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Controversies in the use of race and other human categorisations in the South African higher education sector

12 and 13 June 2024

Stellenbosch Institute for
Advanced Study (STIAS),
Stellenbosch

forward together
sonke siya phambili
saam vorentoe



Concept Note

Stellenbosch University (SU) hosts the conference, 'Controversies in the use of race and other human categorisations in the South African higher education sector' at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) on 12 and 13 June 2024. This critical conversation is organised by the Committee for the Institutional Response to the (Khampepe) Commission's Recommendations (CIRCoRe), as part of the work of CIRCoRe's Workstream IV, which interrogates the intersection of race, human categorisation and science (RHCS).

The conference seeks to interrogate the case for the use of human group descriptors in the sciences with a focus on the use of race and its attendant problems. These are such problems as the questionable use of race in various disciplinary settings in the social and natural sciences, from anthropology to forensics.

The conference also aims to explore the role of antiquated views about human beings and their groupings in the perpetuation of scientific racism in South Africa. A comprehensive investigation into how race is used in contemporary South African science and a reckoning of the state of contemporary scientific racism in South Africa is overdue. While this subject cannot be exhaustively addressed on a single occasion, this forum nonetheless aims to broach the subject by initiating new traditions of investigation. These new traditions of investigation will aid in developing solutions to the problems that arise from the use of race and other human categorisations in the sciences.

A considerable body of literature about the problems with historical racial

thinking and the scientific racism of previous periods in South Africa already exists. However, there are relatively few studies that trace the legacy of racial thinking in South Africa into present day research practice and research ethics controversies as they have become manifest across the higher education sector in South Africa.

A series of controversial research articles published in the last five years, each following a long tradition of scientific racism in South Africa, have catalysed the elevation of the problems of using race and other human categorisations in science to a question of national importance. Recent books that hold the historical view as illuminating on the problems that we have today in the sciences and research ethics are Christa Kuljian's (2016) *Darwin's Hunch: Science, Race and the Search for Human Origins*; Jonathan Jansen and Cyril Walters' (2020) *Fault Lines: A primer on race, science and society*; Alan Morris's (2022) *Bones and Bodies: How South African Scientists*; and Jonathan Jansen and Jess Auerbach's (2023) *The Politics of Knowledge in the Biomedical Sciences*, among others.

These problems, and possible resolutions, have been recognised to have significant throughgoing implications for university policies, research practices, ethics committee deliberations, and teaching practices across the South African higher education sector. The response to these controversies and the rise of the question of the use of race and other human categorisations in science, though, has largely been reactive and organised around specific institutional responses to racist research at the

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institutions responsible for their publication.

Deeper critical questions about the nature of scientific research and its reproduction of these issues are yet to be systemically addressed.

The problems addressed and the lessons learned during this conference will have relevance to institutions across the South African higher education sector. Individual examples of the problematic use of race and other human categorisations at SU and

other higher education institutions can be used as case studies to glean overarching insights about the research enterprise.

These case studies can be used to collate the lessons learnt from various experiences and craft possible recommendations about improving scientific practice at SU and the South African higher education sector.

CIRCoRE Workstream Members

Prof Soraya Bardien
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Dr Tanya de-Villiers Botha
Prof Nadine Bowers Du Toit
Prof Stan du Plessis
Prof Kennedy Dzama
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Mohamed Shaikh
Dr Therina Theron
Dr Leslie Van Rooi

Conference Themes

- 'Race': Approaches and uses in the scientific community
- Addressing race and scientific racism in the curriculum
- Social science study design and the student experience of race
- Race as a factor for access: A case study at Stellenbosch University
- Research on race and student experience in the South African higher education sector
- The socio-educational experiences of black Stellenbosch University commuter students
- Student voices on race, human categorisation and science
- A gender lens into research on race and human categorisation – an interdisciplinary perspective
- Race, racial categories and the democratic tradition on university campuses: What can we learn from Gaza?
- Race, AI (artificial intelligence), and bias
- Race and the body in forensics
- Talking about the ethics of human skeleton collections in South Africa
- Race, ethnicity, identity, language, and anthropology
- The use of population descriptors in health

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 12 JUNE 2024

Programme Director(s): Mr Phila Msimang (Senior Lecturer: Department of Philosophy & CIRCoRe Workstream Head: Race, Human Categorisation and Science) & Mr Thulani Hlatswayo (Coordinator: Student Governance; Assistant Residence Head: Metanoia; and Workstream Secretary: Race, Human Categorisation and Science, Stellenbosch University)

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
08:00	Arrival and Registration	
Higher Education, Curriculum, Admissions and Student Experiences		
09:10-09:20	Opening and Welcoming	Prof Wim de Villiers Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Stellenbosch University
09:20-09:40	Conference Overview	Mr Phila Msimang Senior Lecturer: Philosophy & Workstream Head: Race, Human Categorisation and Science
09:40-09:55	Reading of RSA Constitution Preamble	Mr Keelan Lebotschy (English) Miss Thyra Sedeman (Afrikaans) Mx Abongile Quthu (IsiXhosa)
09:55-10:55	Keynote Address 1 Theme: 'Race': Approaches and uses in the scientific community Moderator: Mr Phila Msimang (Senior Lecturer: Philosophy & Workstream Head: Race, Human Categorisation and Science)	Prof Crain Soudien Sociologist and Emeritus Professor: Education and African Studies, University of Cape Town; Honorary Professor: Nelson Mandela University; Distinguished Visiting Professor: University of Johannesburg
10:55- 11:10	Tea Break	
11:10-12:00	Panel 1 Theme: Addressing race and scientific racism in the curriculum Moderator: Dr Anell Daries (Postgraduate Programs Convenor, Centre for the Study of the Afterlife of Violence and Reparative Quest, Stellenbosch University)	Prof Francois Johannes Cleophas Associate Professor: Sport History, Stellenbosch University (pre-recorded) Prof Faadiel Essop Professor and Director: Centre for Cardio-metabolic Research in Africa (CARMA)
12:00-12:50	Panel 2 Theme: Social science study design and the student experience of race Moderator: Ms Katlego Letlonkane (Programme Manager: Capacity Development, Human Resources, Stellenbosch University)	Miss Sammy Chordnum BA Humanities Student, Stellenbosch University Ms Leza Soldaat PhD Candidate in Sociology, Stellenbosch University
12:50-13:10	Group Photo	
13:10-13:50	Lunch Break	

13:50- 14:40	Panel 3 Theme: Race as a factor for access: A case study at Stellenbosch University Moderator: Dr Leslie Van Rooi (Senior Director: Transformation and Social Impact, Stellenbosch University)	Dr Ronel Retief Registrar: Stellenbosch University Dr Celeste Nel Deputy Registrar: Applications, Student Accommodation and Client Services, Stellenbosch University
14:40-15:30	Panel 4 Theme(s): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research on race and student experience in the South African Higher Education Sector The socio-educational experiences of black Stellenbosch University commuter students Moderator: Dr Zethu Mkhize (Director: Transformation Office, Stellenbosch University)	Prof Ronelle Carolissen Professor: Psychology, Stellenbosch University Dr Jerome Joorst Lecturer: Education Policy Studies, Faculty of Education, Stellenbosch University
15:30: 15:45	Tea Break	
15:45-16:30	Discussion Session 1 Theme: Student voices on race, human categorisation and science Moderator: Ms Rabia Abba Omar (Coordinator: Citizenship Engagement, Centre for Student Life and Learning, Division for Student Affairs, Stellenbosch University)	Mr William Horne Workstream member and student leader, Stellenbosch University Miss Thandile Ngxikwe Chairperson: Societies Council, SRC (Student Representative Council), Stellenbosch University Ms Nomvula Chasakara Chairperson: Student Council, Potchefstroom Campus, North-West University Ms Ila Alberts Convenor: Student Imbizo, Stellenbosch University
16:30-17:45	Panel 5 Theme: A gender lens into research on race and human categorisation – an interdisciplinary perspective Moderator: Prof Sibusiso Moyo (Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies, Stellenbosch University)	Prof Amanda Gouws Distinguished Professor: Political Science, Stellenbosch University Dr Anell Daries Postgraduate Programs Convenor: Centre for the Study of the Afterlife of Violence and Reparative Quest, Stellenbosch University Prof Juliana Claassens Professor: Old Testament and Head of the Gender Unit, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University

16:30-17:45	Panel 5	<p>Mx Ashwin Thyssen Junior Lecturer: Ecclesiology, Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University</p> <p>Prof Keymanthri Moodley Distinguished Professor: Department of Medicine and Head of the Division of Medical Ethics and Law, Faculty of Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University</p>
17:45-18:00	Closing of Day 1 Announcements	<p>Mr Thulani Hlatswayo Coordinator: Student Governance; Assistant Residence Head: Metanoia and Workstream Secretary: Race, Human Categorisation and Science, Stellenbosch University</p>
18:00-19:30	Cocktail Reception (Networking Session)	

DAY 2: THURSDAY 13 JUNE 2024

Programme Director(s): Prof Nadine Bowers-Du Toit (Professor: Practical Theology and Missiology, Stellenbosch University)
& Mr Sibusiso Lukhele (Project Coordinator: DVC: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies, Stellenbosch University)

