

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

Communication and Marketing Review

AUGUST 2019 – JULY 2023



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1. Introduction



This review captures highlights of how the Communication and Marketing Directorate is adding strategic value in pursuit of the goals, mission, and vision of the University. It covers the four-year period from August 2019 to July 2023, showcasing how the directorate has shaped the public narrative and supported the change agenda of the University. The review covers the following key performance areas (KPA):

- Providing strategic management and transformational leadership in Communication and Marketing at the University
- Strategically directing the Communication Department
- Strategically directing the Media Management Department
- Strategically directing the Digital Communication and Marketing Department
- Strategically directing the Marketing Department
- Strategically directing the Arts, Culture and Heritage Department
- Strategically directing the Student Recruitment Department

This review also aims to show how this work has effectively positioned the University as a leader in digital communication and marketing over a period where an international pandemic disrupted all facets of life, including traditional modes of communication and marketing. Very few people would have predicted that the emergence of COVID-19 towards the end of 2019 would be a turning point in the way people around the globe lived and worked. However, there has been a sea-change in the field of communication internationally. Since then, the Communication and Marketing Directorate has been at the forefront of the push towards digital communication

and marketing, in a world that is unlikely to revert to pre-pandemic modes of communication.

1.1. Hub model

The Communication and Marketing Directorate takes a hub model approach (see Figure 1) to projects. This begins when a client seeks assistance with an event, launch, publication or campaign. The first step is to identify the most suitable Project Lead within the Directorate for the faculty or department. Once the Project Lead is determined, they compile a comprehensive communication plan to outline the project’s goals and strategies. The Project Lead then allocates tasks to a team of creative professionals within a productivity hub. These individuals collaborate closely, using their diverse skills to support project requirements and ensure a successful outcome.

After a project is complete, the hub delivers the final product, including various collateral and services, to the client. A post-event debriefing then evaluates project performance, and this is supplemented by thorough analytics to review outcomes and identify areas for improvement. The hub model approach in this way provides a streamlined and coordinated workflow, bringing together specialised expertise within the Communication and Marketing Directorate to effectively meet client needs.

Much of the Directorate’s work was achieved through repurposing a limited budget and increasing our efficiencies and effectiveness in this way of working. A strategy employed to capitalise on our limited resources was to partner with faculties and departments on projects to allow the Directorate to leverage on the achievement of student recruitment and other portfolios.

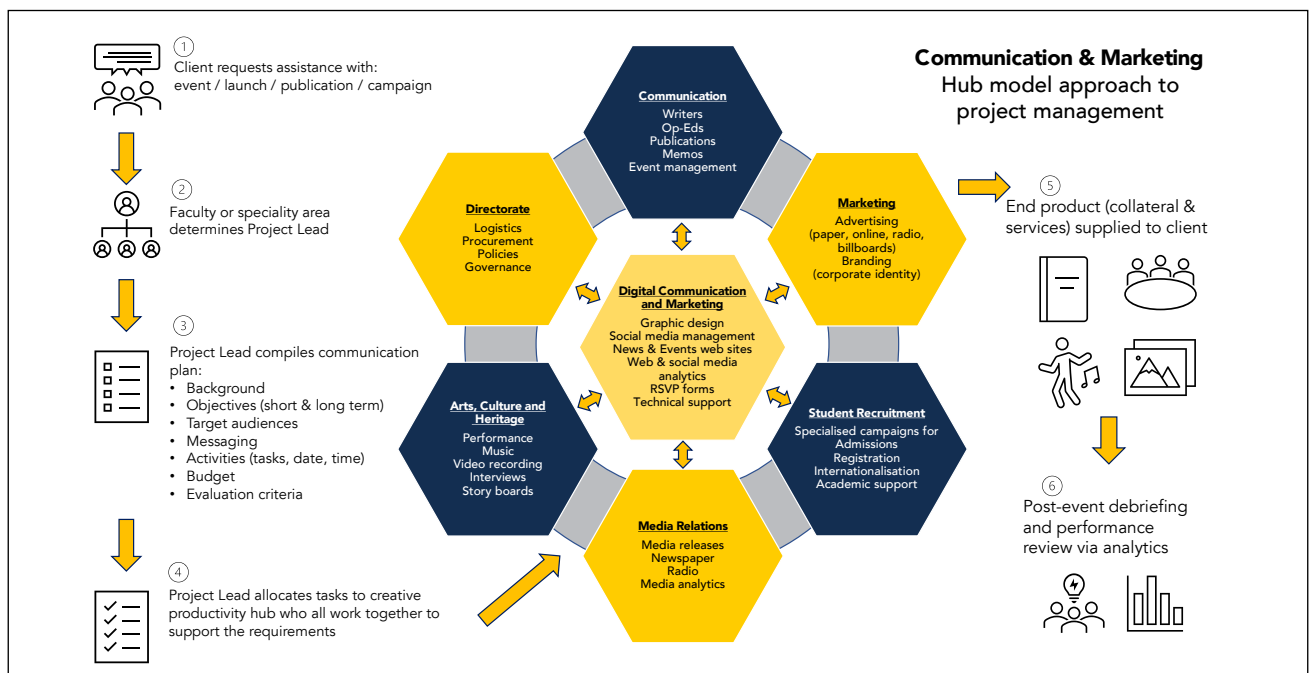


Figure 1: Communication and Marketing Hub model



2. Digital Communication and Marketing

2.1. Digital First

The Directorate's new Digital Communication and Marketing Department was established in January 2020, immediately expanding its existing, and ongoing, "Digital First" approach. Since then, this department has been at the heart of our hub model approach to project management.

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic catapulted us into the digital communication universe. The University's Communication and Marketing Directorate became a focal point, with integrated teams working round the clock with colleagues in faculties, operations and information technology (IT) divisions.

We immediately implemented our Digital First Crisis Communication Strategy in an effort to educate our internal and external wider community. This included our then 29 000 students and 4 000 staff members, in the drive to protect their health and assist them in the switch to remote study and work.

In line with the University's ethos of access for success, and the imperative of "leave no student behind", it is important to note that a Digital First approach does not exclude those who may not have connectivity. Rather, it adapts the original printed content and materials for sharing on social media platforms, including websites, to expand its reach.

2.2. Social media reach

An integral part of the marketing strategy at any university today, social media is a powerful tool for crisis management, recruitment, student relations, fundraising and more.

The Digital Communication and Marketing Department produced the first baseline report for its social media platforms, based on analytics comparing metrics for 2019 and 2020. This has shown the immediate positive effects of our Digital First approach in expanding Nelson Mandela University's social media presence.

The University is active on the following platforms:

- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube

Yearly reports are now conducted, with a summary of findings shown in Figures 2 and 3. The following metrics are used to track our performance on the social media platforms:

- Audience: the number of users who liked / followed / subscribed to our pages
- Impressions: the number of times that any content associated with the page was displayed to a user
- Engagements: the number of times that users reacted to, commented on, shared, or clicked on our posts
- Post Link Clicks: the number of times that users clicked on the links within our post
- Video views: the number of times users viewed our videos

Our Facebook audience grew from 100 621 followers in 2019 to 178 918 in the second quarter of 2023, while on LinkedIn it grew from 11 419 to 98 098 followers. On Twitter the followers grew from 25 826 to 29 621, and on Instagram from 10 134 to 23 571 followers.

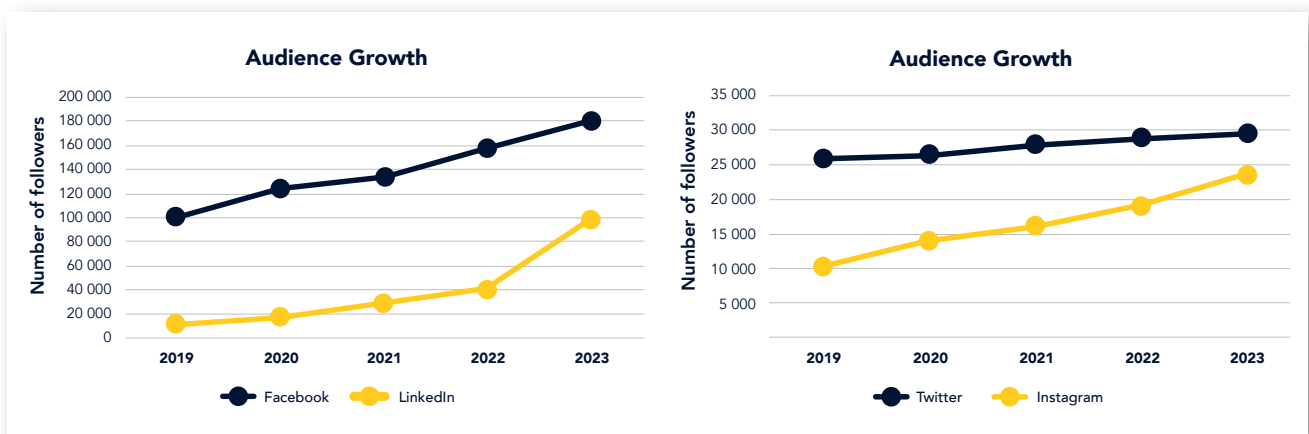


Figure 2: Growth of social media audience at Nelson Mandela University

Date Range	Impressions	Engagements	Reactions	Likes	Shares	Video Views	Post Link Clicks
JAN 2022 – JUN 2023 10 823 Posts	77 976 254	7 120 200	1 009 201	537 054	68 158	6 723 095	248 151
	↑ 1 276%	↑ 2 079%	↑ 1 326%	↑ 742%	↑ 806%	↑ 6 267%	↑ 1 141%
JAN 2019 – JUN 2020 2 942 Posts	5 666 861	326 762	70 764	63 823	7 523	105 601	19 994

Figure 3: Increase in social media metrics for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube combined, starting from an 18-month baseline in 2019-2020 and compared to the last 18 months in 2022-2023.

These numbers highlight the phenomenal growth of our social media platforms which has enabled us to reach stakeholder numbers in the millions, which was previously not possible, and extend our brand globally.

2.3. Websites

University websites play a pivotal role in the modern education landscape, serving as a comprehensive platform that facilitates access to crucial information for students, staff, and the broader community. The Digital Communication and Marketing Department manages and maintains most of our websites, which offer detailed insights into the various faculties, schools, and departments within the institution. Prospective students can explore academic programmes, faculty expertise, and admission requirements, aiding them in making informed decisions about their educational journey. Moreover, research entities and ongoing projects are showcased, promoting transparency and encouraging collaboration among researchers. Additionally, our university websites provide valuable resources on clubs and societies, fostering a vibrant campus life and allowing students to engage in extracurricular activities that complement their academic pursuits. Overall, these websites contribute significantly to the dissemination of knowledge, supporting the growth of a diverse and inclusive learning environment.

Figure 4 shows the performance of the main University website (www.mandela.ac.za) for the same baseline

period as for the social media platforms: the number of visitors increased by 41%, from 2.3 million to 3.3 million; pageviews by 64%, from 20.6 million to 33.9 million; and browser sessions by nearly 67%, from 8.7 million to 14.6 million (pageviews refer to the time spent on a single web page by a user, regardless of how many times they leave and come back, while a session refers to how long a user spends on a website, which may involve visiting multiple pageviews).

2.4. Online productions

The Communication and Marketing Directorate has expanded its production of webinars, digital packages and content for distribution across online platforms, and this has led to increased online traffic and awareness. Short videos of visual and creative arts are released to mark celebration days and other notable events.

In 2020, for example, 34 videos were produced including a special edition **Madiba Video** marking International Mandela Day on 18 July. Another significant production was a 25-minute video designed to supply information on Mandela University doctoral programmes, as evidence for the Council for Higher Education (CHE) review. The University's apex event of graduation now also uses a digital approach, which enabled students and their families to celebrate safely at home over the pandemic period, starting with the December 2020 graduation season (see 5.1 below).

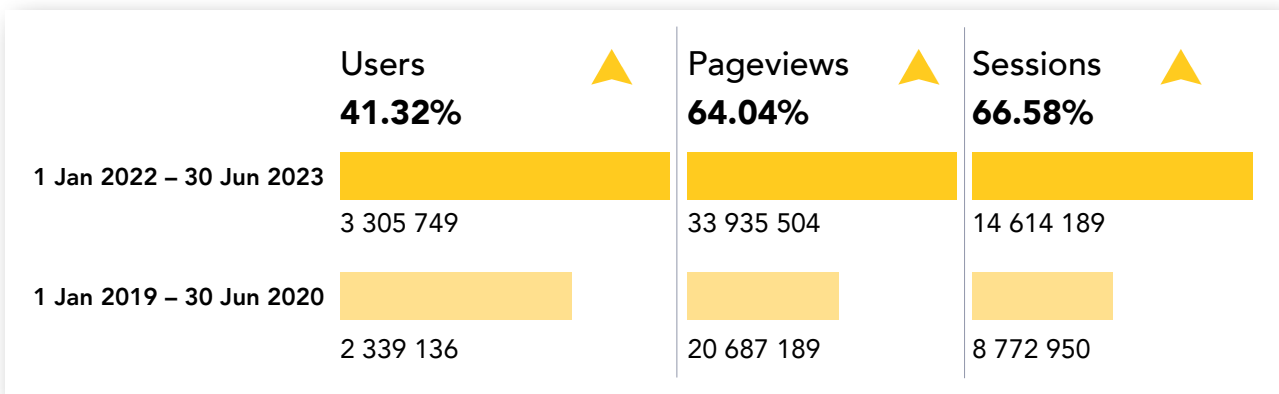


Figure 4: Increases in visitors, pageviews and browser sessions for www.mandela.ac.za.



3. Communication

3.1. Internal and external crisis and emergency management communication

The Directorate has developed a proactive and effective crisis management communication process which is successfully used as the need arises. In brief, the procedure is as follows:

- Posts are tracked continuously via social listening to pick up any trending issues
- Senior Director (SD): Communication and Marketing Directorate is alerted any time of day or night
- SD informs Deputy Vice Chancellor: People and Operations (DVC: PO), who chairs the Emergency Management Team (EMT)
- EMT meets for briefing on pressing issues, and recommends the way forward
- Dean of Students engages with student leadership and feeds back to Executive Management (MANCO) for decision making
- MANCO gives feedback to the Directorate, which crafts statements, these are usually completed late evening, when meetings conclude
- University updates are sent via memo, posted on web and social media, and shared with external media.

The University regularly deals with the impact of national issues such as those, for example, around student funding, and Communication and Marketing is called on to accurately and sensitively reflect the University's position. The most recent example of this was sporadic student protests in the first quarter of 2023.

The Communication Department issued regular University updates while the Media Manager responded to numerous queries and requests for comment from local and national media. The team also facilitated publication of an opinion piece to reflect the University's position, written by the Dean of Students, in The Herald newspaper.

3.2. COVID-19 communication – Internal and external communication

The Communication and Marketing Directorate has played a key role in creating awareness, providing general updates and sharing the many interventions by the University in its role in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Working with all University departments, this has seen the Directorate navigate uncharted waters in a bid to guide staff and students safely through the pandemic. The immediate priorities in 2020 were to save lives, and the academic year, and this was strongly reflected in our institutional messaging.

To guide these efforts, two communication plans were drafted, and a **dedicated coronavirus website** developed as a credible go-to reference destination for both internal and external audiences. This formed the basis of our university-wide "It's in your hands" campaign.

As the health and wellbeing of our staff and students remained a priority, the Communication Department shared regular updates to inform and reassure internal stakeholders, provide access to ever-changing COVID-19 information, and guidance around remote working. The international Digital Communication Awards (DCA) recognised Nelson Mandela University for its internal COVID-19 Communication Plan with a bronze award in 2020.

The COVID-19 communication drive included the publication of **pocket guides**, the creation of **advisory posters**, and a call for staff to get involved as part of the solution in managing the pandemic. Much of this work, and other successes, was enabled by the work of the multi-stakeholder Coronavirus Task Team (CTT).

The Directorate designed and produced COVID-19 collateral for use across all social media platforms. As the pandemic continued, and intensified, over 2020, 2021 and 2022, so too did the collateral that the team had to produce.

The University's COVID-19 webpages received over 134 000 page views early on, during the height of the pandemic. The site did well on Google searches for coronavirus information, appearing on the first page especially for universities and schools searching for posters on COVID-19 protocols.

To sensitise staff, students and the wider community, the team was successful in sharing the following stories, both in print and in video format of:

- Those who contracted COVID-19 and shared their experiences.
- Those working at the front line - the health workers.

IT IS IN YOUR HANDS
the fight against COVID-19



- Those providing solutions - special safety shields, innovative machinery for hospitals, hand sanitisers and more.

COVID-19 Remembrance Services – Internal communication

Not only did the pandemic change the way we worked, lived, and studied, it also took the lives of loved ones. Over the deeply challenging era of 2020 to 2022, Mandela University can directly attribute the death of 20 staff members and one

student to COVID-19. To acknowledge this, and help staff to grieve their loss, an **online remembrance service** was hosted on 26 March 2021, when South Africa was plunged into the strictest lockdown level.

The University's Executive Dean of Health Sciences, Professor Lungile Pepeta, was one of the members of staff who passed on due to COVID-19. The Directorate was involved in producing an online tribute in the shape of the **Lungile Pepeta Memorial**.

Prof Lungile Pepeta
16 July 1974 - 07 August 2020

Biography

Born and bred in Bizana, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa.

Primary and secondary education in Bizana, and matriculated from Bizana Village High School in 1991.

Joined the Faculty of Health Sciences of the then University of Transkei (Now Walter Sisulu University) in 1992 and graduated with MBChB in 1997.

Completed Internship in Mthatha General Hospital in 1998.

Joined Frontier Hospital in Queenstown and Dordrecht Hospital, to perform community service in 1999.

Obtained Diploma in Child Health through the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa in October 1999.

[toggle more...](#)

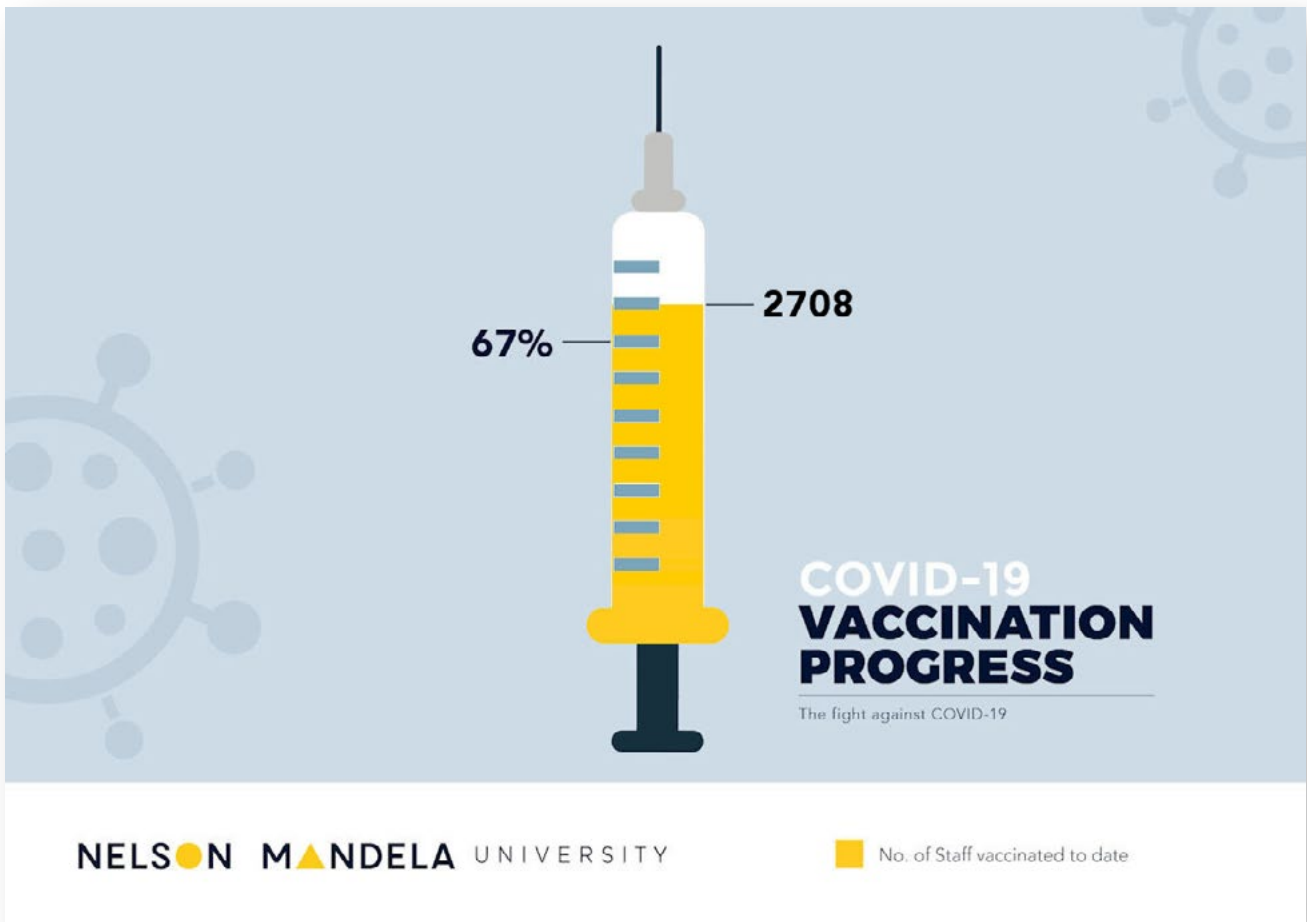
**Statement by the Vice-Chancellor:
Professor Sibongile Muthwa**

It is with great sadness and an immense sense of loss that we at Nelson Mandela University learned of the passing of our Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences, Professor Lungile Pepeta.

