



saair

30TH SAAIR CONFERENCE 2023

Future-forward Higher Education – **THE NEXT 30 YEARS**

23–26 OCTOBER 2023

Lord Charles Hotel, Somerset West, Western Cape

Hosted by **Stellenbosch University**



Prof Karen Webber
President of AIR,
University of Georgia



Dr Iman Megahed
AVP, Digital Transformation,
Chief Strategy & Knowledge
Officer at The American
University in Cairo



Dr Nicolene Murdoch
Pro Vice-Chancellor,
Educational Partnerships
and Quality at Western
Sydney University



Prof Ian Cloete
Specialist Project Director,
Information Governance at
Stellenbosch University



www.saair-web.co.za | saairconf@sun.ac.za



08:00-08:45	Registration and tea	
Venue: Somerset 1, 2 & 3		
08:45-09:00	Opening and Welcome	Prof Deresh Ramjugernath , Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching at Stellenbosch University
09:00-12:30	Pre-Conference Workshop 1 Venue: Somerset 1	Dr Nicolene Murdoch GAICD PFHEA, Pro Vice-Chancellor: Educational Partnerships and Quality, Western Sydney University, Sydney Australia Brittany Vermeulen , Sustainability Coordinator, Western Sydney University, Sydney Australia Title: Sustainability Education: Think, Care, Do
	<p>At Western Sydney University (WSU), a critical aspect of our commitment to sustainability is to develop and deliver sustainability literate graduates. Our CORE framework (Curriculum, Operations, Research and Engagement) is incomplete if we don't continuously work on embedding the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into our curriculum content and assessment. Our students learn about sustainability applied to different disciplines and in this way, they are better prepared and equipped for the complexities they will encounter when they enter the world of work in any industry. Some of this is embedded in existing curriculum, and in other instances, we develop programs and learning activities that contribute to the SDGs (or a single SDG).</p> <p>The purpose of the workshop is to explore the key concepts of Sustainability Education as a pedagogical approach resulting in all graduates developing capabilities to lead within their professions and society. The workshop will draw on the experience of curriculum transformation and renewal projects at WSU to develop resilient and sustainability literate graduates across different disciplines, programs and micro-credentials.</p>	
09:00-12:30	Pre-Conference Workshop 2 Venue: Somerset 2	Innocent Mamvura , Data Scientist AI/ML Lead, University of the Witwatersrand Title: Harnessing the Potential of Generative AI Tools in Institutional
	<p>This interactive workshop focuses on leveraging the potential of Generative AI tools, with a special emphasis on ChatGPT, to empower institutional researchers with innovative applications and data-driven insights. ChatGPT, powered by OpenAI's cutting-edge language model, offers a unique opportunity to explore natural language processing capabilities, enabling researchers to interact with AI systems like never before.</p> <p>The workshop will commence with an introduction to Generative AI, providing participants with a foundational understanding of its principles and the distinctive role of language models in driving human-machine interactions. Attendees will gain insight into the architecture and training process behind ChatGPT, appreciating its strengths and limitations in the context of institutional research.</p> <p>Through hands-on sessions, participants will have the opportunity to engage directly with ChatGPT, learning how to create conversational agents, generate text-based content, and curate responses. By exploring real-world use cases, attendees will discover how ChatGPT can be harnessed to augment institutional research in various domains.</p>	
09:00-10:30	Pre-Conference Workshop 3 Venue: Somerset 3	Tristan Horlick Regional Manager – Africa THE (Times Higher Education) Title: Reflections from the World University Rankings 2024 – Southern Africa

	<p>Times Higher Education's (THE) World University Rankings 2024 are the largest in THE's history, with 2,500 universities from over 100 countries around the world submitting data; the latest ranking is a celebration of the world's leading research-intensive universities.</p> <p>Join THE in this Masterclass where we will analyse the recent WUR 2024 results, as well as explore regional performances and year-on-year trends from Southern African universities.</p> <p>This session will also include an overview of WUR 3.0, the new THE World University Rankings methodology introduced in the 2024 edition of the ranking. Furthermore, we will explore the performance of Southern African universities and how they compare against their peers across Africa and the rest of the world.</p>	
11:00-12:30	<p>Pre-Conference Workshop 4</p> <p>Venue: Somerset 3</p>	<p>Jerall Toi Deputy Director: Information Policy, Strategic Initiatives & Information Governance, Stellenbosch University Title: Personal Information Impact Assessments for Institutional Researchers</p>
	<p>In 2018, the Information Regulator (South Africa) published the Regulations Relating to the Protection of Personal Information wherein the Regulator made clear that "a personal information impact assessment is done to ensure that adequate measures and standards exist in order to comply with the conditions for the lawful processing of personal information". However, the Regulator has not been prescriptive about how and when to execute such an assessment. This may cause some uncertainty amongst institutional researchers about how to best give effect to the right to privacy in their day-to-day.</p> <p>This workshop aims to help address this gap for institutional researchers and SAAIR stakeholders. Drawing on international practice and more recent South African developments, this practical-focused workshop will introduce delegates to the legislative background behind impact assessments, equip them with the tools to execute self-assessments, and empower them to seek additional guidance when needed.</p>	
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
14:00	End of day	
17:00-19:00	<p>Social gathering: Ken Forrester Vineyard (Group 1)</p> <p>Own transport to and from the venue - 6km from Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset West</p>	

Day 1: 24 October 2023			
08:00-09:00	Tea and Registration		
Plenary Session 1 Venue: Somerset 1, 2 & 3 Chair: René Robbertze & Prof Ian Cloete, Stellenbosch University			
09:00-09:25	Welcome Remarks by SAAIR President	Ms. Liile Lekena, SAAIR President and Director: Strategic Planning in the Directorate of Institutional Planning and Research at the Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT)	
09:25-09:35	Introduction of Vice-Chancellor	Prof Ian Cloete, Stellenbosch University	
09:35-10:00	Opening of Conference	Provisional: Prof Wim De Villiers, Vice-Chancellor: Stellenbosch University	
10:00-10:05	Introduction of Keynote Speaker	Prof Ian Cloete, Stellenbosch University	
10:05-10:50	First Keynote Address	Prof Karen Webber, Professor emerita in the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia and the past-president of AIR Title: Facing Forward: The Future of IR in Higher Education	
10:50-11:10	Morning Tea Break		
11:10-11:40	Sponsor 1 presentation	Quantum Solutions	
11:40-11:55	Question and Answer session		
11:55-12:00	Introduction of Keynote Speaker	René Robbertze, Stellenbosch University	
12:00-12:45	Second Keynote Address	Prof Ian Cloete, Past Senior Director: Division for Information Governance, Stellenbosch University Title: Data & Analytics in Higher Education	
12:45-13:00	Conference Delegates Networking		
13:00-14:00	Lunch break		
Parallel Sessions			
	Venue: Somerset 1 Topic 1 Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years	Venue: Somerset 2 Topic 2 Innovative Future Research to Advance Education: Or is it?	Venue: Somerset 3 Topic 3 Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision-Making
14:00-14:30	1.1: Presenter(s): Bonza Majosi, Juan-Claude Lemmens & Herman Janse van Vuuren Affiliation: University of Pretoria, South Africa Title: Leveraging Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to	2.1: Presenter(s): Tatiana Sango & Sanet Steyn Affiliation: University of Cape Town, South Africa Title: Augmenting the role of a subject matter expert in the	3.1: Presenter(s): Graham Dampier Affiliation: University of Johannesburg, South Africa Title: We Need New Measures: A Case for the Progress Rate in Higher Education

Day 1: 24 October 2023			
	streamline analytics processing	assessment development life cycle with ChatGPT	
14:30-15:00	1.2: Presenter(s): Juliet Townes & Yonela Liwani Affiliation: University of Fort Hare, South Africa Title: Personality and perceived stress amongst the youth in South Africa	2.2: Presenter(s): Rohan Posthumus Affiliation: University of the Free State, South Africa Title: Build your own ChatGPT: Leveraging Large Language Models for Personalized Tutoring	3.2: Presenter(s): Elizabeth Booï Affiliation: University of the Western Cape, South Africa Title: Exploring the difference between first-year expectations and experiences during COVID-19
15:00-15:15	Afternoon Tea		
	Venue: Somerset 1 Topic 1 (continued) <i>Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years</i>	Venue: Somerset 2 Topic 4 <i>Sustainability, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and Higher Education</i>	Venue: Somerset 3 Topic 3 (continued) <i>Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision-Making</i>
15:15-15:45	1.3: Presenter(s): Dr. Riashna Sithaldeen, Jaamia Galant, Kende Kefale & Precious Mudavanhu Affiliation: University of Cape Town, South Africa Title: Adapting a model of a business intelligence competency centre for student success work in higher education	4.1: Presenter(s): Herman Visser & Barry Ackers Affiliation: UNISA, South Africa Title: The integration of sustainable development and integrated reporting by South African universities	3.3: Presenter(s): Marianne Bester Affiliation: Stellenbosch University, South Africa Title: Advancing future-oriented and learning-centred programme review
15:45-16:15	1.4: Presenter(s): Francois Strydom & Sonja Loots Affiliation: University of the Free State, South Africa Title: Understanding and responding to systemic changes: The role of institutional researchers in guiding decision-makers	4.2: Presenter(s): Eleanor Johannes Affiliation: UNISA, South Africa Title: "Quality is Sustainability, and Sustainability is Quality": Lessons learnt from an Institutional Audit	3.4: Presenter(s): Randhir Rawatlal Affiliation: University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa Title: The role of hyper-parameter models in achieving robust student success models.
16:15	End of day 1		
17:00-19:00	Social gathering: Ken Forrester Vineyard (Group 2) Own transport to and from the venue - 6km from Lord Charles Hotel in Somerset West		


