela University Excellent Teacher for 2021 •



Tim Gibbon

Faculty of Science

Tim Gibbon, a professor in Physics, believes that physics tells the story of the Universe - everything from the smallest atom to the largest galaxy. Physics sharpens problem solving and creativity and equips students with tools to innovate, create and improve lives and inspire others. He notes that definitions and equations lead students to invent technologies to discover and shape new worlds.

"Dream, create, achieve, inspire."

• Nelson Mandela University Emerging Excellent Teachers for 2021 •



Candyce Clark

Faculty of Health Sciences

Pharmacy lecturer Candyce Clark hopes to inspire new pharmacists to develop a love for chemistry. She says we should never forget that all medicines start off in the chemistry lab and end up in a reaction vessel called the human body.

She thrives in leading her students along the journey of drug discovery - from molecule to medicine.

"Always keep trying, but most importantly, keep doing and keep discovering!"



Timothy Speckman

Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology

Timothy Speckman, an associate lecturer in Information Technology, sparks ideas for solving problems with technology. Like a committed bus driver, he successfully delivers his students to their destination, namely success, bringing hope for a better life to an entire generation.

"A good teacher will impart knowledge, but an excellent teacher will learn how his students consume knowledge."



Jean-Pierre Basson

Faculty of Humanities

Jean-Pierre Basson, who is a senior lecturer in Architecture, shapes his learning and teaching around his students, as social beings in a community. He puts them in the centre, guiding them to success. He understands his students' strengths and limitations and additionally forms critical relationships with the community, for everyone's benefit.

"A good teacher can convey knowledge, and an excellent teacher inspires students to perform at their best."



Sue Petratos

Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology

Computer Literacy is as vital as ABC to the youth of today. In Sue Petratos's classes, students are not only taught to be book smart but to also develop their self-confidence, embrace who they are and be passionate about empowering others. This professor of Information Technology recognises that by instilling these, there will be a better future for all.

"The future lies not in the hands of the teacher, but in the hands of their protégés."



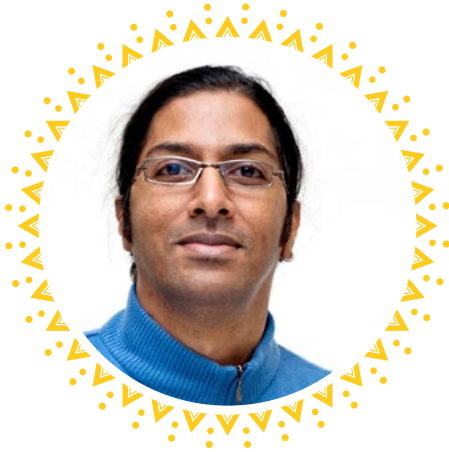
John Andrews

Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology

John Andrews, a senior lecturer in Architecture, says the design studio engages with society while producing creative research and an authentic learning experience to contribute tangibly to society, reconciling academia, community, and the profession. His students designed, funded and built a crèche for a disadvantaged community.

"Design/build is about deconstructing privileges and allowing the by-product of an authentic learning experience to contribute tangibly to society."

• Faculty Excellent Teachers of the Year •



Jude Mathurine

Faculty of Humanities

Jude Mathurine, a lecturer in Media and Communication, guides his students towards critical thought and confronting historical challenges to inform the needs of 'the media' for social good, and to resolve problems that matter to their communities, the region and the nation.

"Do good. Be better."

• Faculty Excellent Teachers of the Year •



Andre Mukheibir

Faculty of Law

Five years ago, this professor in Private Law started experimenting with online, open-book assessments to simulate real life situations, where attorneys would research problems. Her assessments are problem-based, covering the entire syllabus. Students have to know their material and consult sources for accuracy, not just memorise sources, as was done previously.

"Avoid the straitjacket – be original and creative."

• Faculty Emerging Excellent Teachers of the Year •



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Pharmacy lecturer Candyce Clark hopes to inspire new pharmacists to develop a love for chemistry. She says we should never forget that all medicines start off in the chemistry lab and end up in a reaction vessel called the human body.

Candyce thrives in leading her students along the journey of drug discovery - from molecule to medicine.

"Always keep trying, but most importantly, keep doing and keep discovering!"