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
08:00	Arrival and Registration	
Science and the Disciplines		
09:10-09:20	Welcoming	Prof Nico Koopman Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel, Stellenbosch University
09:20-09:40	Performance Musical item	Mr Solomon Mathipha BA Drama and Theatre Student
09:40-10:40	Keynote 2 Theme: Race, racial categories and the democratic tradition on university campuses: What can we learn from Gaza? Moderator: Dr Choice Makhetha (Senior Director: Division for Student Affairs, Stellenbosch University)	Prof Jonathan Jansen Distinguished Professor, Faculty of Education, Stellenbosch University
10:40-10:55	Reading of Stellenbosch University Restitution Statement	Mr Keelan Lebotschy (English) Miss Thyra Sedeman (Afrikaans) Mx Abongile Quthu (IsiXhosa)
10:55- 11:10	Tea Break	

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
11:10-12:00	<p>Panel 6</p> <p>Theme: Race, AI (artificial intelligence), and bias</p> <p>Moderator: Prof Kanshukan Rajaratnam (Director: School for Data Science and Computational Thinking, Stellenbosch University)</p>	<p>Dr Tanya De Villiers-Botha Senior Lecturer: Philosophy, Stellenbosch University</p> <p>Dr Rensu P. Theart Senior Lecturer: Systems and Signals, Engineering, Stellenbosch University</p>
12:00-12:50	<p>Panel 7</p> <p>Theme: Race and the body in forensics</p> <p>Moderator: Prof Kathryn Smith (Associate Professor: Visual Arts, Stellenbosch University)</p>	<p>Dr Keegan O. Meiring Lecturer: Division of Clinical Anatomy, Stellenbosch University</p> <p>Mr Dimpho Moletsane PHD Candidate, African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science (ACEPS), University of Johannesburg</p>
12:50-13:50	Lunch Break	
13:50-15:10	<p>Panel 8</p> <p>Theme: Talking about the ethics of human skeleton collections in South Africa</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Christa Kuljian (Science writer, author, and research associate at Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WiSER)</p>	<p>Prof Ciraj Rassool Senior Professor: History, University of the Western Cape</p> <p>Dr Wendy Black Curator of Archaeology, Iziko Museum</p> <p>Dr Brendon Billings Senior Lecturer: Anatomical Sciences, University of the Witwatersrand</p>
15:10-16:00	<p>Panel 9</p> <p>Theme: Race, ethnicity, identity, language, and anthropology</p> <p>Moderator: Dr Handri Walters (Lecturer: Sociology and Social Anthropology, Stellenbosch University)</p>	<p>Prof Peter Rule Associate Professor: Curriculum Studies, Stellenbosch University</p> <p>Ms Lydia Furayi Chief Education Officer: Lifelong Learning, Arts & Culture, Kunene Regional Council (pre-recorded)</p>
16:00-16:15	Tea Break	
16:15-17:05	<p>Panel 10</p> <p>Theme: The use of population descriptors in health</p> <p>Moderator: Mr Phila Msimang (Senior Lecturer: Philosophy & Workstream Head: Race, Human Categorisation and Science)</p>	<p>Dr Caitlin Uren Lecturer: Division of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics and the Centre for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology</p> <p>Ms Ilana le Roux Department of Public Law, University of Pretoria</p>

Time	Session	Presenter(s)
17:05-17:30	Discussion Session 2 Theme: Key takeaways and avenues for further investigation Moderator: Dr Sharman Wickham (CIRCoRe: Research Development and Training Specialist; Workstream Head: Curriculum, Stellenbosch University)	Open to the floor
17:30-17:40	Closing of Day 2 Vote of Thanks	Prof Deresh Ramjugernath Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching, Stellenbosch University

Conference Session Abstracts

'Race': Approaches and uses in the scientific community

Presenter: Prof Crain Soudien

While the social sciences have since the 1970s largely settled on the idea of race' as a social construction, the hard sciences and particularly the biological and medical sciences have been significantly slower in coming to question the validity of the idea.

This contribution looks at the state of the discussion in a few major scholarly, professional and scientific associations and institutions around the world, and how they are approaching and using the idea for research purposes. It will show that there are information important convergences in terms of basic definitions but interesting differences with respect to what should be done with the concept of 'race'. In development, it will be argued, are new insights into and understandings of the social and the biological and the relationships between them. What the implications of these are for the South African discussion of how 'race' might be used will be explored.

Leveraging infrared imaging to mitigate bias and promote equity in face recognition *Rensu P. Theart, Marthinus J. Booysen*

Presenter: Dr Rensu P. Theart

Face recognition that relies on computer vision often performs poorly for individuals with darker skin tones. This is due to training bias caused by the under-representation of highly pigmented individuals in existing datasets. The performance is further worsened by darker skin reflecting less light, which results in reduced discernible detail in the visible light spectrum.

To address the reflection challenge, we incorporated the infrared spectrum, invisible to the human eye but detectable by electronic sensors. To address the training bias, we augmented existing datasets with images of highly pigmented individuals captured using the visible, infrared, and full light spectrums, and fine-tuned existing face recognition solutions to compare performance across these three modalities.

The results showed a marked improvement in accuracy when including the infrared spectrum, increasing recognition accuracy from 97.5% to 99% for highly pigmented faces.

The improvements achieved with the infrared spectrum underscore its potential to advance face recognition for individuals with darker skin tones. Furthermore, our study underscores the necessity of focusing on skin tone rather than race, as it is the primary factor influencing recognition performance. For this purpose, skin tone scales such as the Monk Skin Tone scale may be used to replace demographic information such as race.

Our analysis also revealed that fine-tuning the face recognition network resulted in a shift in prioritisation towards different facial features, particularly the nose region, for highly pigmented skin tones. This highlights the importance of considering facial structure alongside skin colour, often indicative of ethnic groupings, to enhance recognition performance.

By directly addressing skin tone estimation and facial feature analysis, the research offers methodological insights into handling human physical attribute data with nuance and reduced bias. These insights can inform best practices for managing data on race, ethnicity, and other human categorisations, contributing to the mitigation of scientific perpetuation of racism.

Tethered in bones: Racial categories in forensic anthropology

Presenter: Dimpho Moletsane

Racial classification is a complex, contentious and controversial issue in post-apartheid South African academia. The use of racial descriptors carries considerable baggage, making their deployment challenging. Focusing on forensic anthropology and social epistemology, my submission explores the problematic nature of racial categorisation in forensic anthropology, particularly its link to the persistence of outdated public views on human categorisation.

Sauer (1992) presents a dilemma within anthropology: although many practitioners reject race as bio-ontologically real and consider its use to be harmful, the use of racial categorisation remains seemingly indispensable in forensic anthropology, where it's employed to assign unidentified human remains to a racial group. Sauer also questions whether accurately guessing a subject's race from bodily remains validates the scientific concept of race, arguing that such use reflects societal context rather than an affirmation of race concepts themselves. For Sauer, it is not the case that anthropologists are insisting on the veracity of racial groupings as bio-ontological truths, but instead, their use of race categorisation reflects the racialisation of the society in which their investigations occur.

However, Elizabeth A. DiGangi and Jonathan D. Bethard (2020) argue that this practice ignores the lack of a clear link between skeletal remains and social race, perpetuates outdated notions of race, and thereby hinders social progress. DiGangi & Bethard employ critical race theory to critique this practice of forensic racial categorisation from a decolonial standpoint. They highlight the lack of empirical study on morphoscopic traits and their relation to social race or ancestry. They argue that, by continuing to engage in racial estimation uncritically, forensic anthropologists perpetuate racial categorisation, fail to adhere to modern scientific methodology and neglect their impact on social understanding of race.

For my contribution, I examine the socio-epistemic ramifications of the continued usage of racial categories in forensic anthropology despite being ostensibly discredited. In

particular, I will explore anthropologists' role in refuting scientific racism in the public and scientific domains. I introduce "socio-epistemic tethering" (SET) to the debate, drawing from 4E cognition and Sterelny's "scaffolded mind" concept to propose that certain concepts can cognitively tether individuals, influencing their ethical perceptions and behaviours, thus hindering social transformation.

I contend that white supremacy assumes race-based hierarchies and informs the racial differentiation inherent in racialisation. I argue that expecting law enforcement and the public to keep up with nuanced anthropological debates on race is unrealistic. Moreover, racial landscapes, marked by observable phenotypical differences and correlations like skin colour and economic class, reinforce misconceptions of biological race.

Forensic anthropology, I contend, is yet another vector for the perpetuation of race-based thinking as we know it. I submit socio-epistemic tethering as an account of how the uncritical use of racial categories in forensic anthropology, coupled with experts' role and collaboration with law enforcement, may contribute to the persistence of racialised patterns of thought and behaviour, fostering socio-epistemic tethering in society.

Sport science is a field of higher education activity driven by university programmes and policies that are embedded in institutionalised cultures of hidden and not so hidden racist histories

Presenter: Prof Francois Cleophas

Sport science is a field of higher education activity driven by university programmes and policies that are embedded in institutionalised cultures of hidden and not so hidden racist histories.