Day 2: 25 October 2023			
08:00-09:00	Tea and Registration		
Plenary Session 2 - Venue: Somerset 1, 2 & 3 Chair: René Robbertze & Prof Ian Cloete, Stellenbosch University			
09:00-09:10	Welcome Remarks Chairperson	Prof Ian Cloete, Stellenbosch University	
09:10-09:15	Introduction of Keynote Speaker	Ms René Robbertze, Stellenbosch University	
09:15-10:00	Third Keynote Address	Dr Nicolene Murdoch GAICD PFHEA Pro Vice-Chancellor: Educational Partnerships and Quality Western Sydney University, Sydney Australia Title: An integrated approach to sustainability and resilience: Lessons from Western Sydney University’s journey to being #1 in the world	
10:00-10:30	Sponsor presentation 2	Francois Hayes, Facility Manager MAPS/WORKS	
10:30-10:45	Questions and Answer session		
10:45-11:30	Morning Tea Break and Conference Photograph Session		
Venue: Somerset 1,2 & 3			
SAAIR AGM			
11:30-12:45	SAAIR AGM	Ms. Liile Lekena, SAAIR President & the SAAIR Exco	
13:00-14:00	Lunch Break		
	Parallel Sessions		
	Venue: Somerset 1 Topic 1 (continued) Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years	Venue: Somerset 2 Topic 4 (continued) Sustainability, the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and Higher Education	Venue: Somerset 3 Topic 3 (continued) Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision- Making
14:00-14:30	1.5: Presenter(s): Mark Mason Affiliation: The Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Title: Complexity Theory and the Enhancement of Learning at the University of Cape Town	4.3: Presenter(s): Benjamin Ntshabele & Katlego Rulin Sebesho Affiliation: SAAIR Title: Socio-Economic Background and Educational Aspirations of First-Time Entering First-Year Students: 2023 SMU Survey	3.5: Presenter(s): Kavita Beemsen & Mathole Macwele Affiliation: Durban University of Technology, South Africa Title: ENVISION2030 Strategy Tracker: DUT’s Creative. Distinctive. Impactful.’ MEL tool for Strategic Reflection
14:30-15:00	1.6: Presenter(s): Emetia Swart & Flip Schutte Affiliation: Regenesys Business School, South Africa	4.4: Presenter(s): Kirsten Lucas & Pieter Nagel Affiliation: University of Limpopo	3.6: Presenter(s): Siphelo Mapolisa & Angelo Fynn Affiliation: UNISA, South Africa


Day 2: 25 October 2023			
	Title: A consumer behaviour framework when choosing a Private Higher Education Institution	Title: What happened to the locus of control of internal quality assurance under conditions of disruption?	Title: 2022 Unisa Graduate Exit Survey: Tracing Employment Trajectories Post-graduation
15:00-15:15	Afternoon Tea		
	Venue: Somerset 1 Topic 1 (continued) <i>Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years</i>	Venue: Somerset 2 Topic 5 <i>Open Topic</i>	Venue: Somerset 3 Topic 3 (continued) <i>Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision-Making</i>
15:15-15:45	1.7: Presenter(s): Jan-Hendrik Viljoen Affiliation: North-West University, South Africa Title: Leveraging Large Language Models for Knowledge management in Universities: A proof of concept	5.1: Presenter(s): Brian Turigye Affiliation: Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Uganda Title: Using Innovative and Reflexive Pedagogies that Stimulate learning in Healthcare Students across continents	3.7: Presenter(s): Lerato Tladi Affiliation: UNISA, South Africa Title: Understanding the final year experience: Lessons from the University of South Africa
15:45-16:15	1.8: Presenter(s): Siphamandla Handsome Nyathikazi, Naveena Moodley & Vasu Chetty Affiliation: University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa Title: The adoption of E-Learning as a remote teaching and learning methodology in tertiary institutions during Covid-19: A case study of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal	5.2: Presenter(s): Emily Mabote Affiliation: Tshwane University of Technology, South Africa Title: Enablers and Constraints of an integrated quality approach: A Case for Tshwane University of Technology	3.8: Presenter(s): Randhir Rawatlal & Rubby Dhunpath Affiliation: University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa Title: Identification of Gatekeeper Courses: An application of Graph Theory to Institutional Research
16:45	End of Day 2		
18:00-22:00	Gala Dinner Venue: Lord Charles Ballroom Dress Code: Smart Theme: Black & White Masquerade		



Day 3: 26 October 2023			
08:00-09:00	Registration and Tea		
Plenary Session 3 Venue: Somerset 1, 2 & 3			
09:00-09:10	Welcome Remarks Chairperson	Ms Liile Lekena, SAAIR President and Director Strategic Planning: Directorate of Institutional Planning and Research Mangosuthu University of Technology	
09:10-09:15	Introduction of Keynote Speaker	Prof Ian Cloete, Stellenbosch University	
09:15-10:00	Fourth Keynote Address	Dr Iman Megahed, the AVP for Digital Transformation, Chief Strategy and Knowledge Officer at the American University in Cairo (AUC).	
10:00-10:30	Sponsor presentation 3	Glen Barnes - IDSC	
10:30-10:45	Questions and Answer session		
10:45-11:00	Morning Tea Break		
Parallel Sessions			
	Venue: Somerset 1 Topic 3 (continued) Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision- Making	Venue: Somerset 2 Topic 3 (continued) Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision- Making	Venue: Somerset 3 Topic 3 (continued) Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision- Making
11:00-11:30	1.9: Presenter(s): Marianne Engelbrecht & Lessing Labuschagne Affiliation: UNISA, South Africa Title: Unbundling researcher development: Applying Causal Layered Analysis to understand the present conditions and preferred futures of researcher development in South Africa.	3.9: Presenter(s): André Müller Affiliation: Stellenbosch University, South Africa Title: “Unconscionable.” Institutional audits, the QAF and the darkness that lies ahead.	3.10: Presenter(s): Junaid King & Muleka Nengwani Affiliation: MANCOSA, South Africa Title: The Impact of the Metaverse on Higher Education in South Africa: Afro-Centric Framework for the Metaverse in Higher Education
11:30-12:00	1.10: Presenter(s): Elizabeth Archer Affiliation: University of the Western Cape Title: Friend or Enemy! Jealously guarding borders Academia from ChatGPT	3.11: Presenter(s): Enna Moroeroe & Frank Magaya Affiliation: University of the Free State, South Africa Title: Graduate Destination Survey (GDS)	3.12: Presenter(s): Benjamin Tlhale Ntshabele Affiliation: SAAIR, South Africa Title: Graduate Employability Study 2023: Employment Outcomes and Challenges for Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University Graduates


12:00-12:30	<p>1.11: Presenters: Hossein Masoumi Karakani, Catherine Naik, Papama Somgede and Mxolisi Masango</p> <p>Affiliation: University of Pretoria</p> <p>Title: Fostering student achievement by cultivating essential soft skills: Insights from an advanced analytics standpoint</p>	<p>3.13: Presenter(s): Remy Nnadozie</p> <p>Affiliation: Rhodes University, South Africa</p> <p>Title: Towards a Performance Scorecard for Enrolment Planning for Public Higher Education Institutions in South Africa</p>	<p>3.14: Presenter(s): Mthimkhulu Mafaesa</p> <p>Affiliation: University of the Free State, South Africa</p> <p>Title: Is it Working? - Assessing the Effectiveness of Nudging UFS Students</p>
12:30-13:00	<p>1.12: Presenter(s): Kat Yassim; Chinaza Uleanya & Ademola Omotosho</p> <p>Affiliation: University of Johannesburg & CPUT</p> <p>Title: Coevolutionary Theory: Towards Integrating A Sustainability Framework In Higher Education Institutions</p>	<p>3.15: Presenter(s): Papama Somgede, Catherine Naik, Hossein Masoumi Karakani & Mxolisi Masango</p> <p>Affiliation: University of Pretoria</p> <p>Title: Predicting Student Disruption in Political Activism: Safeguarding Institutional Sustainability in South African Higher Education</p>	<p>3.16: Presenter(s): Thato Mnguni</p> <p>Affiliation: University of Johannesburg</p> <p>Title: Exploring survey administration and cybersecurity</p>
13:15-13:30	Conference closure		
13:30	Lunch & departure		