• Faculty Emerging Excellent Teachers of the Year •



Phumezo Ntlatywa

Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology

The teaching philosophy of Phumezo Ntlatywa, a lecturer in Information Technology, is centred around ubuntu by listening to students, being conscious of societal needs, keeping everything simple and using technology. It also means every student knows that their views are respected and that they belong in a learning environment.

"Be happy, make others happy; the world needs it."

PASS AWARDS



• Professional, Administrative and Support Service (PASS) Excellence Team Awards •

There are five PASS Excellence Team Awards for 2021. Given the critical role that institutional support played in enabling the academic project to continue in the ever-changing climate of the COVID-19 pandemic, this should not be surprising. These teams showed unwavering commitment, dedication and determination in executing their duties.



Communication and Marketing team

The COVID-19 pandemic fast-tracked the role of Communication and Marketing in effectively positioning the institution as one in the service of society by implementing a new integrated production hub structure and a “digital first” approach.

By deploying the digital benefits of social media and websites, the institution has successfully driven a slew of campaigns, such as COVID-19 safety and awareness, vaccination education, water awareness and applications for both undergraduates and postgraduate students, to position the institution with wider audiences both nationally and internationally.

Since the implementation of the new digital strategy in 2020, Communication and Marketing have grown the audience on the social media platforms by 86% and increased impressions (number of times posts have been displayed to users) by 36% to over 34.5 million. In 2021, Mandela University was mentioned and/or discussed by others in just over 20 000 messages, resulting in a potential exposure to over 218 million followers, while the sentiment around our brand has been very positive (83%).

Such efforts also saw the team win an international digital award for its internal COVID-19 communication.

The new digital first strategy helped to vastly increase student application numbers, take the arts to greater numbers of people and enable the transition of in-person institutional events to the virtual stage.

“It was a difficult time for everyone, but recognising the importance of good communication in times of crisis, it was critical that we guided staff and students through the pandemic, led by the outputs of the Coronavirus Task Team (CTT). We established a substantive digital presence to improve our efforts. It wasn’t easy, but we learnt a great deal and remain committed to constantly seeking solutions,” Senior Director: Communication and Marketing Chantal Janneker reflected, adding that she was proud of her team both in Gqeberha and George.

The efforts of the Student Recruitment colleagues saw a 34.7% increase in applications year on year, thanks to new online strategies using a digital first approach to both target and reach new audiences. Their retention strategy also played a key role in helping the University to exceed its first-time entering target and enrolling 8 634 new first years with a 50% split between undergrad diplomas and

certificates and 50% degrees. This exceeded the 2021 total by 44.57%.

Apart from the COVID-19 pandemic support, the team ran a SAVE WATER NOW campaign calling on internal stakeholders to change their water usage behaviours in the face of a crippling drought. It also ran an educational VAX FAX campaign around vaccines to enable informed decision-making.

Externally, the work of the Coronavirus Co-ordinating Committee (CCC), in response to the needs of the pandemic, was shared in agenda-setting media, entrenching Mandela University’s identity as one in the service of society.

The hands-on events team transitioned to the virtual space, hosting webinars and live premieres, and upskilling themselves to ensure that milestone and other celebratory occasions were still held.

The Arts, Culture and Heritage arm of the division substantially positioned the arts at the institution through a series of successful digital packages, celebrating key events, the Naming and Renaming processes and the re-imagining of the Archives.

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The COVID-19 decontamination team within Cleaning

Keeping staff and students safe in order to save lives and save the 2021 academic year, saw the institution's small but dedicated COVID-19 decontamination team move into overdrive.

They gave of their time and risked their own and families' lives in consistently decontaminating sites from Lockdown level 4. And they did so without complaint, all working beyond their normal scope of work to ensure the safety of Mandela University staff and students.

"The team had to start decontamination of venues because staff and third-year students were returning. It was not an easy ride but due to a good motivation from us as managers and administration, we managed to convince the team," said team leader Dumisani Myataza.

Staff from the cleaning team were identified to work together with the University's SHE office, which assisted with training and preparation for the job at hand.

The team was, and is, responsible for sanitisation needs on all the University's Gqeberha campuses.

It was not an easy task, but Myataza and manager Nosiseko Jack were consistently able to motivate the team, sometimes with near-impossible requests.

Sanitising a normal office takes a staff member between five to seven minutes and for larger venues, such as the Indoor Sport Centre, it takes a team of three about an hour, while for South Campus library, the job is about two to three hours.