This presentation exposes these hidden histories by capturing the essence of sport science epistemology within South African historical contexts. Therefore, the presentation unapologetically pays attention to the untold and unpleasant side of sport science history. A deliberate attempt was made to unsettle existing assumptions about the subject's "glorious past" and its "wonder years". It provides insight into racial and class intersections during a time, prior to 1994, when white racism dictated the practice. The embedded racism of this period remains hidden in the 'new' South Africa. A case is made in this presentation that there exists a connection between hidden knowledges of the past and troubled knowledge in the present.

What this presentation also does, is to show how ignorance (itself not a neutral construct) of the history of sport science knowledges can enable racist accounts. This gives reason to exercise caution against suggestions that racism is eradicated from the sport science curriculum when there are still hidden race matters in the subject's history.

The language of genetics: Multiple voices contributing to the ongoing debate on population descriptors in South Africa

Presenter: Caitlin Uren

What is the correct way to refer to human populations in genomics research? This question has been discussed extensively over the past few years and has recently come to a head particularly in South Africa with the publication of various controversial articles.

Discussions on the most appropriate way to refer to human populations have extended from within the local community where the research was performed, to the researchers themselves and furthermore, to heads of international genetics societies. A common thread emanating from these discussions is that there is no clear way forward; however, it is important to provide researchers with tools to make informed decisions regarding the choice of population descriptors in genomics research.

For this reason, drawing on the voices of various stakeholders in the field, we provide a decision tree that we hope will assist researchers. Whilst we do not believe that this will be applicable to all researchers in every sub-field of genomics, we hope it forms a stepping stone for future discussions on the subject and to some extent prevents us from repeating past mistakes.

Uncovering race: The proverbial 'other' in forensic anthropology

Presenter: Dr Keegan O. Meiring

The classification of race, ethnicity and/or population affinity remains contentious within the realm of civil society. Moreover, the application of these terminologies now poses turmoil among academics; inclusive of those belonging to health and forensic sciences.

This impasse has created difficulties within the operations of the Victim Identification Service Unit (Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Stellenbosch University) whose members assist regional medicolegal and law enforcement agencies in estimating the identity of unknown deceased persons. The estimation of a biological profile guides police in better understanding their respective forensic-related cases and offers the opportunity for possible identification of the deceased. The ability to provide these profile estimations is however contingent upon published research findings.

As such, scientific inquiry involving human remains – especially those belonging to specific population groups, is deemed vital in increasing the validity and reliability of the information provided to police officials. The importance of this information is underpinned by the probable inability to secure DNA for analysis; however, even in instances where DNA is available, an identity might remain undeterminable. Therefore, the development and refinement of biological anthropological research and practices are integral in providing a socially relevant service to the often marginalised and forgotten. Despite this niche, ethical cognisance is required to prevent the exploitation of the disadvantaged and under-represented.

Therefore, determining the appropriate recourse in managing the above-mentioned societal threats while simultaneously spearheading the opportunities for social justice, is insistent upon transparent and cooperative collaboration. Notwithstanding the above, the use of racial/ethnic/population cataloguing remains a deterrent to the evolution of societal perceptions of what is considered ethically and legally fair. Reference to rescinded legislation provides evidence of how population categorisation was instigated; how it influences notions of identity; and, how the continual use of apartheid-styled terminology has set a precedent for the current academic stalemate.

Navigating racial complexities: A contextual analysis of coloured students' experiences at Stellenbosch University

Presenter: Leza Soldaat

The discourse surrounding race and other human categorisations continues to be a complex and contentious issue in South Africa, particularly in the context of higher education. Within the larger context of race and human categorisation in higher education, this paper offers a contextual examination of the complex experiences of Coloured students at Stellenbosch University (SU) in South Africa.

The paper will delve into the context chapter of a doctoral study, which serves as the foundational framework for understanding the nuanced experiences of coloured students within SU. Utilising an ecological model that was modified from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) framework, the paper investigates the ways several dimensions – such as environmental, institutional, commonplace, and individual – influence the experiences that students of colour have with their daily lives. In this paper, universities are not only conceptualised as spaces of learning but also spatial entities that are directly related to the demography and economies of towns and cities such as Stellenbosch.

In as much as the university is an "epistemic entity" entangled within colonial and imperial circuits of knowledge-making and power, it is also a 'spatial entity' located in social geographies of inequality that were produced through racialised spatial relations of colonisation and apartheid (Alexander, 2003; Jansen and Walters, 2020; Mzileni and Mkhize, 2020). Furthermore, the paper explores how discursive formations, such as language politics and cultural resistance, shape the construction and maintenance of racial categories, by focusing on the experiences of coloured students. Through thematic analysis of scholarly articles discussing language, power, and coloured identity, the paper uncovers the ways language was employed as a tool of oppression and marginalisation within academic spaces. Finally, the paper proposes the use of decolonial research methodologies such as photovoice that centralise participants' voices to foster inclusivity and a culture of reflexivity among researchers.

In short, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions on race, human categorisations, and their implications for higher education institutions in South Africa and beyond. By critically examining the intersections of race, power, and identity, the study seeks to inform policy and practice, as well as research methodologies in the pursuit of social justice and transformative change in higher education.

Bias, race and machine learning: Ethical considerations

Presenter: Dr Tanya De-Villiers Botha

One of the central concerns in AI ethics is bias in automated systems. Over recent years, it has become clear that, far from being neutral computational systems, AI-based automated systems can reflect, perpetuate, and even amplify social biases. In this context, social biases should be understood in the sense of "undue prejudice against social groups".

It has also become clear that the ways in which such biases become embedded in AI-based systems are varied and complex, potentially stemming from different points in the machine learning pipeline. Moreover, not such biases lend themselves to technical "fixes". This talk will explore some of the possible sources of biases in machine learning and automated systems more generally as well as their potential impacts. I will touch on possible mitigation strategies, but my overall claim will be that there is no obvious, foolproof way to "debias" AI-systems.

Hence, an ethical approach to creating, deploying, and using AI-based systems entails always being alert to the potential for bias and to ensure that appropriate mitigation and amelioration measures are in place. Sometimes, it may even be ethical not to automate a process.

Addressing scientific racism: an initial attempt at curriculum renewal for postgraduate biomedical sciences students

Presenter: Prof Faadiel Essop

Scientific racism, deeply rooted in colonialism, continues to permeate modern biomedical science and medical practices, perpetuating systemic biases and disparities. However, there is an emerging interest to address this issue as part of a broader process of decolonization of curricula at some medical schools.

The process of decolonisation is complex and multifaceted and includes attempts to make curricula more inclusive, and to confront past injustices that occurred with scientific and medical advancements. For example, colonialism contributed to and perpetuated false beliefs about racial hierarchies and differences in physiology based on race. Such ideas historically influenced medical research efforts, education, and practice, resulting in discriminatory treatment of some research subjects and patients. Moreover, attempts to address such issues can be challenging as existing biomedical sciences curricula are rooted in Eurocentric perspectives and historical traditions. As an initial attempt to deal with scientific racism as part of the decolonisation of the Department of Biomedical Sciences' BSc (Hons) curriculum at Stellenbosch University's medical school, two (discussive) sessions (forming part of the Features of Science module) were introduced regarding scientific racism and decolonization. Student feedback regarding such sessions was assessed by completion of an anonymous survey and a thematic-type analysis (anonymous) of self-reflective journals.

The survey data showed that around two thirds of the class possessed a moderate understanding regarding decolonisation in the science and medical context. A thematic analysis of comments revealed that such sessions made students realize the negative impact of colonialism in terms of the development of medical knowledge for e.g. scientific racism, suppression of traditional knowledge, and the exploitation and experimentation on indigenous populations.

Furthermore, the students indicated that the inclusion of scientific racism and decolonization sessions may add value to their future careers by enhancing their critical

thinking and awareness of social and cultural contexts in science and medicine, and their professional responsibility to ensure inclusivity, fairness, and ethical conduct in their workplace.

These findings show that incorporating conversations on scientific racism and decolonization into the biomedical sciences curriculum can promote students' personal growth and awareness, while also creating opportunities for greater inclusivity by fostering an environment of open discussion and learning in classes. Moreover, it should better equip students with the tools to challenge and mitigate scientific racism in their future careers, and to become advocates for social justice and equity.

Naming as contested space: A Namibian case study

Presenters: Lydia Furayi and Prof Peter Rule

This paper arises from a doctoral study in progress at Stellenbosch University (SU) on the inclusion of San people in higher education that takes the form of a case study of the University of Namibia, Rundu campus. Historically, names such as 'Bushmen' and 'Bosman' were imposed on groups of indigenous people by colonizers in southern Africa. These names carried derogatory connotations such as thieves, cattle-stealers, wild men, and even sub-humans. They reflected the violence and denigration of people now considered to be the first inhabitants of southern Africa and justified practices such as dispossession, forced labour, forced removal and extermination.