His passing is not only a great loss to the University, which is gearing up to launch its medical school, but to the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro, Eastern Cape and country.

Professor Pepeta joined the University on 1 January 2017 as the vision for establishing a medical school that offers an alternative educational model towards meeting the country's growing need for health professionals was gaining momentum.

[toggle more...](#)



Vaccination campaign – Internal communication

On the back of “It’s in your hands” campaign, we ran a successful **Vaccination Campaign** in 2021, focusing on vaccinations as the best means of protecting yourself against the coronavirus. The team designed and produced digital collateral that was used across all social media and web platforms.

We worked closely with health services colleagues in positioning the institution as a public vaccination site, in line with the University’s educational purpose and philosophy of operating in service to society. Special preference was given to staff and students. Up to 75% of our staff took advantage of the opportunity, also bringing their spouses and partners along. A concerted effort was made to encourage students to get vaccinated.

Arts and culture online – Internal and external communication

At the advent of COVID-19 the performing arts sector saw venues closed, with no live audiences permitted. Artists around the world, and at Nelson Mandela University, had to find new ways of being and doing. The Directorate and the University Choir, which had come under new

leadership in April 2020, explored new methods to educate, entertain and delight audiences. The result was an online blossoming of musical events that, having been recorded, are now accessible for perpetuity. This included online renditions of students and staff at home, singing individually, making simultaneous recordings. The result were renditions of Johnny Clegg’s **Spirit of the Great Heart** and John Knox Bokwe’s **Plea for Afrika**. This was a first for the University and a trend that was also being followed the world over.

The annual Nelson Mandela University **Isisusa Jazz Fest** traditionally celebrated in person in the city also moved online in 2020, with a production pre-recorded in the South Campus Auditorium. In a first for the University, the **Isisusa Jazz Fest** was broadcast digitally on 27 November 2020, featuring national headline jazz saxophonist Sisonke Xonti as well as Mandela students, staff and alumni.

With the pandemic still active the following year, the **second online edition of the festival** on 26 November 2021, paid homage to fallen arts and culture legends, namely Oliver Mtukudzi and Sibongile Khumalo.

The **third iteration** was held on 8 December 2022, featuring the Nelson Mandela University Choir and other choirs, and





broadcast live on the University's YouTube channel. All the online Isisusa Jazz Festivals and other Arts and Culture events may be accessed by audiences globally indefinitely.

Storytelling for behavioural change

The Arts, Culture and Heritage Department used a science communication technique to create a cartoon titled **eRona Times**. Released on 6 July 2020, and aimed at adults, this depicted people in real life South African settings playing their part in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic. Its intention was to drive change management and help to save lives as part of Nelson Mandela University's #itisinyourhands and #MaskUpMandela campaigns. The cartoons were presented in English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. The graphic novel format also used clear, simple language in a bid to reach a wider audience who may or may not have advanced literacy skills.



With preventative measures being the best form of defence against the virus, eRona Times shared the consequences of positive changed behaviours to create awareness and educate readers. The cartoon series was shared on all our social media platforms over several months. It is also housed on our [#MaskUpMandela website](#).

The use of pop art in the designs of the cartoons was a first for the university and the design processes for messaging in crisis communications. The University's new Medical School today carries the original artwork of eRona Times, in the form of graphic prints on the walls of selected areas of the school on the Missionvale Campus. This acts as a visual archival recording not only of the disease in an academically appropriate setting, but also extends the longevity of the original cartoon strip.

Children's storytelling is another area where Arts, Culture and Heritage contributed to vital messaging. The University launched a multilingual children's story book, *Virus Fighters* in a [webinar](#) on International Mother Tongue Day in February 2021. South African performance artist and educator Dr Gcina Mhlophe also shared the magic of storytelling at this webinar.

Virus Fighters is an international partnership between Nelson Mandela University and the University of Dar Es Salaam, in Tanzania. This multicultural series, available in the five languages of isiXhosa, Afrikaans, kiSwahili, French and English, shares the cornerstone message of social and human behaviour to beat the virus. The University of Dar es Salaam was key in translating the books in kiSwahili to enable the distribution to go wider into the African continent. Additionally, French was also used to allow for more Western African coverage.

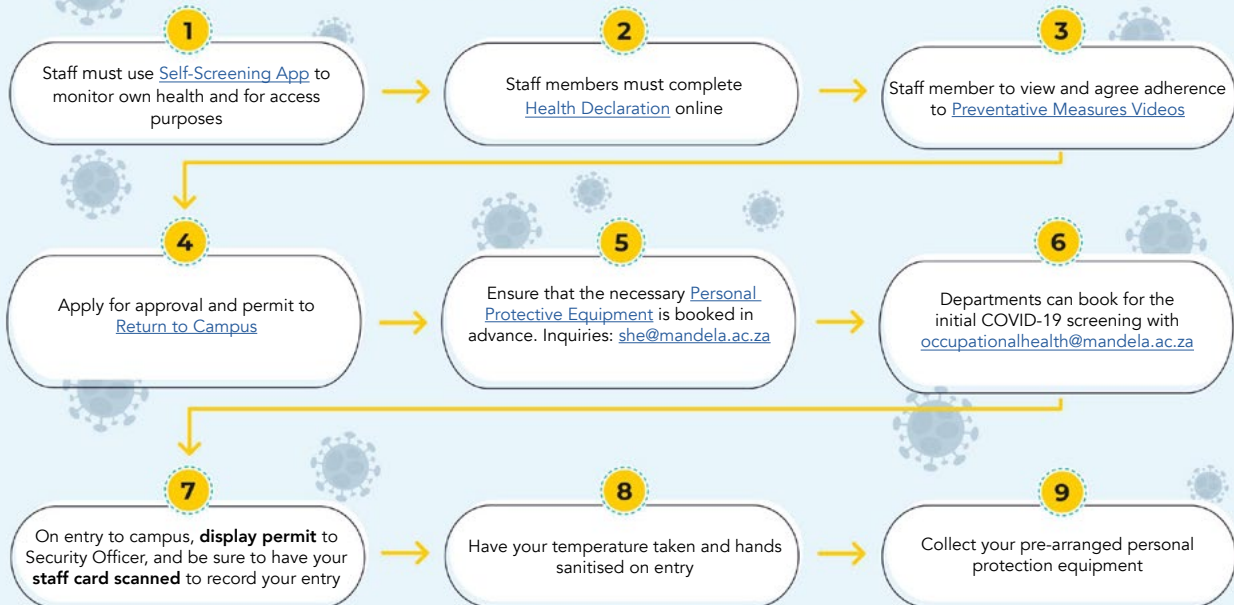
Academic support – Internal and external communication

The Communication and Marketing Directorate produced electronic collateral to support Learning and Teaching in its drive to continue and complete the 2020 academic year in a virtual space. This was a first for many, but it worked well in the end.

Since the emergence of the pandemic in South Africa, the University, through its Coronavirus Task Team (CTT), actively monitored developments around the pandemic,

PROCESS TO RETURN TO WORK

Returning to Work Information and Guides



Failure to adhere to the above process will unfortunately prevent your access to campus

and implemented strategy for the surveillance, prevention and management of the virus.

From the developments of the various workstreams, updates were shared to the internal University community through Memo, and externally through the University's new site and social media platforms.

Return to work support – Internal communication

In 2022, the University was able to start the transition of its staff and student body from a predominantly online way of working to working and studying on campus. This process was not without its challenges, and communication played a vital role in assisting in this major about-turn. The team worked closely with colleagues in Human Resources and the CTT to facilitate the transition from remote to in-person work on all campuses. This included regular updates around maintenance, cleaning and safety along with the publication of a line manager's guide to facilitating this process. We also issued a **staff handbook** advising members of staff on what to expect once they returned to campus. All staff were expected to be back in their offices by 15 September 2022. This support complemented the Directorate's ongoing work around COVID-19 vaccinations.

Capturing and sharing the response to COVID-19 – Internal and external communication

From the start, Nelson Mandela University pooled its intellectual and other resources to contribute to broader societal efforts against the pandemic, working with provincial and metro stakeholders. Amid stories of a debilitating shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) in hospitals, in 2020, the Communication and Marketing Directorate began showcasing the University's transdisciplinary collaborations to contribute to the national and provincial fight against COVID-19.

The work of the COVID-19 Coordinating Committee (CCC) and its numerous work streams has been profiled nationally.

National news features and thought leadership pieces at the start of the pandemic have included:

- Prof Paul Watts on how COVID-19 left SA at the mercy of overseas drug exporters (Mail & Guardian; 25 March 2020).
- A news feature on the Centre for Community Technologies (CCT) app to assess schools' e-readiness (Mail & Guardian; 26 March 2020)

News features and opinion pieces from Deans and other academics on using our intellectual resources in the service of society were pushed through influential media platforms:

- Professors Lungile Pepeta, Azwinndini Muronga and Barend van Wyk: "NMU rises to challenge of fighting COVID-19" (The Herald; 9 April 2020)
- "Engineers, Doctors and Business Unite" (Engineering News; 6 May 2020).
- The University's production of its own sanitiser (covered across various media nationally)
- 3D printing of face shields (The Herald; 9 April and 6 May 2020),
- #MaskUp campaign by professors Lungile Pepeta and Mary Duker (The Herald; 15 April 2020).

On the academic front, and towards efforts to complete the academic year at both university and schools in general, thought leadership pieces included the following:

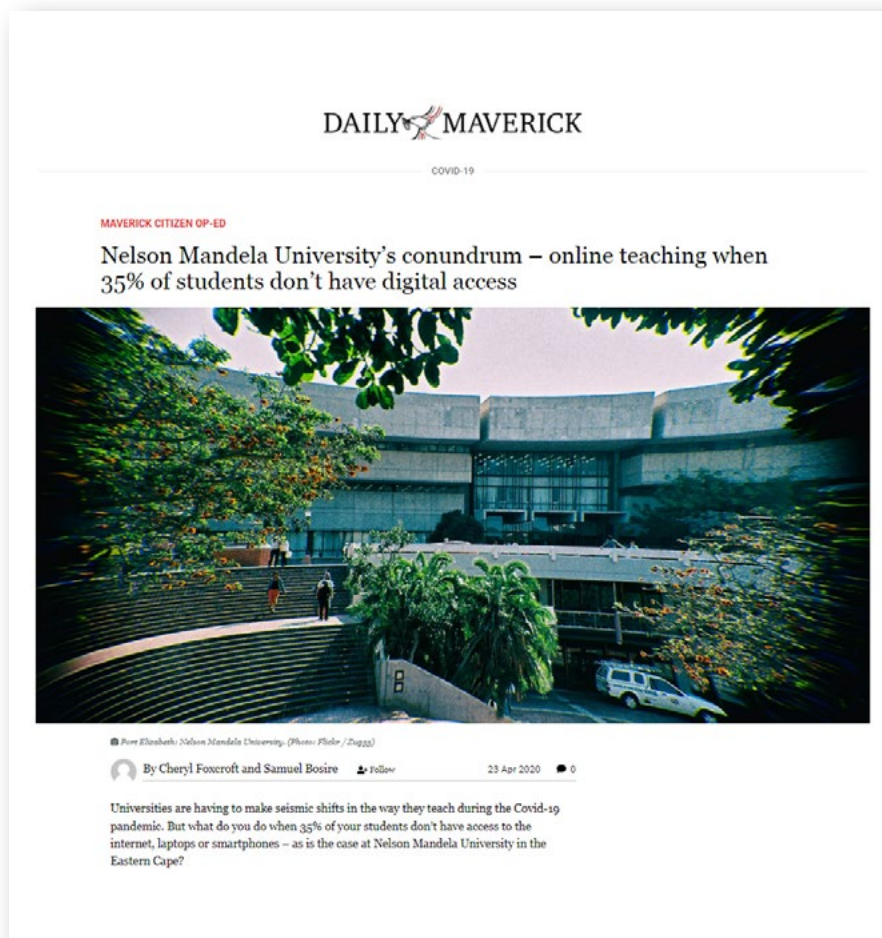
- Prof Cheryl Foxcroft and Dr Sam Bosire: "Nelson Mandela University's conundrum – online teaching when 35% of students don't have digital access" (Daily Maverick, 23 April 2020)
- Prof Cheryl Foxcroft: "Integrated approach to salvage studies" (The Herald; 29 April 2020)

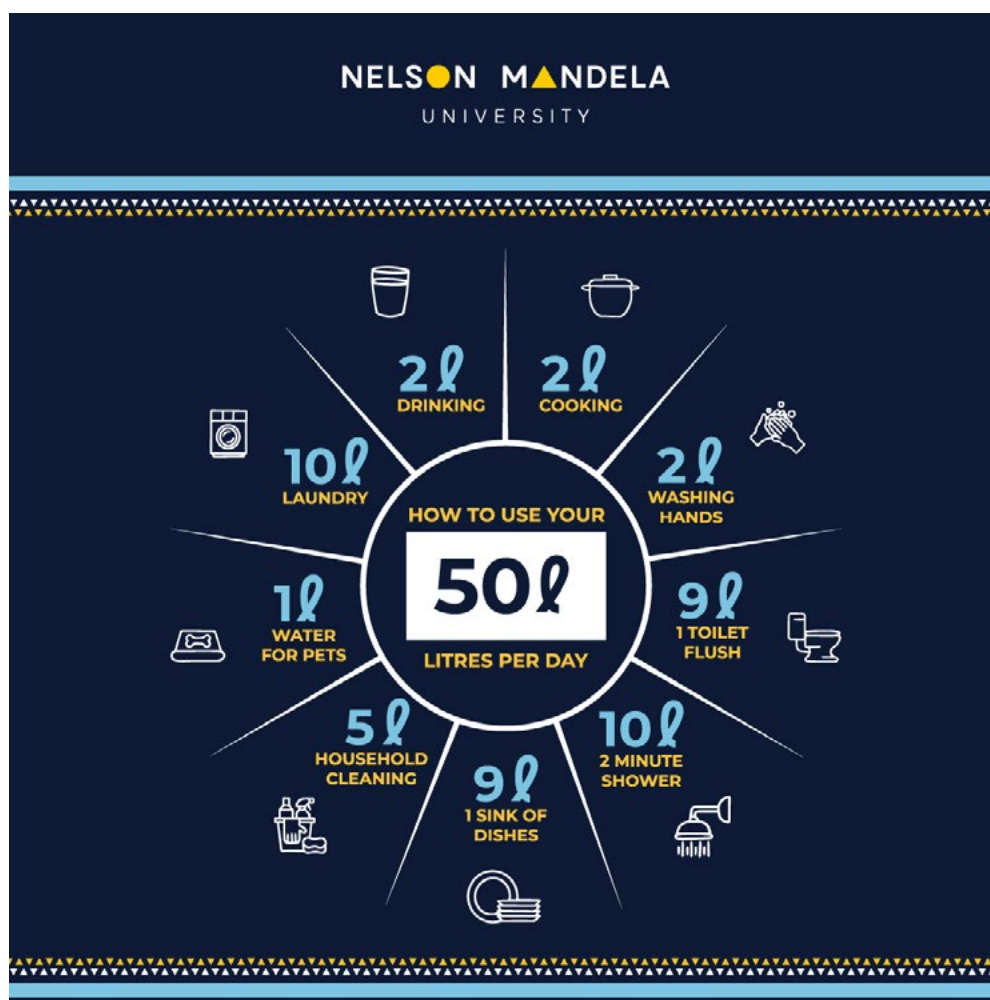
- Dr Muki Moeng and Dr Bruce Damons: "Education needs to be reimagined" (Weekend Post, 6 June 2020)
- Doctors Muki Moeng and Bruce Damons: "A reimagined school is embedded in its community" (Mail & Guardian; 16 July 2020)
- Dr Noluthando Toni: "The COVID-19 pandemic has forced academics to reflect and reimagine teaching and learning" (Mail & Guardian; 21 August 2020).

As the number of cumulative COVID-19 cases in the country grew, our academics added their voice to national lobbies for rethinking the COVID-19 containment measures (professors Lungile Pepeta and Fikile Nomvete, The Herald; 10 June 2020), and called for the food security crisis in households to be urgently addressed (Phumeza Mkontwana, Weekend Post; 13 June 2020).

Later, as lockdown restrictions lowered to Alert Level 3, and a phased return to campus was announced, the message become one that spoke of how to co-exist with the virus:

- Mr Luthando Jack: "Our COVID-19 world: how to reintegrate students into universities" (Mail & Guardian; 21 June 2020)
- Prof Darelle van Greunen: "Adapting for the Digital Now" (Weekend Post; 1 August 2020).





Data modelling also became a focus area with the University adding to the conversation by offering Prof Azwinnidini Muronga’s opinion piece: “Prediction models work but accurate data is vital” (The Herald: 5 August 2020).

Towards the end of the year, in the second wave of the pandemic, case numbers on campus rose with greater effect on staff and students than in the first wave. The University’s public messaging highlighted our duty of care to students:

- Mr Luthando Jack: “NMU strives to cushion students” (The Herald: 11 December 2020)
- Sr Valencia Benjamin and Sr Althea Hawkins: “Taking care of students during storm” (The Herald, 23 December 2020).

Gender-based violence – Internal and external communication

Amid reports of increased incidents of gender-based violence (GBV), exacerbated by the lockdown, the voice of academics in the University’s transformation and gender space was heard as part of the national conversation:

- Dr Ruby-Ann Levendal: “Ending violence against women” (The Herald; 15 July 2020)
- Dr Babalwa Magoqwana: “The danger of well-meaning men using the term ‘our women’” (Mail & Guardian; 29 July 2020).

3.3. Water Crisis Communication

Water awareness and water saving plans - Internal and external communication

As the COVID-19 crisis was subsiding, another crisis was rising: the crippling drought in Nelson Mandela Bay, which still faces a demand for water that exceeds supply. The Communication and Marketing Directorate introduced a **“Save water now”** awareness campaign. This aimed to encourage users to urgently cut back on the consumption of water.

The campaign has targeted students in particular, as this is where water usage levels have been high. Collateral includes posters, editorial opinion pieces, electronic signatures carrying themed messages, and other digital material on the topic.

Water and sustainability – Internal and external communication

Sustainability remains an apex priority of the University, with environmental stewardship an integral value and a sustainable, socially just world a core outcome of Vision 2030. With Nelson Mandela Bay suffering from ongoing drought and dwindling dam levels, institutional sustainability engineer Dr Andre Hefer penned an opinion piece: "NMU ramps up its water-saving" (The Herald; 21 October 2020).

3.4. Communication with non-office bound staff

The Non-Office Bound Team Integration Project, which began in December 2019 and given the name One Team/ Iqela Elinye, aimed to smoothly integrate 900 support staff members into the University's structure. However, the integration process encountered challenges, including absenteeism, low productivity, and strained relations between management and workers, leading to a sense of mistrust.

