

# VC's VOICE

## FUTURE VISION COMING ALIVE IN ALL OUR UNIVERSITY SPACES

We are poised to achieve our targets for 2019 and we feel ready and able to take our university forward – from good to great – in service to society.

As a university that carries Mandela's name our focus is on our identity as a university of continental and global repute, pioneering knowledge generation and reimagining engagement and transformation.

The Mandela in Nelson Mandela University refers not only to Mandela the person but to the social construct and associated scholarly insight, with critical analysis and deconstructive reading of what this means, as we discussed during the stimulating Dalibhunga Colloquium hosted by CriSHET between 6 and 8 March this year.

Across all knowledge fields, our university should be known worldwide for our scholarly formulation of the Mandela legacy, including how to build bridges between the natural sciences and the humanities, with pragmatic import and real-life programmes that make a difference in the lives of ordinary people.

The establishment of a Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS) will play an important role in this, and in achieving our pan-African and internationalisation goals. Along with my team and colleagues, we see TIMS as the principle articulation of my intellectual project as Vice-Chancellor.

It is about creating anew the university's social justice intentions, and making transformational and transformative leadership a standard within the university. The social figure of Mandela, his spirit and his legacy, tells us that the future of democratic institutions and their promises of a more equal society are not lost, and we must respond and rethink, in deep ways, the purposes of the university in promoting the public good.

At the start of the 2019 academic year we continued our efforts to widen student access, which is essential to creating a more equal society. As with the rest of the higher education sector, this has been marked by the challenges our students experienced in respect of registration, financial aid and accommodation. In 2018, we conducted a comprehensive review of our undergraduate student access and enrolment. As a result, we are attending to various areas for improvement, but much work remains to be done.

In support of our aspirations to increase our postgraduate enrolments, Council allocated R60 million for postgraduate bursaries and scholarships for 2019 – the highest amount ever.

However, additional resources need to be mobilised to support academically deserving, financially needy postgraduate diploma and honours students who do not qualify for national financial aid, and this will form part of our resource mobilisation strategy over the next few years. We will be approaching funders, including the banks, the private sector, SETAs and industry, who have traditionally funded undergraduate studies, to ask them to extend, or, where appropriate, to redirect some of their funding to supporting postgraduate studies and the "missing middle".

In an effort to promote a more seamless experience for our postgraduate applicants, this year we will be streamlining the postgraduate admissions system. We have asked our DVC Research and Engagement to develop a

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### KEY INSTITUTIONAL PLANS FOR 2019

Many of the key institutional plans for 2019 have emerged in response to issues raised during the VC's listening campaign and ongoing discussions. These include:

- Reimagining our **institutional identity** and **strategic positioning** – linked to the legacy and values of Nelson Mandela – **to differentiate** our university within the **broader higher education sector** nationally and internationally.
- Fostering an **inclusive, transformative institutional culture** that promotes **social solidarity** and **cohesion**.
- Decolonising the curriculum and awakening **African scholarship**, epistemologies and systems of thought.
- Revitalising the humanities and fostering **transdisciplinary collaboration**.
- Repositioning engagement to partner with external communities on common platforms to jointly create **innovative solutions to complex societal challenges**.
- Embracing **humanising pedagogical approaches** and student-centric support that liberate the **full potential** of our students and enhance **holistic student success**.
- Developing, attracting and retaining the **next generation** of socially diverse **academic** and **support staff**.
- Systematically increasing **postgraduate enrolments** and **graduate outputs**, while also improving the qualifications profile and research outputs of academic staff.
- Promoting our long-term **sustainability through innovative, strategy-aligned resource mobilisation** and **responsible resource stewardship**.



### STUDENT ACCESS FOR SUCCESS

#### 2019 FAST FACTS

AS AT 25 MARCH 2019

**28 395**  
STUDENTS

**1 176**  
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

**88%**  
UNDER-GRADUATES

**56**  
COUNTRIES REPRESENTED

**69%**  
OF STUDENTS FROM THE EASTERN CAPE

**83%**  
OF STUDENTS RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID

# ORGANISATIONAL REDESIGN

## BETTER FOR US

The organisational redesign process – the concept and planning of which was approved by Council last year – is under way, in a bid to ensure that Nelson Mandela University is strategically aligned, fit for purpose and sustainable in meeting its vision, mission and mandate of serving society.