While the study focuses on the inclusion/exclusion of San students in higher education, it also grapples with the problem of naming of first inhabitants and their descendants in contemporary Namibia. Research participants included four students at the University of Namibia (Rundu campus), four traditional/community leaders and two graduates who participated in interviews and focus groups. They speak Khwedam as their home language and identify themselves as "Khwe" or "Barakhwena" rather than "San". Only one traditional leader who participated in the study identified himself as a "San" person rather than as "Khwe" or "Barakhwena". However, an analysis of the data and related literature indicates that these students share characteristics and experiences of many other "San" students in the Namibian education system: isolation; discrimination on the basis of their language, appearance and/or poverty; absence of their cultures and histories in the curriculum.

Should these students be identified by the term "Khwe" and "Barakhwena" by which they identify themselves or the term "San" which associates them with a wider set of historical and contemporary experiences? What priority should be given to the names that other Namibian ethnic and linguistic groups use to identify them? The term "Khwe" links them to a particular language/dialect (Khwedam) and geographical locations in northern and north-eastern Namibia (Omega, Cheto, Msambo and Mutciku), whereas the term "San" has wider national and regional associations. In addition, terms such as "first peoples", "indigenous peoples", "first nations" and "first inhabitants" locate them in international discourses and debates. All these terms have various advantages as well as limitations related to being over- or under-inclusive.

The study attempts to deal with these questions of naming from a perspective that acknowledges the historical background, the complexity and fluidity of identity in the local, national and global contexts, the power dynamics that are at work in self- and other-identification, and the personal and communal challenges faced by these students in the Namibian education system. It searches for what would be the best practices in terms of using the name that does not carry any form of derogatory, inhumane, racist or discriminatory connotation of any kind towards the humanity of the "Khwe" or "Barakhwena" person.

Race as a factor for access: A case study at Stellenbosch University

Presenters: Dr Ronel Retief and Dr Celeste Nel

Stellenbosch University (SU) has been historically associated with the Afrikaner community and was (and still is by some) seen as a bastion of white Afrikaner culture and language. During apartheid it was one of the universities that played a role in maintaining racial segregation in education.

Like many institutions in South Africa, SU has undergone significant transformation since the end of apartheid in 1994. Efforts have been made to address issues of racial inequality and to promote diversity and inclusion on campuses. This includes initiatives to increase the representation of black South Africans in our student population.

Despite these efforts, challenges remain, and issues related to race continue to be topics of debate and activism on campus. Like many universities around the world, SU is grappling with ways to create a welcoming and inclusive environment where all students and staff feel valued and respected, and have a sense of belonging, regardless of their racial, cultural or socio-economic background.

As a case in point, this presentation will focus on two of the University's key access policies, i.e. the Admissions Policy as well as the Residence Placement Policy. Race and socio-economic status (SES) are two key factors taken into account for access as stipulated in both policies; however, racial transformation at SU is still progressing at a slow pace. The presenters will reflect on the tensions between policy and practice, the barriers to access and the interplay between race and socio-economic status. Strategies for widening participation will be explored and the impact of these, reflected upon.

Assessing the new anthropological culture and the necessity of ethnographer's thick description

Presenter: Sammy Chordnum

Over the past two decades, South African tertiary institutions have turned their time and resources towards decolonization theory, a topic of utmost importance in social science. An unfortunate by product of this pursuit is the resurgence of the 'armchair anthropologist'.

The paper aims to examine the decline in academic integrity amongst scholars when producing scientific knowledge about race in post-apartheid South Africa. Through engaging with recent literature on the emergence of hybrid research methodology combined with the disregard for ethical efficiency specifically in social science, this paper will attempt to show where and how the gap in the scientific knowledge become violent towards the other. The argument put forth within this paper holds that tertiary institutions alongside psychologists would be able to not only identify scholars' biases early on in the research process but can be implemented to guide scholars to produce knowledge more suited for their racial, political and social-economic standing within South African society.

Using *'Age and Education- related effects on cognitive function in Coloured South African Women'* by Nieuwoudt et al. as a case study, and the research findings of Geertz, Ross, and Said this paper will highlight how neglecting the implementation of thick description when conducting ethnographic research led to the production of violent scientific knowledge against coloured women in South Africa. The goal of this paper is to highlight the dangerous effects of biased scientific knowledge when produced through hybrid research methodology. This paper further aims to examine how academic capitalism's psychological effects have physically manifested into academic negligence.

Tertiary institutions have failed to address scholars' lack of reflexive efficiency and objectivity when obtaining data through field work and the ongoing negligence of ethical procedures when processing scientific knowledge about race within tertiary institutions. The present-day lack of objectivity and diverse perspective in academic institutions hinder the ability to challenge biased scientific knowledge effectively.

Designing de-raced babies? Thinking through constitutional contradictions in non-racial assisted reproduction

Presenter: Ms Ilana le Roux

The South African fertility industry – a primarily private enterprise – is saturated with white donors, clients, and professionals. Tessa Moll and Amrita Pande have both argued that the overrepresentation of whites in the fertility industry, as well as the manner in which Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) are used, is a function of and perpetuates the doctrine of white supremacy. Specifically speaking on the practice of egg donor 'matching', the work of Moll and Pande reveals the prominence of race in the fertility industry. Not only are donor databases principally organized according to apartheid racial categories, but race is coded into most (if not all) ostensibly 'non-racial' donor criteria and traits. Focusing on the constitutional value of non-racialism and constitutionally protected reproductive rights, this paper explores the tension and contradictions produced by the 1996 Constitution as articulated by Azanian thought. In particular, I suggest that the liberal non-racialist de-categorisation of the fertility industry will: (1) have significant implications for assisted reproduction in South Africa; and (2) lead to the proliferation of reproduction-related judgements in which the Constitutional Court would eventually have to decide whether a supposedly non-racial constitution protects the right to reproduce on racially essentialist terms.

The socio-educational experiences of black Stellenbosch University commuter students

Presenter: Dr Jerome Joorst

This talk presents qualitative educational and related social experiences of three black students who travel more than 20 kilometres daily to and from Stellenbosch University (SU) to access their university studies. It draws on data collected in interviews with three black commuter students who studied at SU recently – Gilla, Zoe and Mzwai (pseudonyms).

Their lived experiences of studying while commuting represent the stories of many other black students whose university encounters are inflected, conditioned and complicated by the double challenge of being black and poor and having a commuter identity. Their stories highlight the one-dimensional institutional discourses in historically white universities that continue to misrecognise commuter student identities and how they engage in their university learning.

Despite various physical and emotional challenges, the study provides a glimpse of the self-formed practices that commuter students develop to open a viable university pathway.

Conference Programme Directors, Presenters, Panel Members and Moderators



Rabia Abba Omar

Rabia Abba Omar is a researcher, curator, and facilitator. She is the Coordinator: Citizenship Engagement at the Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert Institute and a core member of the UNESCO Chair on Intercultural Competence team at Stellenbosch University (SU). She is currently completing an MA in Visual Studies at SU as a joint fellow between SU's Centre for the Study of the Afterlife of Violence (AVReQ) and Exeter University's Imagining Futures of Un/Archived Pasts project. She served on the SU SRC in 2017 and was a part of the Open Stellenbosch collective.

Abba Omar holds an MA in Heritage Studies, with distinction, from University of the Witwatersrand, where she was a part of the Oceanic Humanities for the Global South research project. She is an alumnus of the UnSchool of Disruptive Design's Emerging Leaders Fellowship and the Accountability Lab's Non-Profit Management Fellowship. She has experience across higher education, the NGO space, and arts environments. She likes to think at the intersections of water, memory, archives, and current expressions of past violences.



Ila Alberts

Ila Alberts holds a Bachelor of Arts in Law (*cum laude*) degree from Stellenbosch University (SU), with a double-major in German literature and Political Science and is currently in her first year of the two-year postgraduate LLB programme. Her leadership journey started when she was elected Junior Mayor of the City of Cape Town in 2019, and continued when she joined SU in 2021, which was also the year that she was elected Chairperson of the Law Faculty's Student Faculty Committee (JV/S). During her term she testified with the Khampepe Commission. Thereafter she served as the Vice-Chairperson of the Academic Affairs Council and is currently the Convenor of the Student Imbizo of SU. She is also a member of the Listen, Live, Learn (LLL) programme. Passionate about languages, politics, and history, Ila has also spent a few years writing for *Die Matie*, volunteering as a Matie Buddy with the International Office, and recently completed a prestigious internship programme for African graduates in Berlin (IPS Afrika) with the German Bundestag in January.

Conference Programme Directors, Presenters, Panel Members and Moderators



Dr Brendon Billings

Dr Brendon Billings is a senior lecturer in the School of Anatomical Sciences at Wits Medical School and the curator of several research collections including the Raymond A. Dart Collection of Modern Human Skeletons, the largest on the continent. Billings serves on the school's collections committee for research. He is a member of the Wits human research ethics committee (medical), the chair of the ethics committee for the Anatomical Society in South Africa, and a member of the ethics and humanities committee for the International Federation of Associations of Anatomists. Billings's research interests are comparative neuroscience, anthropology, the history and philosophy of science, clinical anatomy, and the ethics of anatomy. He is widely published, most recently in relation to the ethics of body donations to medical schools.