First Keynote Address	Prof Karen Webber Professor emerita in the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia and the past-president of AIR	
Title:	Facing Forward: The Future of IR in Higher Education	
Abstract: Higher education continues to evolve in our post-pandemic world, and Institutional Research must evolve too. In this keynote presentation, Prof Webber will identify key issues that impact the higher education sector and will offer suggestions on how IR professionals can contribute to keeping higher education relevant and valued.		
Biography: Prof Karen Webber		
<p>Karen Webber is a professor emerita in the Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia. She holds her Ph.D. from The University of Maryland College Park. Prior to joining the IHE faculty on a full-time basis, she served as director of institutional research and interim associate provost for institutional effectiveness at the University of Georgia. Webber came to UGA in 2003, following a 15-year tenure in the Office of Institutional Research & Planning at the University of Delaware.</p> <p>She has published research on a number of issues related to institutional effectiveness in higher education including faculty roles and work productivity, graduate education, gender equity in higher education, undergraduate research, and capacity building in institutional research. Her primary research interests remain cantered on the assessment of academic, cognitive, and psychosocial growth of college students, with additional interests in gender studies, and higher education data management.</p> <p>Webber is the recipient of the 2018 Sidney Suslow Scholar award, which is the highest honour the Association for Institutional Research (AIR) bestows on an individual. AIR recognizes a member who has made extraordinary contributions through scholarly work to the field of institutional research and advanced understanding of the profession in a meaningful way. Webber was nominated and selected for this honour by her AIR peers.</p> <p>Webber is currently president of AIR (2022-2023). She remains active in other national and regional professional organizations including ASHE and SCUP. Webber was president of the North East Association for Institutional Research (1998-99) and received the NEAIR Distinguished Service Award in November 2004. Through 2009, she served as chair of AIR’s Professional Development Services Committee, has previously served on the Membership and Nomination Committees, and is a faculty member in the annual AIR Foundations Institute. In 2016 Webber received the Distinguished Service Award from SCUP.</p> <p>She collaborates with colleagues around the world on IR, decision support, and academic planning in higher education. Webber travels to other countries to assist with improvements in higher education, with recent stops in Croatia, South Africa, and the UK.</p>		

Second Keynote Address	Prof Ian Cloete Past Senior Director: Division for Information Governance, Stellenbosch University	
Title:	Data & Analytics in Higher Education	
Abstract:		
Biography: Prof Ian Cloete		
Prof Ian Cloete led the analytics and business intelligence functions for strategic planning and decision-making at Stellenbosch University (SU), executing the typical functions of a Chief Data & Analytics Officer (CDAO). Aspects of this mandate include data integration, quality assurance, modelling, scenario development, business analysis, digitalisation, process re-engineering, machine learning and artificial intelligence to support the		

management, organisational development and positioning of SU both locally and internationally, thereby facilitating a data-led institution in governance, strategies and tactics. He developed novel models for effectiveness and efficiency for SU, including a score card for its Strategic Framework. He has led the design of frameworks for the implementation of legislation (e.g. POPIA), policies and regulations relating to privacy, information management, information security, data classification, and more. Stellenbosch University recognized these achievements with a Chancellor's Award in 2022.

He is a Senior Life Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE). He is a member of the IEEE Computational Intelligence Society and participated in its founding, as well as the establishment of its first three academic journals. He contributed to the founding of the World Congress on Computational Intelligence (WCCI) series of conferences which united different societies in artificial neural networks world-wide. He served on numerous international conference programme committees, chaired renowned international conferences, was invited keynote speaker many times and served as associate editor for 8 academic journals in the disciplines of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Neural Networks, Knowledge-Based Neurocomputing and Fuzzy Logic. He arranged many special sessions at conferences to exhibit and promote these disciplines, specifically on the topic of knowledge-based neurocomputing which unites symbolic AI and neural networks. He started his academic career at SU in Computer Science and was appointed as professor at a young age. In 1999 he was appointed as Professor of Computational Intelligence at the International University in Germany (IU), and subsequently served as Dean of the School of Information Technology and as President and CEO of the IU. He led the accreditation, quality assurance and educational reforms of the Bologna process in Europe for the IU, and established novel curricula and teaching methodologies, which he often presented as invited keynote speaker at the Future of Europe Summit series of conferences hosted by the government of Andorra.

Third Keynote Address	Dr Nicolene Murdoch GAICD PFHEA Pro Vice-Chancellor: Educational Partnerships and Quality, Western Sydney University, Sydney Australia	
Title:	An integrated approach to sustainability and resilience: Lessons from Western Sydney University's journey to being #1 in the world	
<p>Abstract: In 2021, Western Sydney University (WSU) launched an innovative Sustainability and Resilience Decadal Strategy (SRDS 2030) which sets out our ambitions around sustainability, social justice, and environmental stewardship. The strategy outlines 9 priority statements that provides us with focus and is embedded in the CORE framework (Curriculum, Operations, Research, Engagement) of our institution. The statements present us with challenges and opportunities and have been informed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) blueprint. This was a proud moment for the University, to see our sector-leading efforts to drive social transformation recognised through our ranking.</p> <p>During the keynote, learnings will be shared of the strategy development process and managing the implementation of this in an integrated way across the institution. This is an aspirational strategy, but also a tool to frame our work and plans aligned with the SDGs and the linkages with a host of strategies and plans developed in various areas across the University. It shares experiences of filtering this down to operational, divisional, and academic plans. The SRDS 2030 is owned and driven locally by staff and students across the institution.</p> <p>Significant effort has been put to increase engagement and ownership of the strategy across the university community. An innovative engagement platform was developed and launched which enables staff and students to submit their work, research, events, efforts, and activities, aligning it directly to the strategy. In this way impact can be measured. The platform reflects the philosophy of the SRDS, making it a living document that engages staff and students and continuously creating awareness and giving visibility of progress.</p> <p>Further lessons around governance and reporting, thought leadership and research, teaching, learning and curriculum and partnerships will be shared. It is evident that students, partners and communities want to be</p>		

associated with an institution committed to sustainability. In closing, reflections will be shared on the benefits and importance of universities leading sustainability and resilience efforts and how WSU is leveraging our sustainability work to reconnect across the institution, within our Western Sydney community and all over the world.

Biography: Dr Nicolene Murdoch

Nicolene Murdoch commenced her career in higher education at her alma mater, the University of Johannesburg in 2000. Whilst completing her Masters in Adult Education, she worked as a graduate assistant administering student satisfaction and teaching evaluation surveys. This was a key step in igniting her passion for higher education and quality improvement. She progressed over the last 20 years from a graduate assistant to lecturer and executive, and obtained her doctorate in Higher Education Management from the University of Liverpool in the United Kingdom.

She was subsequently recruited to Monash South Africa (MSA), where she worked for almost 12 years. The campus was founded and established by Monash University, Australia (Go8) in 2001. It grew from about 200 students when she joined, to over 4000 when she left in 2016. She served MSA in various roles, the last two years as Chief Operating Officer (COO).

Her career at MSA provided her with extensive experience managing all aspects of campus life, educational provision from foundation studies, through to internationally recognized degrees and Higher Degrees by Research (HDRs). She also gained extensive experience about the Australian regulatory context, with the challenging task of adhering to both the South African and Australian accreditation requirements, ensuring compliance across different jurisdictions.

Laureate International Universities acquired shares in the MSA campus in 2013 and extended this to be the sole shareholder by 2015. This introduced Nicolene to a vibrant, innovative, multinational education company and extended her international higher education management experience beyond South Africa and Australia. She was responsible for 2 rounds of extensive pre-acquisition due diligence and all governance and reporting requirements of a publicly listed company, achieving commercial success and driving quality educational outcomes. She was inducted into the Laureate network in the United States, Paris, Turkey and Spain.


After spending more than 15 years in a very vibrant South African higher education environment, she took on a new challenge for her own professional and personal growth. Laureate afforded her the opportunity to relocate to Sydney, Australia in May 2016. She initially held the position of Director (Product Management), guiding innovative course development across the education brand entities in Australia and New Zealand.

After a few months in Australia, she was promoted to the role of Program Director of a global Laureate project, responsible for the new Student Information System (SIS) implementation, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and to rethink the digital experience of Laureate students across the network. The systems roll-out was aligned with an extensive process alignment exercise called E2G – Enrolment to Graduation – focusing on the student lifecycle and ensuring a seamless user experience, a quality learning experience and connecting with students on various mobile platforms. She was then promoted to Vice President (Student Administration).

