NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

**Vice-Chancellor's Quarterly Report to Council
Quarter 2, 2020**

18 June 2020

VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO COUNCIL
SECOND QUARTER, 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

It gives us great pleasure to present the second quarterly report of 2020 to Council. The main theme for this report is student success, with a specific focus on various interventions implemented to improve graduate and research outputs. This report also provides Council with an overview of strategic highlights and challenges for this quarter particularly within the prevailing unprecedented context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Council would be aware, the country went into lockdown on 26 March, just as we were in the process of preparing for the autumn graduation season, which was due to commence on 15 April 2020. Given the prevailing circumstances, the University was not able to host the graduation ceremonies. For the first time in the history of the University, **4 477** qualifications were awarded to students in absentia on 24 April 2020 at a special ECS meeting presided over by our Chancellor, Dr Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi.

2. VISION 2030: STRATEGIC PLANNING

We are acutely aware that the pandemic has given rise to a "new normal" globally and universities are no exception. Although much of our attention in this quarter has focused on the immediate contingency measures required to rescue the 2020 academic year, it is crucial that, in parallel, we start thinking ahead to design future-focused strategies that will enhance our long-term sustainability. As part of our Vision 2030 strategy formulation processes that are unfolding, we will need to reflect on the lessons learnt over the past few months and how these will fundamentally transform future ways of working and of learning. This includes accelerated digitalisation of our current operating models, systems and processes to promote organisational resilience and agility, while continuing to align our work with our institutional transformative ethos.

Ocean Sciences
The Ocean Sciences Project Office has recently been engaging extensively with our DVCs, Executive Deans and selected international partners to update our ocean sciences strategy for 2020 to 2025. These consultations have yielded rich insights and ideas, which will be harnessed to articulate our future trajectory in respect of cutting-edge, inter- and transdisciplinary ocean sciences qualifications, research, innovation, international partnerships, engagement and resource mobilisation.   A fit-for-purpose campus governance and management model, including a resourcing model that promotes university-wide collaboration and synergies, will underpin this five-year strategy.   The outcomes of this process will be shared with Council in the next quarter after further consultations have been concluded.

Medical school
As Council is aware, the HPCSA Medical and Dental Board was due to sit on 20 March 2020 to deliberate on the accreditation of our medical programme, but this meeting did not take place due to the lockdown. On further enquiry, the Board will sit on 19 June 2020 and we remain hopeful that our item serves at this meeting following which the approval letter from HPCSA will be submitted to CHE and SAQA for registration. We will only be able to offer the medical programme after these accreditation processes have been concluded.

Infrastructure and equipment for the medical programme on the Missionvale Campus is more than 90% complete, with full completion delayed by the COVID-19 lockdown. Construction on site resumed when the country moved to lockdown level 4 and the medical programme team should be able to move to the Missionvale Campus in the second semester. The posts approved for the second wave of staff appointments for the medical programme are almost filled and the third wave will commence after approval by MANCO of the funding required.

Revitalising the humanities and promoting transdisciplinarity
Since March 2020, the work for the Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS) has taken place in the virtual realm and the TIMS website foregrounds the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony that took place earlier this year. National and international collaborators, Professor Verne Harris from the NMF and Professor Xolela Mangcu from George Washington University continue to provide collaborative input to advance the work of TIMS. In 2020, two book publications on Nelson Mandela from these affiliated Nelson Mandela University researchers will be available in print. Recently, Professor Harris, together with his colleague and Chief Executive of the NMF, Mr Sello Hatang, released their book entitled *I Know this to be True about Nelson Mandela* (2020), while Professor Mangcu's biography on Nelson Mandela is scheduled to be launched later this year.

In addition to the above, we have initiated a Senior Professors project to advance the University's academic reputation particularly as it relates to revitalising the humanities and cultivating transdisciplinarity. Earmarked funding has been allocated to attract and retain established scholars at a professorial level and, to date, eleven applications have been received and a second level of engagement is currently underway in order to ensure that the project encompasses the required knowledge areas.