Teams of two staff members go to small areas to decontaminate, but for big areas, many more people are needed. Every day, the team has more than five venues, increasing now with staff returning to campus and mask-to-mask classes.

While it's scary, owing to fear of being infected, said Myataza, the dedicated team is always willing to assist.

Occupational Health Service COVID-19 Centre team

Leading the way through the unknown world of the global coronavirus pandemic at Nelson Mandela University was a team of committed health workers, who not only endeavoured to keep the University community safe, but extended their care to the public too.

The COVID-19 Centre team became pivotal in driving solutions in a time of ever-changing uncertainty as they implemented their disaster management skills to the benefit of the entire University community.

It was their dedication, drive and knowledge that enabled Nelson Mandela University to be the first within the higher education sector to open a fully-fledged vaccination site to its own staff, students and the public.

With no guidebook available for navigating the unknown challenges of an invisible enemy, the team, led by Sister Valencia Benjamin, researched

near and far for credible information to direct their actions. This included the World Health Organisation, the Department of Health and the experiences of other countries that were ahead of South Africa in terms of the trajectory of the virus.

It was, and is, a practice they follow to this day, ever seeking solutions to the many facets of managing a pandemic that has changed every aspect of our lives – the way we work, study and go about our day-to-day living.

They joined hands with health organisations and practitioners externally and with Mandela University colleagues internally, as part of the Coronavirus Task Team (CTT), to enable a multitude of interventions and establish the COVID-19 Vaccination Centre on North Campus.

The interventions also included wellness advice, vaccination explanations, talks, surveillance and monitoring documentation and the hosting of



highly successful VAX FAX webinars in which the first recipients of the vaccine – frontline workers - were able to share their experiences and answer questions.

Those who contracted the virus experienced first-hand the professional, caring nature of a team whose true worth revealed itself in this time of global crisis. They also walked alongside those who lost loved ones, including colleagues and the family members of the 20 staff members who succumbed to COVID-19.

Physically, their collective impact is now evident in the successful construction and development of the COVID-19 Vaccination Centre on North Campus. As their own premises were unsuitable for such facilities, they worked closely with Infrastructure Planning, Technical Services and the Safety, Health and Environment colleagues to open a centre that initially was targeted at supporting Mandela staff

and students. But the demand for vaccinations was such in the beginning that the Centre was opened to the public too, despite a lack of additional support from the Department of Health.

Indeed, the majority of those vaccinated came from the public, but most Mandela University staff (more than 73% of whom were fully vaccinated by March this year) chose to use the Centre.

The feedback from public and staff alike has been hugely positive, not only around the Centre, but towards the team generally for their work ethic and genuine care as they have successfully implemented their integrated Health and Wellness Strategy Framework.

That recognition was also replicated when Sister Benjamin and her team won a top poster award for their professional handling of the pandemic at a conference for their industry in 2021.

It was their dedication, drive and knowledge that enabled Nelson Mandela University to be the first within the higher education sector to open a fully-fledged vaccination site to its own staff, students and the public.



Institutional Governance Department

Good governance enables Nelson Mandela University to build a sustainable, better future for us all. And undergirding that good governance is the dedicated Institutional Governance team who prevailed against the many challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic to deliver on their support to the University.

With 131 years of institutional knowledge between them, the nine team members provided various secretarial and reporting support for 36 institutional meetings in 2020, while navigating the new world of online meetings.

Without the guidance or support of an immediate line manager (the Deputy Director post was vacant for 11 months), the team dug deep to keep their deadlines by working after-hours and weekends.

They recognised that, despite the many challenges of working from home, failure to do so would

negatively impact on the work of the University. They knew momentum would have been lost in making critical decisions, approving policies and in meeting other important governance requirements, if these were not passed timeously.

To enable their support in the new world of work, the team had to grapple with new technologies, adopt an open mindset and implement their own time management routines.

They underwent training in new software and electronic systems to help to improve record-keeping, save time and increase meeting attendance by stakeholders.

There were personal victories for many too – from going paperless to seamlessly co-hosting key institutional meetings – but ultimately, it was their combined efforts throughout the past year or more that bolstered the good governance of Nelson Mandela University.



Technical Services and Space Optimisation Management team

Without the key foundational support of Infrastructure Services and Space, Nelson Mandela University might have floundered during the dark, early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, it flourished as, among other initiatives, it successfully established South Africa's first public vaccination centre at an institution of higher education.