She commenced as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the pathway college of Western Sydney University in July 2018. The College is a wholly owned entity of the University providing high-quality academic pathway programs, complemented by English language courses and proficiency testing, as well as offering a suite of vocational programs to students and business clients. She is a proud graduate of the Australian Institute for Company Directors (GAICD) and she is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (PFHEA) in the UK.

After four years at The College, she has now taken up the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor, Educational Partnerships and Quality (EPQ) at Western Sydney University within the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President Academic. As PVC, she provides high-level advice and counsel to the University's Senior Executive and contributes to Western Sydney University's success by enhancing the suite of quality educational programs and lead the implementation of a new whole-of-university approach to program quality. The portfolio

also provides strategic support to the academic schools and the essential governance oversight required over the expanding suite of local and international third-party providers, educational and placement partners. She is responsible for an exciting and sector-leading “Students as Partners” program, where students participate in co-design of curriculum with industry, and she is overseeing the implementation of the innovative Sustainability and Resilience Decadal Strategy (SRDS) of Western Sydney University, which was launched in 2021.

Fourth Keynote Address	Dr Iman Megahed The AVP for Digital Transformation, Chief Strategy and Knowledge Officer at the American University in Cairo (AUC).	
Title:		
Abstract:		
Biography: Dr Iman Megahed		
<p>Iman Megahed is the AVP for Digital Transformation, Chief Strategy and Knowledge Officer at the American University in Cairo (AUC). In her capacity as Chief Strategy and Knowledge Officer, she is responsible for institutional effectiveness functions: strategic planning, assessment, accreditation, institutional surveys, institutional research and business process improvement. She founded the business intelligence and data governance functions to support informed based decision making.</p> <p>In her capacity as AVP for Digital Transformation, she is responsible for laying the University digital transformation strategy, its execution and tracking. This includes Information Security; University Infrastructure; University Technology Solutions and Systems; Academic Computing Support Services and Operational Excellence functions.</p> <p>Previously she held a number of positions including Executive Director of Data Analytics and Institutional Research (DAIR), and Director of Online Student Services. She founded the office of Online Student Services which applied web services and portal technology to enhance student services. She also founded the Business Intelligence team as the main driver for data and advanced analytics in support of decision making.</p> <p>Iman also teaches in the School of Business at AUC on a part-time basis with a specialization in courses on Business Fundamentals, Ethics, Human Resource Management and Management Information Systems.</p> <p>With a successful track record in administrative positions in Higher Education since 1992, Iman has accumulated extensive technical expertise, unique project management skills coupled with solid results-oriented leadership style and profound understanding of institutional effectiveness and informed based decision making. Iman earned her PhD in Organizational Behaviour from Cairo University and her MBA and BS in Computer Science with honours from The American University in Cairo.</p>		

Topic 1: Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years

1.1	Presenters: Bonza Majozi, Juan-Claude Lemmens and Herman Janse van Vuuren	Title: Leveraging Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to streamline analytics processing
<p>Abstract: There is increased demand for Higher Education (HE) researchers to provide near ‘real-time’ analytics of institutional data for timely decision-making. This demand however requires more agile strategies, that add to existing challenges in HE, including the availability of data that may only exist in silos, technological adoption, and keeping up with disruptive technologies. Thus, HE institutions globally have to rethink their digital transformation strategies in the COVID-19 aftermath, and popularization of artificial intelligence tools. Institutional systems need to continue to serve students and staff, and remain socially, technologically, and organizationally relevant.</p> <p>In this paper, we discuss the implementation of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) technology as a driver for good Business Process Management (BPM) for analytics. By providing a reflection on our experience implementing RPA, we argue that both BPM and RPA are critical for digital transformation. We elaborate on institutional analytics processes, quick wins, resource needs, and capacity required to implement RPA projects.</p>		
1.2	Presenters: Juliet Townes and Yonela Liwani	Title: Personality and perceived stress amongst the youth in South Africa
<p>Abstract: Personality is an imperative factor in dealing with stress and challenging environments. Several studies have examined the impact of personality on academic stress. However, limited literature concentrates on the relationship between South African higher education youth, personality constructs, and perceived stress. The current study adds validity to previous research by adding the unique perspective of these participants. The main objective of this study was to examine the relationship between personality and perceived stress among South African university students. The participants in this study were 187 university students enrolled at a South African university. Participants completed the Big Five Inventory and the Perceived Stress Scale. The study concluded that personality is significant in determining the perceived stress levels of students. The study recommends various initiatives to assist tertiary students enhance their self-awareness and emotional intelligence to improve their stress tolerance levels, academic performance, and overall well-being.</p>		
1.3	Presenters: Dr. Riashna Sithaldeen, Jaamia Galant, Kende Kefale and Precious Mudavanhu	Title: Adapting a model of a business intelligence competency centre for student success work in higher education
<p>Abstract: Recognizing the ethical and sustainability aspects of student success, the University of Cape Town (UCT) implemented data analytics as a key strategy by adapting a business intelligence competency centre (BICC) model. The university established a comprehensive project to integrate data-informed approaches to student success, to improve outcomes and reduce achievement gaps. To implement this strategy, UCT formed a cross-functional team called Data Analytics for Student Success (DASS). The team conducted surveys, designed interventions, created dashboards, provided staff development, and developed a data dictionary. The adoption of the BICC-like approach brought multiple perspectives, broke down silos, and created a community of collaboration around data analytics for student success and data-informed decision making. The project emphasised the importance of institutional research and a student-centred approach. Overall, the DASS model demonstrates the value of cross-function, student-centred data analytics in supporting sustainable student success and future-oriented decision making in higher education.</p>		
1.4	Presenters: Francois Strydom and Sonja Loots	Title: Understanding and responding to systemic changes: The role of institutional researchers in guiding decision-makers
<p>Abstract: While most contact-based higher education institutions have returned to predominantly face-to-face modes of learning and teaching in the wake of the pandemic, the urgency towards leveraging technology in</p>		

institutions is likely to continue growing. Research conducted during the pandemic showed that, while students and staff are eager to continue with blended learning and teaching, there are many considerations, such as equal access to resources and infrastructure, digital skills, and appropriate pedagogical integration of educational technology, among others, that need attention (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2020; Council on Higher Education, 2021).

In response to these and other needs, the REconceptualising LeArning and TEaching (RELATE) Project was conceptualized by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to reimagining learning and teaching futures in higher education, and to develop some of the quality assurance artefacts that are required for these futures. As part of this broad project, the University of the Free State and Nelson Mandela University contributed two extensive reports on the state of student success during and after the pandemic to help guide the sector's thinking about future focus needs.

1.5	Presenter: Mark Mason	Title: Complexity Theory and the Enhancement of Learning at the University of Cape Town
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Abstract: In the post-Apartheid era South Africa's universities have faced serious questions about the quality of their student learning in the face of near impossible challenges. The University of Cape Town has launched a range of initiatives to support and enhance student learning. These initiatives, designed with a common purpose, are of course intended to work together so that their effects might be compounded and realized in enhanced student learning outcomes. Drawing substantially on the power of compounding, complexity theory offers unique insights into how and why things change – and also into how and why things remain largely the same or inexorably grind towards failure. The networked initiatives undertaken by UCT constitute a case of learning enhancement that is also well explained and understood in terms of complexity theory. This paper draws on concepts from complexity theory both to understand how learning might be enhanced in higher education institutions in severely straitened circumstances and to offer insights for education leaders and policy-makers in this domain.

1.6	Presenters: Emetia Swart and Flip Schutte	Title: A consumer behaviour framework when choosing a Private Higher Education Institution
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Abstract: The aim of the article is to introduce a conceptual framework on the consumer decision making process when individuals are choosing a Private Higher Education Institution in South Africa. Private higher education providers fulfil a pivotal role in the country as there is a growing need for higher education in South Africa. This framework can be implemented by management of the Private Higher Education Institutions in South Africa in order to have more effective and fitting marketing strategies and policies that will enable these Private Higher Education Institutions to target a larger market. This study used a qualitative research design in the form of 23 semi-structured interviews with students enrolled in three Private Higher Education Institutions in South Africa. This conceptual framework highlights two major factors from the conclusions. Firstly, this study's conceptual framework excludes the decision-making steps because none of the participants followed these steps when deciding where to study. Secondly, contributing factors that PHEI's have to consider when targeting a larger share of the market were added to the conceptual framework of this study.