3. **DISTINCTIVE EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY THAT CONTRIBUTES TO STUDENT ACCESS FOR SUCCESS**

Overall student success rates
Student success rates at the University steadily improved to levels where we were exceeding the national benchmark of 80%. Unfortunately, this trend started reversing after the protracted #FeesMustFall shutdown in 2016 with a decline in success rates in 2017.

Through various targeted interventions, our success rates started to improve in 2018 and 2019, which we hope to maintain in spite of the current challenges associated with the rapid transition to blended learning during the COVID-19 lockdown. Some of these initiatives include the following:
- Tracking student progress to facilitate the early identification of learners who are experiencing learning challenges and need to be referred to student success coaches (academic advisors).
- Expanding peer mentoring, tutorials and supplemental instruction, especially in high-risk or gateway modules, which have historically proven to be a barrier to student success.

- Implementing a first-year success (FYS) programme and various forms of extended curricula/foundation provisioning to assist vulnerable students with the transition to university studies.
- Providing psychosocial and nutritional support to promote holistic student wellness.
- Developing the pedagogical, curriculum development and assessment skills of lecturers, particularly with the massive shift to blended learning.

Flexible, blended learning pathways to complete the 2020 academic year
As part of our efforts to recover the 2020 academic year, we have adopted a phased approach to resuming learning and teaching activities. To date, between 74-78% of our students have resumed their learning online. While many are experiencing this as very challenging, the majority are persisting with the support of their lecturers.

We have developed a second learning pathway to assist students who do not have access to mobile devices or connectivity. The content and assessments on both pathways are equivalent, although learning for Pathway 2 students will be intensified when they return to campus in phases.

As per the national directives, we are in the process of identifying the 33% of students who may start returning to the University under Level 3 regulations as announced by government. These are mainly final-year students, especially those who need to do laboratory and studio work, clinical training and experiential learning.

4. **ENGAGED, INNOVATIVE SCHOLARSHIP CULTURE THAT GENERATES KNOWLEDGE RECOGNISED FOR ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABILITY**

The Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Internationalisation (DVC: RII) has made significant strides in implementing processes to align the activities of portfolio with the relevant strategic priorities and goals.

Internationalisation and strategic partnerships
The International Office (IO) is finalising the Internationalisation Strategy Implementation Plan, which will prioritise the expansion of our African partnership footprint, enhance the University's profile and visibility globally, and facilitate our involvement in international networks and collaborative international research projects.

The RII portfolio is currently taking stock of existing partnership agreements to assess which of these should be renewed and maintained. The IO manages 73 partnership agreements, of which 53 are active, 19 require revision, and one is pending further information. These partnerships are distributed throughout Europe (43), North America (16), Africa (5), the Asia-Pacific (5), and Latin America (4).

The International Student Mobility Strategy is being finalised, together with a proposed implementation plan to expand the recruitment of students from Africa, BRICS countries, and countries in the Global South and North. This includes aligning the applications, admissions and registration processes for international students with those of the University to ensure that these are integrated, user-friendly and streamlined.

Mapping alignment of research with international priorities
Through a process of mapping the University's research activities against the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Africa's Agenda 2063, and the National Development Plan (2030), 21 potential thematic areas have been identified. Preliminary analyses indicate that, overall, the University's research largely focuses on addressing quality education, infrastructure, industrialisation and innovation, and economic growth, employment and decent work.

Furthermore, a process is underway to identify RII policies that need to be revised or drafted to support improvements in research quality and productivity.

Postdoctoral funding
There has been a steady growth in postdoctoral numbers with 70 fellows being hosted at the University by the end of 2019. Strategic funding was allocated this year to sponsor ten Vice Chancellor's Prestigious Postdoctoral Fellowships for 2020 in priority areas addressing institutional research themes. To date, eight of these fellowships have been allocated, with four having started by May 2020.