This is our process; we own it and we need all staff to contribute. We need to jointly create solutions. We do not want to break what is not broken. We want to become more streamlined and efficient by improving operations, systems and processes.

### LISTENING CAMPAIGN

We were all part of the Listening Campaign and have taken what we heard seriously, building it into the organisational redesign process. This is not just for the structures of our university but also for the processes that back up our work and the systems that support the academic project. We need to be distinct and deliberate in our transformation.

“ Ultimately, we should emerge with a university that works better. ”

### INTEGRITY OF THE PROCESS

We are setting out to make this an inclusive exercise and we need to be authentic. The process has to be procedurally fair and comply with legal requirements. It will take some time, but we have the opportunity to approach the redesign process as a way of enhancing and entrenching organisational solidarity and social cohesion. The process is a lever for building social engagement – and this is key.

### COMING ALIVE IN ALL OUR UNIVERSITY SPACES

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postgraduate studies strategy to increase our postgraduate enrolments, improve our research outputs and develop the next generation of demographically diverse academics.

During my listening campaign last year, staff members raised the vexing issue of weaknesses in our cumbersome HR recruitment and selection processes. We have put improvement plans in place that are starting to show results, particularly in the faculties where it is critical that we improve our turnaround times in filling vacancies.

Another key issue is the normalisation of labour relations in our institution. The integration of more than 800 staff members from across all our campuses was not an easy process. It called for the renegotiation of conditions of service, which put a strain on the relationship between organised labour and management. Our two unions have now



#### NOTES:

2. “As is” Each cohort (function) will review the current design including the synergies, overlaps, duplications, decisions, processes, workflows, key systems, enablers, key performance indicators and people which support and enhance the operational efficiencies to enable the best delivery of its role, be it academic programme offerings, research and/or engagement, in best serving society. This is the review.

### INNOVATIVE THINKING

We have developed a concise document titled, “The Case for Change”, which spells out the why and how of the process. This is the time to innovate around the faculties and divisions. We need to come through the process with rigour and generosity and for all of us to contribute to the university that we want.

### COMPLEX ORGANISATION

We are a complex organisation – an ecosystem. We do not always get everything

signed the recognition agreement and the new conditions of service, so we are on the right path for management and staff to work together for the future of our university.

The wellness of all our staff is a priority and we are exploring ways to improve staff morale. To this end, we have lifted the financial austerity measures we had put in place and we have allocated significant additional funding to the academic project to begin addressing high student to staff ratios.

We need to continue promoting a culture of engagement at all levels to build resilience and cultivate an inclusive, affirming working environment that is conducive to staff fulfilling their highest potential.

We have started our university-wide consultations for the organisational redesign process which aims to assess whether our structures, systems and processes are fit for purpose and aligned with our forward-looking strategic intentions. We need to

that we desire, and we cannot guarantee that we will all be happy with the outcome of the redesign process. But we must enter into a spirit of engagement and all strive to get the best out of this process.

When we have finished, I hope the experience will have unified us. Ultimately, we should emerge with a university that works better: that is more streamlined, more efficient and more aligned to our strategic imperatives.

For more on the roll-out of the organisational redesign process go to <http://staff.mandela.ac.za/Portal-Pages/Case-for-Change>

rethink our institutional operating model in fundamental ways to improve our agility and responsiveness to rapidly evolving technological advancements and volatility in the higher education sector. We are hoping to report back to Council in June with our consolidated organisational redesign proposals and to start the implementation of our revised structures towards the end of 2019.

We are a values-driven university but it is not sufficient to simply say this; it should find daily expression in what we teach and how we teach, and in our relations with our students and the communities with whom we interact.

Overall, we are feeling buoyant and upbeat, and there is generally a clear understanding of the direction we are taking as an institution in service to society. This is coming alive in all our university spaces and we are proud of this.

**VICE-CHANCELLOR**  
Professor Sibongile Muthwa

# GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

## – A BLEMISH ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Gender-based violence remains one of the biggest and most profound problems in South African society. Its prevalence in institutions of higher learning – as a microcosm of this society – has garnered much debate and attention in recent years.