1.7	Presenter: Jan-Hendrik Viljoen	Title: Leveraging Large Language Models for Knowledge management in Universities: A proof of concept
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Abstract: Due to the sheer quantity of documentation generated in Higher Education environments, knowledge management of these documents is extremely challenging. The booming field of Artificial Intelligence, especially the field of Large Language Models, creates an opportunity to address the issue of access and processing of the content of institutional and relevant sector documentation. The aim of this qualitative research project is to design a customized Large Language Model chatbot to help with knowledge management. This pilot study used the North-West University as a research unit. The results of this research have already shown that it is possible to design such a chatbot and to train it with institutional documentation. This chatbot will promote institutional knowledge management by allowing users access to specific insights and to determine key drivers, enablers, risks, and opportunities faster.

1.8	Presenter: Siphamandla Handsome Nyathikazi	Title: The adoption of E-Learning as a remote teaching and learning methodology in tertiary institutions during Covid-19: A case study of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
<p>Abstract: This research was a case study that sought to explore if the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) is ready to adopt E-learning as a fully-fledged method of teaching and learning during Covid-19. The advent of the Coronavirus (Alsoud and Harasis 2021) in South Africa was confirmed by the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) on the 5th of March 2020. Since then, academic institutions at all levels have been grappling with the ways of delivering education in a safe mode that could prevent the spread of the pandemic. This prompted the need for academic institutions to adopt a fully ledged E-learning methodology in teaching and learning. Consequently, the aim of the study was to explore the readiness of the academics to adopt the E-learning methodology. Such readiness was explored through the application of the study objectives that were aimed at academic staff's satisfaction level with the change, challenges that were experienced by the academic staff during the adoption process, the impact of E-learning on academics' work and personal lives as well as the improvement of such methodology for the benefit of the institution.</p>		
1.9	Presenters: Marianne Engelbrecht and Lessing Labuschagne	Title: Unbundling researcher development: Applying Causal Layered Analysis to understand the present conditions and preferred futures of researcher development in South Africa.
<p>Abstract: Strategic plans of universities have a strong focus on the promotion of reputable and impactful research and innovation, as well as the promotion of distinguished scholarship, that in turn compels the professional development of researchers. Unbundling what is currently happening in the realm of researcher development and how adequate support can be provided to researchers, should be pre-empted by the mapping of the inner dimension of the institution and the lived experiences of its researchers. For this paper, the critical futures methodology of Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) was used to guide an inquiry into the causes of phenomena surrounding current researcher development practices within a distance-learning institution. This consisted of undertaking a qualitative structural analysis of the lived experiences of researchers in order to obtain a holistic understanding of what it means to be successful as a researcher and how it can be used to develop and design the preferred future of an enabling and inclusive researcher development eco-system in the disruptive environment of Society 5.0.</p>		
1.10	Presenter: Elizabeth Archer	Title: Friend or Enemy! Jealously guarding borders Academia from ChatGPT
<p>Abstract: This paper explores the contentious relationship between academia and artificial intelligence (AI), focusing on tools like ChatGPT. While AI has significantly influenced higher education and job markets, its increasing accessibility challenges traditional academic structures, raising concerns about academic integrity. The professional sector's rapid adoption of AI contrasts with the conservative approach of higher education institutions. The study highlights the importance of integrating AI into curricula to maintain competitiveness and relevance in this rapidly evolving landscape. The concept of micro-credentialisation is introduced as a potential solution to keep pace with AI advancements. The paper advocates for universities to recognise AI's transformative potential, foster continuous learning, and prepare students for a future shaped by digitalisation and automation.</p>		
1.11	Presenter: King Solomon Hailemariam	Title: Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years using Business IT Alignment
<p>Abstract: This research paper examines the role of Business IT Alignment (BITA) in enabling Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to adapt to future challenges over the next 30 years. Using a qualitative research methodology, the study analyzes data from expert interviews with leaders from HEIs and the IT industry, utilizing thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns in the data. The findings indicate that BITA can facilitate HEIs' adaptation by enabling operational efficiency, enhancing the student experience, fostering innovation, and supporting strategic decision-making. Specifically, BITA can enable HEIs to leverage technology to address changing student needs and preferences, respond to emerging industry demands, and prepare students for the workforce of the future. The</p>		

study concludes that BITA is a crucial factor in HEIs' ability to adapt to future challenges, and provides implications for HEI leaders and IT professionals seeking to implement BITA strategies. Future research directions are also discussed.

1.12	Presenters: Kat Yassim; Chinaza Uleanya and Ademola Omotosho	Title: Coevolutionary Theory: Towards Integrating A Sustainability Framework In Higher Education Institutions
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Abstract: Achieving sustainable development is one of the most complex issues globally. Sustainability discourses seem to centre on how to achieve environmental sustainability, integrate cutting-edge technology in light of the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) and concurrently advance economic and social development. Despite the widespread acceptance of the concept of sustainability, the trajectories of societies remain profoundly unsustainable. This implies that more holistic pedagogies are urgently needed to enable viable solutions. Over the last two decades, the sustainability debate has resulted in significant analytical advances and new knowledge, however, it does not appear to have catalysed the necessary change to deal with current interconnected problems. Research indicates that the vast majority of sustainability scholarship has thus far focused on the external world of ecosystems, larger socioeconomic structures, government institutions, corporate world and technology resulting in a key lever, namely, the university being underestimated. This paper explores coevolutionary theory as a possible framework for an integration of a sustainability framework into universities. This theory supports change as a joint outcome of adaptation and environmental selection. Occurring at both the macro and micro-organisational level it offers insights into how universities can integrate strategic efforts as an emergent process that is driven by change and adaptation at different levels. As a more tangible exploration of theory, a comparison of universities from Africa, Europe, USA, Canada and the Middle East and their approach to coevolutionary theory in relation to a sustainability framework is shared. Findings show that as sustainability imperatives become a priority for universities, the five first principles of efficacious adaptation, namely fostering co-evolution, applying tension where and when needed, improving requisite complexity, taking advantage of modular design and speeding up the rate of change are key parameters for sustainability focused universities to arise.

Topic 2: Innovative Future Research to Advance Education: Or is it?

2.1	Presenters: Tatiana Sango and Sanet Steyn	Title: Augmenting the role of a subject matter expert in the assessment development life cycle with ChatGPT
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Abstract: This study investigates the application of ChatGPT, an advanced language model, for the generation of assessment items in educational contexts. The size of the item bank for each of the National Benchmark Testing (NBT) testing cycle is crucial for maintaining the validity and reliability of assessments. A diverse and extensive item bank allows for greater variability in test questions, reducing the chances of item overlap between test forms within the same testing cycle. This in turn assists with mitigation of the item harvesting threat and enhances test security, especially in the case of online test delivery model. Traditional methods of creating assessment items often require significant time and effort from subject matter experts. Leveraging the capabilities of ChatGPT, this research explores the potential of automating stages of the item generation process to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

2.2	Presenter: Flip Schutte	Title: Towards a model for innovative assessments in Private Higher Education Institutes
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Abstract: The rapid transition to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated the re-evaluation of assessment practices in higher education. This research article presents a model designed to inform policymakers and practitioners on innovative approaches to address these challenges effectively. Using an action design research methodology, this study delves into the problem of online assessments in Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs). By considering the contextual factors of load shedding, unavailability of Wi-Fi, the requirement for cheat-proof evaluations, and the paramount importance of addressing learning outcomes, the researchers sought to design a model that enables effective assessments in a post-COVID world. The designed artifact contributes to the

growing body of knowledge on assessment practices in higher education by providing practical insights and recommendations for adapting to the unique challenges faced in a post-COVID world. The model can guide policymakers and practitioners in developing a framework to address innovative assessment designs in the future.

2.3	Presenter: Rohan Posthumus	Title: Build your own ChatGPT: Leveraging Large Language Models for Personalized Tutoring
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Abstract: This paper explores the use of Large Language Models (LLMs) for personalized tutoring in higher education. It discusses the challenges faced by institutions due to technological advancements and the changing landscape of education. By tailoring LLMs to address individual student needs, personalized explanations, examples, real-time translations and resources can be generated, fostering a supportive learning environment. The research uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to assess the effectiveness of LLMs in an English for Academic Literacy module as a case study. The LLM algorithm is based on deep learning techniques and utilizes BERT for contextual understanding of text. Comparative analysis between the LLM-generated responses and those of a human author provides insights into the LLM's capabilities. Preliminary findings indicate that LLMs have the potential to enhance student engagement. Further research is recommended to improve LLMs' accuracy and relevance.

Topic 3: Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision-Making

3.1	Presenter: Graham Dampier	Title: We Need New Measures: A Case for the Progress Rate in Higher Education
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Abstract: Over the past couple of decades, the success rate has been used to evaluate institutional efficiency in South Africa's higher education system. The success rate is defined as the proportion of modules passed relative to module registrations, which means that it ignores the importance of course load in evaluating an institution efficiency and a student's academic attainment. One of the various shortcomings of the success rate is that it removes a module from its broader context, which means that it obscures important information from the process of evaluating an institution and an individual student. This means a more information laden measure is needed. This paper proposes a measure that takes a student's success rate and course load into account in order to calculate the progress rate. This paper demonstrates the value of using the progress rate to guide decisions on how to allocate resources and direct academic interventions.