Research ethics
A Research Ethics Management software system (INFONETICA) has been acquired, which should improve the ethics application, management, and monitoring processes as from August 2020.

Research outputs
In April 2020, the Department of Higher Education and Training released the report on the national research outputs produced in 2018, as reported in the 2019 cycle. Whilst there was a decline in research outputs nationally, Mandela University showed an improvement with **427** units awarded compared to 389 in 2017.

Innovation
Propella, a University co-owned business incubator, is expanding its footprint and has been awarded funding by the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA) to set up a Township Incubator in the Neave Industrial Park. Another exciting development is that one of the companies incubated at Propella, HedgeSA, is composed of a multi-disciplinary team of innovative graduates from the University and is developing a low-cost bag mask ventilator called the Salutaris to help fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts are underway for the fundraising and commercialisation of the bag ventilator to ensure that it is available to hospitals and clinics as soon as possible. It is pleasing to note that 57% of the ventures onboarded since Propella's inception in 2015 were founded by entrepreneurs who are Mandela University students or alumni.

Library and information services
The COVID-19 lockdown has catalysed the transition to virtual library and information services across all universities. Ongoing engagements with publishers aim to ensure that students have 24/7 access to prescribed e-books and open educational resources.

5. ENHANCING STUDENT LIVING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

The University has been engaging students successfully through virtual platforms to support their participation in University decision-making during this period.

Student governance and development
Weekly meetings with the SRC Executive have been set up to consult with student leaders in respect of the University's response to national COVID-19 imperatives. With the support of the SRC, we have also initiated amendments to the SRC constitution to provide for alternative measures in the event that we are unable to hold SRC elections due to the pandemic.

Financial aid
All NSFAS students continue to be paid allowances and, to date, Financial Aid has administered the following funds during 2020.

Category	Amount	Number of Benefitting Students
Council funds (UG & Hons)*	R 44 795 780	2 141
Council funds (M&D)*	R 34 324 550	679
Government funding (including DHET gap funding)	R 41 242 455	6 671
NSFAS	R 1 086 013 592	13 428
TOTAL	**R 1 206 376 377**	

* Note: Although not administered by Financial Aid, postgraduate bursaries funded by Council are included in the table above.

Strategic Resource Mobilisation and Advancement (SRMA) and Nelson Mandela University Trust
SRMA provides operational support to the Nelson Mandela University Trust to mobilise resources for bursaries. With the introduction of the expanded NSFAS scheme at undergraduate level, the focus shifted to mobilising bursaries for the so-called missing middle and postgraduate students. As at the end of April 2020, the SRMA mobilised just over R20million for bursary funding. In addition, an amount of R150 000 was transferred to the Office for International Education for students needing assistance to complete their studies in 2020.

During 2019, the values for Council-funded Master's and Doctoral Postgraduate Research Scholarships (PGRS) were increased to levels that are more nationally competitive and provision was also made for academically deserving students enrolling for Advanced and Postgraduate Diplomas, as well as BTech and Honours degrees. These shifts will partially cushion the University in respect of the changes in NRF funding expected to come online in 2021, which will decrease the number of postgraduate students who receive support.

Student housing
A dedicated work stream has been established under the auspices of the COVID-19 Task Team to plan for the phased return of students to campus and residences. This team has been guided by national guidelines in finalising all the pre-arrival readiness plans for on-campus residences in Port Elizabeth and George.

Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS)
UADS has contributed to the development of the guidelines for universal online teaching as part of supporting differently abled students to participate in remote learning.

Madibaz sport
Our sporting codes have been halted given the various restrictions imposed by the lockdown. It is, however, worth noting that the Madibaz Rugby Team has officially been promoted from the Varsity Shield to Varsity Cup.

Student health services
Partnerships have been formed with the Departments of Health in Nelson Mandela Bay and George to support our COVID-19 screening and testing procedures. While catering services have remained closed during the lockdown, food parcels continue to be distributed to needy students who remained in on-campus accommodation during the lockdown.