Thanks to the efforts of a team of planners and artisans, who went above and beyond the call of duty, the University was able to continue its key operations at short notice in highly uncertain circumstances.

While the majority of Mandela University staff worked from home, the men and women tasked to ensure that everything was functional, continued to work rotationally. Apart from the day-to-day operational activities, they both planned and implemented the infrastructure needed to support COVID-19 protocols and the safety of all staff and students.

Once the new entrance arrangements for every campus had been secured, the team shifted its

attention to the establishment of a dedicated COVID-19 centre where the Occupational Health staff could do essential periodic screening of all University staff returning to work.

As the country readied itself for mass vaccination, the same team redesigned this centre and installed additional infrastructure to support the vaccination process. The centre on North Campus was further opened up for the public to come and get their shots at our University. The centre had to be laid out for effective flow to prevent contact of persons while supporting large volumes of persons.

"Again, we had to think this through very carefully in terms of managing crowds and keeping everyone safe. The entire team was involved in the implementation – adjusting and amending existing infrastructure to now serve the needs of coping with a pandemic," said Senior Director of Infrastructure Services and Space, Melvin Syce.

"We want to acknowledge the design contribution of our staff member, Rodger Thomas, who had several co-morbidities, yet still came to campus

during COVID's height to design the layout for this successful centre. He sadly died after being infected by the virus."

In addition, the Building and Engineering Services Teams had to consider the existing challenges of loadshedding and water scarcity in aligning its plans in support of the academic project.

Suddenly, the role of those responsible for signage, lighting, paving, plumbing, ventilation, water supply and the like took on new meaning.

Many staff members recognised the value of the team's support, openly acknowledging their role with letters of gratitude.

And those who grumbled about a lack of wide-scale maintenance soon changed their stance, when learning that the division had 24 vacancies and was working in a rotational format, which significantly reduced their capacity. This forced them to focus their attention on emergency requests and ensuring that students in residences were supported.

While the majority of Mandela University staff worked from home, the men and women tasked to ensure that everything was functional, continued to work rotationally. Apart from the day-to-day operational activities, they both planned and implemented the infrastructure needed to support COVID-19 protocols and the safety of all staff and students.

- Professional, Administrative and Support Service Excellence Award •
Peromnes level 5 to 7



Nomakwezi Mzilikazi

Research Management

The exceptional leadership skills and contribution to the strategic objective of research management has earned Nomakwezi Mzilikazi, Director of Research Management, this award. This invaluable experience in research has seen Mandela University implement academic development programmes and develop significant international partnerships.

“Every single experience and encounter holds valuable lessons. Be deliberate about your own learning from your own experiences.”

-
- Professional, Administrative and Support Service (PASS) Excellence Award •
Peromnes level 8 to 9



Karen Snyman

Student Governance and Development

Karen Snyman, the Student Entrepreneurship Specialist in Student Governance and Development, has shown commitment and active involvement in activities of Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education. With innovation and creativity, she has developed various programmes to improve students' entrepreneurial capabilities, giving them hope during the difficult COVID-19 peak times.

“Seeing students' growth into the change makers of tomorrow and knowing your role in their development is a most satisfying experience.”

- Professional, Administrative and Support Service (PASS) Excellence Award •
Peromnes level 10 to 12



Nomathamsanqa Dokwana

Chemistry

Chemistry Laboratory Technician Nomathamsanqa Dokwana has been instrumental in running research activities for the department, and her hard work has motivated fellow employees, and provided students with the confidence to execute their research activities.

"The more opportunities I receive to help people reach their goals, the more eager I am to help others."

- Professional, Administrative and Support Service (PASS) Excellence Award •
Peromnes level 10 to 12



Travis Smit

Zoology

Travis Smit, a Laboratory Technician in Zoology, has phenomenal work ethic, shows professionalism and bravery and is often required to work in dangerous situations to ensure the safety of both staff and student. He had to take on senior duties during the pandemic, resulting in him going above and beyond his scope of work.

"Enjoy what you do and live life to the fullest."

- Professional, Administrative and Support Service (PASS) Excellence Award •
Peromnes level 13 to 17



Luyanda Novas

Madibaz Sport

Luyanda Novas, a Support Services Assistant at Madibaz Sport, has a proactive attitude and the will to show initiative. He takes on supervisor responsibilities to lead in the absence of a manager and displays a positive image for the University to all stakeholders.

"I like what I'm doing at work; every day I gain more skills."