3.2	Presenter: Elizabeth Boo	Title: Exploring the difference between first-year expectations and experiences during COVID-19
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Abstract: Students transitioning from high school to university education struggle to adjust and experience challenges. These challenges relate to adjusting to the teaching and learning style and the anxiety of transitioning from a high school to a university. It is inevitable because students need to adapt to the demand of higher education. Students need to adjust to creating new social experiences and academic life expectations. This study explores the differences between the expectations and experiences of first-year students transitioning into university during COVID-19. The five senses of success framework approach were used to theorise the study. Cross Industry Standard Process for Data Mining (CRISP-DM) methodology and Wilcoxon signed-rank test were used for the design and analysis. The participants consisted of 471 first-year students selected using a purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using Qualtrics electronic interviews system and analysed using R project for statistical computing. The results show that there is a significant gap between expectations and experience. The finding from this study concludes that first-year students entering university have unrealistic expectations about the following five factors investigated in this study: capability, connectedness, purpose, resourcefulness, and academic culture. The study recommends further investigating student expectations and experience from a qualitative perspective and exploring intentional and targeted interventions to help manage these expectations when necessary.

3.3	Presenter: Marianne Bester	Title: Advancing future-oriented and learning-centred programme review
<p>Abstract: A robust programme review process is crucial for enhancing the quality of academic offerings, provisioning, and support to prepare students for the ever-changing dynamics of the world. Despite the consensus on the importance of programme evaluation in higher education, the scholarly attention given to the evaluation models used in reviewing existing academic programmes has been limited over the years. This paper aims to elucidate the significance of programme review as an integral component of an institutional cycle of continuous improvement. It critically examines three prevailing theoretical perspectives and associated evaluation models in health sciences education. Additionally, it proposes adapting Stufflebeam’s context-input-process-product (CIPP) evaluation model (2011) as a viable learning-centred approach to address the complex challenges posed by the institutional and disciplinary contexts within health science education. Furthermore, insights from two case studies are carefully considered and extracted to inform future implementation strategies.</p>		
3.4	Presenter: Randhir Rawatlal	Title: The role of hyper-parameter models in achieving robust student success models.
<p>Abstract: Despite the high level of interest in the application of Machine Learning to the prediction of student success, the impact remains relatively limited. A major reason is the high level of specificity of the models developed and hence their relatively short lifespan and limited range of application. More specifically, the predictive capacity tends to degrade when applied to different cohorts of students or even different classes in the same module.</p> <p>In this presentation, we demonstrate that it is possible to achieve more robust models by simple statistical processing. When the input features are normalised e.g. as a number of standard deviations away from a mean (z-values), the predictive capacity tends to increase. Furthermore, by computing the general characteristics of both students and modules as hyper-parameters, the range of application of a model increases significantly. The potential for the development of a model which applies across disciplines and even across institutions is outlined.</p>		
3.5	Presenters: Kavita Beemsen and Mathole Macwele	Title: ENVISION2030 Strategy Tracker: DUT’s Creative. Distinctive. Impactful.’ MEL tool for Strategic Reflection
<p>Abstract: Impact is fundamental to ENVISION2030, the Durban University of Technology's (DUT's) 10-year strategy that has its locus of impact as contributing to improving lives and livelihoods. This ethos requires an engaged and purposeful approach to monitoring and evaluation, as well as a mindset that is open to learning from data and improving as we advance iterative annual plans towards attainment of ENVISION2030’s statement of strategic intent. Adaptive Management¹ is a critical framework for using strategy tracking data for decision-making through regular reflection. This approach sees data as an opportunity for learning and strategy/action adaptation, not as a tool for compliance/consequence management. In this presentation, our intention is to provide conference delegates with an institutional research practitioner’s example of DUT’s ‘Creative, Distinctive, and Impactful’ institutional monitoring, evaluation (for) learning homegrown Strategy Tracker tool, which is designed as a high-level overview of ongoing strategy impact for the University as a whole.</p>		
3.6	Presenters: Siphelo Mapolisa and Angelo Fynn	Title: 2022 Unisa Graduate Exit Survey: Tracing Employment Trajectories Post-graduation
<p>Abstract: The purpose of this study was to track and trace the employment trajectories and experiences of Unisa graduates who graduated during the 2019/2020 period. The findings of this study will help inform management of the employment experiences of graduates which may facilitate the development of strategies aimed at improving graduate employment. This study employed a descriptive design which was aimed at providing a comprehensive description of a phenomenon. Data was collected by means of an online survey designed specifically for this study. The instrument covered demographics, year of graduation, employment during studies, employment post-graduation, qualification relevance and employment experience. Data were analyzed descriptively using frequency counts and measures of central tendency to identify patterns and trends.</p>		

3.7	Presenter: Lerato Tladi	Title: Understanding the final year experience: Lessons from the University of South Africa
<p>Abstract: With intensified competition to attract students among higher education institutions, student satisfaction surveys have become the yardstick for institutional performance (Wong & Chapman, 2022). As explained by Elliott and Shin (2002:197), student satisfaction can have a positive impact on student motivation, retention, recruitment, and fundraising efforts. Therefore, by identifying and meeting students' needs and expectations, higher education institutions are then able to attract and retain quality students. This presentation looks at the findings of a study conducted among Unisa alumni who had graduated during 2021 and 2022, to understand their dissatisfaction with various aspects related to their final year of studies and pre-graduation period. The aim thereof, is to not only identify areas of improvement for Unisa but for other HE institutions looking to enhance their students' experiences and consequently maintain a competitive advantage.</p>		
3.8	Presenters: Randhir Rawatlal and Rubby Dhunpath	Title: Identification of Gatekeeper Courses: An application of Graph Theory to Institutional Research
<p>Progression of students through academic programmes is complicated by the existence of Gatekeeper Courses (Vasquez 2015, Douglas 2017, Torbey 2020), defined here as those courses which exhibit high failure rates and which appear to limit the progress toward graduation. Attempts to develop support for these courses is limited by extent to which these courses can be identified. When relying on faculty to identify these courses, personal bias or opinions about the reasons for a lack of student progression often results in de-prioritising these courses. As a result, the courses which need the most support are not those which receive it (Jacklin & Riche 2009, Smith, 2007, Hopkins 2008). In this paper, an automated method for identifying Gatekeeper Courses is proposed. The method is rigorously defined in terms of student progression and is found to identify Gatekeeper Courses at a 95% level of accuracy.</p>		
3.9	Presenter: André Müller	Title: "Unconscionable." Institutional audits, the QAF and the darkness that lies ahead.
<p>Abstract: Having been a quality practitioner for the past fifteen years, I reflect on the developments in QA and how it plays out in higher education. I follow a qualitative, autoethnographic approach, which allows me to draw on personal experience to describe the factors impacting - and undermining - the "quality" project at universities. What is "quality"? What are universities for? And what is good teaching-learning-assessment in an era of generative AI? I reflect on a period that includes the HEQSF alignment, two phases of the CHE's quality enhancement project and the current regimen of institutional audits. Amidst protests, decolonisation debates, and stage 6 load-shedding, we are pivoting into an unknown, for which the doors of perception are yet to be opened. Can Weick's "adaptive" and "collective" sense-making help? Barnett's idea(l) of an "ecological" university? Or are we doomed to gaze into Nietzsche's abyss... becoming the monster we vowed to fight?</p>		
3.10	Presenters: Junaid King and Muleka Nengwani	Title: The Impact of the Metaverse on Higher Education in South Africa: Afro-Centric Framework for the Metaverse in Higher Education 5
<p>Abstract: Educators have been increasingly intrigued by the concept of the Metaverse for some time now, with social media behemoth Facebook's recent rebranding to Meta further reigniting this interest. This virtual space, with its potential for realistic self-representation, has piqued particular interest in the realm of education due to its potential to enhance the social dimensions of teaching and learning. Yet, despite its growing attention, the Metaverse remains a relatively novel term, underscoring the need for an investigation into its current state of research and possible implications for higher education, particularly within the context of South Africa. Whilst various studies have undertaken literature reviews to summarise findings related to the Metaverse at large, and a single study by Tlili et al. (2022) has systematically summarised the findings related to the Metaverse in education, there appears to be a conspicuous absence of research focusing specifically on the Metaverse's implications for higher education in South Africa. To address this gap in the literature, the present study will utilise a desktop literature review methodology. This method entails a comprehensive review of existing literature both internationally and nationally, inclusive of academic articles, reports, white papers, and other relevant scholarly</p>		

materials, to synthesise key findings related to the Metaverse and its potential impact on higher education. The primary research questions guiding this review include: What is the impact of the Metaverse on higher education and what challenges are associated with its implementation? According to the Metaverse Roadmap (2006), which variant of the Metaverse will be most suitable for application in South African higher education? What potential learning scenarios and assessment methods might be effectively implemented within the Metaverse? The ultimate aim of this study is to construct an Afrocentric framework for the application of the Metaverse within the domain of South African higher education, thus offering a culturally resonant and contextually relevant approach to this emergent educational technology.

