

Department of Industrial Psychology

DECEMBER 2021

FROM THE CHAIR'S OFFICE

It is an immense privilege to have so much to celebrate and be thankful for after a challenging and difficult year.

The commitment and resilience of the Department's core academic and administrative staff and its students leave me humbled, whilst I am amazed by their innovative approach and ability to excel despite challenges and obstacles.

This is why we are – and remain – a leading academic department, and I trust that everyone will tackle 2022 with the same mindset. But before we look to the future, I want to invite you to celebrate the highlights of the past six months with us, as mentioned in this biannual newsletter.

During this time, we not only welcomed Dr Mpho Magau as a permanent colleague to lead the Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Human Resource Management, but also three extraordinary appointments: Prof Steve Sireci from the University of Massachusetts and Prof Dragos Iliescu from Bucharest University as Extraordinary Professors, and Dr Enoch Teye-Kwadjo as Extraordinary Senior Lecturer. We are fortunate to have colleagues of this stature associated with the Department and we are excited about the potential of these connections.

An absolute highlight was our virtual achievement awards ceremony held



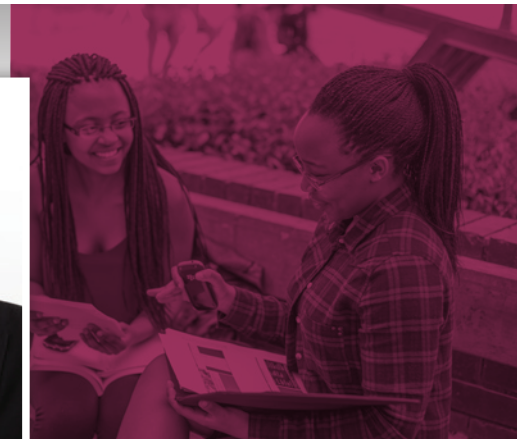
in November. Although we could not meet in person, it was a great privilege to raise our individual glasses to celebrate and honour the hard work and dedication of students and staff members. The same is true of the leaders of our social impact projects. For them, challenges are just opportunities for innovation and expansion.

However, many people will be left with a COVID-19 mental health scar, and Dr Wim Myburgh addresses this in an article about the consequences of and possible approach to the pandemic. We are now approaching the time where we all must detach, rest, and recover to be ready for whatever 2022 has to offer.

I do hope that the upcoming break will be a happy and relaxing time for you.

Life is like a camera...*FOCUS* on what is important, *CAPTURE* the good times, *DEVELOP* from the negatives, and if things don't work out, *TAKE ANOTHER SHOT*...

- Prof Aletta Odendaal



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DR MPHOGAU TO LEAD POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



Dr Mpho Magau recently joined Stellenbosch University's Department of Industrial Psychology from the University of Johannesburg to lead the Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), amongst other responsibilities.

He is very excited about joining the Department and is looking forward to becoming part of an outstanding team of professionals.

"I would like to contribute towards positioning the recently launched Postgraduate Diploma in SHRM as a sought-after qualification attracting local and international students of the highest calibre who want to improve their competence in human capital optimisation.

"Secondly, the virtual world of work that is exacerbated by COVID-19 and the need for advanced digitisation in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) presents an opportunity to explore online HR offerings. With my expertise in the development of online qualifications, I intend to partner with key stakeholders to understand the market needs and collectively craft a strategy to take advantage of existing opportunities in online teaching and learning.

"Thirdly, I aim to strengthen our collaboration with the South African Board for People Practices (SABPP) to improve the profile of our offerings and calibre of students, which is in line with the Department's aspiration of developing HR professionals as scientific strategic business partners.

"Lastly, my priority in knowledge production is to establish research focus areas in employment relations and HR reporting, which are key elements of the SABPP HR Competency model. This will provide students with the opportunity to investigate solutions to improve different areas of South Africa's labour relations system and how human capital disclosure can be enhanced in integrated reporting."

