



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
Professor emerita in the
Institute of Higher Education
at the University of Georgia
and the and the past
president of AIR



Dr Iman Megahed
The AVP for Digital
Transformation, Chief
Strategy and Knowledge
Officer at the American
University in Cairo (AUC)



Dr Nicolene Murdoch
GAICD PFHEA
Pro Vice-Chancellor:
Educational Partnerships
and Quality, Western Sydney
University, Sydney, Australia



Prof Ian Cloete
Past Senior Director: Division
for Information Governance
& Extraordinary Professor:
Industrial Engineering,
Stellenbosch University



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



Welcome by the 2023 SAAIR Conference Organising Committee

It is with great pleasure and anticipation that we extend a warm and heartfelt welcome on behalf of Stellenbosch University and SAAIR to each one of you to the 30th Annual Conference of the Southern African Association for Institutional Research (SAAIR). As we gather here amidst the breathtaking views of the Stellenbosch winelands to embark on a journey of knowledge and collaboration, we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of SAAIR and are reminded of the profound purpose that underpins our gathering.

Firstly, to foster the evolution and application of methodologies and techniques drawn from a diverse array of disciplines, aimed at advancing institutional research, analysis, planning and strategy in the realm of higher education.

Secondly, to cultivate a spirit of exchange, interpretation, and dissemination of information that pertains to higher education and its myriad institutions. The power of shared knowledge is unparalleled, and our collective efforts are instrumental in propelling our institutions to new heights of excellence.

Thirdly, our pursuit encompasses the elevation of individual competence and proficiency. By nurturing the professional development and training of those engaged in institutional research, we ensure that our mission is sustained by dedicated and adept professionals.

The landscape of education is ever-evolving, and in such transformative times, our role becomes even more pivotal. Each presentation, discussion, and interaction during this conference will contribute to the vibrant tapestry of insights that enrich our shared understanding and elevate our collective endeavours.

On behalf of the organising committee, I extend my deepest gratitude to all speakers, authors, attendees, reviewers, sponsors, and the SAAIR Exco who have made this gathering possible. May the connections we forge, the ideas we exchange, and the insights we gain set the stage for a conference that leaves an indelible mark on the discipline of institutional research.

Once again, welcome to the 30th SAAIR Conference.

Ian Cloete

On behalf of the SAAIR Conference Organising Committee:

Ms. René Robbertze (Co-Chair), Ms. Albè van Niekerk and Prof. Ian Cloete (Co-Chair)

Message from the SAAIR President

The Southern African Association for Institutional Research turns thirty this year (SAAIR). As we reflect on the past three decades, we are grateful and in awe of all those who formed the SAAIR, secured its existence, and made significant contributions to the development of institutional research in higher education throughout the Southern African region.

Our goal has always been to enhance research and analysis to generate better management information, which is essential for comprehending, organizing, managing, and operating higher educational institutions and organizations. For the past 30 years, we have continuously fostered the creation and use of novel approaches as well as the unrestricted sharing of knowledge about institutions of higher learning.

As we stand on the brink of our fourth decade, it's time to look forward. With the theme for our 30th SAAIR Conference being "Future-forward Higher Education: The next 30 years", we are setting our sights on the horizon. It is a call for introspection, innovation, and foresight. A call to challenge the status quo, harness new methodologies, and envision the future of higher education in the ever-evolving global landscape.

The lessons from the past serve as our foundation. But now, more than ever, we need fresh ideas, courageous conversations, and a shared commitment to the progression and elevation of our higher educational institutions.

As we gather for this monumental conference, I challenge each of our esteemed members and participants to not only celebrate our past achievements but to also look ahead with optimism and determination. Let us collaborate and envision a future where the SAAIR remains at the forefront of innovation, excellence, and the advancement of institutional research.

In this spirit of reflection and anticipation, I invite all of you to join us at the 30th SAAIR Conference. Together, let's honour our rich history and chart a vibrant and transformative path forward.

Warm regards,

Liile Lerato Lekena




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| 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 Research: A ChatGPT Workshop |
| <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> | | |

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| 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 | Pre-Conference Workshop 4 Venue: Somerset 3 | Jerall Toi Deputy Director: Information Policy, Strategic Initiatives & Information Governance, Stellenbosch University Title: Personal Information Impact Assessments for Institutional Researchers |
| <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 | Social gathering: Ken Forrester Vineyard (Group 1) | |