Dr Wendy Black

Dr Wendy Black is Chief Curator of Art and Social History at Iziko Museums of South Africa. After obtaining her PhD at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in 2014, she took up the post of Curator of Archaeology at Iziko Museums. Here, she expanded on her research interests related to the population history of the indigenous hunter-gatherer people of southern Africa and helped develop an active and transformed Archaeology Unit. More recently, Wendy has become involved with indigenous rights and transformation issues as they relate to human remains collections and group representations within South African institutions. She is a member of the national Advisory Committee on the Repatriation and Restitution of Human Remains and Heritage Objects.



Prof Nadine Bowers-Du Toit

Prof Nadine Bowers-Du Toit is Professor in 'Theology and Development' and the Head of Department. Practical Theology & Missiology at the Faculty of Theology, SU. Her research over the past 24 years has largely focused on the role of faith communities in addressing the intersecting issues of poverty, inequality, race and gender. Her most recent projects, which investigated the role of faith identity in activating Faith Based Organisations (FBO) as civil society role players and the issue of young adults, race, faith and inequality respectively, have been funded by grants from the National Research Foundation and the Nagel Centre for World Christianity. Prof Bowers-Du Toit recently edited a book volume entitled "Faith, race and inequality among young adults in South Africa: Contested and contesting discourses for a better future" (SUN media, 2022). Besides lecturing, publishing and supervising post graduate students, She is often invited to address congregations, church leaders and Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) on topics pertaining to community development and social justice. She sees herself as an activist academic always seeking to push for space for more voices to be heard and is the founding chairperson of the Transformation Committee at the Faculty of Theology.



Prof Ronelle Carolissen

Prof Ronelle Carolissen is a clinical psychologist and full professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychology at SU. She is a South African National Research Foundation (NRF)-rated researcher. Her research expertise and publications explore transformation in higher education, with a specific emphasis on feminist decolonial pedagogies and critical community psychology perspectives on equity and youth citizenship in higher education contexts. She has published numerous journal articles in these areas and is the co-editor of the books *Community, self and identity: Educating South African university students for citizenship* (Human Science Research Council (HSRC Press, 2012), *Discerning critical hope in educational practices* (Routledge 2014), *Transforming Transformation in Teaching and Research in Higher Education* (African Sun Media, 2018) and *Community Psychology: South African Praxis* (2022). She serves on South African and international journal editorial boards that intersect in the fields of education and community psychology and serves on managing boards, most notably the SAMRC (South African Medical Research Council 2019-present). She is a Fulbright research scholar alumnus (2021-2022), chief editor of the journal, *Psychology in Society* (PINS), and a member of ASSAF (Academy of Science of South Africa).

Conference Programme Directors, Presenters, Panel Members and Moderators



Nomvula Chasakara

Nomvula Chasakara is a dynamic and accomplished individual with a robust academic background and a rich tapestry of leadership and social service experience. Currently pursuing a BA Honours in Public Governance at North-West University (NWU), Chasakara has consistently demonstrated academic excellence and leadership. She completed her BA in Public Governance with Politics and Public Administration, graduating with distinction in 2024. Her academic journey is marked by active involvement in student governance, underscoring her commitment to leadership and advocacy.

Chasakara's leadership roles at NWU include serving as the Chairperson of the Student Campus Council for the term 2023/24; Deputy Chairperson (2022/23), and as the Transformation and Diversity with Current Affairs Officer in the Students' Representative Council (2022-2024). Her leadership extends to acting as the Students' Representative Council Academic Officer in 2024 and as a Student Assistant for the School of Public Governance.



Prof Juliana Claassens

Prof Juliana Claassens (PhD Princeton Theological Seminary) is Professor in Old Testament and Head of the Gender Unit at the Faculty of Theology, SU. She is the author of *Writing and Reading to Survive: Biblical and Contemporary Trauma Narratives in Conversation* (Sheffield Phoenix Press 2020) and *Claiming Her Dignity: Female Resistance in the Old Testament* (Liturgical Press, 2016). She recently completed a commentary on Jonah for Old Testament Library that will be published later in 2024 with Westminster John Knox. She has edited several publications that were produced by the Gender Unit, including, *Queering the Prophet: On Jonah, and Other Activists* (ed. L Juliana Claassens, Steed Davidson, Charlene van der Walt & Ashwin Thyssen; London: SCM Press, 2023) and a collection of essays that will be published later in 2024 under the title *Narrating Rape: Lacunae and Shifting Perspectives in (Biblical) Literature and Popular Culture* (ed. Rhiannon Graybill, Christl Maier, L Juliana Claassens; London: SCM Press 2024).



Sammy Chordnum

Sammy Colene Chordnum is a Bachelor of Arts student at SU, majoring in Anthropology and Political Science.

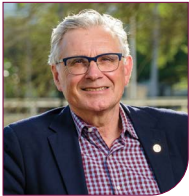
Chordnum has developed a growing interest in research methodology and cultural sociology, specifically its gaps in South African society and history. Chordnum hopes to pursue postgraduate studies in a manner that does not only unpack but also problematises these issues. Chordnum's goals going into the conference are to broaden her perspective and understanding of ground-floor operations of academia and knowledge production. She not only looks forward to gaining insight from academic elders on how to navigate and utilise her voice in academia, but to also engage in topics in that plague her mind as a female, coloured student attending SU. Chordnum feels privileged to be in this space at such an early stage of her academic career and will be seizing it as an opportunity to learn and grow from colleagues.



Dr Anell Daries

Dr Anell Stacey Daries is the postgraduate programmes convenor and NIHSS/ SU Prestigious Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for the Study of the Afterlife of Violence and the Reparative Quest (AVReQ), SU. She graduated with a PhD in history and has experience as a lecturer, administrator, project leader, researcher, academic facilitator, and mentor. Her research explores the origins, trajectories, and social implications of sciences to do with the human body within the context of South African pedagogical histories. Her broad research interest intersects with her professional experience as her work examines the socio-political implications and legacies of institutional cultures within the context of higher education.

Conference Programme Directors, Presenters, Panel Members and Moderators



Prof Wim de Villiers
(CIRCoRe Chairperson/
Project Owner)

Prof Wim de Villiers is Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University (SU), having been appointed to the position in 2015. He is an alumnus of SU, Oxford University and Harvard University. De Villiers holds an MBChB (SU), MMed (SU), DPhil (Oxford) and MHCM (Harvard). After graduating from SU with an MBChB, he went to Oxford University for his PhD, and then to America, where he studied at Harvard and held several senior positions at the University of Kentucky including Head of Gastroenterology, and Administrative Head of the Good Samaritan Hospital. He was included in the publication Best Doctors in America.

De Villiers was appointed Dean of Health Sciences at UCT in July 2013 and returned to South Africa before joining SU in his current position. On the national stage, he serves as Chairperson of the Finance and Investment Committee of Universities South Africa, chair of Higher Health. On the international stage, he was until recently a council member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities.



Dr Tanya de Villiers-Botha

Dr Tanya de Villiers-Botha is a senior lecturer in the Department of Philosophy at SU. She is also head of the Unit for the Ethics of Technology in the Centre for Applied Ethics, coordinator of the Data and Computational Ethics Research Group, and a member of member of the Global AI Ethics Consortium of the Institute for the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence, Technical University of Munich. Her research interests include: philosophy of mind and cognitive science, meta-ethics and the epistemology and ethics of AI.



Prof Faadiel Essop

Prof Faadiel Essop is currently a professor in the Division of Medical Physiology (BMRI, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences) at Stellenbosch University. He is also the Director of the Centre for Cardio-metabolic Research in Africa (CARMA). Prof Essop completed his undergraduate and doctoral studies at the University of Cape Town and subsequently pursued a BA (Hons) degree (Arabic Studies) at the University of the Western Cape.

He was awarded the Helen Suzman Chevening Fellowship for postdoctoral research (Leeds, UK) and worked as a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Texas-Houston Medical School. Prof Essop is an NRF-rated internationally acclaimed researcher and is investigating the effects of chronic stress on cardio-metabolic diseases onset and the role of immune activation in HIV-related cardiovascular diseases. He also completed the Scholarship of Educational Leadership course at Stellenbosch University, was a recipient of the university's teaching excellence award (two occasions) and is a Teaching Advancement at University (TAU) fellow.



Lydia Furayi

Lydia N. Furayi is a doctoral candidate in Education at SU and works as Chief Education Officer for Lifelong Learning, Arts, and Culture in the Directorate of Education, Arts, and Culture, in the Kunene Regional Council in Namibia. In this role, Furayi oversees critical initiatives in lifelong learning, arts, and culture, driving positive change and educational advancement in the region.

Furayi previously served as a Senior Education Officer for Adult Education in the Kunene region, and worked as a Senior District Literacy Organiser in Mukwe Constituency. In this position, she ensured the successful implementation of adult literacy programmes and took on additional responsibilities in programme supervision and community engagement.

Furayi's academic journey began with a Diploma in Adult Education and Community Development at the University of Namibia in 2004. She obtained a bachelor's degree in Adult Education from the University of Namibia in 2007 and a Master's degree in Adult Education in 2017.