RESEARCH AWARDS



• Nelson Mandela University Researcher of the Year for 2021 •

This is awarded to an individual who has shown outstanding research excellence in the year preceding the award.



Andrew Phiri

Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences

The research of Andrew Phiri, an economics professor, is interdisciplinary and allows the data to “speak for itself”. His research identifies and applies analytical tools with the mathematical accuracy to draw precise inferences from real world data. “Hidden facts” on key economic issues are unveiled, competing theories evaluated and new policy framework designs suggested to improve people’s welfare.

“As is the case with mankind, it is really doubtful that any economy can truly prosper without being highly sacrificial.”

• Lifetime Contribution to Research Excellence •



Lifetime Contribution to Research Excellence

Graham Kerley

The science and teaching of Graham Kerley, a professor in Zoology, includes exploring how large animals, such as elephants, rhinos, cheetahs and lions, operate in their environment and how this can be applied to their conservation and ecosystem restoration. Ideas are tested around using wildlife for societal adaptation and to mitigate global change. Many students see these explorations as exciting and socially relevant. Prof Kerley believes that equipping the next generation of scientists to take on these challenges is what being a university academic is about.

“Being inspired by the wealth of nature and its relevance to society and future generations makes my work worthwhile, fun and exciting.”



William Goosen

Faculty of Science

As a scanning electron microscopist at the Centre for High Resolution Transmission Electron Microscopy, William Goosen collaborates with researchers and students in the sciences, such as botany and ocean sciences, where he images diatoms, to indicate environmental and climate change. Imaging of nanostructures for physics, for example, contributes to hydrogen production as a fuel source for environmentally friendly motor vehicles.

"It doesn't matter what you do in life, as long as you are able to do it with enthusiasm."



Janine Adams

Faculty of Science

Janine Adams, a professor in Botany, investigates coastal habitats and climate change to understand how they are responding to warming and the rise in sea level, informing global comparisons and input into the management of South Africa's 300 estuaries. These investigations include water quality, invasive aquatic plants, harmful algal blooms, pollutants, drought and water abstraction.

"I am dedicated to training next generation coastal scientists, ensuring that research links science, policy and management through extensive collaboration."



Bastien Linol

AEON-ESSRI

According to Bastien Linol, a researcher at Africa Earth Observatory Network, understanding how Africa separated from the other continents and has evolved over the last 100 million years predicts natural resources and climatic fluctuations. His geological field mapping measures change to quantify the age of rocks, sediments accumulation, sea level, temperature, precipitation, the flux of rivers and oceanic circulations.

"To approach a problem in nature, start by making a map of the environment."



Belinda du Plooy

Engagement Office

Belinda du Plooy, a senior manager at the Engagement Office, believes storytelling is possibly the most unique, and the most common thing that humans do, and the most interesting ones are those we don't even know we are telling. Her research spans across literature, film studies, popular culture, philosophy, education, psychology and women's studies.

"'Academic' is not a job description; it is an attitude and an approach to life."



Khaled Abou-El-Hossein

Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology

Professor in Mechatronics Khaled Abou-El-Hossein has been researching mechanical metal cutting, optical components engineering and manufacturing, based on using diamond tooling technologies. In his laboratory, the only one in the country, the difficulties in manufacturing advanced optical components for the aerospace industry as well as fabricating industrial mirrors are investigated.

"The best research you can do is when you run experiments and acquire data yourself."



Janine Adams

Faculty of Science

Janine Adams, a professor in Botany, investigates coastal habitats and climate change to understand how they are responding to warming and the rise in sea level, informing global comparisons and input into the management of South Africa's 300 estuaries. These investigations include water quality, invasive aquatic plants, harmful algal blooms, pollutants, drought and water abstraction.

"I am dedicated to training next generation coastal scientists, ensuring that research links science, policy and management through extensive collaboration."



Sylvan Blignaut

Faculty of Education

The current research of Sylvan Blignaut, a professor in Education, focuses on how we could transform curricula in South Africa, both at school and in the higher education sector by focusing on social justice, Africanisation and decolonisation of the curriculum. An important question here is how we could utilise the curriculum to build a more humane and caring society.

"Research is akin to shining a light into dark areas of our lives to understand social reality better."



Joanna Botha

Faculty of Law

The research of Joanna Botha, a professor in Public Law, focuses on developing a regulatory framework for hate crimes and hate speech, which appreciates that inter-group hostility and prejudice is linked to social hierarchies and the power dynamics between marginalised communities and those with 'in-group' status.