Nelson Mandela University has not been immune to this troubling phenomenon, having received reports on gender-based violence incidents involving the institutional community, in particular the students.

Students’ frustration at the perceived inaction by the University on reported cases as well as what students deemed unsatisfactory outcomes of some of the disciplinary cases saw a group of students staging a silent protest at the first Autumn graduation sessions in Port Elizabeth.

Chancellor Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi acknowledged the protest immediately thereafter and committed to following up on the issues raised.

As such, some members of University management met with the protesting students with a view to engage on these issues. These engagements are set to continue in more detail as the parties are finding each other on most of these issues.

In 2018, students reported a total 41 cases of gender-based violence through the Transformation, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, while 12 have been reported thus far this year. These cases range from sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape and physical abuse.

The Legal Office has, from January 2018 to date, dealt with a total 22 cases of gender-based violence, issuing sanctions to the perpetrators that ranged from suspensions to expulsions.

“Reported and unreported cases of gender-based violence on our campuses remains a grave concern. Of greater concern is that some of the alleged perpetrators are among the student population,” says Ms Lee-Anne Groener, the University’s Legal Advisor. “The University unequivocally reiterates its condemnation of acts of GBV and remains committed to working with staff and students to embed a culture of zero tolerance.”

The University concedes that its investigation capacity is still wanting and continues working to bolster that.

Aware of the frustration among students of the perceived inaction by the University on reported cases, Ms Groener says with such matters being of a sensitive nature, the wishes of complainants had to be taken into consideration.

“It should be noted that not all cases reported to the University are escalated to the level disciplinary process due to a number of reasons, ranging from the nature of the complaint to taking the complainant’s wishes of how the matter should proceed into consideration. Some cases are dealt with through a mediation process or are withdrawn – both upon the request of the complainant.” At Mandela University, having experienced some harrowing incidents, a number of processes have since been set in motion to strengthen and improve efficiencies in dealing with issues of gender-based violence.

These include the revision of the University’s Sexual Harassment Policy and the existing Staff and Student Disciplinary Codes; the latter to emphasise the gravity of such transgressions by having a dedicated section that deals specifically with matters of sexual harassment and sexual offences.

Safety and security efforts have been heightened towards ensuring the protection of students and staff, and this work continues through the collaborative efforts of University management, staff and students towards improving its safety environment.

Nationally, the prevalence of gender-based violence on campuses prompted the Department of Higher Education and Training to coordinate the development of a strategy and policy framework to guide an effective response.

This after it emerged that most universities and all TVET colleges did not have proper policies in place to adequately guide responses to reported GBV cases. It is, however, encouraging that there is greater attention and conversation nationally, with the view to collaborate towards eradicating this scourge.



## ZERO TOLERANCE

The following activities were implemented in the year to date as part of the GBV awareness creation, training opportunities and educational programmes for students:

- Ongoing GBV activations and awareness training are being conducted with the student body, with specific focus on students residing in on and off-campus accommodation, as well as the orientation sessions for both first years and postgraduates.
- Several self-defence classes were conducted with female students
- ‘Singamadoda’ facilitator training for male peer students. The peer facilitators will also be receiving gender awareness training as well as facilitator training. The ‘Singamadoda’ positive masculinity programme will be rolled out across on and off-campus residences in the second semester and focus on male students.
- VC initiated a process of policy review of all discrimination-related policies within the University. The second phase of broad-based consultations are currently underway to address formulation of a proposal that will be serving at MANCO and eventually Council in June 2019, to provide mechanisms for reporting of such cases as well as the appropriate infrastructure to investigate and support such cases. Any proposals will form part of the organisational redesign process.
- Discussions with Legal Office and Head of Protection Services regarding interim arrangements relating to investigative capacity, where 2 female personnel will be identified and provided with training to conduct these investigations by SAPS (Humewood). The organisational redesign process underway will address the human resource element of the investigative capacity for such cases.
- Proposed review of the Sexual harassment and offences policy to address aspects relating to the jurisdiction of the University wrt these cases; alternative external mechanisms available to staff and students where these complaints can be lodged, and lastly the functioning of the hearing panel using an inquisitorial approach to the disciplinary process.



Silent protest at graduation.



The Total Shutdown: Intersectional Women’s Movement Against GBV



Mandela Uni Pride events on 11 October 2018