Conference Programme Directors, Presenters, Panel Members and Moderators



Prof Francois Cleophas

As an Associate Professor and a Lecturer at Stellenbosch University, I have been teaching and researching sport history for over 12 years. I have a PhD in sport history and I am an expert in the field, with multiple publications and presentations at international conferences. I am proficient in Microsoft Office, Management, and Microsoft Excel, and I use these skills to create engaging and informative course materials, manage academic projects, and analyze data. My core competencies include curriculum development, student assessment, academic writing, and historical research. I am passionate about sport history and its relevance to society, culture, and identity. I aim to inspire and empower my students and colleagues to explore and appreciate the diversity and complexity of sport history. I value academic excellence, collaboration, and innovation, and I strive to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and education in my field.



Prof Amanda Gouws

Prof Amanda Gouws is Professor of Political Science at SU. She holds a PhD from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign in the USA. Her specialisation is South African politics and gender politics. Her research focuses on women and citizenship, the National Gender Machinery and representation.

She is the editor of (Un)Thinking Citizenship: Feminist Debates in Contemporary South Africa. (UK: Ashgate and Cape Town: Juta, 2005). In 2007 she was the Edith Keeger Wolf Distinguished Visiting Professor at Northwestern University, USA. In 2011 she was selected as a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation Centre in Bellagio, Italy, where she was working on a book on the Women's Movement in South Africa.

In 2012 she received the Wilma Rule Award for the best paper at the International Political Science Association Conference in Madrid, Spain, in the category Gender and Politics with the title "Multiculturalism in South Africa: Dislodging the Binary between Universal Human Rights and Culture/Tradition". She is a Commissioner for the South African Commission on Gender Equality.



**Thulani Hlatswayo
(RHCS secretary)**

Thulani Hlatswayo is Student Development Practitioner with the primary role as a Coordinator in Student Governance and a secondary role as Assistant Residence Head for Metanoia Residence at SU. Servitude of the student community is at the core of his roles, and the fundamental requirement is providing support and guidance to students in their experiential learning outside of classroom (co-curriculum). The latter is done to create a transformative student experience whilst also creating a friendly, supportive and value driven living environment for those away from home. There are many common denominators in what he does but the most obvious is that of daily involvement and connection with students, staff and the many other role players that are also striving towards the fruition of development in the space.

In Student Governance, he specialises in project management, policy and programme development, governance, and structures development. He serves as the secretary of CIRCoRe's RHCS workstream.

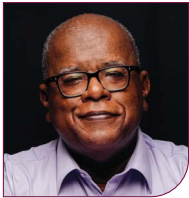
Hlatswayo studied Bachelor of Arts in Social Dynamics majored in Political Science, Sociology, and Public Development Management and he holds a BCom Honours in Public Development Management. Currently pursuing a Masters in Commerce at the School of Public Leadership, Stellenbosch University.



William Horne

William Joshua Horne is a third-year theologian at the Stellenbosch Theological Faculty. He considers Pieke Commuter Student Community (CSC) as home away from home as a student at Stellenbosch University, and he has held leadership positions at the CSC for the past two years. He is a member of the faculty's Sleak programme, entailing volunteering work in Bishop Lavis and providing the elderly with mental and emotional support. Horne is a member of CIRCoRe's RHCS workstream.

Conference Programme Directors, Presenters, Panel Members and Moderators



Prof Jonathan Jansen
(Keynote Address)

Jonathan Jansen is Distinguished Professor of Education at Stellenbosch University and the immediate past President of the Academy of Science of South Africa. He started his career as a high school biology teacher in the Cape and holds a PhD from Stanford University as well as honorary doctorates from four universities, including the University of Edinburgh. He is the author of the award-winning book, *Knowledge in the Blood* (Stanford University Press), and his recent books include *Corrupted* a study of chronic dysfunction in South African universities (2023, Wits University Press), and *The decolonisation of knowledge* (2022, Cambridge University Press).

He was recently inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and will be the Chin Yidan Global Fellow at Harvard University in 2024.



Dr Jerome Joorst

Jerome Joorst is a lecturer in and former chair (2020-2022) of the Department of Education Policy Studies in the Faculty of Education at SU. holds a PhD (Education Policy Studies) from SU. His research interests lie in the sociology of education, particularly young people's navigational skills in educational contexts when faced with adverse conditions. His most recent work is a chapter about commuter students' academic and social lived experiences at Stellenbosch University in an edited volume *The Educational Pathways and experiences of black students at Stellenbosch University* (2023) published by African Sun Media. Joorst is a former residence head and mentor in SU's Schimathus program.



Prof Nico Koopman
(CIRCoRe Secundus Chairperson)

Nico Koopman is Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel at SU, and is a professor of Public Theology and Ethics. He was Dean of the Faculty of Theology at SU. He was founding member and chairperson of the Global Network for Public Theology and is a fellow of the Institute for Theological Inquiry in Princeton, New Jersey. His research focuses on themes like inalienable dignity, healing reconciliation, embracive justice, responsible freedom, equality, as well as the reciprocal and transformative impact of universities on the various spheres of society, including the domains of politics, economics, the natural environment, civil society and public opinion-formation. He is involved in public discourses in the academy, churches and broader society, both locally and internationally.



Christa Kuljian

Christa Kuljian is a science writer and the author of three books – *Sanctuary* (Jacana 2013), *Darwin's Hunch: Science, Race and the Search for Human Origins* (Jacana 2016), which was short listed for the Sunday Times Alan Paton Award for Non-Fiction, and *Our Science, Ourselves: How Gender, Race and Social Movements Shaped the Study of Science*, forthcoming in October from University of Massachusetts Press. Currently a Research Associate at the Wits Institute for Social and Economic Research (WiSER) at Wits University, Kuljian is also a fellow with the Consortium on the History of Science, Medicine and Technology (CHSMT) in Philadelphia.

Conference Programme Directors, Presenters, Panel Members and Moderators



Ilana le Roux

Ilana le Roux is a Lecturer in the Department of Public Law at the University of Pretoria (UP). She holds a BSc in human genetics, an LLB, and an LLM in research, all obtained from UP. She has presented and developed courses on property law, intellectual property law, statutory interpretation, social justice, criminal law, and medical law, and is the former Guardian for the Pretoria Student Law Review (PSLR). Drawing on African Ethics, legal and political philosophy and black radical thought, her ongoing doctoral project contemplates the ways in which new reproductive and human gene editing technologies function as instruments for white supremacist ideology and conquest. Her research interests include human biotechnologies, Azanian socio-political philosophy, critical race theory, and white supremacy.



Katlego Letlonkane

Katlego Letlonkane is the Programme Manager, Diversity Capacity Development – HR Employment Equity and the Promotion of Diversity, SU. She is fascinated by the prospects of human-centred design in how people work and live. Building inclusive societies is a global conversation and one that Letlonkane feels will have a restorative impact in the social, cultural and economic systems of our society. Katlego is passionate about justice. She practiced as a labour lawyer for a few years and spent some time as a People Advisory consultant. At SU, she manages the diversity programme as part of HR in the Employment Equity and Promotion of Diversity portfolio. Katlego is curious about humanity and human behaviour. She holds a Masters in critical diversity studies and a master's degree in law, specialising in Labour Law and is currently a LLD Candidate in the SU Law Faculty, focusing on social justice and labour.



Sibusiso Lukhele

Sibusiso Lukhele has worked in the higher education sector for the past 14 years. Most of these years were spent in the scholarship management sector, where he designed and implemented scholarship programmes for some of the biggest corporates and foundations in South Africa. The scholarships enabled high performing students to study across South Africa's public universities. The scholarship programmes that he designed not only enabled access to university, but also success so that students can graduate within the required time and become active economic participants upon the completion of their degrees. Lukhele has developed into a specialist in the higher education sector and a specialised project manager. In July 2023, he joined SU as the Project Coordinator in the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies



Dr Choice Makhetha

Dr Kelebogile Choice Makhetha has over 20 years of work experience within the public Higher Education sector in South Africa, with 17 years spent at senior and executive levels. She obtained her PhD in Political Science in 2003, at the University of the Free State (UFS), in the field of Elections and Electoral Systems from a South African perspective, funded by the Mellon Foundation. Makhetha is the Senior Director for Student Affairs at SU since 2019. Makhetha is a member of the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Practitioners and served as the President of the Association for four years.

She is a member of the Institutional Audit Committee (IAC) of the Higher Education Quality Committee, reporting to the Council on Higher Education. Makhetha served as the Transformation Advisor in the Office of the Vice Chancellor and Principal, at the Central University of Technology. She also served as the Vice-Rector for Student Affairs and External Relations, among other roles, at UFS. This role included responsibility for Student Affairs, International Relations, Community Engagement and broader external relations, and liaising with government at all levels.

Conference Programme Directors, Presenters, Panel Members and Moderators



Keegan Meiring

Keegan Meiring is a lecturer in the Division of Clinical Anatomy (FMHS) at SU since October 2022. He holds undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Biomedical Science and Forensic Anthropology from the University of the Witwatersrand. In addition to these, he earned a PG Diploma in Financial Planning and an Advanced Diploma in Deceased Estate Administration from the University of the Free State while employed as a financial literacy consultant at Alexander Forbes. His research areas of interest is that of forensic taphonomy, bioethics and policy development.