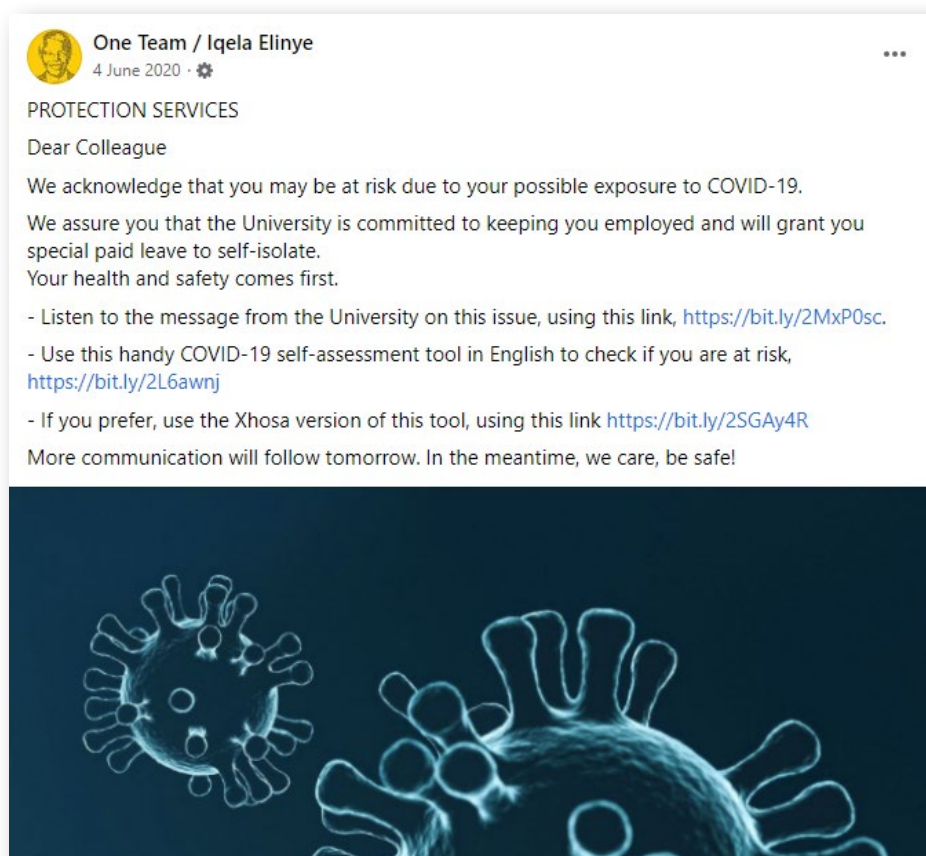
The project's primary objective was twofold: firstly, to enhance integration by establishing effective communication channels to foster a positive organisational climate, and secondly, to demonstrate the University's

commitment to transparent, engaging, and empowering communication for the support staff's roles, advancement, and performance, ultimately leading to a more meaningful societal contribution.

The communication strategy aligned with the University's core values, emphasising the importance of support service team members and their well-being. Key messages covered various critical issues, including support during the COVID-19 pandemic, commemorating significant events, participating in University programmes, and staff development initiatives. Messages through Facebook and Whatsapp were successful, with strong support for communication regarding non-office bound teams.

The communication framework involved regular messaging through the two channels in multiple languages, and senior managers played a role in disseminating Whatsapp messages to encourage feedback and discussion.

Since the project's start, over 860 messages were delivered to non-office bound staff. Research indicated positive outcomes, such as increased commitment and loyalty to the University, satisfaction with benefits, and improved morale among staff. However, areas for improvement include prioritising training for non-office bound staff, possibly reducing message frequency, and addressing mobile phone usage issues among some staff members.





4. Leadership Communication

4.1. Institutional strategy

Mandela University Message Map – Internal and external communication

By using a message map, we ensure that messages about Nelson Mandela University are coherent, concise and aligned with goals and target audiences. This tool helps to organise and structure key messages and talking points for effective communication. It outlines the main ideas, supporting details, and the desired outcomes of a message, helping individuals or an institution to stay focused and deliver clear and consistent information across different platforms.

In May 2020, the Communication and Marketing Directorate and Institutional Strategy collaborated to develop the first Message Map of the University. This creative process highlighted what we can offer stakeholders through our knowledge and services and aligns with the forward direction of Vision 2030. This process of mapping the attributes and benefits organizes them into a hierarchy that builds up to the brand promise. The institutional Message Map is a critical tool that serves as a framework to organise and convey all our messages into a compelling story, so that content generated is deeply aligned with the vision, mission, and values of the University.

Vice-Chancellor's Matrix – Internal and external communication

To assist Vice-Chancellor (VC) Professor Sibongile Muthwa and her office in terms of optimally planning her diary, the Directorate developed a VC's Matrix. This is, essentially, a year-long calendar of events and other commitments that require the VC's attendance, support, input or other form of engagement. Along with institutional events hosted by the Events section in the Communication Department, it also includes writing forewords for publications, messages for staff and students, and attendance at other external events.

Additionally, the Communication and Marketing Directorate proposes other opportunities the VC might consider in terms of strategically positioning the university through her leadership. This includes writing opinion pieces on key topics within the higher education sector, giving media interviews and assisting in student recruitment related opportunities. Regular meetings to discuss the proposed programme are held with the VC's Office.

All of the VC's activities are published on her **profile page** and include her global initiatives, articles and opinions, updates to our staff and students, video messages, and speeches.





2023: Advancing Mandela University – Internal and external communication

Prof Muthwa began her second five-year term as VC at Nelson Mandela University in 2023. She marked this with a lecture, **Advancing Mandela University: Consolidating the Gains, Charting the Future Together**, for University stakeholders in March. This required a concerted effort from the Communication and Events teams in terms of conveying the correct message to multiple groupings of stakeholders. The VC’s speech has now set the tone for the way forward over the next five years with a focus on the strategic areas of digitalisation, student hunger, youth employability and entrepreneurship and sustainability.

4.2. International engagements – Digital Communication and Marketing

International engagements that involve the VC are covered by Communication and Marketing through media releases and posts on social media that include photographs, video clips and other digital material. A member from Communication and Marketing Directorate usually accompanies the VC’s delegations to provide real-time reporting. In addition, the Directorate provides marketing collateral for each event, as and when called for. The

following are a few of the significant VC visits to Africa, Europe and the US over the past year.

United States of America (USA), October 2022 – Digital Communication and Communication

The VC along with seven other University representatives visited the USA in October 2022, visiting the Washington, DC and New York City areas. The purpose of the trip was to reconnect with existing members of our USA-based ecosystem, including alumni and other partners. It also was geared towards cultivating relationships with potential new members of this ecosystem such as USA universities, philanthropic organisations, government institutions and representatives of the private sector.

East Africa, June and July 2022 – Digital Communication and Marketing

A delegation led by the VC visited Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda to connect the University with the African continent and expand its African footprint. This institutional initiative to expand our African footprint was conceptualised around Nelson Mandela’s footsteps as he travelled through the continent from the year 1962, seeking support for the liberation of South Africa. Several partner university agreements were signed as part of the three-country visit.



United Kingdom (UK), February 2023 – Digital Communication and Marketing

The VC led a delegation to the University of Sussex in February 2023, which culminated in the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Prior to this visit, colleagues from the University of Sussex visited Nelson Mandela University in July 2022.

Partnership with the University of Oldenburg, 2023 – Digital Communication and Marketing

The University of Oldenburg, Germany, has a longstanding cooperative relationship with Nelson Mandela University that stretches back to 1998. Originally established in the field of education, this has expanded to be active and successful in a range of disciplines.

The 25th anniversary of the partnership was celebrated with a visit by a delegation from the University of Oldenburg to Nelson Mandela University in Gqeberha in November 2022. The purpose of this visit was to deepen the cooperation of the different units, plan joint projects for the coming years, and sign a new long-term cooperation agreement.

In the second part of the celebrations, a cooperation week was organized at the University of Oldenburg, where a delegation from Nelson Mandela University visited from 26 to 30 June 2023. Communication and Marketing Senior Director, Chantal Janneker accompanied the VC's delegation and provided the full suite of communication and marketing support.



Ethiopia

The first country on the first leg of this tour was Ethiopia from 26 to 28 June 2022.

[Read more ▶](#)



Uganda

The second part of the tour took place in Uganda on 29 and 30 June 2022.

[Read more ▶](#)



Kenya

The last part of this tour took place in Kenya on 1 and 2 July 2022.

[Read more ▶](#)



4.3. Giving Campaign

The Communication and Marketing Directorate played a key role in the run up to and roll out of the University's **Mandela Day Giving Campaign**, launched on 3 July 2023. The multi-year campaign aims to raise R30 million for four projects that intend to change lives, in line with the University being in service of society.

The Directorate produced a content plan, set up a **web page** and designed the artwork for the campaign. The web page provides a text and video message from the VC, as well as information on the four projects supported. Each project has a donate button that allowed one to directly give towards that project.

The Directorate produced scripts for the Vice-Chancellor, Chair of Council and Chancellor under tight deadlines. It coordinated recording the videos in studios in Johannesburg and on campus, and sourced a programme director for whom a script was and included in the video launch.

An internal teaser campaign kicked off 10 days ahead of the launch. It comprised Mandela quotes which focused on the importance of *ubuntu*, education and helping others.

Prior to this, the Directorate produced a "thought leader" article under the byline of the DVC: Engagement and Transformation on what it means to be an engaged university. The piece, "Engagement: Universities need





JOYOUS OCCASION: There was much fanfare as Nelson Mandela University launched its new medical school yesterday
Picture: FREDLIN ADRIAN

NMU Medical School hailed as beacon of hope

Guy Rogers
rogersg@theherald.co.za

Nelson Mandela University (NMU) has formally launched its new medical school with the focus on producing top drawer community-minded doctors willing to practise in poor and rural areas.

Speakers at the university's Missionvale campus event yesterday hailed the establishment of the new facility in one of the poorest corners of Gqeberha as a beacon of hope.

NMU vice-chancellor Prof Sibongile Muthwa paid homage to the university's ever-jovial Professor Lungile Pepeta, the late dean of health sciences, who was a driving force behind the medical school project before his death in August 2020.

"He would have been bouncing proud today," Muthwa said.



OFFICIAL OPENING: Eastern Cape health MEC Nomakhosazana Meth, left, higher education minister Dr Blade Nzimande and Nelson Mandela University vice-chancellor Prof Sibongile Muthwa at the launch of the new medical school at the Missionvale campus
Picture: FREDLIN ADRIAN

"This new institution has social justice at its core.

"It will improve access to health services and at the same time drive urban renewal.

"We look forward to collaborating with all our partner institutions, provincially and nationally, in producing fit-for-purpose, service-orientated and

civic-minded medical professionals committed to making a difference in the lives of the disadvantaged."

She said the NMU Medical School was the 10th in the country and the second in the Eastern Cape after the establishment of the facility at Walter Sisulu University in

Mthatha. "A total 50 students enrolled at the NMU Medical School in March and the aim is to increase that number to 80 first-year students next year."

Muthwa said the decision to establish the medical school at the university's Missionvale campus was deliberate.

"It's close to Dora Nginza

and Livingstone public hospitals and is in the heart of the Bay townships.

"It will be an inspiration for the communities it aims to serve, as well as the Eastern Cape and SA at large."

The launch was the culmination of an idea mooted 75 years ago by Rhodes University that a medical school should be established in then Port Elizabeth.

The project was carried forward by successive deans at the University of Port Elizabeth and NMU after it was renamed.

In 2014, the project gained momentum when former NMU vice-chancellor Derrick Swartz contacted higher education minister Dr Blade Nzimande, and the minister declared his strong support for it.

Speaking yesterday, Nzimande said he was proud and excited to be launching the

REPORT CONTINUES: P2

launch in October 2019 published in the Mail & Guardian, The Herald and the Daily Dispatch in November 2020.

In April 2023, the Centre received national recognition in the Human Science Research Council–Universities South Africa (HRSC-USAf) Humanities and Social Sciences Awards for its scholarly efforts towards social justice. This accolade generated media coverage.

On our social platforms we published 105 posts on CWGS that garnered over 437 000 impressions and 24 000 engagements that included 4,377 video views.

Medical School launch

The University announced the approval of its MBChB programme in December 2020, generating substantial public and media interest. The official launch of the Medical School at Missionvale Campus, delayed until November 2021 and smaller than originally planned (due to COVID-19 restrictions), was a milestone event. The Communication and Marketing Directorate designed collateral for the launch which included a newspaper supplement, media releases, opinion pieces, a webpage, branding and a video with recorded messages of local and international support.

Medical school still committed to producing socially conscious doctors

There is so much more we can do to improve the health, quality of life and lifespan of everyone in SA, and, at the same time, achieve a better return from public health spend.

We are confident that Nelson Mandela University's new medical school will help us achieve this and that, once it is up and running, the health services platform throughout the Eastern Cape will improve.

The official launch on Tuesday November 30 in Gqeberha is historic as we look forward to collaborating with all our partners, internally and externally, in producing fit-for-purpose, service orientated and civic-minded medical professionals committed to making a difference in the lives of the disadvantaged.

The programme is unique in SA as its comprehensive primary healthcare approach focuses on the four pillars of medicine: Disease prevention, health promotion, treatment

and rehabilitative medicine.

This strong community-based ethos aims to develop socially conscious medical doctors who can compete globally, but who also have a deep passion to change the lives of poor communities.

We thank our country's other medical schools, their researchers and practitioners for their collaboration, which contributed greatly to our curriculum design.

We plan to continue to work together in finding solutions and innovations.

It has been intense to fulfil the requirements of launching a medical school at our Missionvale Campus in Gqeberha.

The infrastructure includes lecture halls, laboratories for physics, chemistry, physiology and anatomy, and more than 60 offices for medical school staff members.

We are also partnering with several provincial and district hospitals, like the nearby Dora

Nginza Regional Hospital, and associated clinics.

Our initial intake of first year MBChB students has largely been matriculants with strong pass rates in maths, physical science, life science and English.

Next year, our intake will increase to 80 first-years, and demand for placement has been high with more than 5,500 applications.

In terms of staffing, we have received and continue to receive CVs from all over SA, and internationally from doctors, specialists and professionals, wanting to be part of the medical school.

One of the first appointments in 2019 was the director of the medical programme, Prof Mfanufikile Nomvete — a gastroenterologist from Livingstone Hospital and former head of its internal medicine department.

While the human and capital investment for the new



In My View
SIBONGILE MUTHWA

biomedical engineering field.

EBET's advanced engineering design group is involved in the development of intelligent prosthetics to assist people with limited mobility, while the virtual reality domain presents another great local opportunity.

In line with our holistic approach, we are strongly pursuing community engagement.

We believe the best approach to medical education, the practice of medicine and healthcare service delivery is one that engages the agency of our served communities.

We will partner with these communities to build on their efforts to be informed about the drivers of disease, and to pursue preventive approaches to health and wellness.

One of the key strategic growth areas for both the institution and the surrounding community, the medical school is being intentionally and collectively driven on the

Missionvale Campus as part of its pursuit of social justice and inclusive access to good healthcare.

We are encouraged by, and fully embrace, the suggestion and advice of the Health Professions Council of SA that we constitute an outward facing advisory board to guide and enable our medical programme delivery, and to ensure it stays true to its promise.

Through Vision 2030, Mandela University reaffirms its commitment to change the world through student-centric educational opportunities, innovative research and transformative engagement that contribute to a better life for all.

With social justice at its core, we hope our new medical school is set to forever change the healthcare landscape of SA and the lives of those we serve.

● Prof Sibongile Muthwa is the vice-chancellor of Nelson Mandela University

The launch garnered overwhelming media coverage to the value of R2 221 148 in advertising value equivalent (AVE) across national print and broadcast media. It also yielded an overall audience reach of 68 394 622 across print, broadcast and online media.

Engagement

As a transformative, responsive university in service of society, engagement is the third pillar of our institution along with the two traditional pillars of learning and teaching, and research. With up to 250 engagement projects active at Nelson Mandela University at any one time, the Directorate endeavours to share what the institution is doing in this sphere with a wider audience. Apart from the avenues outlined previously, such as media releases, opinion

pieces and social media platforms, we have an ongoing a partnership with The Herald Citizen of the Year awards programme that assists in sharing what we do.

The University has profiled numerous engagement projects in The Herald Citizen of the Year publication from 2020-2023, with a minimum of four pages of editorial content each year. The event's overarching mandate is to share CSI and community related content, showcasing inspirational stories of hope that reflect individuals and entities serving communities.

The partnership will continue for the years 2024 to 2026 with the Communication and Marketing Directorate and Transformation and Engagement Portfolio anchors for the university.



5. Events



5.1. Graduation

Graduation is a flagship event for the University and the Communication and Marketing Directorate strives to present a positive, once-in-a-lifetime experience for our thousands of graduands each year. The process also includes communication and marketing activities that publicize human interest or newsworthy qualifications and research. It also involves coordinating the event and attending to details such as the student procession, stage set-up, on-day coverage, and the overall look and feel of graduation. Over the period under review, the Directorate also piloted a new ticketing system.

Autumn Graduation 2020

As the COVID-19 pandemic precluded face-to-face graduation from March 2020 onwards for some time, we produced electronic and printed collateral for the switch from in-person to virtual ceremonies. These efforts aim to replicate, as closely as possible, the experience of a traditional in-person graduation ceremony for participants and guests watching the process online. This included overseeing the look of the venue to mirror the conventional stage set-up for graduation. We were also involved with pre-recording the office bearers, which included writing speeches, audio visual

and plant hire, stage branding, catering, academic attire, and more. This was done while following strict COVID-19 protocols. We also ensured that the Chancellor received her pack for recording purposes, which included academic attire, a pull-up banner, script and a gift.

While virtual ceremonies were never, and will never be, the University's first choice, the safety of the students, their families and our staff was the overriding priority. We committed therefore to supporting all graduates in celebrating their milestone safely, at home, with an online ceremony and additional digital opportunities.

Autumn Graduation featured five honorary doctorates namely Ben Okri, Zanele Mbeki, Lesetja Kganyago, Phuthuma Nhleko, and Sindiwe Magona. This brought additional complications as they were not able to attend ceremonies in person. We therefore ensured that each honorary doctorate was recorded before graduation, and their recording released on the University's YouTube channel. This involved hiring videographers who were in the same city as the recipients, who were spread across the country. The team paid attention to details such as the correct measurements for their academic attire, couriering gowns to their homes ahead of the recordings, and helping to check and edit their speeches.



Summer Graduation 2020, Autumn and Summer Graduation 2021

Nelson Mandela University marked its next three graduation seasons online, following a similar procedure as outlined above. The Summer Graduation season in December 2020 featured a series of ceremonies that acknowledged students graduating at the end of a long and difficult year. Many of our students are the first in their families to go to university hence, despite the disappointment of not being able to celebrate face-to-face, it was particularly important to communicate the symbolic significance of graduation.

There was a total of 14 136 views, but the number of viewers will far exceed this number as graduates had been encouraged to celebrate in the safety of their homes with their families.

Here is the breakdown per session:

- Session 1 – 17 December 09:30 – Education: 6830 views
- Session 2 – 17 December 14:30 – Business and Economic Sciences and Law: 2949 views
- Session 3 – 18 December 09:30 – Health Sciences and Faculty of Science: 1944 views
- Session 4 – 18 December 12:00 – Humanities: 975 views
- Session 5 – 18 December 14:30 – EBET: 1438 views

Autumn Graduation 2021 saw three honorary doctorates awarded, with a similar procedure followed for COVID-19

safety protocols as at Autumn Graduation 2020. Professor Martin Tsamenyi, Dr Mmatshilo Motsei and Dr Gloria Serobe while Summer Graduation 2021 featured one honorary recipient: Mr Joel Netshitenzhe. Breakdown of number of views per session as of 11 May:

- Faculty of Education and Faculty of Law – 8416 views
- Faculty of Health Sciences – 8743 views
- Faculty of EBET – 8893 views
- Faculty of Humanities – 5816 views
- Faculty of Science – 5310 views
- Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences – 12870 views

Autumn Graduation 2022

After two years of COVID-19 lockdown and virtual graduation sessions, Nelson Mandela University was able to hold its first live graduation sessions again in April 2022. The Directorate's media campaign aimed to drive human interest stories related to graduation and celebrate the joy of being able to receive a qualification in person, on stage, and with family and friends.

Results far exceeded expectations: print, broadcast and online news services picked up our stories and reported on them 86 times, with a reach of over 39 million. The Directorate's graduation social media campaign resulted in more than 7 million impressions and over 400 000 engagements with our posts. Social listening indicated that 131 authors in eight countries mentioned Nelson Mandela





University graduation in 705 messages. These could have been viewed more than 1.4 million times by the followers of these authors, resulting in close to 36 000 engagements.

The 2022 Autumn Graduation season media coverage was again boosted by honorary doctorate awards, particularly that of veteran news broadcaster, Dr Noxolo Grootboom. Her honorary doctoral award garnered significant national broadcast media coverage. The other recipients were: Sindiso Mfenyana and, posthumously, Prof Lungile Pepeta.

Summer Graduation 2022, Graduation Recognition Ceremonies

December 2022 saw the first in-person Graduation Ceremony since the COVID-19 restrictions and included a new event: Graduation Recognition Ceremonies. This was targeted at students who had graduated online during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021 and had been denied the opportunity of walking across the stage to be capped.