| Day 1: 24 October 2023 | | | |
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| 08:00-09:00 | Tea and Registration | | |
| Plenary Session 1 Venue: Somerset 1, 2 & 3 Chair: René Robbertze & Prof Ian Cloete, Stellenbosch University | | | |
| 09:00-09:30 | Welcome Remarks by SAAIR President | Ms. Liile Lekena , SAAIR President and Director: Strategic Planning in the Directorate of Institutional Planning and Research at Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) | |
| 09:30-09:35 | Introduction of Vice-Chancellor | Prof Ian Cloete , Stellenbosch University | |
| 09:35-09:45 | Opening of Conference | Prof Wim De Villiers , Vice-Chancellor: Stellenbosch University | |
| 09:45-09:50 | Introduction of Keynote Speaker | Prof Ian Cloete , Stellenbosch University | |
| 09:50-10:35 | 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 | |
| 10:35-11:00 | Morning Tea Break | | |
| 11:00-11:30 | Sponsor 1 presentation | Quantum Solutions | |
| 11:30-11:45 | Question and Answer session | | |
| 11:45-11:50 | Introduction of Keynote Speaker | René Robbertze , Stellenbosch University | |
| 11:50-12:35 | Second Keynote Address | Prof Ian Cloete , Past Senior Director: Division for Information Governance & Extraordinary Professor: Industrial Engineering, Stellenbosch University Title: Data & Analytics in Higher Education | |
| 12:35-13:00 | Conference Delegates Networking | | |
| 13:00-14:00 | Lunch break | | |
| Parallel Sessions | | | |
| | Venue: Somerset 1 Topic 1 <i>Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years</i> | Venue: Somerset 2 Topic 2 <i>Innovative Future Research to Advance Education: Or is it?</i> | Venue: Somerset 3 Topic 3 <i>Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision-Making</i> |
| 14:00-14:30 | 1.1: Authors: Bonza Majoji, Juan-Claude Lemmens & Herman Janse van Vuuren Affiliation: University of Pretoria, South Africa Title: Leveraging Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to | 2.1: Authors: Tatiana Sango & Sanet Steyn Affiliation: University of Cape Town, South Africa Title: Augmenting the role of a subject matter expert in the | 3.1: Author: 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 | | | |
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| | streamline analytics processing | assessment development life cycle with ChatGPT | |
| 14:30-15:00 | 1.2: Authors: Juliet Townes, Prof Roger Elliott & Angela Pike-Bowles Affiliation: University of Fort Hare, South Africa Title: Personality and perceived stress amongst the youth in South Africa | 2.2: Author: Rohan Posthumus Affiliation: University of the Free State, South Africa Title: Build your own ChatGPT: Leveraging Large Language Models for Personalized Tutoring | 3.2: Author: Elizabeth Boo Affiliation: University of the Western Cape, South Africa Title: Exploring the difference between first-year expectations and experiences during COVID-19 |
| 15:00-15:20 | 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> |
| 15:20-15:50 | 1.3: Authors: 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: Authors: Herman Visser & Barry Ackers Affiliation: UNISA, South Africa Title: The integration of sustainable development and integrated reporting by South African universities | 3.3: Author: Marianne Bester Affiliation: Stellenbosch University, South Africa Title: Advancing future-oriented and learning-centred programme review |
| 15:50-16:20 | 1.4: Authors: 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: Author: Eleanor Johannes Affiliation: UNISA, South Africa Title: "Quality is Sustainability, and Sustainability is Quality": Lessons learnt from an Institutional Audit | 3.4: Authors: Papama Somgede, Catherine Naik, Hossein Masoumi Karakani & Mxolisi Masango Affiliation: University of Pretoria Title: Predicting Student Disruption in Political Activism: Safeguarding Institutional Sustainability in South African Higher Education |
| 16:20 | End of day 1 | | |
| 17:00-19:00 | Social gathering: Ken Forrester Vineyard (Group 2) | | |


| Day 2: 25 October 2023 | | | |
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| 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) <i>Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years</i> | Venue: Somerset 2 Topic 4 (continued) <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> |
| 14:00-14:30 | 1.5: Author: 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: Authors: 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: Authors: 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: Authors: Emetia Swart & Flip Schutte Affiliation: Regenesys Business School, South Africa Title: A consumer behaviour framework when choosing a | 4.4: Authors: Kirsten Lucas & Pieter Nagel Affiliation: University of Limpopo Title: What happened to the locus of control of internal | 3.6: Authors: Siphelo Mapolisa & Angelo Fynn Affiliation: UNISA, South Africa Title: 2022 Unisa Graduate Exit Survey: Tracing Employment Trajectories Post-graduation |