Student conscientisation and social compacting
Under the leadership of the SRC President, the My Mandela Student Brigade has been launched in an attempt to conscientise our students and raise awareness of the behaviour modifications required to comply with the COVID-19 imperatives.

6. **TRANSFORMATIVE INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE THAT PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION**

The Acting DVC of the Engagement and Transformation (E&T) portfolio has been co-opted as convenor and chairperson of the COVID-19 Coordination Committee (CCC) since 31 March 2020. Under the auspices of the CCC, the Community Convergence Workstream (CCW) was established to coordinate the direct interventions of various entities to respond to COVID-19 challenges.

Hubs of Convergence (HoC)
The HoC is responsible for facilitating the coordination and management of the work of the CCW. This is situated within the framework of convergence and rethinking engagement whereby projects are undertaken in ways that extend the agency and autonomy of local community-based organisations, especially in socio-economically deprived communities. Some of the noteworthy initiatives of the CCW include the following:
- Assistance in planting gardens to supply fresh produce to community kitchens;
- Establishing and maintaining a COVID-19 public education and information website;
- Producing and distributing 900 masks to children and adults in local communities;
- Tele-counselling and the provision of psychosocial support; and
- Designing and hosting short learning programmes and webinars on workplace wellness and COVID-19 preparedness.

These interventions are being mapped as implementation unfolds to capture collective learning and to inform the University's longer-term programmatic work post-COVID.

Mandela University Convergence Fund
The University launched the Mandela University Convergence Fund in April 2020 to provide a vehicle for all staff and the broader University community to contribute directly to supporting the Hubs of Convergence in responding to the immediate needs of vulnerable communities. As at 10 June 2020, the Convergence Fund stood at R217 575, of which R120 000 had been disbursed to provide food relief for the elderly and survivors of GBV in disadvantaged communities. Further details, including how to contribute to the Convergence Fund, can be accessed at: https://www.mandela.ac.za/News-and-Events/Coronavirus-Information/Convergence-Fund

Gender transformation and gender-based violence (GBV)
The Centre for Women and Gender Studies (CWGS) has been driving conversations and partnerships across the city and the province to establish a 'gender agenda' that is intersectional, inter-disciplinary and humane. This includes the African Women's Intellectual Histories research project, which will culminate in an online colloquium and a co-edited book that will bring together outputs from different scholars in EC universities.

As part of its educational and advocacy mandate, the Centre has been conducting GBV training and is currently developing a training manual for different University stakeholders, which will be shared by the end of June 2020. In addition, the CWGS has created a digital space through the *Online Reading with the Author Fridays* to facilitate engagements with a community of gender scholars during the lockdown.

Through the work of the Transformation Office, Phase 1 of the online GBV reporting page has been completed, tested and signed off. Training of relevant internal staff will be conducted online. There have not been any further reports of GBV cases since the last report to Council in March 2020. Those cases that were reported and investigated prior to the lockdown will be processed through the formal disciplinary mechanisms when students return to campus.

Contribution of engagement entities to a vibrant intellectual culture
As part of fostering a vibrant and stimulating intellectual culture at Mandela University, the Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (*Cri*SHET) is relaunching a book series *On Higher Education Transformation* in partnership with the Director of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education at the University of Johannesburg, Prof Michael Cross. The first volume in the series, *Scholarly Engagement and Decolonisation: Views from South Africa, The Netherlands and the United States*, is in the printing stage and will be launched later this year.

The Chair has been granted CSUR-NRF funding for a three-year project (2020-2022) on *Critical University Studies and Higher Education Transformation*. *Cri*SHET has also established a multi-university partnership for the development of an Online Resource for Higher Education Transformation (ORHET).

The Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (CANRAD) has collaborated with the SARCHI: Identities and Social Cohesion in Africa (ISCIA) and the CCW on a webinar series framed by social justice concerns entitled '*Thinking Together through the Pandemic*'. CANRAD has also been contributing to informing national debate through the participation of Prof Christi Van der Westhuizen in TV and radio interviews on issues pertaining to COVID-19.