The Directorate worked closely with faculty and academic administration to ensure that as many graduates as possible were reached, and that their experience was special. The team also ensured that all design collateral was done

correctly, and the Graduation look and feel was in line with the corporate identity of the University.

Autumn Graduation 2023

Although the first in-person Graduation Ceremony in 2022 had gone well, the 21 sessions hosted in April 2023 were even more successful. Social media coverage was exceptional and media coverage surpassed expectations. The Communication and Marketing Directorate team wrote and published 37 stories for both internal and external audiences.

As mentioned in 2022, we witnessed extremely successful live Autumn Graduation celebrations on social media. In 2023, we endeavoured to see if this was an exception, due to post-pandemic relief, or if it could be improved upon to extend brand exposure not just locally but also into Africa and internationally.

It has been satisfying to note a massive increase in reach.

Nelson Mandela University's social media posts were displayed over 15.5 million times to users (up by 112%) and generated over 1.9 million engagements (up by 348%)



compared to 2022. Video views grew by 678% to over 4.1 million. Three videos on Facebook had over 1.5 million impressions, with one reaching 4.7 million impressions and over 900 000 engagements, while one on Instagram had more than a million impressions.

Social listening results indicated that 2 509 authors in 55 countries mentioned our graduation in 4 098 messages. These could have been viewed over 22.3 million times by the followers of these authors, resulting in 196 237 engagements.

In addition, George hosted its first two graduation ceremonies on campus at the former Furntech building. Both ceremonies were well received.

Communication and Marketing Directorate ensured that both the digital and print media items were updated and, in some cases, re-designed for graduation. This work included photographic backdrops that graduates could use for photographs.

5.2. Welcoming Ceremonies

With lockdown restrictions from early in 2020, the VC's traditional in-person Welcoming Ceremony and all the faculty welcome sessions, including meet-and-greet sessions, had to move online. The Communication and Marketing Directorate Events team, equipped with experience gained over 2020 and 2021 in hosting several online webinars, assisted faculties with these events. The result was a series of successful online events to ensure that the class of 2022, and their parents or guardians, were given insights into what to expect in the year ahead. This required online presentation training, speech writing, and exceptional organisational skills.

We held a standalone Welcoming Ceremony at the Indoor Sport Centre in February 2023 at which the VC welcomed close to 3 000 guests comprising first year students and their parents or guardians. Faculty welcomes, with the Deans' address and meet-and-greet sessions, remained online and were hosted the week before. The actual in-person event was also streamed online so that those unable to attend could learn about the institution. This saw many different design elements, both digital and print.

5.3. Academic and Excellence Awards

The first in-person hosting of these awards since the start of the pandemic in 2020 was in November 2022. Mindful of budget constraints and end-of-year "event fatigue", we combined the Academic Awards for student achievers and the VC's Excellence Awards into one slick and prestigious event. The Directorate's work included scriptwriting, a filmed welcome, congratulatory message from the VC and

stories about the winners for media consumption. The Events team also embraced new skills to provide the first full awards production with a voiceover, slides and quotes from all the winners.

5.4. Support for institutional events, campaigns and projects

The Communication and Marketing Directorate assisted in producing electronic collateral for the shift from in-person events to virtual events, campaigns, and other projects. This has included invitations, posters, virtual backgrounds, brochures and other marketing material. In many areas, this was a first, and the end results have been outstanding, and still used in mid-2023. The team also guides faculties and departments on the correct use of the institutional brand on various templates. Event support also calls for a substantial amount of graphic design work.

Public lecture: Dr Joyce Banda, 2020

Arts, Culture and Heritage, in conjunction with the CGWS and the Strategic Resource Mobilisation and Advancement (SRMA) office hosted a public lecture by former Malawian president, Dr Joyce Banda in February 2020. Through this lecture, the Centre aimed to expand the conversation on women and leadership in Africa. It also provided an opportunity to showcase the public art on South Campus, and gave rise to discussions on the architecture (established and new) of the University.

AfriFem Chair launch, 2021

In June 2021, the University launched the research Chair in African Feminist Imaginations. Media support was given and a series of opinion pieces by the Chair were distributed for publication, including *Female Fear Factory: Any woman can be made into a whore, so sit like a girl* (Daily Maverick, 5 August 2021).

International Museum Day, 2022

International Museum Day was marked by a collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Art Museum that showcased the Palaeoscience Virtual Tour. This featured a behind-the-scenes online tour of the art museum, providing a new platform for the University to engage with the city.

International Narcotics Control Board Report, 2022

Faculty of Health Sciences Executive Dean Prof Zukiswa Zingela delivered the annual report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) to an international audience in March 2022. A report on this event was published in Weekend Post.



Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education Lekgotla, 2022

In June 2022, Student Life and Development (SLD) hosted an entrepreneurship lekgotla in partnership with the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) programme to showcase youth entrepreneurship efforts in the Eastern Cape and at Nelson Mandela University. The Communication and Marketing Directorate provided media support for the event, which garnered coverage in local and national media.

Research Week, 2022

Mandela University hosted an inaugural Research Week in November 2022 as a pre-event of the World Science Forum, under the theme Science for Social Justice. This Research Week provided opportunities to develop and nurture researchers, and to showcase the impact of the University's work in open science and societies, and on

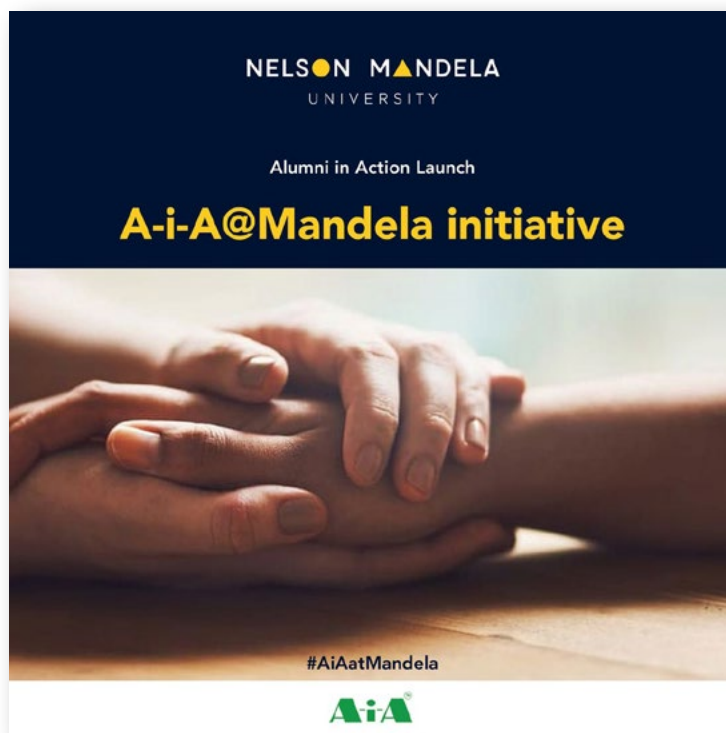
sustainable futures. Communication and Marketing supported the event by creating speaker profiles, a **website**, an internal Memo, external media release and daily summaries of the day's proceedings and well as social media coverage.

Alumni-in-Action, 2023

The University, in partnership with **Alumni-in-Action**, launched an initiative to render support to student survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) in March 2023. Media support was given to this project, generating coverage in The Herald and University World News.

Automotive Engineering Chair launch, 2023

The University launched its new Chair in Automotive Engineering, in partnership with the AIDC-EC, with media support given in June 2023. This was covered by The Herald and Engineering News.





6. Marketing

6.1. Brand review audit

Since the renaming of the University to Nelson Mandela University, the Communication and Marketing Directorate has produced a mass of new brand collateral in various digital and printed formats. Given the expanse of material produced over this time, any appraisal of the implementation requires broad brushstrokes. In summary, it includes designs for high-level communication of the University's large strategic and academic projects, campaigns such as student recruitment and water saving, branded items such as apparel and sportswear, day-to-day visual messaging for events and everyday life at Mandela University, and more. This has provided numerous interactive touch points for internal and external stakeholders with our brand.

As chief custodians of the brand of Nelson Mandela University, the Communication and Marketing team has been central in rolling out this process. It is able to offer important insights on the collateral produced, processes followed, and challenges faced.

With this in mind, the Directorate implemented and concluded a **brand review audit** from April to July 2023, which includes recommendations on how to take the process further. This will be shared with the University community in the next Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) Reference Group meeting.

6.2. Brand and signage guidelines

Using the brand audit and findings as a base, the team has had sessions with graphic designers and other role players within the Directorate to re-visit current brand and signage style guides. They are being updated and, once signed off and implemented, will form the basis for our brand and signage policies. In time this also will require updating.

Infrastructure and signage collaborations

With the University constantly growing, Communication and Marketing has worked with Infrastructure Services and Space Optimization (ISSO) on signage projects. This includes signage for new buildings and residences, as





well as establishing what signage requires upgrading or replacement.

Shared Services project

The shared services project includes the correct application of our brand in the new Shared Services spaces on North Campus. The Directorate has been involved with the concept, design and implementation phases. This is an ongoing project which will expand to other campuses.

Missionvale Campus branding

The project to rebrand the Missionvale Campus accelerated after the Medical School was launched in 2021. The Directorate was responsible for briefing the agency. The designs and concept have been completed and await input from the VC before implementation.

Spatial branding

The Directorate has started with a concept design that will see high traffic areas, such as the Help Desk, for example, flagged with institutional branding. Certain faculties and departments have also called for assistance to correctly brand their areas. This is an on-going project.

Five-year branding and collateral

A variety of events, campaigns and publications were planned to celebrate Nelson Mandela University's five-year renaming anniversary in 2022. The Communication and Marketing team was instrumental in coming up with a concept to mark the milestone with collateral to be used across all platforms for the year.



7. Student Recruitment

7.1. Recruitment over COVID-19

With the onset of COVID-19 in March 2020, the Student Recruitment Department swiftly transitioned to a digital approach to interact with students. Traditional student recruitment practices such as school visits, exhibitions and other face-to-face initiatives were halted due to regulations aimed at preventing the spread of the virus.

The Directorate created highly effective landing pages for our Internationalisation and Postgraduate campaign portal pages, which have helped to draw traffic to these sources of information.

The start of lockdown led to confusion about university applications. In light of this, Student Recruitment partnered with the Registrar's Office to produce a **video**, viewable on the University's YouTube channel. The aim was to create awareness of what was in place, as well as how and when applications would open for the 2021 intake. Later in 2020, the University released an **update** to this. The Registrar recorded an additional message for Grade 12 learners, who had experienced a very disrupted academic year, wishing them success with their matriculation examinations.

Getting to know my Mandela University

Due to the lack of face-to-face interaction and the move to online, it was decided to introduce the Student Recruitment team on various social media channels. A **Getting to know my Mandela University** video provided information to assist prospective students to make informed decisions about study choices at Nelson Mandela University. The

goal was to create a more personal approach, despite the overwhelming move to digital recruitment.

In-person and Virtual Open Days

As was the case with most universities internationally, we had to cancel all arrangements for annual face-to-face Open Days. Student Recruitment, in collaboration with faculties and the Support Service Departments, hosted faculty-based Virtual Open Days, in May and June 2022, in the form of a series of short videos on our official YouTube channel. These videos showcase the best of each faculty, and included additional information on admission procedures and requirements, financial aid, sport, student housing, arts and culture and more. Despite being pre-recorded, a chat function allows viewers to engage with faculty academic staff as well as Academic Admissions staff.

Nelson Mandela University hosted its first in person Open Day in March 2023 after an absence of three years due to the pandemic. We hosted a Parent Information Session in May 2023 in the Sport Centre on Missionvale Campus, where the then Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching engaged with parents around the topic "Post-pandemic readiness". More than 120 parents attended the event which had been advertised in The PE Express, a free community newspaper. Furthermore, two radio interviews were conducted (Umhlobo Wenene and Eden FM).

A total of 7 376 learners attended the Gqeberha event over two days in May 2023. Close to 3 200 learners attended the George Open Day event over two days later in May.



Online recruitment

In addition to the call-to-action campaigns, Student Recruitment also ran an online motivational campaign. The team updated the **MyFuture webpage** with various resources for learners, including e-learning, science, mathematics, blogs, the launch of the MBChB, faculty webinars, a MyFuture inbox and a congratulatory note to the class of 2020.

With the extension of the lockdown into 2021, and the Nelson Mandela Bay area identified as a COVID-19 hotspot, Student Recruitment increased its focus on retention messaging to support enrolment. These interventions included a video, **We're excited to welcome you**, which targeted provisionally accepted students with a short, upbeat message.

Additional highlights of 2021 included more digital content creation. This included a new video message from the Registrar, Virtual Open Day and faculty promotional videos, webinars, steps to study digitally, a support campaign by the University's Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS), how to connect with Student Recruitment, and good luck wishes aimed at 2021 Grade 12 learners.

With no end in sight to the pandemic, new and innovative ways were sought for the Student Recruitment team to

engage with its stakeholders. This led to the creation of the "Connect with a Student Recruiter", a Microsoft Teams digital solution where prospective students and parents meet a recruiter.

A series of videos introducing the unique seven campuses to prospective students was produced. The longevity of these videos shows their popularity and complements other subsequent campaigns, positioning the University's student recruitment efforts.

Video content from Student Recruitment initiatives has increased and supported the growth in applications. Messaging has also been shared on national television.

In addition to the projects and videos listed above, Student Recruitment has ongoing projects which are refined each year. These include but are not confined to deans, financial aid and new student letters, feeder and partner schools' lists, chatbot testing and launch, VC's Scholarship, Student Access and Enrolment Office flyers in three official languages, and an online booking system to connect to a student recruiter.

Mvezo recruitment

Supported by the Royal House of Mandela, Student Recruitment was part of a Nelson Mandela University





visit to Mvezo in the eastern part of the Eastern Cape in August 2022. The event, supported by all faculties and relevant support services, aimed to build relationships with the community, assist with career options and drive applications. It also provided an opportunity to engage with learners from Grade 9 to Grade 12.

Science for Society

Every year, Communication and Marketing collaborates with the Faculty of Science on science-specific projects and events. This is to encourage more learners to take up mathematics and science in school, as these are gateway subjects for careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics. By focusing on identified scientific themes, the aim is to attract learners who will later enroll at Mandela University for studies in these fields. This is Mandela University's way of helping the country become a knowledge-based economy, where science and innovation are used to resolve society's pressing challenges.

These initiatives not only position the University favourably but work to bridge the gap between science and community issues. They help people understand how science, research and technology have a positive impact on their daily lives and on future generations, meaning that the Communication and Marketing Directorate is playing a role in boosting the public understanding of science.

In addition to student recruitment, the Directorate, along with the Faculty of Science, are using various projects to

showcase the University's commitment to serving society in the SADC region. This aligns with a strategic focus area of Vision 2030, which is to pursue impactful, pioneering research, innovation and internationalisation to address grand societal challenges and promote sustainable futures.

AIDC partnership outreach

The AIDC EC and Nelson Mandela University have an MoU that has been followed up with a Service Level Agreement (SLA). This SLA enables the two parties to collaborate on projects over the next three years. This has so far included the Skills Indaba and Careers Expo which was hosted at the Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium in September 2022. Pre-identified schools were limited to sending 20 learners each, and the event attracted more than 1 000 learners. Student Recruitment coordinated the event in which all seven faculties participated, as well as relevant service departments.

7.2. International marketing

Student Recruitment ran an international marketing campaign from 15 December 2021 to 28 February 2022 which yielded significant success. A first of its kind for this department, the campaign created phenomenal awareness of Nelson Mandela University in designated countries on the African continent. This new digital communication and marketing approach truly revolutionized student recruitment and placed the Mandela brand on the map into the African continent and beyond.

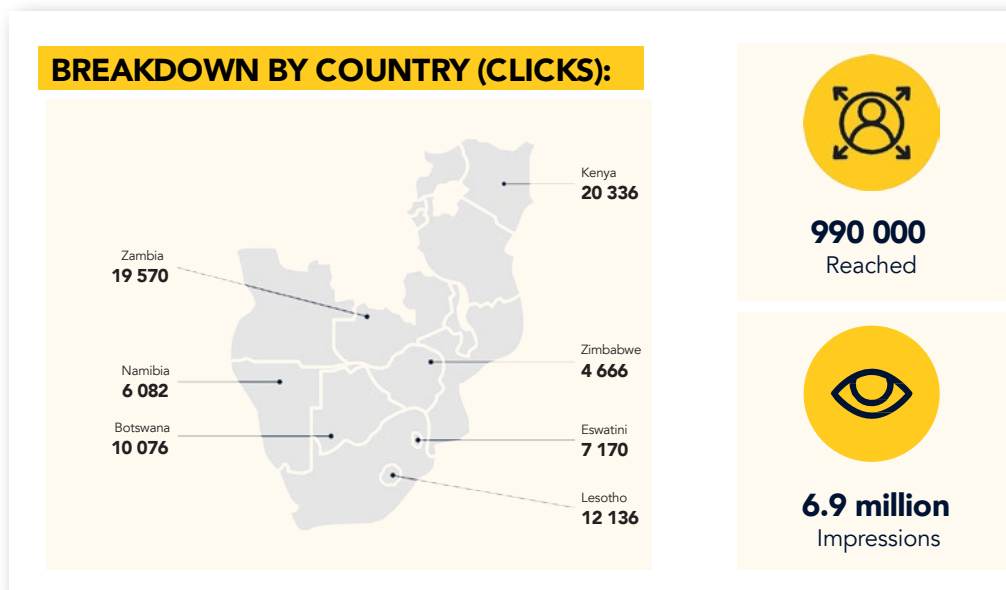


Figure 5: Student Recruitment campaign reach

Figure 5 indicates the reach of the campaign.

Although some COVID-19 restrictions were still in place at the start of the year, traditional student recruitment methods such as face-to-face engagements and exhibition participation re-emerged early in 2022.

In 2023, there is still a need for a balanced hybrid approach to student recruitment that includes digital and traditional media, and many of the digital methods used over the pandemic continue.

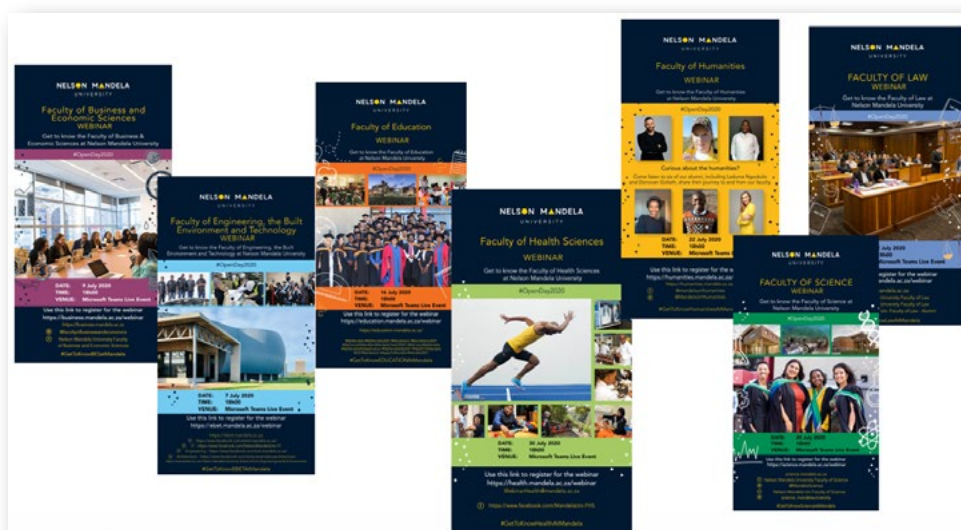
7.3. Faculty webinar series

Due to the pandemic, hosting the traditional Open Days at the University's campuses was not feasible. To provide applicants with essential information about programmes and services, the recruitment team introduced online

faculty-specific webinars. These webinars, held in the early evening, were hosted by the Executive Deans and faculty staff. They provided a platform for each faculty to showcase their unique offerings to principals, teachers, prospective students, and their families from all over the country. Over time, the online events were improved to better represent each faculty, with adjustments made based on evolving restrictions, including mask-wearing and social distancing, while strictly adhering to health and safety protocols.

Webinars in 2020

In response to the pandemic's challenges, the institutional Open Day in Gqeberha and George had to be postponed and eventually cancelled. To adapt, the recruitment team swiftly transitioned to a digital approach, hosting the Open Day virtually for the first time. These faculty-based webinars were conducted via MS TEAMS from 2 July to 30 July 2020.