| Day 2: 25 October 2023 | | | |
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| | Private Higher Education Institution | quality assurance under conditions of disruption? | |
| 15:00-15:20 | 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> |
| 15:20-15:50 | 1.7: Author: 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: Author: 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: Author: Lerato Tladi Affiliation: UNISA, South Africa Title: Understanding the final year experience: Lessons from the University of South Africa |
| 15:50-16:20 | 1.8: Authors: Siphamandla Handsome Nyathikazi, Naveena Moodley & Vasu Chetty Affiliation: University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa Title: Investigating University of KwaZulu-Natal academics' readiness to adopt E-Learning during the times of Covid-19 | 5.2: Author: 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: Author: André Müller Affiliation: Stellenbosch University, South Africa Title: "Unconscionable." Institutional audits, the QAF and the darkness that lies ahead. |
| 16:20 | 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 | | | |
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| 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 in the Directorate of Institutional Planning and Research at Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) | |
| 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). Title: Unleashing the power of data and analytics: AUC's journey from IR to AI | |
| 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 1 (continued) <i>Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years</i> | Venue: Somerset 2 Topic 3 (continued) <i>Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision-Making</i> | Venue: Somerset 3 Topic 3 (continued) <i>Institutional Research for Future-Oriented Decision-Making</i> |
| 11:00-11:30 | 1.9: Authors: 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: Authors: Enna Moroeroe & Frank Magaya Affiliation: University of the Free State, South Africa Title: Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) | 3.10: Author: Benjamin Tlhale Ntshabele Affiliation: SAAIR, South Africa Title: Graduate Employability Study 2023: Employment Outcomes and Challenges for Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University Graduates |
| 11:30-12:00 | 1.10: Author: Elizabeth Archer Affiliation: University of the Western Cape Title: Friend or Enemy! Jealously guarding borders Academia from ChatGPT | 3.11: Author: Remy Nnadozie Affiliation: Rhodes University, South Africa Title: Towards a Performance Scorecard for Enrolment Planning for Public Higher Education Institutions in South Africa | 3.12: Author: Mthimkhulu Mafaesa Affiliation: University of the Free State, South Africa Title: Is it Working? - Assessing the Effectiveness of Nudging UFS Students |


| | Venue: Somerset 1 Topic 1 (continued) <i>Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years</i> | Venue: Somerset 2 Topic 1 (continued) <i>Adapting to the Future: Higher Education Institutions in the Next 30 Years</i> | |
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| 12:00-12:30 | 1.11: Authors: Hossein Masoumi Karakani, Catherine Naik, Papama Somgede and Mxolisi Masango Affiliation: University of Pretoria Title: Fostering student achievement by cultivating essential soft skills: Insights from an advanced analytics standpoint | 1.12: Authors: Kat Yassim, Chinaza Uleanya & Ademola Omotosho Affiliation: University of Johannesburg & CPUT Title: Coevolutionary Theory: Towards Integrating A Sustainability Framework In Higher Education Institutions | |
| 12:45-13:00 | Conference closure | | |
| 13:00 | Lunch & departure | | |

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| 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 | | |
| 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. | | |
| 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 centered on the assessment of academic, cognitive, and psychosocial growth of college students, with additional interests in gender studies, and higher education data management. | | |
| 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. | | |
| 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. | | |
| 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. | | |

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| Second Keynote Address | Prof Ian Cloete Past Senior Director: Division for Information Governance & Extraordinary Professor: Industrial Engineering, Stellenbosch University |  |
| Title: | Data & Analytics in Higher Education | |
| Abstract: The importance of Data and Analytics (D&A) has been expanding rapidly in all organisations, fuelled by applications in artificial intelligence and machine learning. IR should not be left behind. In this keynote presentation, Prof Cloete will discuss the rapid advances in D&A and its application in IR, including novel analytic models and practical considerations concerning people, process, technology, and information. | | |
| 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.

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| 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> | | |

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 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.

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| Fourth Keynote Address | Dr Iman Megahed The AVP for Digital Transformation, Chief Strategy and Knowledge Officer at the American University in Cairo (AUC). |  |
| Title: | Unleashing the power of data and analytics: AUC’s Journey from IR to AI | |

Abstract: The journey from standard Institutional Research to business intelligence and beyond. Challenges of institutional readiness, enterprise architecture and data governance. A case study of a 100-year old liberal arts American University in Cairo.

Biography: Dr Iman Megahed

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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| 1.1 | Authors: Bonza Majozi, Juan-Claude Lemmens and Herman Janse van Vuuren | Title: Leveraging Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to streamline analytics processing |
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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.

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.

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| 1.2 | Authors: Juliet Townes, Prof Roger Elliott & Angela Pike-Bowles | Title: Personality and perceived stress amongst the youth in South Africa |
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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.

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| 1.3 | Authors: 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 |
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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.

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| 1.4 | Authors: 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 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).</p> <p>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.</p> | | |
| 1.5 | Author: Mark Mason | Title: Complexity Theory and the Enhancement of Learning at the University of Cape Town |
| <p>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.</p> | | |
| 1.6 | Authors: Emetia Swart and Flip Schutte | Title: A consumer behaviour framework when choosing a Private Higher Education Institution |
| <p>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.</p> | | |
| 1.7 | Author: Jan-Hendrik Viljoen | Title: Leveraging Large Language Models for Knowledge management in Universities: A proof of concept |
| <p>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.</p> | | |