"Be curious, be brave, believe in your work and you will inspire change."



Luvuyo Ntombana

Faculty of Humanities

The research of associate professor in Sociology and Anthropology, Luvuyo Ntombana, entails cultural anthropology, African Indigenous Knowledge Systems, masculinities, African spirituality and religion. His studies also focus on the role of Xhosa male initiation in relation to medical male circumcision, as an HIV/AIDS prevention method - avoiding reducing it to just circumcision.

"Intellectualism is missing in modern religions; true spirituality is using the mind to see that which is beyond the mind."



Andrew Phiri

Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences

The research of Andrew Phiri, an economics professor, is interdisciplinary and allows the data to "speak for itself". His research identifies and applies analytical tools with the mathematical accuracy to draw precise inferences from real world data. "Hidden facts" on key economic issues are unveiled, competing theories evaluated and new policy framework designs suggested to improve people's welfare.

"As is the case with mankind, it is really doubtful that any economy can truly prosper without being highly sacrificial."



Ilse Truter

Faculty of Health Sciences

The research of Ilse Truter, a professor in Pharmacy, ensures that medicines are used rationally and cost-effectively, enabling the patient to obtain maximum benefit from the treatment. Pharma-co-epidemiology studies the use and effects of medicine in large populations. A pertinent example currently is whether or not a lower dose of a COVID-19 vaccine might be safe and effective in young children.

*“Research starts with courageous curiosity
... the flame of one candle in the unknown
darkness will soon light many more candles.”*



Margie Childs

Faculty of Education

Photo-voice, collage work and poetic inquiry are among the visual and arts-based approaches for language and literacy and teacher education practice that Margie Childs, a senior lecturer in Education, uses to understand classroom and community challenges and complexities. Mutual dependability and vulnerability are associated with a Humanising Pedagogy.

*“Effective learning environments allow space and
place for students and lecturers to relate to each
other and the world.”*

• Faculty Emerging Excellent Researchers of the Year •



Johan Cronje

Faculty of Health Sciences

The research of Johan Cronje, a lecturer in Psychology, seeks to further investigate authentic assessment to understand each child within their specific context and to highlight their unique strengths and areas for future development. In 2012, he collaborated internationally on the third edition revision of the Griffiths Scales of Child Development.

“Every moment is an opportunity to learn something new.”

• Faculty Emerging Excellent Researchers of the Year •



William Goosen

Faculty of Science

As a scanning electron microscopist at the Centre for High Resolution Transmission Electron Microscopy, William Goosen collaborates with researchers and students in the sciences, such as botany and ocean sciences, where he images diatoms, to indicate environmental and climate change. Imaging of nanostructures for physics, for example, contributes to hydrogen production as a fuel source for environmentally friendly motor vehicles.

“It doesn’t matter what you do in life, as long as you are able to do it with enthusiasm.”



Luyolo Mahlangabeza

Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences

Luyolo Mahlangabeza is a Business School research associate who supervised a slew of research by master's students over the last year. This included topics such as the retention of Generation-Y chartered accountants in South Africa; cross-cultural entrepreneurial development; public sector career advancement for women and the impact of automation technologies on employment.

"That fire from within a person has to burn strongly enough to overcome any challenges one comes across."



Sibulele Mtakati

Faculty of Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology

Sibulele Mtakati, a lecturer in Electrical Engineering, investigates techniques to balance generated and consumed power for the stable, safe and efficient operation of an electrical network. Challenges present in connected loads have an impact on the reliability of electrical supply upon which a society's economic and social development depends.

"Try, try and try again."



Thanduxolo Qotoyi

Faculty of Law

The need to extend social protection coverage to the rising number of informal employees is the research focus of Thanduxolo Qotoyi, a lecturer in Mercantile Law. Self-employed, micro and small enterprise employees often work under hazardous conditions and may not be covered for work injuries or economic recession, which increases poverty.

"The measure of a society is how it treats its most vulnerable."



Zintle Sikhunyana

Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences

Zintle Sikhunyana says individuals and households should be assured of access to key resources. She is an associate lecturer in Economics research that evaluates the effectiveness of economic development policies and addresses socio-economic challenges, such as poverty, unemployment and inequality.

"Fruits of empowerment are best realised when the voice of the would-be empowered is heard and taken into account."

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