Extensive awareness was created through boosted social media posts and a direct email campaign. The report includes analytics that provide insight into the reach and exposure of these initiatives. In cases where faculty videos were unavailable, Student Recruitment facilitated their production.

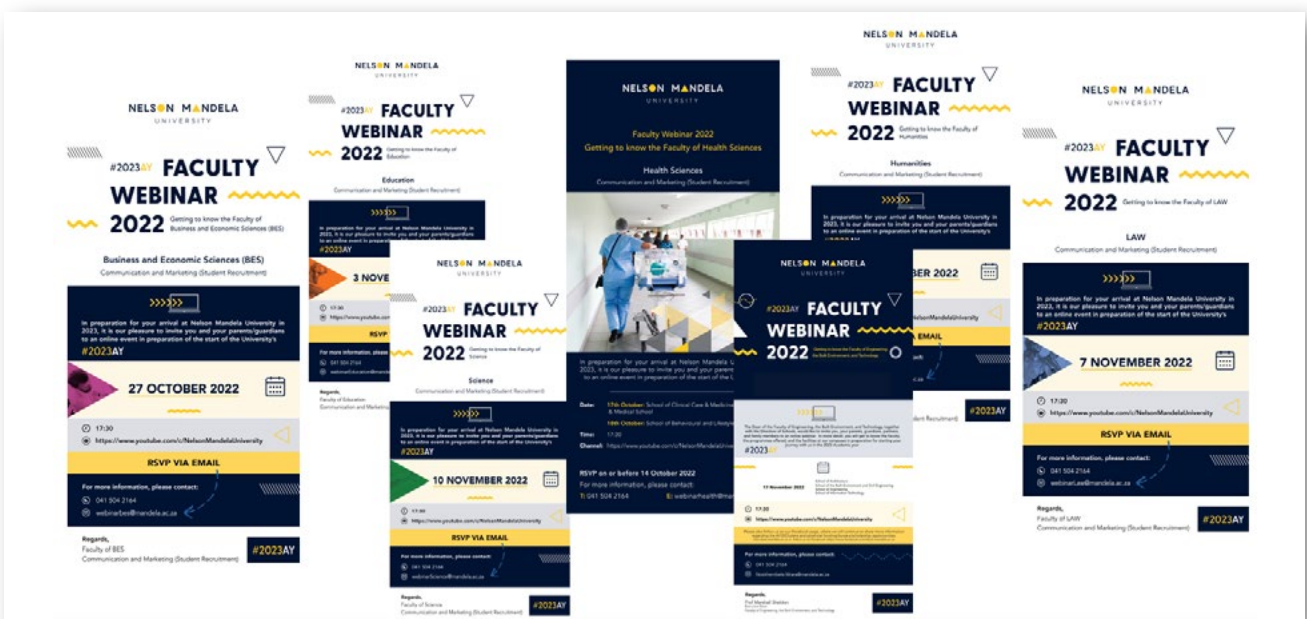
Webinars in 2021

During the preparation for the 2022 Academic year, seven faculty webinars took place on MS Teams between 18 July and 1 September 2021. These online webinars aimed to position the University, given the continued inability to host in-person events. Before these webinars, a virtual Open Day video highlighting the faculties and institution

was produced, uploaded to the YouTube channel, and promoted on various social media platforms. This video helped create awareness, and based on data from the Student Access and Enrolment Office, direct invites were sent to applicants who had received offers to study at Mandela Uni. To further promote these videos and use them as additional recruitment collateral during the late application closing date campaign, a dedicated webpage was created on the **MyFuture@Mandela website**.

Webinars in 2022

In October and November 2022, a series of pre-recorded webinars were launched online for provisionally accepted first-time entering (FTE) students. The Faculty of Health



Sciences hosted two online webinars, with the first focusing on the Medical School and the second providing an overview of other health-related streams. These webinars, hosted on YouTube, allowed Deans and academics to provide insight to prospective students about what to expect when they register the following year. Prospective students also had the opportunity to interact with staff through chat functionality, manned by Student Access and Enrolment, Academics, Student Recruitment, and support staff. The webinars were part of the institution's strategy to inform applicants about the plan for the return of new and current students at the start of the 2023 Academic Year. The sessions also allowed parents/guardians to engage with academics and the Executive Dean and get a better understanding of what to expect before their children's arrival the following year. The webinars featured input from

the Executive Dean, staff, and students and included an online Q & A panel for participants to ask questions.

Webinars in 2023

The first in-person Open Day took place in both Gqeberha and George, with a focus on retaining applicants who have provisional, or firm offers to study at Nelson Mandela University in 2024. To facilitate this, a series of recorded faculty webinars will be conducted in September for accepted first-time entering (FTE) students. Prospective students, along with their parents, guardians, and learners, will receive a link to view a faculty-specific video. These videos will contain detailed information about the faculties, study fields, bursaries, and other essential details to help applicants make informed decisions about joining Mandela Uni in 2024.





8. Arts, Culture and Heritage

8.1. District stakeholder engagement

The Department was involved in a creative arts stakeholder engagement in March 2020, in the form of a plenary session held off campus at Bayworld to encourage all stakeholders from the public sector to form partnerships and cross-pollinate ideas. Members of local and provincial government were represented in the ACHC.

8.2. Naming and Renaming

The **Naming and Renaming** programme of Nelson Mandela University symbolically signals the University's commitment to transformation in naming places, spaces and buildings that enhance our name and intellectual identity. It uses heritage to build social solidarity and promote social justice.

Covering all seven campuses, Arts, Culture and Heritage is taking a phased, precinct-based approach as shown below.

All entities falling under this renaming project should answer the question of how their new name is congruent with the ethos of our namesake, Madiba, and the values espoused in the University's Vision 2030.

The Naming and Renaming Policy provides a progressive guide for revisiting existing names, as well as naming future buildings, spaces and roads in keeping with the vision, mission and values of the University. This includes

redressing imbalances of the past and affirming the indigenous peoples and history of the provinces in which the University is located.

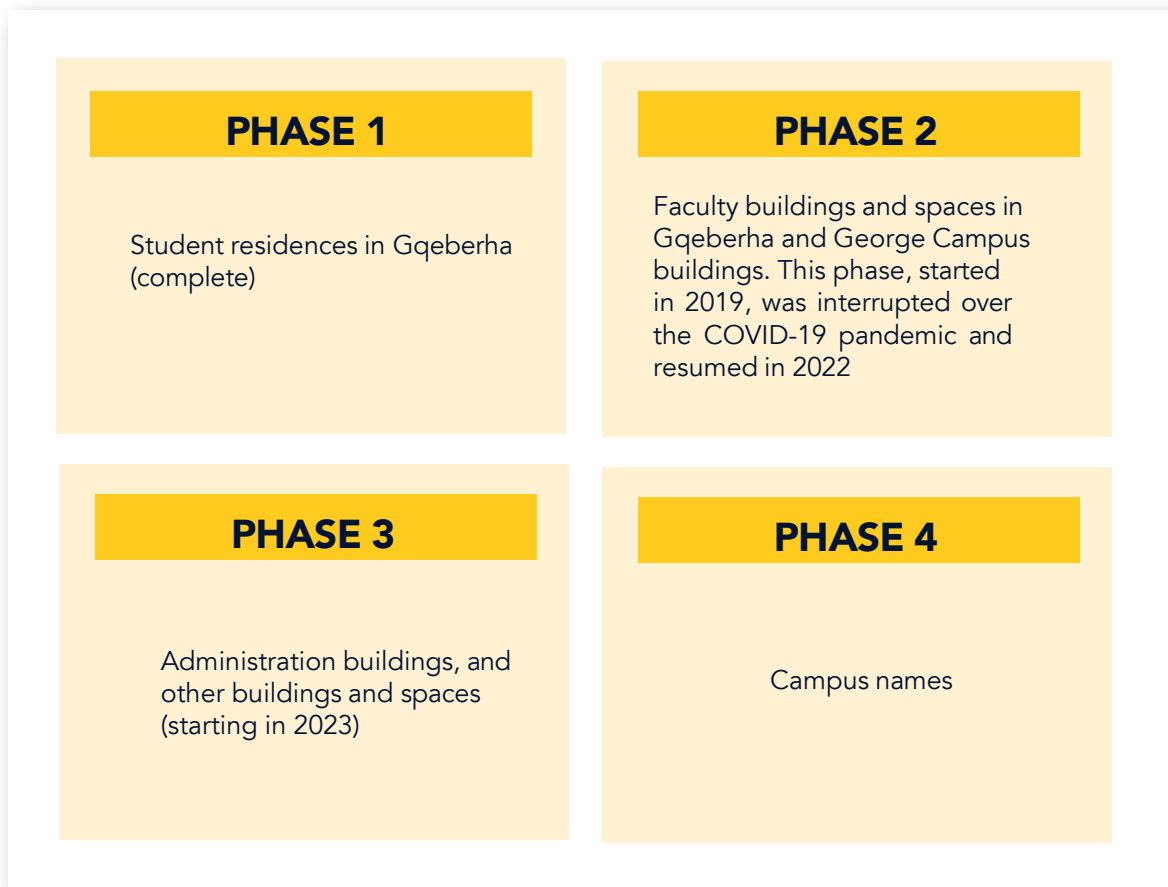
8.3. Signs and Symbols

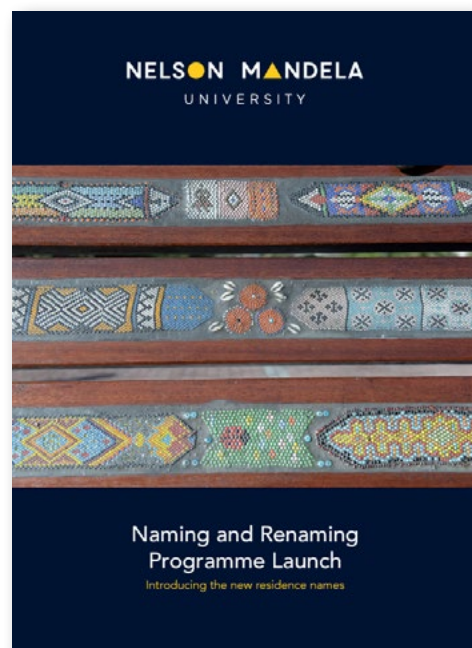
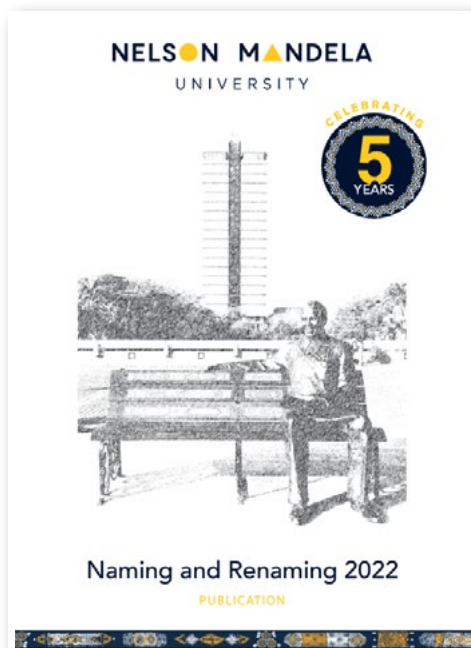
In 2020 we explored a framework for visual narratives with an initial set of 12 categories of symbols offered to stimulate the debate and meaning of what it means to be Mandela University. This newly formed library of designs can be scaled to size and for different media as needed, in physical and digital form. The Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee (ACHC) offered critique and the relevant changes were made to the designs.

In 2021 the ACHC was presented with engaged feedback from experts in practice and in the academy, aimed at enriching the symbolism of the intended meaning and visual narrative. This led to reports filed and distributed for onward submission to MANCO.

In 2022 Arts, Culture and Heritage and the third year Graphic Design class collaborated in a work integrated learning project. The work of four students was presented in the final stage.

The most recent element of Signs and Symbols is a Mandela Quotes Project, a proposal that is now being curated across campuses for input from the VC.





8.4. Archives

Our Digitisation of the Archives Project started in September 2021, with artefacts scanned and filed into online folders. This was an opportunity to create the first inventory of the archive and has enabled the university to work with this data in a way that offers services to the research community.

Dr Brigalia Bam Archive

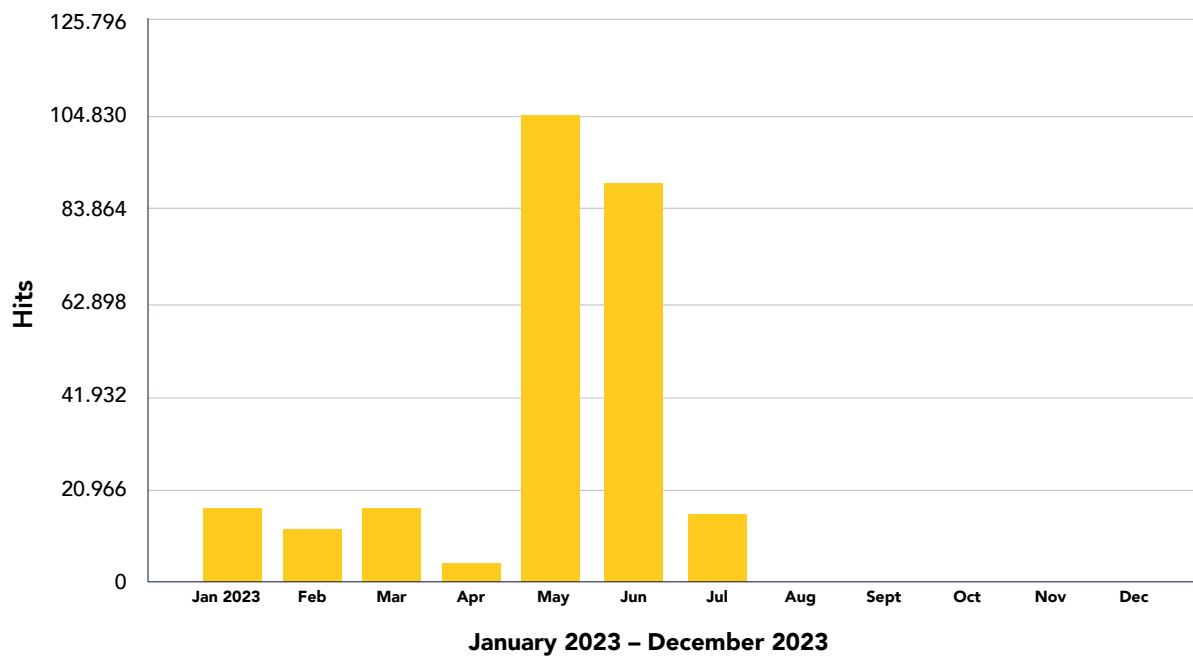
The Nelson Mandela University Archive has acquired the complete private archive of noted South African social activist

and author **Dr Brigalia Bam**, who has played an exemplary role in uplifting women and building democracy in South Africa.

Together with the Bam Foundation, the VC and executive management, Arts, Culture and Heritage launched the **Archive Exhibition** in November 2022. The collection has been digitised and added onto the open-source cross platform software library SEAL and Phase 2 of the acquisition was due to begin in August 2023.

Special collections also have been digitised and placed online through the SEAL system, with the number of online views illustrated in Figure 5.





240 847	258 274	258 274
Visitors The number of unique sessions created during this time period.	Hits The total number of requests made to the repository.	Links The number of followed links in the site.

Figure 6: Online views on the SEAL system





9. Publications



Content creation lies at the core of the work of the Communication and Events team in the Directorate. The bulk of this work is for institutional publications which are produced annually as well as once-off specialist publications for internal and external audiences. The Directorate provides reporting, writing, editing, proof-reading, photography and design services as and when capacity permits, as demand for these services exceeds internal resources. Due to demand, the Directorate outsources work to a freelance team of media specialists who work within rigorous SLA parameters.

9.1. Internal publications

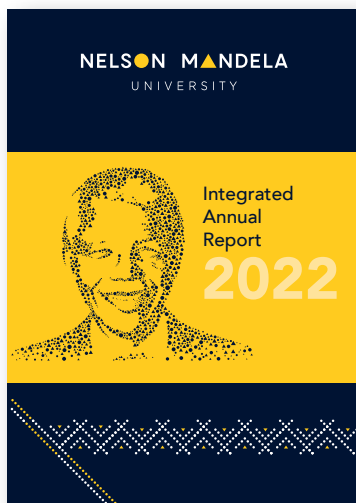
Internal publications include our Memo, the **VC's Voice**, staff bulletins, faculty and Professional and Administration Staff Services support.

To overcome information overload and streamline the distribution of Memo to staff, the team has systematically improved this process. As of July 2023, a twice weekly digest of all events and happenings provides staff with the ease of reading through the list of forthcoming events. Staff can click through to the dedicated **WhatsHappening@Mandela** site for additional event details. This has replaced the 50-plus events which staff received every week.

9.2. External publications

Institutional publications

Communication assists in positioning the University to regional, national and international stakeholders through a range of institutional publications aimed at a broad spectrum of readers. These include but are not limited



to the following, as new publications are created as the need arises.

The Directorate provides writing, editing and design services to Institutional Strategy for publications that include the **Integrated Annual Report** (2019-2022), four VC **Quarterly Reports** each year, and the **Annual Performance Plan**.

It also provided a senior writer to support the DVC: Learning and Teaching for the University's **Self-Evaluation Report** for the CHE audit of 2022, a large scale project that ran to 228 pages. Fortunately, this audit will not need to be repeated for several years.

Our team also provides comprehensive editorial support for the annual **Research and Innovation Report**, a substantial publication with multiple contributors. The most recent Research and Innovation Report (2021) contained 122 pages. The Directorate has also designed a separate publication that showcases the research entities of the University.

Learning and Teaching developed a new publication in the second half of 2019, the 92-page **Mandela University Learning and Teaching 2020**, written, edited and designed in partnership with Communication.

The executive portfolio of Transformation and Engagement, established in July 2019, made use of the Department's services in producing its inaugural **Transformation Report** (66 pages) of 2020-2021. The second Transformation Report, highlighting the newer work of this portfolio, is due for publication this year.

Brochures produced by the Communication Department also include the **VC's Excellence Awards**, 2021 and 2022, and **Naming and Renaming**, 2022.

In July 2023, the Department was finalising the layout and publication of updated marketing collateral in the shape of In Context, a 36-page publication marketing the University, and In Brief, a shorter brochure style publication that summarises the content of In Context.





Faculty publications

Faculties also make use of the Directorate’s services for publications that over this period include:

- Education: **Centre for the Community School** (36 pages)
- Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology: **Ideate**, 2021 (48 pages) and 2022 (88 pages)
- Law: **FishFORCE 2020** (64 pages) and subsequent newsletters since this publication
- Science: **Science Strategy 2030**, which the Faculty describes as its Vision 2030.

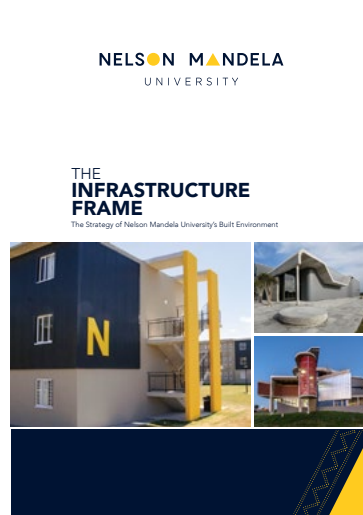
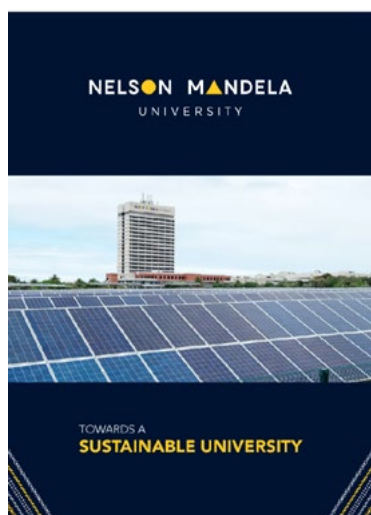
Newspaper supplements

The following publications were released in the form of newspaper supplements.

- Medical School: **Daily Dispatch, The Herald**, February 2021

A run-on of the 12-page supplement, which covered all aspects of the new Medical School, was supplied to the Faculty of Health Sciences and Student Recruitment as an additional means of marketing our engaged transformative





approach to basic health care. This was followed by a supplement in a national newspaper the following year:

- Medical School: **Mail & Guardian**, February 2022
- The Herald Citizen of the Year: **The Herald**, September 2021 and 2022 (discussed under Engagement above).