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| 1.8 | Authors: Siphamandla Handsome Nyathikazi, Naveena Moodley and Vasu Chetty | Title: Investigating University of KwaZulu-Natal academics' readiness to adopt E-Learning during the times of Covid-19 |
| <p>Abstract: During the outbreak of Covid-19, tertiary institutions were temporarily suspended as a cue to minimise the widespread of the pandemic. This research was a case study that sought to explore the readiness of the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN) to adopt E-Learning as a fully-fledged method of teaching and learning during the suspension of conventional classes and beyond. Beyond, in the sense that the speculative information remained that Covid-19 might not be combated soon, and therefore it was not ideal to treat the adoption of E-learning as a makeshift arrangement.</p> <p>The case study applied its objectives to explore factors such as the academic staff's resistance towards 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. The study adopted a mixed method case study design of qualitative and quantitative research methods. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time, analysed separately and the results merged in the summary and discussion of the study findings.</p> <p>The findings of the study revealed that the academic staff of UKZN were ready for the adoption of E-Learning as the teaching and learning methodology. However, the study identified limitations in terms of infrastructural problems such as network service providers, as well as the ongoing blackouts limiting access to electricity. The findings of the study can have a significant impact on the strategic teams of the institution where there is a need of reinforcing control measures on the remote assessment of the students during the E-learning examinations. Furthermore, Management of the UKZN can use the results of this study as a springboard to motivating the academics and fine-tuning their approach towards the application of the technology-based method of teaching and learning.</p> | | |
| 1.9 | Authors: 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 | Author: 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 | Authors: Hossein Masoumi Karakani, Catherine Naik, Papama Somgede and Mxolisi Masango | Title: Fostering student achievement by cultivating essential soft skills: Insights from an advanced analytics standpoint |
| <p>Abstract: In today's fast-paced world, universities hold a significant value for students, extending beyond the mere</p> | | |

acquisition of a degree. As the job market evolves, employers increasingly value soft skills such as communication, critical thinking, over and above hard and quantifiable skills. Human beings maintain an advantage over emerging Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools by virtue of their possession of essential soft skills. This study aims to develop a framework integrating advanced analytics techniques to assess, and enhance student's soft skills and to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed framework in promoting student success. An extensive literature review will be conducted to review the existing frameworks, and best practices related to soft skills development in higher education in SA. Advanced analytics techniques such as natural language processing, sentiment analysis, and machine learning (ML) algorithms will be utilised to extract insights from the collected bibliometric data. By addressing the soft skills gap, universities in South Africa can equip students with the necessary skills to thrive in their future careers.

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| 1.12 | Authors: 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?

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| 2.1 | Authors: 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.

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| 2.2 | Author: 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

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| 3.1 | Author: Graham Dampier | Title: We Need New Measures: A Case for the Progress Rate in Higher Education |
| <p>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.</p> | | |
| 3.2 | Author: Elizabeth Boo | Title: Exploring the difference between first-year expectations and experiences during COVID-19 |
| <p>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.</p> | | |
| 3.3 | Author: 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> | | |

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| 3.4 | Authors: 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 |
| 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. | | |
| 3.5 | Authors: Kavita Beemsen and Mathole Macwele | Title: ENVISION2030 Strategy Tracker: DUT’s Creative. Distinctive. Impactful.’ MEL tool for Strategic Reflection |
| 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 Management ¹ 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. | | |
| 3.6 | Authors: Siphelo Mapolisa and Angelo Fynn | Title: 2022 Unisa Graduate Exit Survey: Tracing Employment Trajectories Post-graduation |
| 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. | | |
| 3.7 | Author: Lerato Tladi | Title: Understanding the final year experience: Lessons from the University of South Africa |
| 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. | | |
| 3.8 | Author: André Müller | Title: “Unconscionable.” Institutional audits, the QAF and the darkness that lies ahead. |
| 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?

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| 3.9 | Authors: Enna Moroeroe and Frank Magaya | Title: Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) |
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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.

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| 3.10 | Author: 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.

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| 3.11 | Author: 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.

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| 3.12 | Author: Mthimkhulu Mafaesa | Title: Is it Working? - Assessing the Effectiveness of Nudging UFS Students 9 |
| <p>Abstract: Nudging students towards behaviours that might improve their academic performance, is a strategy institutions 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 students considered to be “at risk”. These students are then nudged to engage in behaviour that will help improve their chances of success. The effectiveness of the nudging process needs to be constantly reviewed to refine the process. In this paper, I assess the impact of nudging students from the University of the Free State. I will compare the academic performance of the nudged students with that of the non-nudged students. The retention rate gap between students who are nudged to those that are not nudged is high, but with time, this gap should narrow. These findings hold promise for similar initiatives aimed at helping to improve students’ throughput rates.</p> | | |

Topic 4: Sustainability, the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and Higher Education

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| 4.1 | Authors: Herman Visser and Barry Ackers | Title: The integration of sustainable development and integrated reporting by South African universities |
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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.

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| 4.2 | Author: Eleanor Johannes | Title: "Quality is Sustainability, and Sustainability is Quality": Lessons learnt from an Institutional Audit |
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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.