Dr Magau believes Human Resource Management (HRM) is the cornerstone of any organisation aiming to leverage the value of human capital for optimal business performance: "As a field of study, HRM provides

students with the technical knowledge required to develop innovative people solutions. Therefore, HR professionals contribute towards the success of their companies by identifying people-related business needs, aligning the structure of an organisation with corporate objectives, developing key leadership competencies for strategy execution, and serving the various stakeholder interests to maximise shareholder value."

"HRM is the cornerstone of any organisation aiming to leverage the value of human capital."

His own journey in this field began in the late 90s, when he enrolled for an HR qualification two years after starting his career in the mining industry, where labour disputes and unrests were the order of the day: "I wanted to understand how this instability could be eradicated and sound labour relations improved. Additionally, I advanced my awareness of people development, with a key interest in investigating the return on investment (ROI) of training on business performance. This is how my passion for HR measurement developed. I later enrolled for a master's degree with a research focus on HR metrics and analytics. My PhD was also in this focus area, but I specifically developed a measurement instrument to assess how intellectual capital disclosure in corporate annual reports can be used by the investment community to predict the value of intangible assets on future business earnings."

Dr Magau's research interests include HR metrics and analytics or HR measurement, employment relations, talent management and corporate disclosure assessment in HR accounting, sustainability, and integrated reporting.

Department welcomes three extraordinary appointments

Three candidates were approved as extraordinary appointments in the Department of Industrial Psychology for a period of three years: Distinguished Prof Steve Sireci from the University of Massachusetts as Extraordinary Professor, Prof Dragos Iliescu from Bucharest University as Extraordinary Professor and Dr Enoch Teye-Kwadjo from Ghana University as Extraordinary Senior Lecturer.

“I want to use this opportunity to welcome Steve, Dragos and Enoch. It is an absolute honour to have colleagues with this professional and scholarly expertise affiliated to the Department and we are looking forward to engaging them officially in different research and developmental activities,” said Prof Aletta Odendaal, chair of the Department.



Apart from being a full professor of Work Psychology in the Department for Psychology and Cognitive Science at the University of Bucharest, **PROF ILIESCU** is also the Director of the Doctoral School of Psychology and Education at the same institution. He joined the university after a 24 year

career in business and consulting, during which he focused on, among other things, test adaptation on commercial and research projects. He has worked with colleagues from South Africa on several projects, both research related and through professional associations such as the International Test Commission and the International Association for Applied Psychology.

“This opportunity has come as both a surprise and a challenge. South Africa has long been acknowledged for its commitment to the required standards and the subsequent high quality of teaching and training in industrial and organisational psychology as well as cross-cultural psychology. I am inspired and energised by this collaboration and have so many ideas about what we can do.”

Through his association with the Department, he would like to achieve two important objectives.

“Firstly, we can contribute to international science in general by advancing our understanding on a number of issues that are related to testing and assessment in work settings. There are several theories and hypotheses for testing for which South Africa is uniquely suited because of the sheer diversity of cultures and languages. Secondly, we can contribute to practice in South Africa, specifically to cross-cultural assessment, by developing indigenous measures on several variables that, to date, have not been assessed, or not assessed with sufficient cultural diversity based on indigenous (emic) theories and measures. These are certainly exciting projects, and I can’t wait to start working on them.”

PROF SIRECI, a Distinguished Professor in the Psychometrics Programme at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Director of the Center for Educational Assessment, has been working in the area of educational testing for about 30 years, primarily with the objective of improving the validity of the assessments. That pursuit has led to research in test translation, content validation, computer-based test designs, test accommodations, standard setting, and anti-racist/culturally sustaining assessment design.



He is thrilled to be part of the Department and is looking forward to the conversations he will have with colleagues to forge some common paths forward.

“For many years I have admired the work of Prof Odendaal, and I am proud to count her among my colleagues. I am interested in learning more about the mission of the Department and common research interests we can pursue together. I am also looking forward to teaching and learning opportunities and to meeting students and other faculty in the Department.

“I also realise we need more cultural diversity in the fields of educational measurement and industrial psychology and so I am hoping that, through this partnership, we can bring more black African professionals into these fields.”