Using Strategic Resource Allocation Committee funding, the Directorate was able to produce a supplement covering the activities of Science for Society over 2022:

- Science for Society: **Daily Dispatch, The Herald**, February 2023

Sustainability and Infrastructure reports

Two new publications to capture key aspects of Nelson Mandela University were completed in 2022, telling the story of the institution both visually and with substantive accounts of various projects and achievements: **Towards a Sustainable University** (46 pages), and the Infrastructure Report (not yet available online). With sustainability a key strategic trajectory for the University,

a dedicated publication on this topic will continue to be of significance.

Alumni

Our alumni and friends' magazine, **Thetha**, is a glossy magazine style publication, ranging between 48 and 64 pages. It seeks to reflect the diverse achievements of alumni and position the University as a dynamic African institution in the service of society.

Students

Despite the obvious challenges of 2020 due to COVID-19, a comprehensive Student Diary was completed in 2020 in readiness for the class of 2021. The number of copies was reduced given the anticipated hybrid learning and teaching mode of delivery and funds were reprioritised.

Other publications aimed at **prospective students** include:

- Course Catalogue (Z-Card)
- Mandela Uni NCV Guide
- Undergraduate Guide



New medical school to open in 2021

Mandela University's medical degree will contain some of the best elements from the Cuban model

COMMENTARY
Lungile Pepeta

When I am standing in one of our medical school lecture halls at Nelson Mandela University's Maitland campus, I almost don't believe that we have come this far. People have been waiting for a medical school in Port Elizabeth since 1966. It's a giant boost for public health and the local economy.

Launching a fully operational medical school has required precise planning, as the total funding required from the department of higher education and training was not available. That's when we came up with the idea to repurpose buildings on the Maitland campus to meet our needs.

Three lecture lecture halls; a skills laboratory for second to final year medical students; basic science laboratories for physics, chemistry, physiology and anatomy; more than 60 offices for medical staff members and new spaces for the medical school at the Dora Nigam hospital and the associated clinic.

We deliberately chose the Maitland campus for our medical school – the 300 in South Africa – because it is located in the township area of Maitland and Twicken, populated by working class, unemployed and financially disadvantaged students. The Maitland campus was originally part of the old Vista University, built for black people during the apartheid years. Situating the medical school here is about ensuring that to prepare healthcare for all our communities, and contributing to urban renewal and development.

Before we can open applications for the six-year MBChB degree, starting in 2021, the preparatory's curriculum, together with the infrastructure and equipment, must be approved during a site visit by the Health Professions Council of South Africa and the Council on Higher Education. The site visit is from 28 October to 1 November this year and we are ready.

Our hundred medical students will be selected for the first MBChB cohort in 2021. Our first cohort will be recruited from the Eastern Cape with a master pass rate of 60%, 80% in science, 80% in English, 80% in mathematics and 80% in science. There will be an 80% master admission from schools (80% from non-fee-paying schools) and 20% from universities.

Reading wise, we are recruiting CVs from throughout South Africa and internationally; people at all levels want to be part of our new medical school, and many have said they are keen to move to Port Elizabeth. Our staffing needs are considerable. The basic science courses alone require more than 60 staff.

The medical programme director has been appointed and started on October 1. He is Professor Mkhizisi Ntshona, a gastroenterologist from Livingsstone Hospital and the former head of its internal medicine department, all the clinicians at the provincial hospitals in the Nelson Mandela Maitland Livingsstone, Dora Nigam and Port Elizabeth Peninsula; and at the private hospitals are extremely excited about the medical school. The whole health services platform will improve in the province once the medical school is up and running.

From first year to final year, our students will train in research-rich in the urban and peri-urban environment in the metro, and in district hospitals in the Eastern Cape, including Cradock, Graaff-Reinet, Makhanda (formerly Grahamstown) and Bhebe. In all these centres we will have clinical experience of our campus with accreditation and lecture rooms where our students will link to the main campus using audiovisual technology to participate in lectures, conferences and webinars. We also intend to work with the private sector to train our students. Talk about this are ongoing. We must use all the resources we have to train the best medical practitioners for our country.



Our medical school will be the first in South Africa to use leading global technology for interactive anatomical education, endoscopy, surgery and research. An example are the Anatomage 'virtual anatomy' dissection tables, which feature the full external and internal anatomy of the male and female body, with all the realism of living humans.

The 3D body platform enables students to rotate the biological human using their fingers trackpad-style, and the body can be 'cut' and operated on with the system's touch-sensitive cutting tool.

Our medical school programme is also unique in South Africa. It's a comprehensive approach to medicine that will focus equally on the four pillars – disease prevention, health promotion, treatment and rehabilitative medicine. The system produces comprehensive general family physicians, appropriately trained both for South Africa's medical and health needs, and in how to best serve diverse communities. We have also incorporated our faculty's philosophy of interprofessional education, ensuring all health professionals will train together in our communities and share expertise in their respective areas.

To develop our model, we incorporated some of the best elements of the Cuban medical training model. I visited Cuba and experienced firsthand the quality and appropriateness of their medical training for our country's needs. In Cuba 80% of medical practitioners are comprehensive general or specialist family physicians; only 20% are specialists in other areas of medicine or are super-specialists. In South Africa, there is a higher percentage of specialists, with many in private practice or occupying overseas.

The Cuban system laid the foundation for top specialists, such as Dr Khupho Makhoba who was among the first cohort of South Africans to be trained in Cuba, and who subsequently went on to specialise in cardiology in South Africa. He is head of surgery at Livingsstone Hospital and he will be leading our medical school.

We have to start looking after the health of 84% of the population in far more comprehensive and holistic ways, and I believe that the family system is the best platform to do this while and budget-need approach. There is so much more we can do to improve South African health, quality of life and lifespan and I am confident that our new medical school will help us achieve this.

Professor Lungile Pepeta is a paediatrician, cardiologist and executive dean of the Faculty of Health Sciences at Nelson Mandela University.

Op-ed headline	Author	Publication
Suffering double disadvantage	Dr Nokhanto Mdzanga	The Herald (11 January 2020)
Academics must reach out to the public	Dr Savo Heleta	Mail & Guardian (24 January 2020)
Why Vhembe is producing top matrics	Prof Azwinnidini Muronga	Mail & Guardian (31 January 2020)
No more cut-and-paste biographies of the man at the heart of our history	Prof Xolela Mangcu	Sunday Times (16 February 2020)
Partners aim to build new society	Prof Sibongile Muthwa and Mr Sello Hatang	Mail & Guardian (28 February 2020)
Domestic workers undervalued, underpaid	Dr Bridget de Villiers	Daily Dispatch (18 March 2020)
COVID-19 leaves SA at mercy of overseas drug exporters	Heather Dugmore	Mail & Guardian (25 March 2020)
How to assess schools' readiness	Heather Dugmore	Mail & Guardian (27 March 2020)
Township dwellers will isolate in their own way	Pedro Mzileni	Daily Dispatch (9 April 2020)
NMU rises to challenge of fighting COVID-19	Prof Lungile Pepeta	The Herald (9 April 2020)
Research shows a compliment can achieve more than a tip	Prof Syden Mishi	Daily Dispatch (10 April 2020)
Mask up and help ramp up coronavirus solutions	Prof Lungile Pepeta	The Herald (15 April 2020)
How COVID-19 will affect students	Pedro Mzileni	Mail & Guardian (23 April 2020)
Working together key to rising from ashes	Prof Charles Wait	Daily Dispatch (25 April 2020)
Integrated approach to salvage studies	Prof Cheryl Foxcroft	The Herald (29 April 2020)
Successful 2020 will grown NMU brand	Prof Madele Tait	The Herald (6 May 2020)
Engineers, doctors and business unite	Heather Dugmore	Engineering News (6 May 2020)
What education might look like in post-lockdown SA	Prof Werner Olivier	IOL (27 May 2020)
We've learnt how to protect ourselves, now let's feed ourselves again	Prof Charles Wait	Daily Dispatch (21 May 2020)
Customised learning may be best bet for SA scenario	Prof Werner Olivier	Daily Dispatch (28 May 2020)
Policy exists, but shacklands spring up	Prof Sijekula Mbanga	Mail & Guardian (26 June 2020)
Higher education forever changed	Ms Chantal Janneker	Daily Dispatch (27 June 2020)

Table 2: Op-eds published January 2020 – December 2020

Op-ed headline

Author

Publication

Radical shifts needed to reintegrate students into campus life

Mr Luthando Jack

Daily Dispatch (28 June 2020)

Ending violence against women

Dr Ruby-Ann Levendal

The Herald (15 July 2020)

The danger of well-meaning men using the term 'our women'

Dr Babalwa Mqoqwana

Mail & Guardian (29 July 2020)

How managers can measure performance

Dr Randall Jonas

Business Day (31 July 2020)

Prof Lungile Pepeta: A personal tribute

Mr Asemahle Gwala

Daily Maverick (10 August 2020)

It is our duty to deepen Lungile Pepeta's legacy

Mr Luthando Jack

HeraldLIVE (11 August 2020)

Putting a price on "blue carbon" water habitats

Prof Janine Adams

WaterWheel (1 September 2023)

Central's potential as a student village

Dr Pedro Mzileni

The Herald (16 October 2020)

NMU ramps up water-saving

Dr Andre Hefer

The Herald (21 October 2020)

NMU strives to cushion students

Mr Luthando Jack

The Herald (11 December 2020)

Table 2: Op-eds published January 2020 – December 2020 (continued)

Mail & Guardian News • Thought Leader Environment Friday

ARTICLE / 25 MAR 2020

Covid-19 leaves SA at the mercy of overseas drug exporters

By Heather Dlamini

Integrated approach to salvage studies

The Covid-19 pandemic lockdown has created significant challenges for the higher education sector, and our universities and colleges are working hard to manage and mitigate the impact of the virus. It is only a partial relief that the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) has announced that it will increase the number of students it supports to 500,000. This is a welcome move, but it is not enough to meet the needs of all students who are struggling to continue their education. We need to find other ways to support our students, and this is where an integrated approach to salvage studies comes in. This approach involves working with various stakeholders, including government, industry, and academia, to find ways to support students who are struggling to continue their education. It is a holistic approach that takes into account the needs of the student, the institution, and the wider community. By working together, we can find ways to support our students and ensure that they are able to continue their education and contribute to the development of our country.

Mail & Guardian News • Thought Leader Environment Friday

ARTICLE / 24 MAR 2020

How to assess our schools' eReadiness

By Heather Dlamini

Higher education forever changed

Even if we return to campus tomorrow, the Covid-19 pandemic has irreversibly launched us into the digital communication universe. Within this new universe, the role of communication in SA's higher education sector is more important than ever before. Communication divisions in our universities have become an essential service, with integrated teams working round the clock with our faculties, operations, IT and web divisions. As always, the content and communication needs to be targeted, clear and authentic, but the added factor is that it needs to be delivered in a way that people feel the human touch. Online and virtual communication via webinars, microsites, zoom and WhatsApp has become the norm. It instantly widens our world, but it requires rapid adaptability and agility to shift academic curricula events that normally happen in physical venues to webinars, and to make sure every one knows what is happening, when, and how to participate. However, the shift to digital platforms is not easy. There are so many differences between physical classroom learning and teaching online. At the same time, we are acutely aware of the economics of the digital divide. At Nelson Mandela University (NMU), 35% or e450 of our 27,000 students don't have suitable learning devices such as laptops or smartphones. A temporary solution NMU has put in place for the next three months is to loan laptops to students who don't have one and provide all students with 30GB of free data per day. Students without connectivity will be prioritised on our interactive 2021 with a strategic approach under way. Others with access will pursue a combination of digital and face-to-face pathways. We are also busy with student recruitment for 2021 with a strategic approach under way. Professor Cheryl Fawcett is deputy vice-chancellor of learning and teaching at Nelson Mandela University.

Mail & Guardian News • Thought Leader Environment Friday

ARTICLE / 23 MAR 2020

The danger of well-meaning men using the term 'our women'

By Babalwa Mqoqwana

Partners aim to build a new society

Nelson Mandela University Foundation is collaborating with the Madiba Foundation of building a new society. The Madiba Foundation is a non-profit organisation that is dedicated to the development of the African continent. It is a unique partnership between the university and the foundation, and it is a testament to the power of collaboration. The partnership is focused on building a new society that is based on the values of ubuntu, which is the African concept of "I am because we are". This means that we are all interconnected and that we all have a role to play in building a better world for ourselves and for future generations. The partnership is also focused on promoting the values of respect, tolerance, and peace. These are the values that are essential for a harmonious and just society. The partnership is a model for how we can work together to build a better world for ourselves and for future generations.

Mail & Guardian News • Thought Leader Environment Friday

ARTICLE / 23 MAR 2020

NMU strives to cushion students

By Luthando Jack

Integrated approach to salvage studies

The Covid-19 pandemic is an unprecedented challenge for the higher education sector. It has disrupted the lives of millions of students and staff, and it has created significant financial challenges for many institutions. At Nelson Mandela University (NMU), we are committed to supporting our students and staff during this difficult time. We have implemented a range of measures to cushion the impact of the virus, including financial aid, mental health support, and flexible learning options. We are also working with our partners to find ways to support our students and staff. This is an integrated approach that involves working with government, industry, and academia to find ways to support our students and staff. It is a holistic approach that takes into account the needs of the student, the institution, and the wider community. By working together, we can find ways to support our students and staff and ensure that they are able to continue their education and contribute to the development of our country.

Mail & Guardian News • Thought Leader Environment Friday

ARTICLE / 23 MAR 2020

Suffering a double disadvantage

By Ruby-Ann Levendal

Saturday Insight

NOKHOMO NOKHOMO

SA is an already experiencing a multitude of early childhood development centres with staff who are either unqualified or unskilled. This is particularly true in the rural areas, where there are few opportunities for children to access quality early childhood education. This is a double disadvantage for these children, as they are not only missing out on quality early childhood education, but they are also missing out on the social and emotional support that is essential for their development. We need to find ways to support these children and ensure that they are able to access quality early childhood education. This is a challenge that requires a strategic approach that involves working with government, industry, and academia to find ways to support these children. It is a holistic approach that takes into account the needs of the child, the institution, and the wider community. By working together, we can find ways to support these children and ensure that they are able to access quality early childhood education and contribute to the development of our country.

Op-ed headline	Author	Publication
Computational thinking must be integrated into education courses	Prof Barend van Wyk	Weekend Post (20 February 2021)
Nelson Mandela University a beacon of medical hope in E Cape	Dr Thandi Mgwebi	Cape Times (9 March 2021)
Data shows third Covid wave soon to hit East Cape metros	Prof Azwinndini Muronga & Darelle van Greunen	The Herald (24 March 2021)
A day at the beach 100 000 years ago	Heather Dugmore	Sunday Times (2 May 2021)
Nelson Mandela University stays true to its purpose	Prof Sibongile Muthwa	The Herald (18 May 2021)
Learning and teaching in the Covid era	Prof Cheryl Foxcroft	The Herald (18 May 2021)
Youth still fighting for quality education	Siboniso Cele	The Herald (16 June 2021)
COVID challenges a learning curve for staff, students alike	Prof Cheryl Foxcroft	The Herald (21 June 2021)
Why students need sport and camaraderie more than ever	Yoliswa Lumka	The Herald (22 June 2021)
Mandela University pushes to vaccinate up to 500 people per day	Prof Sibongile Muthwa	The Herald (29 June 2021)
What NMU is doing about water	Dr Andre Hefer	The Herald (2 July 2021)
Why collaborative activism is needed in these changing times	Luthando Jack	The Herald (7 July 2021)
Ignoring employee workplace rights a costly mistake for all	Bridget de Villiers & Mandisa Mavuso	The Herald (13 July 2021)
NMU committed to role in fighting Covid	Debbie Derry	The Herald (15 July 2021)
We need to work together to solve SA's problems	Prof Deon Pretorius	The Herald (27 July 2021)
NMU's partnering on bookbag project comes at critical time	Dr Ossie Franks	The Herald (28 July 2021)
Society pays tribute to female heroes while putting women in danger	Prof Phumla Gqola	Sunday Times (8 August 2021)
A living philosophy for Africa	Heather Dugmore	Sawubona Magazine (1 September 2021)
How to beat end-of-year exam stress	Nomalungelo Ntlokwana	Mail & Guardian (8 October 2021)
Student anguish must be addressed	Dr Phumeza Kota-Nyati	The Herald (15 October 2021)
The value of lifelong learning	Dr Thandi Mgwebi	Cape Argus (26 October 2021)
Medical school still committed to producing socially conscious doctors	Prof Sibongile Muthwa	The Herald (26 November 2021)
NMU medical school on right track	Dr Savania Nagiah	The Herald (1 December 2021)
Digitalisation brings maths and science to rural areas	Prof Azwinndini Muronga	The Herald (10 December 2021)

Table 3: Op-eds published January 2021 – December 2021

Mandela University pushes to vaccinate up to 500 people a day

South Africa, June 2021. The vaccination drive at Nelson Mandela University (NMU) is well underway, with the university pushing to vaccinate up to 500 people a day. The university has set up a dedicated vaccination centre on campus, and is currently vaccinating students, staff, and members of the community. The university has also set up a mobile vaccination unit that can be deployed to various locations on campus. The university is currently vaccinating up to 500 people a day, and is aiming to reach 100,000 people by the end of the year. The university is currently vaccinating up to 500 people a day, and is aiming to reach 100,000 people by the end of the year.

On the morning of June 14, the university opened its 14th vaccination centre at the Nelson Mandela University (NMU) campus. The university is currently vaccinating up to 500 people a day, and is aiming to reach 100,000 people by the end of the year. The university is currently vaccinating up to 500 people a day, and is aiming to reach 100,000 people by the end of the year.



In My View
SREKHA MUTHIAH

The university is currently vaccinating up to 500 people a day, and is aiming to reach 100,000 people by the end of the year. The university is currently vaccinating up to 500 people a day, and is aiming to reach 100,000 people by the end of the year.

Medical school still committed to producing socially conscious doctors

There is so much more we can do to improve the health of our community. The medical school is committed to producing socially conscious doctors who will be able to address the needs of our community. The medical school is committed to producing socially conscious doctors who will be able to address the needs of our community.



In My View
SREKHA MUTHIAH

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Computational thinking must be integrated into education courses

It is often said that digital is the new normal. In the current era, digital skills are essential for success in the workplace. Computational thinking is a key skill that is needed for success in the workplace. Computational thinking is a key skill that is needed for success in the workplace.

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Saturday Insight
BARIND VAN WINK

Computational thinking is a key skill that is needed for success in the workplace. Computational thinking is a key skill that is needed for success in the workplace.

Data shows third Covid wave soon to hit East Cape metros

The third Covid-19 wave is expected to hit the East Cape metros soon. The data shows that the third wave is expected to hit the East Cape metros soon. The data shows that the third wave is expected to hit the East Cape metros soon.

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In My View
SREKHA MUTHIAH

The data shows that the third wave is expected to hit the East Cape metros soon. The data shows that the third wave is expected to hit the East Cape metros soon.

Digitalisation brings science and maths to rural areas

The use of digital technology is bringing science and maths to rural areas. Digitalisation is bringing science and maths to rural areas. Digitalisation is bringing science and maths to rural areas.

Digitalisation is bringing science and maths to rural areas. Digitalisation is bringing science and maths to rural areas.



In My View
SREKHA MUTHIAH

Digitalisation is bringing science and maths to rural areas. Digitalisation is bringing science and maths to rural areas.

yourviews

As an engaged institution, Nelson Mandela University is committed to producing socially conscious doctors. The university is committed to producing socially conscious doctors who will be able to address the needs of our community.

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Nelson Mandela University a beacon of medical hope for E Cape

Nelson Mandela University is a beacon of medical hope for the Eastern Cape. The university is committed to producing socially conscious doctors who will be able to address the needs of our community.

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Students' anguish must be addressed

Over the last 18 months, our students have experienced a period of immense stress and anxiety. The university is committed to addressing the needs of our students and providing them with the support they need.

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In My View
SREKHA MUTHIAH

The university is committed to addressing the needs of our students and providing them with the support they need. The university is committed to addressing the needs of our students and providing them with the support they need.

Why collaborative activism is needed in these changing times

In these changing times, collaborative activism is needed to address the challenges we face. Collaborative activism is needed to address the challenges we face.

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In My View
SREKHA MUTHIAH

Collaborative activism is needed to address the challenges we face. Collaborative activism is needed to address the challenges we face.