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| 4.3 | Authors: Benjamin Ntshabele and Katlego Rulin Sebesho | Title: Socio-Economic Background and Educational Aspirations of First-Time Entering First-Year Students: 2023 SMU Survey |
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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.

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

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| 4.4 | Authors: Kirsten Lucas and Pieter Nagel | Title: What happened to the locus of control of internal quality assurance under conditions of disruption? |
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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.

Topic 5: Open Topic

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| 5.1 | Author: Brian Turigye | Title: Using Innovative and Reflexive Pedagogies that Stimulate learning in Healthcare Students across continents |
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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 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.

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| 5.2 | Author: 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.

| First Name | Last Name | Email Address | Company |
|------------|-------------------|--|---|
| Ernestina | Ansen | ansene@cput.ac.za | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Liz | Archer | earcher@uwc.ac.za | University of the Western Cape |
| Glen | Barnes | glen@idsc.co.za | IDSC Consulting |
| Kavita | Beemsen | kavitab@dut.ac.za | Durban University of Technology |
| Marianne | Bester | besterma@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Thato | Bhembe | tmnguni@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Roelanie | Boersema | roelanie.boersema@aros.ac.za | Aros |
| Elizabeth | Booi | ebooi@uwc.ac.za | University of the Western Cape |
| Margi | Boosey | mboosey@varsitycollege.co.za | IIE Varsity College |
| Jacques | Botha | rsjb@ufs.ac.za | University of Free State |
| Sizakele | Buthelezi | buthefs@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Albert | Chawanda | albert.chawanda@gmail.com | Manicaland State University of Applied Sciences |
| Resha | Chetty | 217121675@mycput.ac.za | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Vasu | Chetty | chettyv6@ukzn.ac.za | University of Kwazulu-Natal |
| Karabelo | Chipunka | Karabelo.Chipunka@mancosa.co.za | MANCOSA |
| Ian | Cloete | ic@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Lisa | Cloete | lisa.cloete@uct.ac.za | University of Cape Town |
| Graham | Dampier | grahamdampier@gmail.com | University of Johannesburg |
| Nick | Davis | Nick.Davis@timeshighereducation.com | Times Higher Education |
| Nolukholo | Dayile | dayilen@cput.ac.za | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Adhir | Debiecharan | Adhir.Debiecharan@mancosa.co.za | MANCOSA |
| Anri | Dorfling | anrid@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Alten | Du Plessis | sadp@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Franzel | Du Plooy-Cilliers | fdplooy-cilliers@ie.ac.za | The Independent Institute of Education |
| Marianne | Engelbrecht | engelm1@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Carla | Enslin | censlin@vegaschool.com | IIE Varsity College |
| Marlyn | Esterhuyse | marlyn@vut.ac.za | Vaal University of Technology |
| Zolani | Fana | zolani.fana@univen.ac.za | University of Venda |
| Merrewyn | Feucht | merrewyn@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Christine | Francke | cpfrancke@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Jaamia | Galant | j.galant@uct.ac.za | University of Cape Town |
| Michael | Gordon | Gordonmm@tut.ac.za | Tshwane University of Technology |
| Natalie | Gordon | natalie.gordon@uct.ac.za | University of Cape Town |
| Oliver | Gore | 44947437@nwu.ac.za | North-West University |
| Liana | Griesel | tebogo.hlongwane@up.ac.za | University of Pretoria |
| Marcel | Grovers | marcel@facilitymanagerpro.co.za | Pro Facility Management South Africa |
| Francois | Hayes | francois@facilitymanagerpro.co.za | Pro Facility Management South Africa |
| Tanya | Healey | tanya.healey@wits.ac.za | University of the Witwatersrand |
| Tristan | Horlick | tristan.horlick@timeshighereducation.com | Times Higher Education |
| Filberth | Ilaza | ilazafilbert@gmail.com | University of Dar es salaam |
| Linda | Jackson | linda.jackson@nmmu.ac.za | Nelson Mandela University |
| Herman | Janse van Vuuren | herman.jansevanvuuren@up.ac.za | University of Pretoria |
| Riaan | Jansen van Vuuren | 11342544@nwu.ac.za | North-West University |
| Eleanor | Johannes | ejohanne@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |

| First Name | Last Name | Email Address | Company |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| Meghan | John | meghan.john@mancosa.co.za | MANCOSA |
| Sanri | Joubert | sanri.joubert@nwu.ac.za | North-West University |
| Anthea | Karra | akarra@cut.ac.za | Central University of Technology |
| Kende | Kefale | kende.kefale@uct.ac.za | University of Cape Town |
| Sanjay | Khoosal | sanjay@vut.ac.za | Vaal University of Technology |
| Sinethemba | Khoza | khozals@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Nonhlanhla | Khumalo | Nonhlanhlaz2@dut.ac.za | Durban University of Technology |
| Carla | Kroon | ckroon@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Deon | le Roux | deon@idsc.co.za | IDSC Consulting |
| Willie | le Roux | lrouxwj@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Liile Lerato | Lekena | Lekena.liile@mut.ac.za | Mangosuthu University of Technology |
| Juan-Claude | Lemmens | juan-claude.lemmens@up.ac.za | University of Pretoria |
| Isaac | Lephalala | isaacl@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Hanlie | Liebenberg | liebeh1@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Shirley | Lloyd | gm@appetd.org.za | APPETD |
| Tabile | Loqo | tabile.loqo@uct.ac.za | University of Cape Town |
| Kirsten | Lucas | Kirsten.Lucas@ul.ac.za | University of Limpopo |
| Mandla | Lukubeni | mandlal@lukubeni-solutions.com | Lukubeni Solutions (Pty) Ltd |
| Shevon | Lurie | slurie@iie.ac.za | The Independent Institute of Education |
| Ntele | Mabote | Mabotene@tut.ac.za | Tshwane University of Technology |
| Loyiso | Maciko | loyisom@saide.org.za | South African Institute for Distance Education |
| Mathole | Macwele | BenedictM@dut.ac.za | Durban University of Technology |
| Mthimkhulu | Mafaesa | mafaesami@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |
| Mluleki | Mafuna | mlumafuna@gmail.com | University of South Africa |
| Frank | Magaya | magayaffi@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |
| Kgothlang Chadwick | Mahao | kmahao@cut.ac.za | Central University of Technology |
| Ashton | Maherry | ashtonm@saide.org.za | South African Institute for Distance Education |
| Nandarani | Maistry | nmaistry@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Bonza | Majozi | bonza.majozi@up.ac.za | University of Pretoria |
| Loquitur | Maka | Makal@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |
| Mmabatho | Makamedi | Mmabatho.makamedi@smu.ac.za | Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University |
| Siyanda | Makaula | makaulas@cput.ac.za | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Lebohlang | Makobane | MakobaneL@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |
| Masilo | Malema | mmalema@wsu.ac.za | Walter Sisulu University |
| Innocent | Mamvura | innocent.mamvura@wits.ac.za | University of the Witwatersrand |
| Ntsundeni Louis | Mapatagane | mapataganen@cput.ac.za | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Siphelo | Mapolisa | mapols@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Kabelo | Maredi | Kabelo.Maredi@nwu.ac.za | North-West University |
| Valentine | Maroga | marogav@tut.ac.za | Tshwane University of Technology |
| Mxolisi | Masango | mxolisi.masango@up.ac.za | University of Pretoria |
| Portia | Mashinini | portiam@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Mark | Mason | mmason@eduhk.hk | The Education University of Hong Kong |
| Hossein | Masoumi Karakani | hossein.masoumi-karakani@up.ac.za | University of Pretoria |

| First Name | Last Name | Email Address | Company |
|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Mbhoni Remember | Mathonsi | 3764108@myuwc.ac.za | University of the Western Cape |
| Patience | Mativandlela | SANNAH.MATIVANDLELA@UNIVEN.AC.ZA | University of Venda |
| Helen | Matshoba | matshrm@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Mzamo | Mbedla | MMbedla@wsu.ac.za | Walter Sisulu University |
| Sindisiwe | Mbhele | MbheleS@cput.ac.za | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Iman | Megahed | iman_m@aucegypt.edu | The American University in Cairo |
| Annamarie | Meyer | ameyer@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Sohanna | Meyer-Singh | singhs1@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Thandokazi | Mfikoyi | tmfikoyi@wsu.ac.za | Walter Sisulu University |
| Gugu | Mhlauli | mhlaulig@cput.ac.za | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Motlatso | Mlambo | mlambmg@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Allison | Mlitwa | amlitwa@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Mafuna | Mluleki | mafunm@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Odwa | Mntonintshi | omntonintshi@uwc.ac.za | University of the Western Cape |
| Tebello | Mofokeng | tebello.mofokeng@univen.ac.za | University of Venda |
| Martha | Mogashoa | martha.mogashoa@ul.ac.za | University of Limpopo |
| Joan Madali | Mokhele | mokhejm@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Matseliso | Molapo | molapmp@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Kagiso | Moleele | moleelek@tut.ac.za | Tshwane University of Technology |
| Naveena | Moodley | moodleyn20@ukzn.ac.za | University of KwaZulu-Natal |
| Raazia | Moosa | Raazia.Moosa@wits.ac.za | University of the Witwatersrand |
| Enna | Moroeroe | moroeroem@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |
| Thandeka | Mosholi | mosholit@yahoo.com | University of Free State |
| Precious | Mudavanhu | precious.mudavanhu@uct.ac.za | University of Cape Town |
| Taabo | Mugume | mugumetj@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |
| Livhuwani | Mulelu | Livhuwani.mulelu@univen.ac.za | University of Venda |
| André | Muller | aemuller@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Takalani | Muloiwa-Klenam | tmuloiwa@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Nicolene | Murdoch | murdochnic@gmail.com | Western Sydney University |
| Kaylene | Murugan | kaylene.murugan@mancosa.co.za | MANCOSA |
| Darlington | Mutakwa | dmutakwa@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Pieter | Nagel | Pieter.Nagel@ul.ac.za | University of Limpopo |
| Anusha | Nagesar | nagesaranusha@gmail.com | Durban University of Technology |
| Jabulane | Ndhlovu | ndhlovuj@unizulu.ac.za | University of Zululand |
| Marian | Neale-Shutte | marian.neale-shutte@mandela.ac.za | Nelson Mandela University |
| Masego | Nebodzandala | M.Nebodzandala@ru.ac.za | Rhodes University |
| Mulalo Royal | Nelwamondo | mulalo.nelwamondo@univen.ac.za | University of Venda |
| aifheli | nemathaga | aifheli.nemathaga@univen.ac.za | UNIVEN |
| Alufheli | Nesamvuni | nesamvuniae@tut.ac.za | Tshwane University of Technology |
| Lufuno | netshifhefhe | lufuno.netshifhefhe@univen.ac.za | University of Venda |
| Abbey | Ngoepe | Abbey.ngoepe@ul.ac.za | University of Limpopo |
| Mafika | Nkambule | Nkambulemw@tut.ac.za | Tshwane University of Technology |
| Mohau | Nkutha | nkutham@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |

| First Name | Last Name | Email Address | Company |
|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------|--|
| Remigius | Nnadozie | c.ngamale@ru.ac.za | Rhodes University |
| Sandla | Nomvete | sandla.nomvete@mandela.ac.za | Nelson Mandela University |
| Ayanda | Nongogo | nongogo.ayanda@mut.ac.za | Mangosuthu University of Technology |
| Benjamin | Ntshabele | Benjamin.Ntshabele@smu.ac.za | Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University |
| Peter | Ntuli | ntulipb@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Sphamandla Handsome | Nyathikazi | nyathikazi@ukzn.ac.za | University of KwaZulu-Natal |
| Xolelwa | Olayi | xolayi@moonbc.co.za | Moon Bouncer Consulting firm |
| Glory | Opeolu | 220346968@mycput.ac.za | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Laetitia | Permall | lpermall@uwc.ac.za | University of the Western Cape |
| Edlyne | Pieterse | epieterse@cut.ac.za | Central University of Technology |
| Ronell | Pietersen | 12611107@nwu.ac.za | North-West University |
| Semira | Pillay | pillays1@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |
| Rohan | Posthumus | posthumusjj@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |
| Marilize | Putter | Marilize.Putter@milpark.ac.za | Milpark Education |
| Tshepo | Rabotapi | trabotapi@wsu.ac.za | Walter Sisulu University |
| Nozipho | Radebe | mavelour@dut.ac.za | Durban University of Technology |
| Cynthia | Reynders | ceo@appetd.org.za | APPETD |
| René | Robbertze | renesc@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Norman | Ronald | normanr@dut.ac.za | Durban University of Technology |
| Tatiana | Sango | tatiana.sango@uct.ac.za | University of Cape Town |
| Fiona | Sass | fsass@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Katlego | Sebesho | katlegorulin@gmail.com | Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University |
| Dimakatso | Sebothoma | dimakatso.sebothoma@uct.ac.za | University of Cape Town |
| Queen | Sekhosana | sekhodq@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Getrude | Seku | Sekudg@tut.ac.za | Tshwane University of Technology |
| Catherine | Sephapo | sephacm@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Mapule | Sikhosana | mapules@mut.ac.za | Mangosuthu University of Technology |
| Onalenna | Silas | silas@ub.ac.bw | University of Botswana |
| Reshma | Singh | singhr@dut.ac.za | Durban University of Technology |
| Riashna | Sithaldeen | riashna.sithaldeen@uct.ac.za | University of Cape Town |
| Noxolo | Soji | nsoji@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Jolene | Stanfley | jjeptha@cut.ac.za | Central University of Technology |
| Welmarie | Steenkamp | welmarie.steenkamp@nwu.ac.za | North-West University |
| Carin | Strydom | admin@saair.net | SAAIR |
| Francois | Strydom | StrydomJF@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |
| Elisha | Stuurman | stuurmane@cput.ac.za | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Anton | Styger | anton.styger@nwu.ac.za | North-West University |
| Reshma | Subbaye | subbayer@ukzn.ac.za | University of KwaZulu-Natal |
| Emetia | Swart | emetias@regenesys.net | Regenesys Business School |
| Rujeko | Tereka | rujeko.tereka@mancosa.co.za | MANCOSA |
| emmanuel | Thagwana | emmanuel.thagwana@univen.ac.za | UNIVEN |
| Lerato | Tladi | Tladils@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Ramogwera | Tlhapane | Ramogwera.Tlhapane@univen.ac.za | Ramogwera Tlhapane Management Consultancy |