DR ENOCH TEYE-KWADJO, a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Psychology at the University of Ghana, is no stranger to Stellenbosch University (SU), after obtaining his PhD at SU’s Department of Psychology in 2014 and completing his post-doctoral fellowship here in 2020.



“I could hardly contain my delight when I received the news of my appointment as Extraordinary Senior Lecturer. Indeed, I feel excited to be associated with this Department, where I recently had an opportunity to hone my psychometric research skills under the able mentorship of Prof Gideon de Bruin. SU remains my ‘knowledge partner’.”

He hopes his association with the Department of Industrial Psychology will help to widen his research network for the purpose of collaborative research.

“I come to this post with important research competencies and skill set. I look forward to working with colleagues and students whose research interests align with mine.”

DEPARTMENT CELEBRATES ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES

In celebration of what the Department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University collectively achieved in 2020, glasses were raised during a virtual achievement awards evening hosted by the Department in November.

Invited guests logged in for a virtual celebration acknowledging the achievements of staff and students during a difficult year.

"This awards evening serves as an example of the importance of teamwork and how every team member brings something to the table," said Prof Aletta Odendaal, Chair of the Department.

"We also want to recognise the contribution of the core academic staff and support team that enabled us to achieve our vision to be regarded as a leading academic department. They are the foundation of the success we are celebrating tonight."

Prof Ronel du Preez, Vice-Dean: Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, congratulated the staff members and students who excelled, despite the obstacles caused by COVID-19, loadshedding, work-life imbalance and personal loss.

"You showed grit and combined passion, perseverance, courage and tenacity to attain both a common goal and personal goals in research, teaching and social impact."

Prof du Preez concluded by saying: "It is my sincere wish that all of the outstanding achievements celebrated here tonight will inspire us all. To the staff, thank you so much for your commitment to the Department and the Faculty in a year that was challenging on numerous fronts. To the students honoured here tonight, well done."

The following students and staff members were acknowledged during the celebration:

Top honours student in Human Resource Management 2020: Andrea Leader

Top honours students in Industrial Psychology 2020: Liam Whitfield and Marisha de Vos

Top master's student 2020: Kendra Joubert

PhD graduates: Dr Michelle Visser and Dr Jacques Pienaar

Two Social Impact project teams also received recognition. These are the **Grade 9 Career Guidance** project team with Prof Tony Naidoo, Dr Michelle Visser, Dr Stefan Rabie, Mr Francois van der Berg and Dr Izanette van Schalkwyk, as well as Mrs Marietha de Wet for **Synergy Between Teaching and Community Interaction**.

The **Industrial Psychology Society (IPS) 2020** was acknowledged for the leadership role it played in representing the academic interest of students within the Department of Industrial Psychology. Members are: Tshepiso Latakgomo (Chair), Candice Oberholzer (Vice-Chair), Telisha Voges, Karla Botha, Bianca Adams, Catrien Dekker, Michelle Karsten and Marné Groenewald.

Congratulations were extended to the **psychometrists registered in 2020**. They are: Wendy Philander, Yandri Brits, Robyn Burbridge, Megan Jonker, Casey Arthur, Caitlin Venter, Franco Gericke, Conrad Eloff, Melanie Heroldt, Kayla Hendricks, Chevan Clarke and Elizma Engelbrecht.

Further congratulations went to the **HPCSA Professional Board Examination candidates**. They are: Zahn van Niekerk, Liisa Kleinhans, Yvonne-Louise Smit, Zinhle Londiwe Nzimande (MPI), Palesa Youlanda Luzipo (MPI), Nokwethemba Makhathini, Francois Klopper, Kaylie Kriel, Andrea Bremert, Damion Perkins, Lisa-Mae Strydom, Nicci Esterhuizen, Jana Huysamer, Talita du Plessis, Carmen Green, Oaitse van Staden, Mari van der Westhuizen, Petro van Zyl, Gerrit Louw and Sonja van der Bank.