The work of the Centre for Integrated Post-school Education and Training (CIPSET) with the merSETA on establishing a youth cooperative with unemployed TVET students continues through social media platforms. CIPSET's seminar series on Work and Learning has been refocused to host webinars for social movement, trade union and university networks in respect of the implications of COVID-19 for society, employment and work.

The Research Chair for Youth Unemployment, Employability and Empowerment (Chair YU) has made good progress with research to assess the way(s) in which education and training has expanded or restrained the livelihood possibilities of TVET college learners. Our University is one of eight partners responsible for three components of the large-scale TVET Colleges Research Programme, which is funded by the National Skills Fund and DHET. The University's career fairs scheduled to take place at the end of July have been cancelled due to the prevailing circumstances. The University and fourteen other universities are collaborating to stage a virtual Careers Fair in partnership with the South African Graduate Recruiters Association in July/August 2020. Thus far, 95 national employers have indicated that they will participate.

7. EMPLOYER OF FIRST CHOICE BY INVESTING IN TALENTED, HIGH PERFORMING EMPLOYEES

The Coronavirus Task Team (CTT) coordinates all activities relating to COVID-19 under the close supervision of the Healthcare Committee chaired by Prof Pepeta. This includes preparing for the staggered return to work of different categories of employees during the various levels of the lockdown. The number of employees permitted on campuses at any given time will be minimised through rotation, staggered working hours, shift systems or remote working arrangements. The University has developed remote working guidelines and arrangements since it is anticipated that the phased return-to-work plan could be in operation for the next six to eight months.

Employee Wellness
During the lockdown, the participation rate in the employee wellbeing programme decreased to 5%. However, the virtual weekly sessions have proven to be successful in reaching staff at all post levels and providing a platform to address the emotional impact of the lockdown.

Recruitment and selection
Recruitment and selection processes have continued virtually and, as at 30 April 2020, the complement of permanent and long-term contracted employees was **2 474**. During the period 1 February to 30 April 2020, 27 employees were appointed permanently or on a contract of longer than one year, of which 24 (89%) were from under-represented groups.

Terminations
A total of 14 employees terminated their employment at the University during this period. This represents a labour turnover of 0.6%, which is well below the sector benchmark of between 4-6%.

Employee Development
Workforce training related to COVID-19 has commenced in earnest in preparation for the staggered return of employees and students to campus. HR is also finalising the development of a virtual onboarding programme to share pertinent information with new employees.

Organisational Redesign
The implementation of Organisational Redesign has continued in different portfolios with a focus on a line manager toolkit to conclude consultations with affected employees. Job analysis, the development of job descriptions and job grading are underway in line with the Peromnes Job Evaluation Policy. In addition, system changes to accommodate new departments, cost centres and account codes have been configured. Several workshops have been held with the Business School, Internal Audit and International Office to conclude organisational redesign proposals and these will serve through the relevant governance structures shortly for approval.

Employee Relations
The 2020/21 Salary/Wage Negotiations were concluded in record time and salary increases were implemented in March 2020 for the first time. With the easing of some of the lockdown restrictions, measures have been put in place to resolve the backlog of ER cases through various remote platforms.

8. **ENABLING SYSTEMS AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT PROMOTE AN EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS, EMPLOYEES AND KEY STAKEHOLDERS**

Graduation
With the assistance of ICT services, graduates have the option to access digital web graduation certificates through a secure system, which prevents unauthorised printing of certificates. As at 5 June 2020, **2465** certificates were generated upon request of graduates of which 1539 were downloaded.

Module assessments
With the suspension of face-to-face lectures, mid-year examinations had to be cancelled. With the approval of ECS, faculties shifted from examinations to continuous assessment in **1 216** modules during the first semester of 2020.