| First Name | Last Name | Email Address | Company |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Jerall | Toi | jerall@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Mzwanele | Toni | mtoni@wsu.ac.za | Walter Sisulu University |
| Juliet | Townes | jtownes@ufh.ac.za | University of Fort Hare |
| Bongiwe | Tshabalala | bongiwe.tshabalala@up.ac.za | University of Pretoria |
| Takalani Patience | Tshivhase | tshivtp1@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Wilhelm | Uys | jwuys@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Melissa | Van der Vyver | melissavdv@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Retha | van Deventer | retha.vandeventer@nwu.ac.za | North-West University |
| Albe | Van Niekerk | albe@sun.ac.za | Stellenbosch University |
| Liesel | Van Wyk | Liesel.vanwyk@nwu.ac.za | North-West University |
| Dion | Van Zyl | dionvanzyl@gmail.com | University of South Africa |
| Brittany | Vermeulen | B.Vermeulen@westernsydney.edu.au | Western Sydney University |
| Jan-Hendrik | Viljoen | janhendrik.viljoen@nwu.ac.za | North-West University |
| Willie | Visagie | willie@quantumeducationsystems.co.za | Quantum Solutions |
| Herman | Visser | vissehj@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Mthuthuzeli | Vongo | mvongo@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Julian | Vooght | julianv@dut.ac.za | Durban University of Technology |
| Karen | Webber | kwebber@uga.edu | University of Georgia |
| Renee | Weideman | weideman@cput.ac.za | Cape Peninsula University of Technology |
| Anri | Wheeler | awheeler@cut.ac.za | Central University of Technology |
| Laurika | Wiese | lvstraat@cut.ac.za | Central University of Technology |
| Esme | Wiid | wiidse1@unisa.ac.za | University of South Africa |
| Louise | Wiseman | lwiseman@varsitycollege.co.za | IIE Varsity College |
| Evan | Witten | wittenec@ufs.ac.za | University of the Free State |
| Philip | Wyse | philipw@quantumsolutions.co.za | Quantum Solutions |
| Kathija | Yassim | kyassim@uj.ac.za | University of Johannesburg |
| Zamangwane | Zikhali | zikhalizs@tut.ac.za | Tshwane University of Technology |



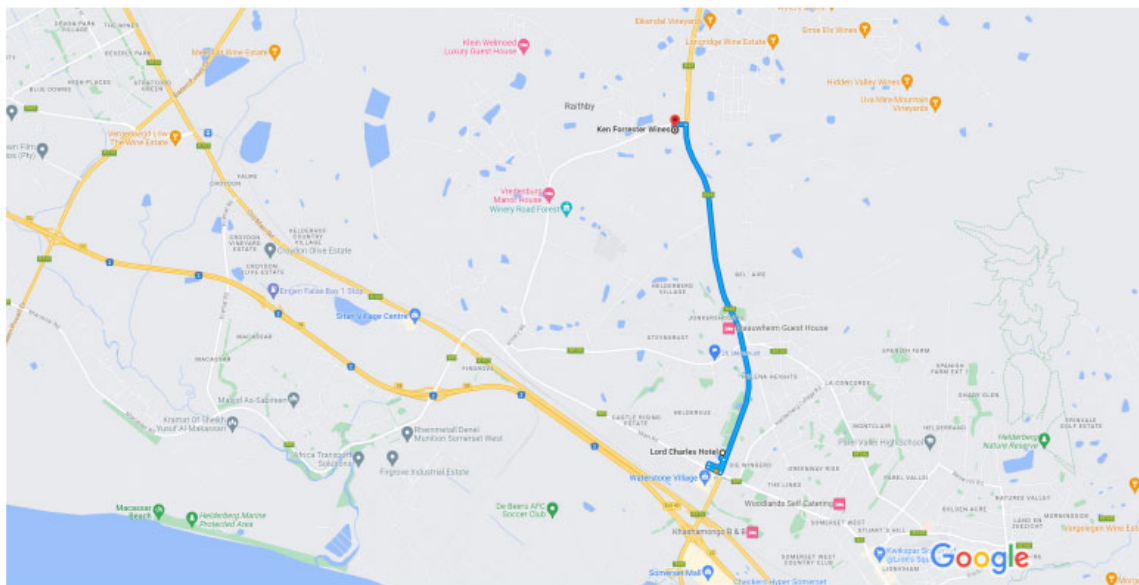
Directions: Lord Charles Hotel, Corner of Broadway Boulevards and, Main Rd, Somerset West, 7130 to Ken Forrester Wines, Scholtzenhof farm Cnr Winery Road &, R44, Raithby, 7600; **Phone:** 021 855 2374

Lord Charles Hotel

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

Take Main Rd/M9 to Broadway Blvd/R44

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------|
| ↑ | 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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info@facilitymanagerpro.co.za
www.facilitymanagerpro.co.za