Last, but not least, special thanks were given to Magda Barnard, Johan van Rooyen and Remé du Plessis for the technical support they provided to staff members after COVID-19 and the subsequent lockdown forced the University to explore virtual and online methods of teaching and learning.

Prof Odendaal concluded: "We would not have achieved the success of this academic year without you."



FOCUSING ON 'TRAINING THE TRAINERS'



A Train the Trainer session was held on campus in September for the Life Orientation teachers from schools that form part of the Grade 9 Career Guidance project.

Building on the Self-Directed Booklet designed to support Grade 9 learners with their subject choice and career planning, the Grade 9 Career Guidance project team – a joint initiative between the Departments of Psychology and Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University – also developed a Facilitators' Guide to ensure implementation efficacy.

In 2020 the project, which offers career guidance to Grade 9 learners in under-resourced communities, adapted successfully to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic by developing the Self-Directed Booklet to ensure the continuation of the project.

The first edition of the booklet was distributed to partner schools in 2020 and the updated second edition in 2021. During the evaluation of the 2020 implementation of the booklet, feedback from the Life Orientation (LO) teachers indicated that they would benefit from training that would help them support their learners as they complete the Self-Directed Booklet.

In response to the teacher feedback, a Facilitators' Guide was developed in 2021 by an Industrial Psychology Master's student, Mr Gerrit Louw, overseen by project leaders Prof Tony Naidoo and Dr Michelle Visser. The purpose of this guide is to provide additional information relevant to the Self-Directed Booklet that LO teachers can use during contact sessions with learners. This further strengthens the support that learners receive when completing their booklets, in addition to the online resources and the help-desk support provided by the project team.

The Facilitators' Guide expands on the content of the

Self-Directed Booklet by highlighting the tasks and desired outcomes from the different sections contained in the Self-Directed Booklet. It also contains information on additional resources available to the teachers and learners if they would like to explore any concept further.

The Facilitators' Guide is divided into three sections. The first section focuses on how the teachers can introduce the Self-Directed Booklet to the learners and help them understand what is expected from them. The second section is designed to help the teachers support the learners when they complete exercises designed to increase their self-knowledge, while section three expands on the second section of the guide by empowering teachers to help learners utilise the information they identified about themselves in the Self-Directed Booklet. This includes helping learners develop an action plan.

To introduce the Facilitators' Guide, a Train the Trainer session was held on campus in September 2021 for the LO teachers from the different partner schools. A group consisting of 14 LO teachers and two representatives of the Rupert Foundation attended. The session was facilitated by Mr Louw and enabled teachers to ask questions and provide valuable feedback on their initial impressions of the booklet.

"We believe that this Guide will have a positive impact on the implementation efficacy of the Self-Directed Booklet at the partner schools and will also increase the confidence of the teachers in supporting their learners when completing the Self-Directed Booklet," said project leaders Dr Visser and Prof Naidoo.

BA HRM PROGRAMME RENEWAL CREATES NEW OPPORTUNITIES

The BA Human Resource Management (HRM) programme offering in the Department addresses the management of people as a source of production by focusing on policies, practices and procedures. The programme's relevance arises from the need for the productive application of human material to contribute to the achievement of organisational goals.

Recently, a programme renewal process was finalised and the renewed BA HRM programme is open for enrolments from 2022 onwards. The most notable change, in keeping with other programmes within the Faculty of Arts and

Social Sciences, is that prospective students with either mathematical literacy or mathematics as matric subjects may apply for admission to the programme.

Moreover, the content of the programme has been restructured and provides an opportunity for students to follow Industrial Psychology and Psychology modules from the first year through to the third year. This sought-after combination, together with the additional exposure to subjects in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, creates a unique programme geared towards training students in Human Resource Management.