3.11	Presenters: Enna Moroeroe and Frank Magaya	Title: Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) ⁶
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Abstract: Graduate destination surveys (alumni research or tracer studies) allow researchers to collect data about the actual labour market outcomes and workplace experiences of university graduates and compare these with their expectations and plans at the time of graduation. The UFS amended its Graduate Exit Survey (GES) questionnaire to collect data about employment, future studies, satisfaction, and skills acquisition from alumni. The resulting Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) aimed to provide empirical evidence to inform interventions intended to better prepare UFS graduates for the world of work and improve their employability. Data was collected through an online survey distributed to UFS alumni registered in the UFS alumni database and all graduates who completed the GES. The findings provided the University with a better understanding of the work-life of its alumni, the transition from study to work, and the professional relevance of the graduate attributes and other skills graduates acquire at the UFS. It provides empirical evidence on the basis of which policy may be revised, and interventions may be designed.

3.12	Presenter: Benjamin Tlhale Ntshabele	Title: Graduate Employability Study 2023: Employment Outcomes and Challenges for Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University Graduates
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Abstract: The 2023 Graduate Employability Survey conducted by Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) aimed to assess the employment status and outcomes of graduates who participated in the Autumn graduation ceremonies held in May 2023. The study employed a quantitative research approach, utilizing a survey questionnaire and targeting graduates from the Autumn graduation ceremony at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) held on May 24-26, 2023. The survey was distributed to the targeted graduates, and data was collected through their participation in the survey. Data collection was facilitated using Google Forms, an electronic survey platform. Out of 1,159 graduates contacted, 100 responded, resulting in a 9% response rate. The survey revealed that 39% of graduates were employed in their field of study, while 31% were unemployed, 23% pursued further studies, and 7% were employed in a different field. Among employed graduates, 50% found employment during their studies or before completing their degrees. The majority of employed graduates (67.4%) worked in the public sector, while 32.6% worked in the private sector. Starting salaries were primarily below R30,000, with 16.3% earning between R11,000 and R15,000. The university played a significant role in recruitment (23.9%), followed by networking (17.4%) and randomly sending out CVs (17.4%). Lack of job opportunities in their field and lack of work experience were cited as the main reasons for unemployment. Activities undertaken by unemployed graduates to seek employment included submitting job applications (90.3%), revising CVs (80.6%), and seeking job leads from family and friends (60.4%). These findings shed light on the employment situation and challenges faced by SMU graduates, emphasizing the importance of early job opportunities and relevant experience for successful career paths.

3.13	Presenter: Remy Nnadozie	Title: Towards a Performance Scorecard for Enrolment Planning for Public Higher Education Institutions in South Africa
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Abstract: This paper aims to propose the development and implementation of a comprehensive performance scorecard for enrolment planning and monitoring for public universities in South Africa. The scorecard would serve as a valuable tool for assessing and monitoring the progress of these institutions in achieving their enrolment targets, while also promoting transparency and accountability. By establishing clear performance metrics and

indicators across various dimensions, such as access, success, efficiency, and research, the scorecard can provide a holistic assessment of each institution's performance and enable meaningful comparisons among peer institutions. Furthermore, the scorecard can facilitate evidence-based decision-making, inform policy development, and drive continuous improvement in the enrolment planning process. Through the adoption of this performance scorecard, public higher education institutions in South Africa can enhance their effectiveness and contribute to the overall achievement of national post-school training and education development aspirations.

3.14	Presenter: Mthimkhulu Mafaesa	Title: Is it Working? - Assessing the Effectiveness of Nudging UFS Students 9
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Abstract: Tracking and monitoring student behaviour, with the aim of nudging them towards behavioural attributes that improve their academic performance, is a strategy institution of higher learning have adopted and are constantly trying to improve. This process requires the assessment of current student behavioural attributes and performance, and flagging those considered to be “at risk”. These students are then nudged towards the traits that will help them improve and eventually succeed. The effectiveness of the nudging process needs to constantly be reviewed and assessed, in order to refine the procedure. In this paper, we assess the impact of nudging students from the University of the Free State. We compare the academic performance of the nudged students with that of the non-nudged students. The preliminary results are promising, as nudged students seem to as they show a decline in the pre-nudging vs post-nudging results for the nudged group compared to the non-nudged group. The retention rate gap between students who are nudged to those that are not nudged is seen to be high, but we believe that the as the nudging program become woven into the culture of the University of the Free State, this gap will be reduced. The results also show that the behavioural indicators we use are able to assist us to identify the struggling students from the active ones.

3.15	Presenters: Papama Somgede, Catherine Naik, Hossein Masoumi Karakani and Mxolisi Masango	Title: Predicting Student Disruption in Political Activism: Safeguarding Institutional Sustainability in South African Higher Education
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Abstract: This paper focuses on the imperative task of effectively predicting and managing student-led protests and disruptions within South African Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to protect their long-term sustainability. While student activism is pivotal for democratic participation and social progress, it can also pose risks that undermine institutional stability. To address this challenge, we propose the utilisation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) to monitor student engagement on social media platforms and forecast politically fuelled campus disruptions. By leveraging these technological advancements, institutions can proactively identify and address potential disruptions, creating a safer environment for political activism. This innovative approach highlights the significant impact of AI on higher education in South Africa, emphasizing its potential to mitigate the potentially disruptive effects of politically charged activities while promoting institutional sustainability.

3.16	Presenter: Thato Mnguni	Title: Exploring survey administration and cybersecurity
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Abstract: Institutional Research is an integral part of any University. The triple “D” - Data-Driven-Decision Making, has become a popular language in Higher Education over the years. Collecting student experience data via surveys is a process and requires a numbers of steps. One of these important steps is the data collection step. The world is rapidly evolving and almost everything is done online via the internet. As such, the University of Johannesburg administers all the student experience surveys online.

With the growth of the internet, internet-based attacks have become more prevalent and will increase as technology becomes more advanced. As such Institutional Researchers (IR) need to integrate cybersecurity as an essential concept in the data collection phase. This is important for the protection of students and systems in the University. Therefore, in this paper I will explore the awareness of IR regarding cybersecurity, cybersecurity practices at the University of Johannesburg implemented during data collection, relevant data protection and privacy regulations suitable for institutional research and lastly best practices to ensure the security and integrity of survey links.

3.17	Presenter: Loyiso Maciko	Title: Embedding Sustainable Goals into Pedagogical Approaches: Opportunities Created by Industry and Community Partnerships
<p>Abstract: The concept of sustainability over the years has remained complex and diverse requiring people from different backgrounds with various perspectives to continuously engage. Thus recently, there has been a rising acknowledgment of the need for education to promote sustainable goals. The paradigm of integrating sustainable goals into teaching, and research remains crucial for fostering the necessary changes in knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes in students to address the complex challenges of the 21st century. This study aims to investigate best practices and challenges associated with incorporating sustainability into higher education, with a particular focus on the opportunities facilitated by industry and community partnerships.</p>		
3.18	Presenter: Evodia Mohoanyane	Title: Exploring the Role of Tutorial Attendance in Strengthening Learning Analytics: A Case Study of the University of the Free State
<p>Abstract: This paper aims to explore the role of tutorial attendance in strengthening learning analytics and provide practical implications for higher education institutions seeking to harness this data for improved student engagement and institutional effectiveness. It also contributes to the ongoing discourse on a comprehensive framework encompassing best practices, methodologies, and tools to maximize the utility of tutoring attendance data. The research methodology entails a comprehensive literature review to establish theoretical foundations and best practices in learning analytics. Furthermore, a case study approach is adopted, focusing on the University of the Free State, which possesses a rich tutoring attendance dataset spanning multiple years.</p>		