Op-ed headline	Author	Publication
Tracking ancient elephants	Charles Helm	The Citizen (5 January 2022)
Bridging the gap between tertiary education and employment	Dr Phumeza Kota-Nyati	Business Brief (1 February 2022)
Lessons from the 2021 matric results	Dr Muki Moeng	Chatsworth Tabloid (1 February 2022)
JSC interviews a sorry display of toxic masculinity	Prof Phumla Gqola	City Press (13 February 2022)
When ex-employees don't look back in anger	Sisitha Magxwalisa	The Herald (10 March 2022)
Employees need support in coping with stress	Sisitha Magxwalisa	The Herald (22 April 2022)
Responsible environmental stewardship matters	Prof Josua Louw	The Herald (24 May 2022)
Act now to mitigate marine crisis	Heather Dugmore	Mail & Guardian (27 May 2022)
Values lecture timely as respect for life plummets	Prof Pamela Maseko & Dr Ongama Mtimka	The Herald (8 June 2022)
Seeking smart solutions to sustainable water delivery	Dr Gaathier Mahed	The Herald (17 June 2022)
We're not just faces and vaginas	Prof Phumla Gqola	Sunday Times (7 August 2022)
The way out of this crisis	Mcebisi Jonas (excerpt of Govan Mbeki memorial lecture delivered at Nelson Mandela University)	Sunday Times (16 August 2022)
Shaping the future with sustainable stewardship	Prof Azwinding Muronga	The Herald (31 August 2022)
Rock stars: scientists rescue rare chunks of human history	Charles Helm & Jan Carlo de Vynck	The Citizen (19 October 2022)
Crucial rock safely in Still Bay museum	Charles Helm & Jan Carlo de Vynck	Cape Argus (24 October 2022)
Pioneer is bringing science education to the continent	Heather Dugmore	Mail & Guardian (10 December 2022)

Table 4: Op-eds published January 2022 – December 2022

'Act now to mitigate marine crisis'

Sixty-million people in the Western Indian Ocean region depend on the sea for food and livelihoods



While the world's oceans are a source of life, they are also a source of crisis. The Western Indian Ocean region, home to 60 million people, is facing a marine crisis. The crisis is caused by a combination of factors, including climate change, overfishing, and pollution. The crisis is a threat to the food and livelihoods of millions of people. It is a crisis that must be addressed now.

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Seeking smart solutions for sustainable water delivery



In My View
DR GAATHIER MAHED

The Eastern Cape's ongoing drought has created multiple business opportunities, as well as innovation in related fields — new products and schemes for smart and efficient delivery of the most basic necessity: water, to communities.

The solutions are varied and some won't work long term, yet those who can are paying top dollar for supply in the short term, regardless of the most-touted 70-million litres of water flowing in from the Noutigodacht Scheme Phase 3.

Government continually points to the short-term solution of reducing water use, but irrigation-related agricultural practices consume about 40% of the total available water and we can live up to half of that through evapotranspiration.

In an urban context we must investigate how we're using water and what for. It starts in the home, with simple devices like plastic water sprayers on each household tap, for example.

Water reduction can only work if coupled with lifestyle changes like altering garden landscapes — use less or no grass, replacing these with indigenous plants and shrubs.

This helps to reduce irrigation needs and lowers water consumption.

Installation of drip irrigation systems also targets water delivery at the base of the plants directly to the roots. This could be coupled with mulching to reduce evaporation from soil surfaces.

The Nelson Mandela municipality has implemented water-saving campaigns and flow restrictors in a bid to help curb consumption. This, with "water-shocking" to ration flows, is coupled with multiple drives to stop leaks — but complaints about the slow pace of plugging these leaks continue.

The municipal interventions are excellent ideas in theory, but need precision execution to effectively reduce leakage and wastage from reticulation systems — a situation that can account for up to 40% loss in some urban settings.

Large-scale drilling of boreholes, particularly in some suburbs like Summerstrand, might not be the best solution either. Cumulative abstraction has

greater impact over time, owing to the public's limited understanding of groundwater reservoirs.

Some side effects in the coastal aquifer include ingress of salt water, reduction of water quality and even potential slumping of soil masses. This leads to issues around home foundation stability and could be devastating if not curbed.

This is cause for concern — about 1 000 wells have been drilled in the Summerstrand area alone. The rest of the city, on the other hand, has drilled in the Gqeberha vicinity, with a view to large-scale supply.

Here the issue is water quality, and a plant and pipeline must be constructed to deliver this water to the municipality for potable purposes.

This medium term, will help to alleviate system strain, but needs to be in tandem with other water-saving initiatives, lead to improvement. Legislation and policies should be a catalyst, rather than a hindrance.

This is particularly true when examining supply chain and the inefficiencies around delivering the correct materials for the job in the specified time and limiting cost.

It's one of many multi-million-rand projects sitting at various stages of the construction phase. Some are incomplete or over budget, and little has been done to reactivate them in the Eastern Cape.

One possible future project is also Noutigodacht Phase 4. Another long-term option is managed aquifer recharge. This involves pumping water into an

Employees need support in coping with stress

With the termination of SA's national state of disaster, employees will be expected to deal with the possibility of more change.

While a return to work may create a new sense of normalcy, it also foreshadows fresh anxieties and stress around what the post-pandemic workplace will look like.

Most organisations are returning to office-based working, while some continue to formalise plans to permanently adopt hybrid approaches.

Employees will continue to remain a key organisational consideration as we navigate year three of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic heralded an unexpected transition to working from home.

This shift led to an increase in employee anxiety, stress and burnout as the lines between home and work life became

blurred. People have become accustomed to working beyond the 9 to 5 routine in environments not characterised by the structure of the formal workplace.

At the same time, employees had to adapt to working predominantly online and as part of virtual teams.

This presented employees with competence challenges as their previous working arrangements had little to no on-line requirements.

The business operating environment is competitive and needs to adjust to the forces of change.

It is thus a reality that the modern workforce is expected to master new ways of working, new technologies, and learn new skills.

At the same time many employees worry about finances and job security.

All of this, coupled with de-

In My View

SISITHA MAGXWALISA

to chronic workplace stress, is defined by the World Health Organisation as a legitimate medical condition.

Some of the causes of workplace stress leading to burnout include work overload, lack of recognition for performance, and employees believing that they have no control over the way in which they work.

With the return to work, employees who are already depleted may struggle to cope with work adjustment expectations. The changes made in response to the pandemic led to employees experiencing a lack of control.

In many instances they did not have much say in how or where they would work and in other decisions that directly affected their work lives.

When added to the "normal" expectations of the 21st century workplace, the return to work could worsen

pre-existing levels of stress and increasing instances of burnout.

While it is not easy to spot the signs of stress and burnout, declines in engagement and performance are usually the first signs something is wrong.

When managers identify this, they need to connect meaningfully with employees to understand their experiences and inquire about the challenges they are facing.

Because mental health in the workplace is still heavily stigmatised, employees may find it difficult to step forward with concerns about their mental wellbeing.

The common argument in response to this is to educate leaders and managers on the importance of mental health and wellbeing at work.

However, there is a sense that managers are still not doing right by their employees

despite mental health awareness and psychoeducation.

It is not uncommon for organisations who 'talk the talk' about prioritising employee wellness to meet employee mental health needs with interventions that aggravate their stress experiences.

An example of this is responding to employee requests for support in the form of a temporarily reduced workload and a performance improvement plan to help employees cope with the exact excessive work demands that underlie their experiences of stress and burnout.

Organisations that are serious about cultivating a healthy work environment and prioritising employee mental health should develop considered organisational wellness initiatives that are aligned to practical organisational change management steps.

Such initiatives need to be filtered throughout the organisation for meaningful change to occur.

Often, considerations around employee wellness support are pitched at managing it at an individual level but fail to consider triggering organisational contextual factors such as negative work cultures, poor leadership, unreasonable workloads and a sense that overworking is something to be celebrated.

Further, in reducing stress and promoting wellbeing it is important to recognise the control that employees seek and are capable of exercising.

Organisations can ensure their employees feel valued by allowing them to have a voice on issues that affect their work. The idea that employees are unable to self-manage or determine how they work is a limiting and short-sighted management view.

It also points to a lack of trust or a need to control employees. This will negatively influence employee motivation, job satisfaction and stress levels.

Prioritising employee mental health and organisational wellness is about encouraging and aligning healthy work behaviour and employee wellness at policy, strategic and operational levels. It also requires trusting and providing employees with the autonomy to plan and make decisions in relation to how and where they perform their work.

● *Sisitha Magxwalisa is an industrial psychologist and lecturer at the school of industrial psychology and human resources, faculty of business and economic sciences, Nelson Mandela University. Her researches expressed are her own and not those of NMMU*

Responsible environmental stewardship matters

The beautiful Garden Route natural landscape is undoubtedly one of the biggest assets of the George Campus of the Nelson Mandela University.

The Southern Cape region encompasses a mosaic of indigenous forests, fynbos, and is flanked by the Outeniqua Mountains to the north and coastline to the south.

In recent years, unsustainable land-use practices, water insecurity, habitat fragmentation, the loss of biodiversity and inadequate fire management practices have made the region vulnerable to climate change patterns and risks.

The Garden Route Wildfires of October 2018 worsened the environmental challenges of the region and especially the George Campus environment.

In the Garden Route, this is worsened by a very significant influx of people from different backgrounds, with often conflicting demands, expectations, values and ethics.

When the future envisaged environmental impact is not carefully managed, the beauty and unique sense of place over which generations of residents and visitors have marvelled will be degraded to just another statistic of a failed attempt by mankind to control their environmental footprint.

Global concerns about the environment are reflected in increasingly sophisticated legislation, policies and protocols, international agreements, and a proliferation of NGOs and societal movements trying to make a difference.



In My View

PROF JOSUA LOUW

Within the academic environment, it is essential that lecturing staff stay informed about modern principles in environmental management, sustainable lifestyles, environmental footprints and ecosystem resilience and landscape ecology.

It is also imperative that academic programmes cultivate value systems and environmental and business ethics among its graduates in support of responsible citizenship and environmental stewardship.

Alien invasive vegetation is regarded as one of the most significant environmental challenges facing the southern Cape.

Local ecosystems across a wide range of site conditions have been invaded by a multi-

tude of invasive species, which resulted in serious threats to water security, reduced economic value of land, abiotic and biotic risks associated with transformed landscapes, of which increased fire risk is paramount, and biodiversity loss.

It is simply unrealistic to expect that national or local government must provide the detailed attention required to address all our environmental concerns.

For this reason, staff at the Nelson Mandela University's George Campus launched a project of monthly 'hacking' events to clean its campus of all alien invasive plants.

The aim is not only to restore the aesthetic qualities of our landscape, but also to manage fire risk, and to create

a landscape of natural functioning biodiversity that can serve as an example and benchmark of what the southern Cape community must strive towards.

Through the involvement of all staff and students, there is a need to engage the science, enhance awareness and increase environmental stewardship.

In doing this, the academics on the campus hope to install an ethic approach that supports the vision of the campus to be a centre of excellence in Sustainable Futures Science.

Hacking is an essential resource Science and Management academic programmes for which the campus is well known, for all students study-

ing at this institution.

The School of Natural Resource Science and Management at the George Campus has partnered with the horticulture department to impart knowledge to staff and build capacity for the George Campus.

Hacking provides a unique opportunity for staff and students to contribute to a sustainably managed campus community.

In modern times, students have to realise that environmental problems are not only an environmental concern which need to be addressed by natural resource scientists and managers — the reality is that environmental degradation will manifest itself as economic problems, which in turn will affect the social envi-

ronment in a variety of negative ways.

Through this initiative, the campus wishes not only to set an example of responsible environmental stewardship, but would like to challenge the Southern Cape community, including schools, formal business, residential communities, NGOs and conservancies to initiate and be involved in similar projects.

This is the right thing to do for anybody who is serious about our wellbeing and quality of lives, and who realises the significance of our natural environment.

● *Prof Josua Louw is the director of the School of Natural Resource Science and Management at Nelson Mandela University's George Campus*

'We're not just faces and vaginas'



PUMLA DINEO GQOLA

Several years ago, at a One in Nine Campaign protest, an activist held up a placard which read, "we're not just faces and vaginas". This has remained in my mind's eye. It captured the frustrating lip-service paid to patriarchal oppression in SA, a country whose public discourse is saturated with challenges to patriarchy and changing women's lives.

For people who spend a lot of time discussing gender power, we have made little headway in creating a more equitable society. This is largely because of the failure of institutions and society to move beyond mere talk, and the constant watering down of demands for real change.

Real change is institutional change and this is going to require consistent attention to feminist demands for structural change. Large-scale recourse to philanthropy, well-intentioned as it is, usually works to keep oppressive systems in place.

We have just come out of Mandela month and

are almost upon the anniversary of the 1956 Women's March to the Union Buildings. The deluge of invitations, public awareness campaigns and events to mark Women's Month is upon us.

Each August, SA finds itself in the grip of a countrywide fever to pay attention to women and "women's issues" because of this historic march. On the surface, this flurry of activity appears to point to collective pressure to take women seriously as individuals and as a group to ensure the elimination of such issues. In other words, recognising the existence of "issues" that affect and impede women should be an invitation to attend to such "issues" en masse and with seriousness.

We understand from the work of feminist thinkers such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak that oppressive systems survive by adapting and mutating. Part of this mutation is through co-opting the language of radical movements. There may be talk of "women's issues" everywhere in August, but only those issues that reduce women to faces and vaginas receive piecemeal attention.

This explains the current circulation of the phrase "women's issues" in ways that are vague, and often dismissive, except for the identification of representation, violence or menstruation. Thus, the phrase "women's issues" becomes a way of avoiding feminist calls to address the many facets of patriarchal marginalisation and violence that ensure that patriarchy continues to mutate.

The women's march recognised the importance of addressing institutional change, by posting a

challenge to how structures order our society. In 1956, women were clear in their identification of the issues. They demanded more than lip-service. Women's issues included legal, political, financial, societal and spatial changes. This is why women's freedom of movement remains at the core of understanding women's issues.

Instead, there continues to be superficial attention to patriarchal oppression, preferably only in March, August and 16 days at the end of the year. And such attention is limited to more women speakers and faces on calendars, sanitary protection donation drives and faux horror at the scale of violence targeted at women and children.

Several years ago, the Total Shutdown Movement laid out plans for practical systemic changes necessary to move the needle on gender power. While "period poverty" is on every body's lips and donation drives are on the rise, there is scant attention paid to the concrete suggestions made by the activists who alerted us to the scale of the problem. It is easier to collect pads for donation than to work to create a school system in which pads, and meals, and books, are easily available. This would be structural change, not lip-service.

But why would pads, tampons and menstrual cups be freely available in a country where so much shame is attached to living in bodies seen as feminine? When women cannot move freely in schools, workplaces, homes or streets without constant unwanted male correction, attention and threat, we are nowhere near addressing what

makes rape so endemic. A society that terrorises women is a society in which rape is widespread.

What about addressing the conditions that result in so many women being unable to afford sanitary protection? Such conditions have everything to do with structures of the economy, the ways in which government departments abdicate responsibility, including amplifying poverty and shame in the systematic breaking down of public health and education structures in our contemporary society.

How can we end the rape epidemic when we consistently ignore the insights that come from anti-rape activists and scholars on how to ensure institutional change and pretend rape is an isolated, inexplicable event that concerns vaginas?

Many women argue for the scrapping of Women's Month given our widespread experience of its marking as a farce. The veil continues to wear thin on this as a month that makes a mockery of the demands of the women it claims to honour. It has once again become fashionable for men to unironically take up excessive space at such events to shame women leaders, offer instructions on what women would do if "they were not their own worst enemies", mansplain and partake in other patriarchal behaviour.

My dream for this Women's Month is to see a different articulation to women's fatigue at the unironic large-scale patriarchal feeding frenzy.

* Gqola is an author and a professor at Nelson Mandela University. Her latest book is 'Female Fear Factory'

EDUCATION / 10 DEC 2022

Pioneer is bringing science education alive on the continent

By Heather Dugmore



Shaping the future with sustainable stewardship

All of our lives are increasingly affected by global sustainability challenges.

We are living in a historical time in which the world labours under multiple pandemics, including leadership, hunger, environmental degradation, racism and other forms of discrimination.

Not least of these is the widespread pathologising of all that is African and African.

All over the world, the cost of pollution and the benefits of environmental sustainability are increasingly recognised as a global megatrend.

Climate change is resulting in natural disasters becoming more frequent — affecting economies, demographics, crop production, food security, migration, and political landscapes.

Climate change projections for the Southern African Development Community region

show that the greatest effects will mostly be felt through water resources.

Humanity faces a future of resource scarcity with the demand for global water, energy and food projected to increase exponentially by 2030.

Water, energy and food are vital resources for human well-being, poverty reduction, and sustainable development.

These three resources are strongly linked and any impact on one affects the other two. In the light of this scenario, Nelson Mandela University's science faculty seized the window of opportunity to define what matters and shape the future of science, technology and innovation.

This is in line with the university's Vision 2030 of being a dynamic African university recognised for its leadership in generating cutting-edge knowledge for a sustainable future.

The vision is underpinned



In My View
AZWINNNDINI MURONGA

by one of our key strategic enablers — sustainability and responsible resource stewardship — and one of our foundational values — sustainable stewardship.

Based on our namesake Nelson Mandela's legacy, our primary focus is on being in service of society by contributing to the co-creation of a more

sustainable and just world. The science faculty is boldly taking the university into the future to be of service to society.

The faculty's vision of being a world-class engaged and transdisciplinary African science faculty that responds to socioeconomic and environmental challenges in society, is the driving force behind this statement.

Sustainable development is embedded in our core ideology. One of our key strategic priorities and goals is to promote and protect basic sciences.

Our George campus is leading sustainability sciences through various programmes. Its sustainability research unit is the first dedicated interdisciplinary research group focusing on the sustainability of complex social ecological systems on the Garden Route.

It is home to a community of critical thinkers who recog-

nise the need to cross the boundaries of the social and ecological disciplines to promote sustainable management of social ecological systems.

The work undertaken by the unit develops the capacity of students and community stakeholders for the sustainable management of ecological, social and economic systems through user-inspired research, training, policy-related work and stakeholder engagement.

We are continuously celebrating, through past and future events, the role of fundamental sciences in contributing to the sustainability of communities across the world.

We recently hosted the Drugs of Africa webinar and we also hosted the 66th annual conference of the SA Institute of Physics (SAIP) for the second time in seven years.

At this conference we commemorated three main events — the International Year of Basic

Sciences for Sustainable Development (IYBSSD 2022), the 100th anniversary of the International Union of Pure and Applied Science (IUPAP), of which SA is a founding member, and the 10th anniversary of the discovery of the Higgs boson — the elementary particle eponymous to Peter Higgs, emeritus professor at the University of Edinburgh.

The science proudly presented our innovations at the opening ceremony and global launch of IYBSSD 2022 in early July.

The event highlighted the crucial role of basic sciences for sustainable development and the achievement of the UN's sustainable development goals.

There was a strong focus on the importance of evidence-informed decision-making on urgent global challenges and the vital role basic sciences play in policy decision-making.

It was in this context that

the faculty demonstrated how basic science is applied in sound decision-making.

IYBSSD 2022 was proclaimed by the 16th session of the UN General Assembly on December 2 2021 for 2022.

It aims to emphasise the essence of basic sciences in addressing the needs of humankind.

It provides access to information, increases societal well-being, and promotes peace through improved collaboration towards the sustainable development goals.

The science faculty will be presenting a range of activities in support of the IYBSSD 2022.

The National Science Week offers a comprehensive programme of public lectures, outreach, webinars, demonstrations, lab tours, talks and science presentations at various locations in Georgeba and Graaff-Reinet.

Our IYBSSD 2022 working

group will oversee numerous activities until June 2023, which will be registered on the Unesco website, with other global initiatives.

We will also host the African School of Fundamental Physics and Applications at the end of the year and the African Conference on Physics and Applications.

Sustainability is engrained in the core ideology and strategy of our faculty, and our institution at large.

The university's recent stellar performance in the 2022 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings is a testament to the institution's commitment to addressing the sustainability challenges faced by the world and SA in particular.

Our faculty is proud to have played a major role in this achievement.

● Prof Azwinnndini Muronga is the executive dean of NMLU's science faculty.

Values lecture timely as respect for life plummets

Nelson Mandela Bay has descended into a city under siege if the rampant killings that have gripped the metro are anything to go by.

It is a city in which greed and competitive rivalry over resources have depreciated the value for human life.

The killing of business leaders Xola Nganga and Ulandi Mputu, with his associate Sibababala Olayi, are the latest in a series of murders that have cumulatively made the city akin to a war zone.

As with many others who have died, the businessmen were not only the pride of their families, but had devoted their lives to community development.