STUDENTS EMBARK ON BPSYCH EQUIVALENCE PROGRAMME

The second intake of the BPsych Equivalence Programme (BPEP) in 2021 included:

(From left to right) Front: Nikita Zass, Aretha Farao, Nwabisa Xhasa, Tamsin Twiss, Amy Biggs, and Laila Rylands. **Middle:** Ferial Samaai, Aaminah Bray, Elsje Beyers, Nikita Icharam, Danielle Smit, Londiwe Mbata, Chrizelle Oosthuizen, Marilise van Wyk and Beth Rose Wiehahn. **Back:** Bryce Pendock, Jason Gilbey, Johald Gericke and Ruan van der Westhuizen. **Absent:** Anell Basson.

ITC conference 2022 to be hosted in South Africa

The Department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University will host the 13th ITC Conference in 2022 in South Africa from 12-15 December 2022 – the first ITC conference to be hosted on the African continent.

The International Test Commission is an “association of national psychological associations, test commissions, publishers and other organisations committed to promoting effective testing and assessment policies and to the proper development, evaluation and uses of educational and psychological instruments globally.”

The theme of the conference is “Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion: opportunities and challenges towards culturally responsive assessment”. Subthemes include:

1. Test development, adaptation, and translation: advancing culturally responsive assessments
2. Innovation and advances in psychometric theory
3. Next generation technology-enhanced assessment, privacy, and test security
4. Global differences in equity approaches, policy, and solutions
5. Best practices in testing and assessment: preserving human rights in the era of big data assessment

For more information, visit www.intestcom.org.

Many will be left with a COVID-19 pandemic mental health scar

The COVID-19 lockdown and subsequent institutional isolation represent a “Black Swan” moment – meaning an unforeseen event that impacts what is needed for psychological well-being and health, writes Dr Wim Myburgh.

Joshua Morganstein, Assistant Director at the Centre for the Study of Traumatic Stress in Maryland, US comments that “If history is any predictor, we should expect a significant ‘tail’ of mental health needs that continue long after the infectious outbreak resolves. Historically, the adverse mental health effects of disasters impact more people and last much longer than the actual disaster or physical health effects”. The longer it continues, the harder the climb to recovery becomes. The mental health epidemic demonstrates that the human spirit can be diminished or crushed beyond just biological and physical health.

Basic psychological needs are the essential ‘nutrients’ of health and well-being. Human beings can be proactive and engaged or, alternatively, passive and alienated, largely as a function of the social conditions in which they develop and function.

All behaviour is motivated. The term motivation is derived from the Latin word ‘movere’, meaning ‘to move’ – a force that concerns energy, direction, and persistence – all aspects of activation and intention. People can be motivated because they voluntarily choose an activity or because there is strong external coercion to comply. They can be urged into action from a sense of personal commitment to excel or from the fear of being punished. These contrasts reflect internal motivation versus being externally regulated. As a matter of significance in mental health and wellbeing, this depends on whether people adopt behaviour due to their own intrinsic needs or do so for reasons external to the self (extrinsic influences).

The present situational context has thwarted the satisfaction of intrinsic needs by external motivation to comply with institutionalised forces. When fulfilled, the psychological needs of autonomy (feelings of volition and choice), competence (feelings of effectiveness and mastery), and relatedness (feeling connected to other people) stimulate human growth and well-being as well as self-regulation and self-determined motivation. If these needs are frustrated or thwarted, people feel controlled, helpless, or isolated.

Pandemic effects on learned helplessness

Peterson and Seligman (1983) define learned helplessness as “the emotional numbing and maladaptive

passivity sometimes following victimisation”. Put simply, it refers to a mental state of helplessness which has been induced through repeated (failed) attempts to escape a harmful situation – people have learnt that their fate is out of their control.

Acting and helplessness are opposites. Both relate to perceived control. In cases where control is threatened, but not lost, action and an attempt to reassert control will likely result. The perception that control is lost, in contrast, results in helplessness and giving up. The principle behind learned helplessness is that the individual’s inference that he or she is incapable of exerting control and achieving desirable outcomes is based on denigration, despondency, and despair.

No freedom, lonely, and incompetent

The pandemic, with imposed control, can lead to learned helplessness, which can subsequently result in a lack of motivation or effort to ‘escape’. Individuals learn that no matter what they have done, and no matter what they will do, they will always remain powerless and under external control.