Dr Zethu Mkhize

Dr Zethu Mkhize is the Director of the Transformation Office at SU. Her responsibilities include providing strategic direction for the Transformation Office which is a multi-facet driver of institutional culture strategies, to enable the transformation of the way the institution creates knowledge and develops the potential of its students and staff. Central to this role is the development of the institutional transformation plan and advancing the implementation thereof.

She holds a DPhil degree in Social Work which she obtained from the University of South Africa, and a Master's Diploma in Human Resource Management from the then Rand Afrikaans University (currently known as the University of Johannesburg). Her leadership management training includes, inter alia, Financial Management and Higher Education Management obtained from Corporate Business & Management Training and Wits Business School, respectively.

Since her registration as a social worker, she has been advocating for social justice at micro-level. This includes enhancing social functioning; upholding self-determination; and promoting well-being for individuals, families, and communities.

She has been working in the Higher Education sector for over 20 years; occupying various roles (as an academic, a research supervisor, and a director for Professional and Administrative Support Staff (PASS) environments. She has worked as a skills development facilitator for Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) accredited programmes. Mkhize's areas of interest are social justice, women empowerment, and policy development. She has published articles and book chapters and has read scientific papers at national and international conferences.



Dimpho Moletsane

Dimpho Moletsane is a PhD candidate and Research Assistant at the African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science (ACEPS) at the University of Johannesburg. His research interests span ethics, social epistemology, and the complexities of post-apartheid South African identity. Moletsane's academic journey began in earnest in their Honours year, with the exploration of how social inequality, exclusion, and segregation can inform conceptions of humour and propriety. For his master's thesis, titled *To Fail to Become South African*, he delved into the moral commitments inherent in post-apartheid South African identity. Moletsane's doctoral study involves an inquiry into conceptions of nonracialism and their potential contributions and subtractions to the realisation of the Rainbow Nation project.



Prof Keymanthri Moodley

Keymanthri Moodley is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of Medicine and Head of the Division of Medical Ethics and Law, Faculty of Health Sciences, SU. The Division was re-designated as a Collaborating Centre in Bioethics in 2023 for the third time by the World Health Organisation (WHO), one of twelve in the world and the first on the African continent. Moodley is also an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Social Medicine, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, USA. She is a specialist family physician, bioethicist, an NRF-rated researcher (established scholar with international recognition) and a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). To date, she has served as Principal Investigator on 5 NIH grants and has over 120 publications (journals, books, book chapters). The Division has trained 40 mid-career professionals from 10 African countries in bioethics and currently has 4 PhD graduates and 4 PhD trainees. Moodley serves on the Scientific Advisory Committee of EDCTP. She currently co-chairs the WHO Working Group on Developing Guidance for Clinical Ethics. Her most recent NIH funded research project explores ethical, legal and social issues (ELSI) in Data Science Innovation in Africa. The group is working on the ELSI of big data and Artificial Intelligence in the African context. Keymanthri is a member of the WHO Ethics and AI Expert Group.

Conference Programme Directors, Presenters, Panel Members and Moderators



Phila Msimang
(RHCS Workstream Head)

Phila M. Msimang is a Senior Lecturer of Philosophy at Stellenbosch University (SU) and the Head of CIRCoRe Workstream IV: Race, Human Categorisation and Science (RHCS). He is the Secretary of the Azanian Philosophical Society and a member of the International Philosophy of Biology Circle among other societies and associations. He is also a member of several international research groups working on the problem of race in science.

His current work deals with the challenges of conceptualising group descriptors in the sciences with the aim to critique or improve their use in research. He has written on the use of group descriptors in the design of public policy and the use and abuse of population descriptors in the human and health sciences. This aspect of his research looks to answer questions about how and under what circumstances classifications of community, identity, socio-political affiliation, social difference, and biological difference become variables of social and scientific significance.



Prof Sibusiso Moyo

Professor Sibusiso Moyo is Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies at SU. Moyo holds a PhD in Mathematics from the University of Natal, Durban and a Masters (with distinction) in Tertiary Education Management from the LH Martin Institute, University of Melbourne Australia. As a scholar, she has published widely in the Mathematical Sciences with a focus on differential equations and optimization problems in international peer reviewed journals. She has also successfully supervised postgraduate students and continues mentoring and supervising at Master's and Doctoral level. She served in various capacities and levels at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) as Associate Director and Professor in the Department of Mathematics, Statistics and Physics and Director Research and Postgraduate Support up to mid-2017. She is currently an Associate Editor for the Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management published by Taylor and Francis and has served as Guest Editor of the Mathematical Methods in the Applied Sciences Journal (published by John Wiley & Sons) and Journal of Engineering Mathematics (published by Springer). Moyo is also board member for Agenda Feminist Media (which hosts the Agenda journal published by Taylor & Francis).



Dr Celeste Nel

Dr Celeste Nel is the Deputy Registrar for Applications, Student Accommodation and Client Services in the Registrar's Responsibility Centre at SU.

Nel was born in Paarl in the Western Cape and matriculated at Paarl Girls' High. She commenced her Bachelor of Arts degree at SU and continued to an Honours degree, followed by a Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching. She completed a master's degree in education in 2001 and a PhD, also in Education, in 2008.

She began her career in higher education as a student recruiter for SU's division for Marketing and Communication in 1997. Her involvement in student recruitment activities led to a keen interest in the challenges that students experience in their transition from school to university – especially first-generation learners from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds. She received her doctorate in Education, titled, The transition from school to university: a theoretical framework for a pre-university intervention, in this field. Nel became the Deputy Director of the Centre for Prospective Students at SU in 2008. The Centre was responsible for marketing and the recruitment of prospective students from diverse background, as well as the offering of career guidance services to prospective students. In October 2013, Nel took up the position as Head: Admissions and Residence Placement within the Centre for Student Access. The Centre for Student Access's focused on ensuring access and supporting the different stages of the enrolment processes from the first initial contact to registration. In her current position as Deputy Registrar for Applications, Student Accommodation and Client Services, access remains a key focus.



Thandile Ngxikwe

Thandile Ngxikwe is a Bachelor of Arts graduate and a PGDip in Sustainable Development student. Ngxikwe is a seasoned student leader that has served in multiple leadership structures and is currently the Societies Council Chairperson. Ngxikwe is a writer, an anti-GBV activist working with the organisation Post2Parliament and an aspiring social scientist.

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**Prof Kanshukan
Rajaratnam**

Kanshukan Rajaratnam is the Director of the School for Data Science and Computational Thinking and an Associate Professor in the Department of Statistics and Actuarial Science at SU. He holds a doctoral degree in systems engineering from the University of Virginia. Prior to his doctoral studies, he worked in industry – Accenture and Nedbank in South Africa and Capital One in the U.S.A. He then taught finance at UCT for nine years. At UCT, he held various leadership positions including Acting Dean of the Commerce Faculty. In the past, his research focus was on the application of data science and operations research in banking and finance. Currently, he is collaborating in research focussing on long covid, vaccine injury, medical ethics, and developing a cross-country database for non-communicable diseases. He is rated by the NRF as an internationally acclaimed researcher.



**Prof Deresh
Ramjugernath**

Prof Deresh Ramjugernath has a BScEng (Chemical) degree from the University of Natal, which he obtained in 1993. He graduated with a PhD in Engineering (Chemical) from the University of Natal in 2001. He is currently the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching at SU. Prior to his appointment at SU, he was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research (March 2017 to December 2020) and Pro Vice-Chancellor: Innovation, Commercialization and Entrepreneurship (March 2013 to February 2017) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He was also the holder of the DST/NRF South Africa Research Chair (SARChI): Fluorine Process Engineering and Separation Technology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal from September 2007 to December 2018 (Interim chair from March 2017 to December 2018). He was appointed full professor of chemical engineering at the age of 31, in January 2004 at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. From July 2007 to December 2011, he also served as the Assistant Dean: Research and Postgraduate Studies in the Faculty of Engineering at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Prior to his appointment as a SARChI Chair, he served as the Head of School of Chemical Engineering (January 2005 to June 2007) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Ramjugernath and his team have worked closely with the chemical industry in South Africa and internationally; and have undertaken numerous contracts and research projects. He has to date published and co-published in excess of 370 peer-reviewed journal papers and over 350 national and international conference papers.



Prof Ciraj Rassool

Prof Ciraj Rassool is senior professor in the Department of Historical Studies and director of the African Programme in Museum and Heritage Studies at the University of the Western Cape. He was the chairperson of the District Six Museum and council chairperson of Iziko Museums of South Africa. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the South African Office of Repatriation and Restitution as well as the Advisory Board of the Von Luschan Collection at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. He is a co-principal investigator of the international collaborative projects, 'Action for Restitution to Africa' and 'Reconnecting "Objects": Epistemic Plurality and Transformative Practices in and beyond Museums'. Rassool is the author of many papers and chapters and is the co-author or co-editor of several books about museums and public culture including *Skeletons in the Cupboard: South African Museums and the Trade in Human Remains, 1907-1917* (2000/2015); *Unsettled History: Making South African Pasts* (2017); *Missing and Missed: Subject, Politics, Memorialisation* (special issue of *Kronos: Southern African Histories*, 44, 2018).