The words of Dr Gloria Serobe at the launch of the inaugural Archbishop Thabo Makgoba annual lecture on values-based leadership should ring a

bell on our collective conscience in a society of poor values and moral degeneration such as this. We have become a society that needs urgent intervention to change the aberrant trajectory we seem to be on.

Speaking at the event held at the Nelson Mandela University recently, Serobe cast a vision for a different society, a vision led by not only competent and excellent leaders, but one grounded in humane values too.

Serobe is the founding member and CEO of Wiphold, the first women-owned company to be listed on the JSE.

In 2020, President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed her as chair of the Solidarity Response Fund, formed in response to the scourge of the Covid-19 pandemic.

She is also the trustee of the Archbishop Thabo Makgoba Development Trust.



In Our View
PAMELA MASEKO & ONGAMA NTINTIKA

Serobe outlined five areas in which values-based leadership could be applied, including authenticity, excellence, inclusivity, morals, ethics, and governance, spirituality and Christian values.

Authenticity includes relating with others from the per-

spective of full acceptance of who we are, our background and shortcomings, and finding the inherent riches that may be tied up in it all, rather than basing our sense of value on falsehoods.

This may include appreciating a rural background, one's identity and other aspects of who one is, even if they are often associated with shame.

Authenticity allows a person to truly influence their generation; even do something about the disadvantages they experienced to help others.

Her example of this was her acceptance of her rural heritage and how, through Wiphold, she and her colleagues were able to pave a path for women in humble situations to own shares in listed companies.

Many bad attitudes and atrocities have been committed by people who have failed to heal from their experience of a humiliating past and became so uncomfortable with it that they resorted to cutting corners to advance in life.

Serobe's grandfather, a man of the cloth, had modelled this sense of taking pride in one's

heritage by continuing to maintain his rural home where her commitment to the community was nurtured, despite a good footing in bustling Cape Town.

Excellence includes a life of full commitment to one's responsibility and a drive to achieve results.

Serobe explained how, as young managers with appropriate qualifications, they were called on to turn around ailing state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in the 1990s, and succeeded before the erosion that came in the late 2000s and 2010s.

She recalled how they as management in Transnet, were shielded from political interference by the then chair of the board Saki Maccooma, which allowed them to do their jobs well.

Inclusivity underscores the spirit of sharing and mutual commitment that comes with abundance. Like they did with Wiphold,

she believes an extra mile must be taken to ensure many people in society benefit fairly from the spin-offs of their efforts.

Morals, ethics and governance relate to the need to be transparent and accountable, and held together by common principles that make or break societies.

There is conduct that is socially unacceptable and people must live a life of congruence in terms of who they purport to be in public corresponds with their conduct when no-one is watching.

Serobe was at pains to explain the importance of spirituality and Christian values in our society, drawing from her experiences growing up and citing the example set by the patron of the lecture, Archbishop Makgoba.

Her grandfather was also well-endowed with resources to not only raise his own children

but also his grandchildren, whom he dearly loved.

Leaders who emulate the values stated above are needed in our ailing society.

Proverbs 29:2 captures the belief of South Africans well from their anxiety about the potential looting of disaster relief funds: "When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice; when the wicked rule, the people groan."

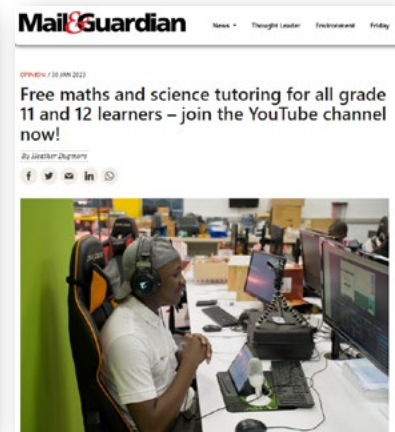
Perhaps it is time, as NMLU, that we push collectively for a society of good values and end the mutiny taking place in the streets of our host city.

The Archbishop Thabo Makgoba lecture was held as an initiative of the faculty of humanities.

● Prof Pamela Maseko is Nelson Mandela University's executive dean of the faculty of humanities. Ongama Ntintika is a lecturer in the department of history and political studies at the university.

Op-ed headline	Author	Publication
Conference tackles oceans law, environmental justice and human rights	Heather Dugmore	Mail & Guardian (18 January 2023)
Free maths and science tutoring for all grade 11 and 12 learners	Heather Dugmore	Mail & Guardian (30 January 2023)
A matter of timing	Heather Dugmore	Sunday Times (5 February 2023)
Billion lost to organised fisheries crime in 'ocean emergency'	Prof Hennie van As	News24 (30 March 2023)
Sustainability matters for museums	Ryan Pillay	The Herald (19 May 2023)
World's oldest homo sapiens footprint identified on SA's Cape south	Charles Helm & Andrew Carr	TimesLIVE (24 May 2023)
Collaboration key to solving Africa's science problems	Prof Azwinnidini Muronga, Natasha Potgieter and Eric Maluta	Mail & Guardian (2 June 2023)

Table 5: Op-eds published January 2023 – July 2023



The above is part of traditional mass communication, namely print, online, and broadcast media. Print media includes newspapers, magazines, brochures, flyers, and other publications that are physically printed on paper. Online media encompasses news websites, blogs, and other digital publications, while broadcast media includes television and radio.

The following figures 7, 8 and 9 show the yearly trends of all three of these combined with respect to number of articles (clip count), advertising value equivalency (AVE), which is

an estimated monetary value of a media campaign, and reach, which is the size of the audience that has viewed the material. The latter is a cumulative value, for example, a single newspaper copy may be read by many, not just one person.

These figures show how effectively the Directorate has increased the brand footprint of Nelson Mandela University over years through increased clip count output, while the AVE provides an indication of the money that would have been spent to obtain the same reach via a paid for campaign.

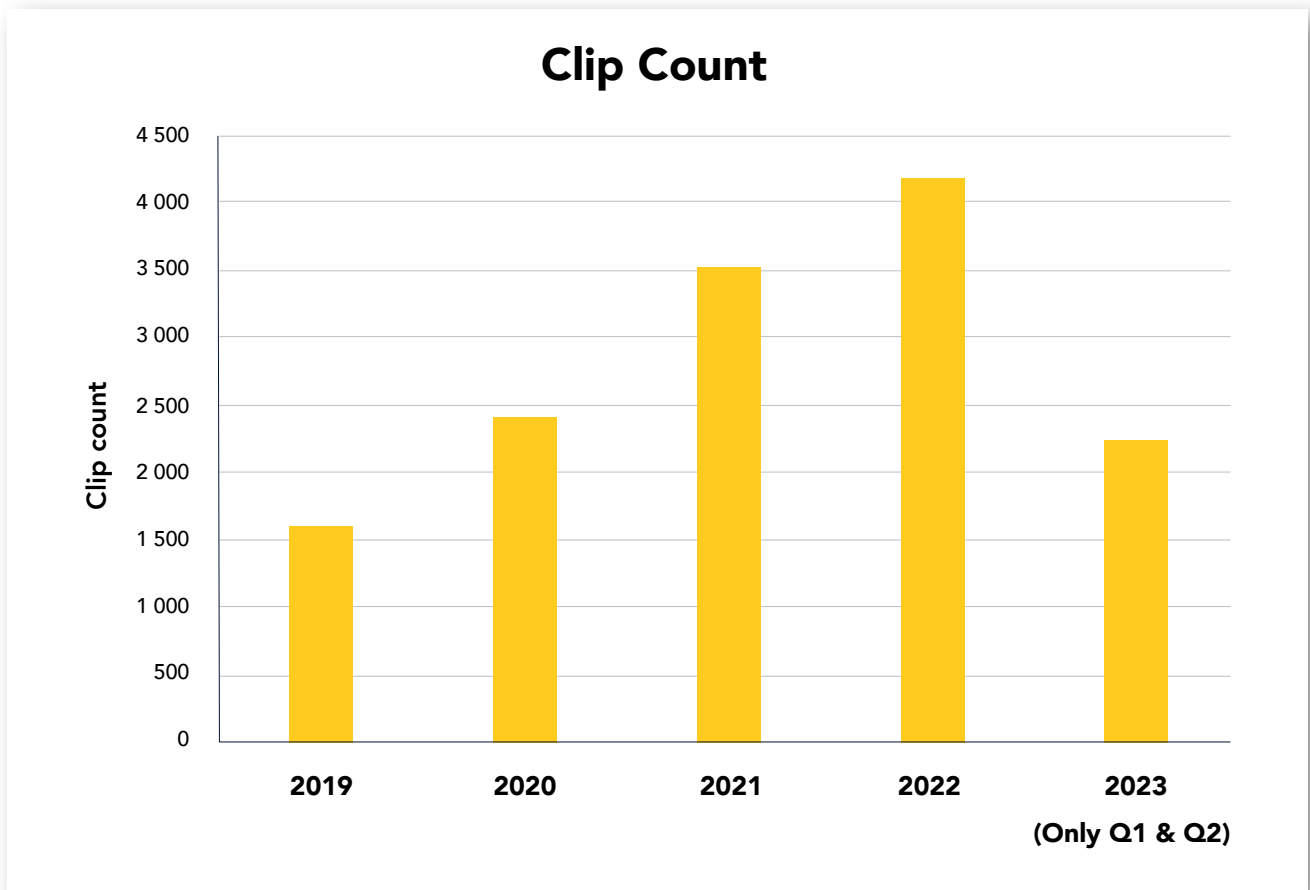


Figure 7: Clip count

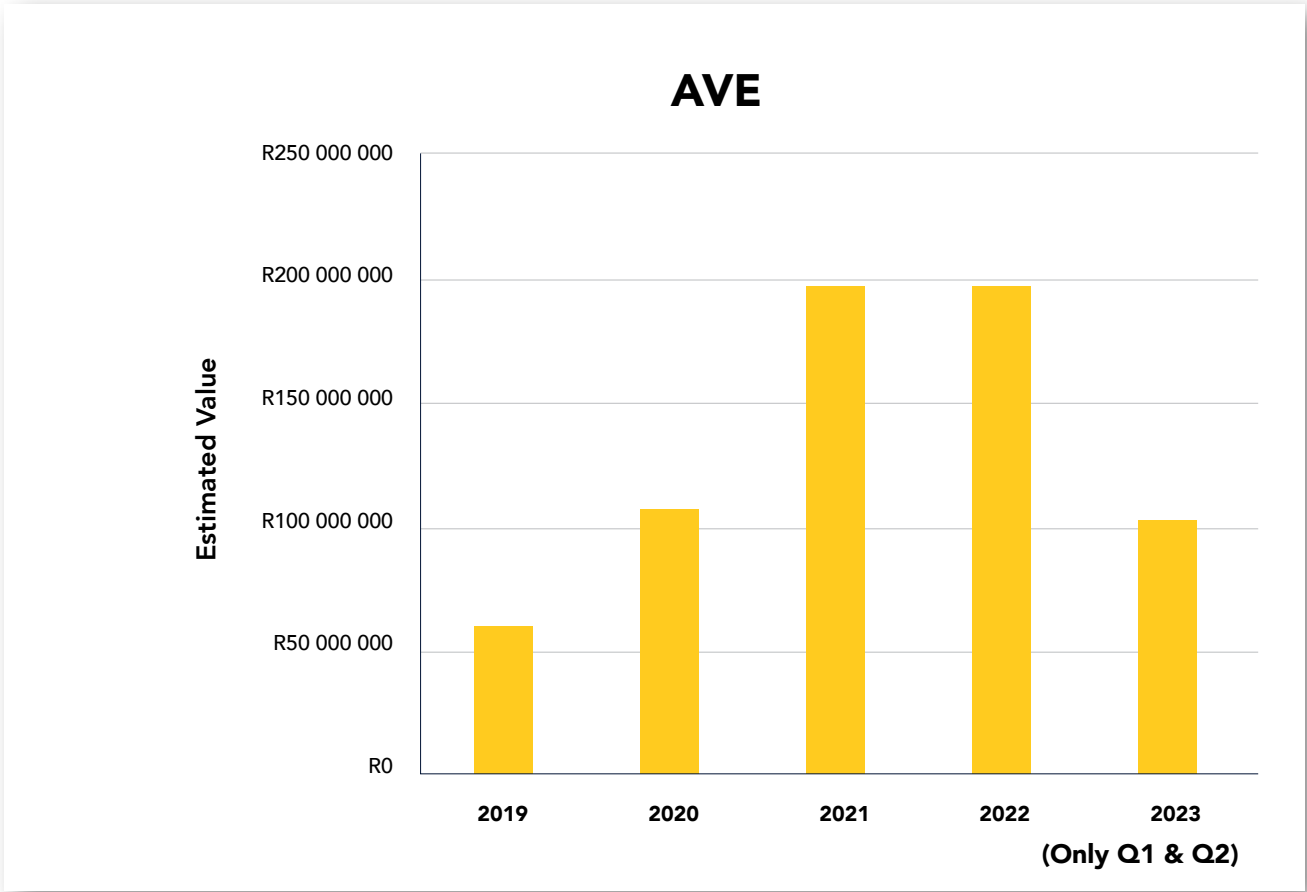


Figure 8: Advertising value equivalency

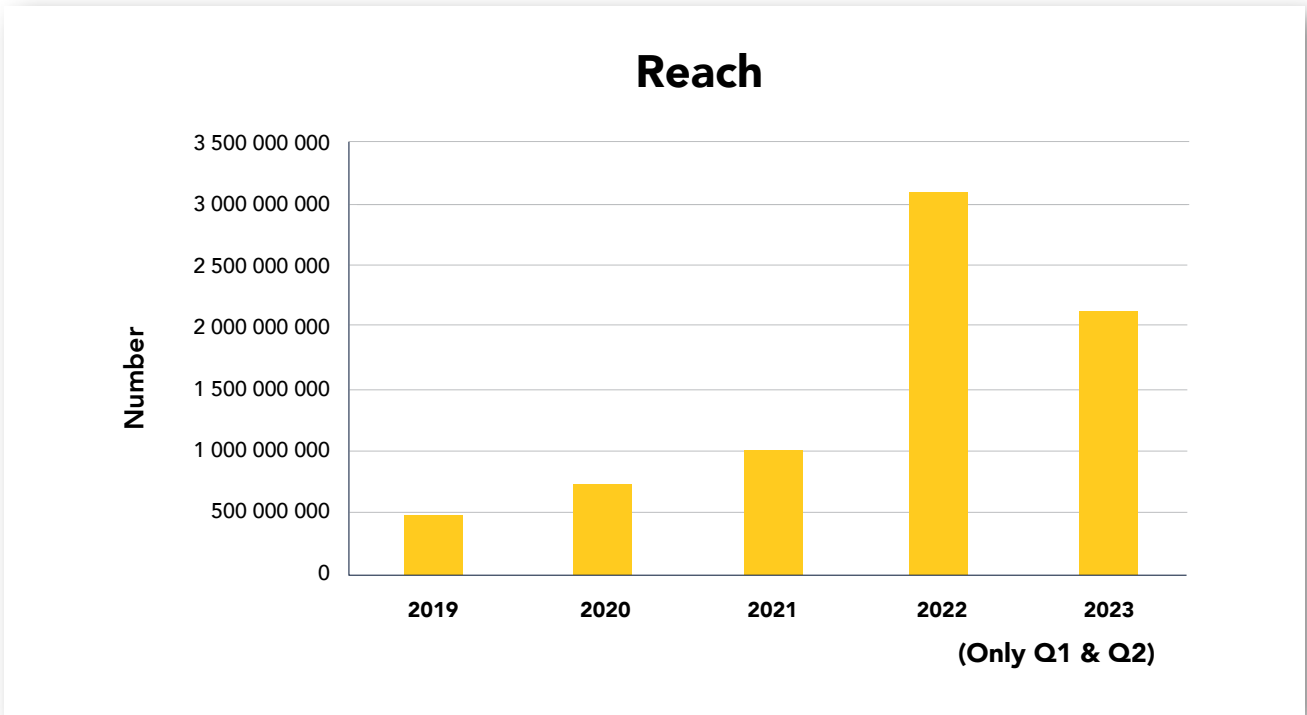


Figure 9: Reach





10. Awards



Although winning awards is not necessarily a reflection of the quality of work of any directorate it is gratifying that the Communication and Marketing has been recognised with various awards and accolades. The Communication; Media Management; Digital Communication and Marketing, and Arts, Culture and Heritage departments in particular worked extremely long and hard over the COVID-19 pandemic as it unfolded. They were called on to relay institutional strategy and messaging over a period that was marked by constant change, uncertainty and disruption. It has been rewarding to see these efforts noticed outside as well as within the University.

Digital Communication Awards 2020

The strategic decision to prioritise digital communications at Nelson Mandela University has reaped substantive results. This has included a third place in an International Digital Communication Awards contest, among heavyweight

brands such as Unilever, Nestlé, Audi, Procter and Gamble, Kentucky Fried Chicken and Vodafone. The “Digital First” entry in the COVID-19 Internal Communication section of the awards focused on the University’s communication efforts in supporting all students to complete the academic year, while ensuring health and safety.

Supersonic New Generation Social and Digital Media Awards bronze award 2021

This award was presented to Stratitude in the category “Most Innovative Social Media and Digital Campaign” by a Small Agency for its client, Nelson Mandela University, in support of our internationalization campaign.

Vice-Chancellor’s Excellence Award 2021

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. This led to the team winning one of the 2021 Vice-Chancellor’s Excellence awards.

Digital Communication Awards 2022

Nelson Mandela University won a bronze Digital Communication Award for outstanding accomplishments in the field of digital communications and PR in the category Small Budget Campaign for its campaign “Live graduation is a hit with students”.

Marketing, Advancement and Communication in Education Awards 2022

Nelson Mandela University won a Marketing, Advancement and Communication in Education (MACE) Bronze Award in the category of Events for its “Live graduation is a hit” campaign.





11. Looking ahead



Looking ahead, the Communication and Marketing Directorate will be rolling out media training for academics and some senior professional staff. This will entail a practical, hands-on exercise, where colleagues will be exposed to best practice science communication methods and media interview techniques, thereby empowering them with the confidence to speak on TV and radio. The intention here is to raise the profile of the University through the free use of the national and international media, by having media-savvy academics talking about their work or commenting on issues of the day.

We will also provide one-on-one coaching to academics who are new to being interviewed by the media. This could take the form of online coaching or via the use of WhatsApp. Taking this further, the Directorate will showcase the expertise of the University by compiling an Academic and Professional Staff Media Directory, which lists staff who are able to speak to the media on their subject matter expertise. This is for the University to be the first port of call by the media for expert comment, which will add credibility to their stories: subject matter experts provide meaning to issues. We also aim for the University to be more visible in *The Conversation Africa*, by facilitating training by their journalists for our academics. *The Conversation Africa* provides a space for

academics to write about their work, with editors guiding them through the process. This again is to raise the profile of the University nationally and internationally. A particular aim is to get more content into *University World News*, a niche, online higher education publication, which has an African, as well as global audience of academics, research institutions and governments. Indirectly, this could foreground the start of partnerships with other institutions.

The Directorate will intensify its support to all campuses, in terms of communication, marketing and branding assistance, while we view alumni communication as integral to our work: since we are the custodians of the Mandela University brand, it is imperative that we communicate with our alumni on developments at their alma mater.

With the International Office's marketing function proposed to reside within the institutional Communication and Marketing Directorate, specialised offerings to provide bespoke strategic services mean additional funding and capacity are required. Depending on the approved model, as well as the human and financial resources that go with it, Communication and Marketing is in a position to take on this function, having already sown the seeds for international marketing with campaigns in 2021 and 2022.

12. Conclusion

Globally, communication and marketing is an evolving continuum that changes to fit in with the times and remain relevant.

This review has aimed to foreground only some of the highlights over the past four years in support of the strategic transformational leadership within the Communication and Marketing Directorate at the university. Each Department within the Directorate has enabled change and operational excellence to support the broader vision, mission, and values of the university.

This review also serves as a baseline to reflect on the past and chart the future.

Through our digital first approach the Directorate has succeeded in extending the Nelson Mandela University brand footprint not only into Africa, but also globally. As a brand in its infancy at only five years old, and in the midst of a multi-year global lockdown, the brand equity is exceptional.

This is visually represented in the following map from our social media tracking software which indicates that, over the reporting period, Nelson Mandela University was mentioned or discussed by others in 152 countries in over 87 000 messages, resulting in a potential exposure of our brand to over 1.02 billion followers of these authors. The sentiment around our brand is also very positive (81%).



Social Listening: When our University is mentioned by others on social media

Total Volume	Total Engagements	Average Engagements
87 556	1 641 038	18.74
Potential Impressions	Unique Authors	Positive Sentiment
1.02B	33 841	81%

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