Furthermore, those suffering from helplessness over a long period of time are more likely to feel the effects of depressive symptoms than those who experience transient helplessness (a short-lived and non-recurrent sense of helplessness). When highly desired outcomes are believed to be improbable and/or highly aversive outcomes are believed to be probable, and the individual has no expectation that anything he/she does will change the outcome, depressive symptomatology is highly probable.

Some restorative prescriptions – deliberate intentional activities

You cannot control what happens, just how you respond. The only way to influence the present events is by focusing on the things one has the power to control: the choices one makes in response to lockdown and life’s events.

- Recall those situations in which autonomy, competence, and relatedness were satisfied despite lifestyle restrictions. Reflecting on these experiences improves well-being since research suggests that

appraising a stressful event differently can help one feel better about it.

- Sense of competence. Work is not defined solely as an activity to earn money. Engage beyond the restriction of the economic aspect of work (such as volunteerism, parenting, caring for parents/others, DIY, financial literacy and managing housework).
- Insert oneself into challenging new tasks to test and extend one's skills. Keep learning to acquire more digital skills for remote work, read books, join an online library, enrol in short online courses, complete puzzles, learn to play music, write, paint, or draw.
- Relatedness needs can most easily be satisfied thanks to, among others, indirect communication with family, friends, and acquaintances (contact with others via internet or phone). Help others and find a way to be of service every day. Who around you needs a meal delivered, their pet walked or a phone call for support?
- Physical activity is progressively subjected to limiting

conditions. It is widely recognised that physical activity induces positive effects on different psycho-physiological aspects at every stage of life. Stress, fatigue, physical inactivity, and a sedentary lifestyle can advance obesity and subsequently contribute to several mental health disorders. Depression and obesity share a bidirectional relationship, where the presence of one disease increases the risk for developing the other.

- One can respond to exercise autonomy by increasing physical activities such as walking, cycling, jogging, and hiking where even pairs or small groups meet relatedness needs, and set challenging physical activity goals to instill a sense of competence and accomplishment.

In summary, we have the autonomy to experience the freedom of carrying out an activity. All the deliberate intentional activities above include actions that can be autonomously implemented, i.e. Connect, Be Active, Keep Learning, Give, and Take Notice.

STUDENT NEWS

New structure for IPS

The time has come for the Industrial Psychology Society 2020/2021 to hand over to the new society.

According to outgoing chairperson Telisha Voges, she feels confident in handing over the society to the new chairperson, Jerisca Pillay, and her team.

“For the last few months Karla Botha (my outgoing vice-chairperson) and I have worked hard on revising the structure of the IPS and we believe the new structure, along with the restructuring of the EBSK, will pave the way forward for an even more impactful IPS. It has been an honour representing this Department and we are excited to see the great work that the new Society will do.”

The incoming chairperson, Jerisca Pillay, said the IPS 2021/2022 will operate under the new structure.

“The new IPS consists of six portfolios. Each portfolio is crucial to the functioning of the society. The main objective of the IPS is to empower, represent, and inform students within the Department of Industrial Psychology, while striving to stimulate interest and support all branches and fields which fall within the

scope of Industrial Psychology and Human Resources. The main reason why the Society has continued to thrive over the past years is because every student who joins the society has a genuine passion for industrial psychology.

“Two of the Society's goals for the new term are to become an integral part of students' academic journey and to uphold our commitment in being a part of various social impact projects. We believe that becoming active members of one's community is important for growth and development.

“Becoming the chairperson of the IPS 2021/2022 means a great deal to me. In some way, it seems to have further confirmed the fact that choosing to study Industrial Psychology was the best decision I could have made for myself. Having been given this opportunity, I want to assure all Industrial Psychology students that the IPS of 2021/2022 will be there for them,” concluded Jerisca.

The Department of Industrial Psychology would like to wish you a safe and blessed festive season and a prosperous 2022.