<i>Topic 4: Sustainability, the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and Higher Education</i>		
4.1	Presenters: Herman Visser and Barry Ackers	Title: The integration of sustainable development and integrated reporting by South African universities
<p>Abstract: Increasingly, governments, funders, the community and various other stakeholders are seeking to understand how university teaching and learning, research and community engagement and outreach contributes to sustainable socioeconomic development. Consuming significant investment, universities often face and numerous competing priorities, with questions being raised about how they contribute to wellbeing in the societies and communities within which they operate. Therefore, based on a combination of stakeholder and accountability theoretical perspectives, and the integrated governance, autonomy and external reporting relationships, our paper attempts to address the question about whether universities should account to the general public and other stakeholders about their sustainable development initiatives. In addition, we investigate possible ways to disclose sustainable development initiatives into university integrated reporting practices. Although the study will examine the implementation and disclosure of sustainable development practices by South African universities, the results have implications for universities around the globe.</p>		
4.2	Presenter: Eleanor Johannes	Title: "Quality is Sustainability, and Sustainability is Quality": Lessons learnt from an Institutional Audit
<p>Abstract: External quality organisations utilise institutional audits as one of their methods for ensuring stakeholders that higher education institutions are fulfilling their stated objectives and, more significantly, that those objectives are worthwhile. The Council on Higher Education (CHE) 2nd cycle of Institutional Audits, conducted in 2022, subjected universities to thorough evaluation to ensure that institutional policies, plans, reports, systems, procedures, strategies, and resources are in line with the university's core business. This paper reflects on the lessons learned from the quality audit and considers whether there is a connection between quality and sustainability. The stated phases of reporting, responding, reasoning, relating, and reconstructing by Ballantyne, Mills, and Lester were employed as a methodology to reflect on practice. Analysis of the results and gained lessons revealed a connection between quality and sustainability, i.e., that you must prioritise sustainability if you want to ensure quality. Moreover, a quality-oriented approach will assure sustainability.</p>		

4.3	Presenters: Benjamin Ntshabele and Katlego Rulin Sebesho	Title: Socio-Economic Background and Educational Aspirations of First-Time Entering First-Year Students: 2023 SMU Survey
<p>Abstract: The 2023 SMU First Time Entering Student Survey aimed to understand the socio-economic background of first-year students joining Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU). The study utilized a quantitative research approach and distributed a survey questionnaire to 1031 targeted first-time entering students. A total of 125 responses were received, resulting in a 12% response rate. The survey revealed that the majority of respondents were females (72%) and South African citizens (100%). The largest proportion of students (39.2%) were from the School of Medicine, followed by the School of Science and Technology (20.8%) and Health Care Sciences (16%). In terms of special needs or disabilities, the majority of students (96.8%) did not identify themselves as having any special needs, while a small percentage (3.2%) regarded themselves as having a disability. Regarding employment during studies, 28% of students indicated plans to work part-time, while the remaining 72% did not plan to work. A significant portion of students (57.6%) reported being the first in their family to attend university, highlighting the potential impact on their educational journey. Moreover, only a small percentage of students had family members in tertiary institutions (13.4%) or with a degree (26.8%). The majority of students (72.8%) came from quintile 1 to 3 schools (no fee-paying schools), while 22.4% came from quintile 4 and 5 schools (fee-paying public schools), and the remaining 4.8% were from private schools. The high school locations varied, with 49.6% situated in rural areas, 32.8% in townships, and the rest in suburban, city, or farm areas.</p> <p>English was the first additional language for the majority of students (89.6%) during their matric year. Access to computer and science laboratories in their schools was limited for a significant portion of students (72.8% and 52.9% respectively). Most students (72.8%) indicated that they were studying their first choice of qualification, while a smaller percentage had second (16%) or third (11.2%) choice. In terms of accommodation, the majority of students (60%) planned to stay at off-campus residences, followed by on-campus residences (36%). A small percentage indicated staying at home or private accommodation. Financially, the majority of students (71.2%) expected to receive the NFSAS grant to pay their tuition fees, while other sources of funding included government bursaries, self-funding, or support from parents or guardians</p>		
4.4	Presenters: Kirsten Lucas and Pieter Nagel	Title: What happened to the locus of control of internal quality assurance under conditions of disruption?
<p>Abstract: This paper reflects on whether the locus of control for quality assurance activities shifted for academics at a university because of the Covid-19 pandemic disruption. It considers whether the pandemic disruption caused a discernible impact on the achievement of performance indicators drafted in Quality Improvement Plans pre-pandemic. The expectation was that QIP implementation reports would identify the Pandemic as causal to the non-achievement of planned activities. A deductive qualitative approach was employed to analyse the reported loci of control for the achievement of the QIPs that were active during and immediately after the Pandemic lockdown periods. The analysis revealed that, contrary to the expectation of the researchers, the locus of control remained with the QIP implementers. The researchers conclude that programme leaders were able to remain in control of their agency despite the condition of disruption.</p>		

<i>Topic 5: Open Topic</i>		
5.1	Presenter: Brian Turigye	Title: Using Innovative and Reflexive Pedagogies that Stimulate learning in Healthcare Students across continents
<p>Abstract: Currently, Health professional education emphasizes biological causes of illness. Evidence indicates that social, economic and political conditions have a greater impact on health and disease than biological factors. Equal Health has been offering an in-person annual social medicine classes in Uganda, Haiti and USA with intent to immerses learners in the study of health equity, the social and structural determinants of health, and leadership for change. With the advent of COVID-19, the course was modeled to enable continuous education while keeping every</p>		

student and faculty safe from COVID-19 through a transnational, hybrid model.

Approach; We adopted a transnational, experiential, hybrid approach to connect students from Uganda, Haiti and USA for 12 weeks. The course recruitment and delivery are centrally controlled but with local contextualized methods in each the sites. The course utilizes virtual platforms like canvas for transnational discussion and execution of the tetrad transnational group projects

5.2	Presenter: Emily Mabote	Title: Enablers and Constraints of an integrated quality approach: A Case for Tshwane University of Technology
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Abstract: Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) has embraced the need to implement an integrated approach to quality assurance in response to emerging trends in the literature on quality in higher education. However, several studies have indicated that achieving an integrated quality assurance system that balances accountability and improvement in a single system is not easy. In response to the literature, I conducted this study to identify mechanisms that can potentially enable or constrain the implementation of an integrated approach to quality assurance at TUT. I used Bhaskar's critical realist philosophy and Archer's social realism as an analytical framework to analyse the institutional context within the domains of structure, culture and agency. Data for the study was generated through document analysis and thirty-five semi-structured interviews with selected participants from across TUT's various levels and campuses.



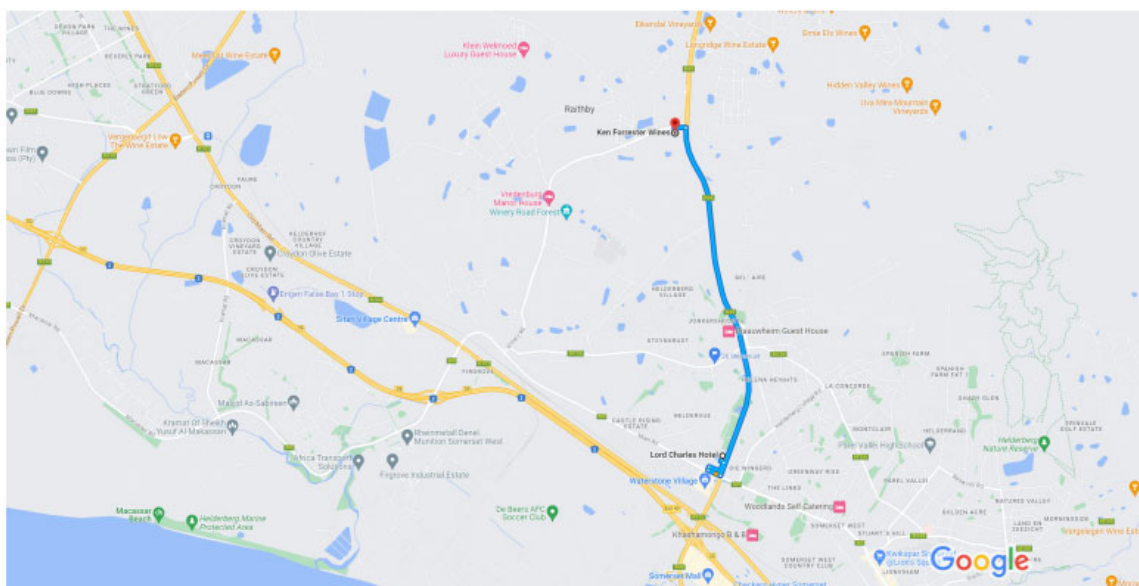
Directions: Lord Charles Hotel, Corner of Broadway Boulevards and, Main Rd, Somerset West, 7130 to Ken Forrester Wines, Scholtzenhof farm Cnr Winery Road &, R44, Raithby, 7600; **Phone:** 021 855 2374

Lord Charles Hotel

Corner of Broadway Boulevards and, Main Rd, Somerset West, 7130

Take Main Rd/M9 to Broadway Blvd/R44

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|---|---------------------------------|---------------|
| ↑ | 1. Head southwest | 2 min (650 m) |
| ↩ | 2. Turn left | 0.0 km |
| ↪ | 3. Turn right | 86 m |
| | ▲ Restricted usage road | |
| ↩ | 4. Turn left toward Main Rd/M9 | 300 m |
| | ▲ Partial restricted usage road | |
| ↩ | 5. Turn left onto Main Rd/M9 | 51 m |
| | | 200 m |



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