Dr Ronel Retief

Ronel Retief was appointed as Registrar of SU on 1 January 2017. After obtaining her master's degree in Afrikaans Literature from SU, she received a doctoral travel grant from the then Centre for Science Development which enabled her to do the groundwork for her doctoral study at Utrecht University in the Netherlands. She obtained her doctoral degree on the *Construction of the Female Subject in the Poetry of Afrikaans Women Poets since 1970* from SU in 2005.

On her return from the Netherlands, Retief spent five years at the Division of Research Development as Coordinator of Research Funding. In August 2003 she was appointed Deputy Registrar at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences where she spent the next 13 years until her appointment as Registrar. In her role as Registrar, she is part of the VC's management team and is responsible for student administration, governance support, record management and legal services. Ronel has taken on a few large institutional projects, inter alia, rewriting the SU Statute and heading up a high-stakes student administration system implementation project.

Ronel is the vice-chair of the USAf Registrar's Forum and serves on various committees and panels within the higher education sector in South Africa.

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Prof Peter Rule

Prof Peter Rule is an associate professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies and the Centre for Higher and Adult Education in the Faculty of Education at SU. His research interests include various aspects of adult and higher education: adult learning in Africa; dialogue and learning; adult literacies; disability and learning; curriculum; students' conceptions of research; and case study research methodology. He has chaired the boards of a number of educational non-governmental organisations and is a member of Umalusi's Assessment Standards Committee. His books include, *Dialogue and boundary learning* (Sense Publishers, 2015), *Your guide to case study research* (with Vaughn John) (Van Schaik, 2011) and, with co-editors Eli Bitzer and Liezel Frick, *The global scholar: Implications for postgraduate studies and supervision* (Sun Media, in press).



Prof Kathryn Smith

Kathryn Smith is Associate Professor and chair of the Department of Visual Arts at Stellenbosch University. She is an award-winning, interdisciplinary visual artist with a specialization in forensic facial identification and depiction. Embracing art and science as complementary knowledge systems, she works at the interface of artistic, curatorial, archival, forensic, and humanitarian contexts, advocating for vital pracademic exchange between operational, institutional and research environments via practices of critical (re) mediation and networked, transdisciplinary and collaborative research. In 2021, she established VIZ.Lab to support creative research at the interface of art, science, and technology at Stellenbosch University, as well as pracademic research and capacity-building for forensic identification processes and policy. In her work, the forensic and the curatorial represent mutual expressions of critical care for bodies, infrastructures, and non-human things.

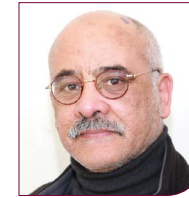
Her creative practice explores the forensic imaginary and related processes of truth-making through multimedia installation, writing, image- and object-making. Major curatorial projects include *Poisoned Past: Legacies of the South African chemical and biowarfare programme* (2016, Nelson Mandela Foundation and touring); *Between Subject and Object: human remains at the interface of art and science* (Michaelis Galleries, 2014); and *Dada South? Exploring Dada legacies in South African art, 1960 to the present* (Iziko South African National Gallery, 2009).



Leza Soldaat

Leza Soldaat is a researcher and academic with a passion for exploring sociological phenomena and promoting social change. She is a PhD Candidate in Sociology at SU, where her research is titled, *Exploring Coloured Identity at Stellenbosch University: An analysis of power dynamics, language politics, and cultural resistance*. By examining these intricate dynamics, Leza aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of identity construction and social interactions in academic settings.

Soldaat is Programme Quality Practitioner at Boston City Campus. The role involves management of the institution's internal quality management system, and she serves an advisory role to the academic committee on all matters related to quality assurance. Previous roles at Boston City Campus included Programme Coordinator, Academic and Quality Manager, and Educator. Additionally, she shares her expertise by lecturing on topics such as Black Feminisms and Feminist Masculinities to Master's candidates, and Sociology of Race to undergraduates at SU.



**Prof Crain Soudien
(Keynote Address)**

Crain Soudien is a sociologist and an emeritus professor in Education and African Studies at the University of Cape Town, an Honorary Professor at Nelson Mandela University, a Distinguished Visiting Professor at the University of Johannesburg and the President of Cornerstone Institute.

An A-rated scientist, he is a fellow of the International Academy of Education, the African Academy of Science, a Senior Fellow of NORRAG, Geneva Graduate Institute, a Chen Yidan Visiting Global Fellow at Harvard University, and a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa.

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Dr Rensu Theart

Dr Rensu Theart is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering at SU, where he has been a faculty member since January 2019. His primary research interests lie at the intersection of image analysis and machine learning, with a strong interdisciplinary approach that spans multiple domains.

Theart's research journey began at the crossroads of electronic engineering and biological science. His early work involved creating visualization and analysis tools to explore molecular structures within cells, aiming to unravel the intricate mechanisms underlying health and disease. This led to the development of a pioneering virtual reality (VR) system designed for 3D visualization of fluorescence microscopy images. This innovative system, which facilitated enhanced control and interaction with 3D cellular images, significantly improved the productivity of biologists by allowing them to conduct colocalization analysis in three dimensions. This work was recognized through two journal papers with a total of 42 citations.



Mx Ashwin Thyssen

Mx Ashwin Afrikanus Thyssen is a Junior Lecturer in the Department of Systematic Theology and Ecclesiology, SU. He is pursuing a joint PhD programme with Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and SU, focusing on the intersection of race and human sexualities, and how Christian theology constructs anthropology. Thyssen's scholarship attempts to make constructive contributions to discourses on Christian history and doctrine. Most recently he co-edited a volume of essays with Professors Juliana Claassens, Steed Davidson, and Charlene van der Walt titled *Queering the Prophet: On Jonah, and Other Activists* (2023, SCM Press).



Dr Caitlin Uren

Dr Caitlin Uren is a researcher within the Division of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics, Stellenbosch University. Caitlin received her PhD in 2017 and went on to complete a five-year post-doctoral fellowship after which she was appointed in a faculty post as part of the Next Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP).

Caitlin's research focuses on characterising genetic diversity in human populations, with a focus on southern Africa. She developed and optimized various computational pipelines and tools to ensure that this immense and unique diversity is correctly described. Further to the population genetic research, Caitlin has been involved in studies that investigate the genetic underpinnings of various diseases and phenotypes including, tuberculosis, COVID-19, primary immunodeficiencies and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).



Dr Leslie Van Rooi

Dr Leslie van Rooi is born in Upington, South Africa. He studied Theology at SU and graduated in 2010 with a doctorate in Church Law and Church History. In 2022 he completes the Advanced Management Programme at INSEAD Business School in Fontainebleau, France.

Van Rooi has published several academic articles and chapters in books. His publications focus on church law, church history, social impact, transformation in higher education and visual redress. He also regularly writes opinion pieces with a focus on higher education, contextual questions, challenges, and opportunities in the context of South Africa. These pieces are published in *Netwerk24*, *Vrye Weekblad*, *News24* and *Daily Maverick*.

After his permanent appointment at SU, Leslie established the Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert (FVZS) Institute for Student Leadership Development (2010) and served as the first head of the Institute. He currently serves as the SU Senior Director for Social Impact and Transformation (since 2018) and is responsible for institutional transformation, the engagement of SU on society (locally and further) as well as relationship management with various sectors and organisations including the Stellenbosch Municipality.

Van Rooi further takes overarching responsibility for the SU Museum and the SU Woordfees and is currently (since 2011) the Residence Head of Simonsberg Residence at SU.

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Dr Handri Walters

Handri Walters graduated with a PhD in social anthropology at the University of Stellenbosch. Her research focuses on race and racial categorization within a broader history of racial science and the interstices between knowledge production, politics and ideology. In this regard her research has delved into the institutional history of Stellenbosch University as related to Afrikaner nationalism, the institutional production of knowledge, and the conceptualization of Afrikaners and its racial others. Recent iterations of her research include a focus on the spectre of racial science in recent scientific studies – including, but not limited to, the field of population genetics. The research has also included ventures into the role of material culture and the museum space, as well as forms of memorialization and restitution within the institutional context.



Dr Sharman Wickham

Dr Sharman Wickham plays several roles in CIRCoRe including as Head of Workstream 2: Compulsory Core Curriculum Embedded in Processes of Academic Renewal, the coordinator for the research project on commuter students (in Workstream :1 Student Life) and in synthesising the project data for reporting purposes.

Over the past 30 years, Wickham has worked primarily as a consultant conducting external programme evaluations for both funders such as the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Ford Foundation and for universities themselves. Many such projects have focused on transformation initiatives. In her work at the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC), Wickham facilitates research partnerships between the four Western Cape universities and two levels of government – the City of Cape Town and the Western Cape Government. Wickham continues to conduct workshops for emerging researchers and writers.



CIRCoRe

Committee for the Institutional
Response to the Commission's
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