Review of the 2020 Academic Calendar
Planning is currently underway to draft an academic calendar that takes into account the completion of first-semester modules, as well as running concurrently with second-semester modules through multi-modal learning and teaching. With the massive transition to online learning, some universities have experienced an increase in the number of students de-registering. However, as at the beginning of June 2020, only **274** students had cancelled their registration at our University compared to **429** at the same time last year.

Support Services
In terms of national directives, the services deemed as essential and critical include protection services, health safety and environment (HSE), cleaning and catering services, as well as transport, fleet management and postal services. With the planned phased return of staff and students to campus, support services staff will be on hand to ensure that the marshalling of staff and students to screening points runs smoothly, venues are frequently and thoroughly cleaned, and additional hygiene materials and Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs) are sourced.

Infrastructure services and space optimisation
All infrastructure projects were suspended during the COVID-19 level 5 lockdown. However, the DHET has granted the Universities permission to proceed with infrastructure development under strict prescriptions. All University contractors were requested to submit adjusted Health and Safety Plans in alignment with specific COVID-19 requirements and contractors will re-start after these plans have been approved.

Communication and marketing
During these unprecedented times, communication has been anchored by the University's resolve to prioritise the wellbeing of students and employees. Key to these communication plans is the dedicated coronavirus website launched on 10 March as the go-to destination for all COVID-related information. This information is also distributed on all social media platforms. In this period, we have circulated 85 Facebook posts, 86 Tweets, and 9 YouTube videos relating to the pandemic.

The achievements of the Coronavirus Coordinating Committee (CCC) are shared in agenda-setting media as part of positioning the University's strengths in the service of society. Op-eds have featured the University's efforts in supporting students to complete the academic year, as well as the innovative contributions of our faculties in fighting the pandemic.

Furthermore, with online applications for the 2021 intake underway, student recruitment measures have been put in place to drive prospective students and parents to the *MyFuture* webpage. This site includes virtual tours of our campuses and a dedicated email address that is managed by student recruiters to enable personalised communication with applicants.

ICT Services
Shifting to blended and flexible learning pathways at scale requires a Learning Management System (LMS) that hosts learning content while also providing a platform for discussion. As can be expected, the use of the University's Moodle LMS has increased exponentially across all faculties with **4 881** modules now available online. The student device initiative has also continued to provide laptops to first-time entering NSFAS-funded students, with **5 173** students having opted in.

To address connectivity requirements of staff working remotely, line managers are now able to pre-approve employee requests for data in accordance with operational requirements up to R1 000 per month. ICT Services has procured 200 routers and SIM cards containing 40/80GB of data on a month-to-month basis to support various data-intensive

portfolios to continue working remotely. Furthermore, the University has brought forward the replacement cycle of PCs to purchase an additional 100 laptops for staff with desktops to ensure that they can work from home.

9.   ENHANCE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH EFFECTIVE RESOURCE MOBILISATION AND RESPONSIBLE RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

Public universities in South Africa and globally are grappling with high levels of uncertainty and concerns that government budgets will be increasingly constrained due to the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. In light of this, MANCO has approved the establishment of a Task Team to conduct scenario planning to forecast the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the University's long-term financial sustainability.

The University is particularly sensitive to changes in subsidy, fees and salaries. Any material changes in subsidy and fee assumptions impacts on the amount available to fund staffing costs. Revenue from fees and subsidy in the latest forecast equates to 98% of the revenue budget, after bad debts and before investment income. This, together with the salary benchmark of 65%, is assumed in the high-level modelling. Self-funding initiatives need to implement sustainability plans to limit the cross-subsidisation required from fees and subsidy. Furthermore, the business models approved by Council will continue to be monitored and reviewed to ensure that student accommodation and facilities funding models break even in the medium- to long-term.

The SRMA is maintaining contact with donors to keep funding flowing into the Trust and the University has not experienced a decline in donor funding thus far when compared to the same time last year. While it is too soon to assess the impact of economic pressures on donations going forward, we anticipate that resource mobilisation will become increasingly more competitive especially as many organisations are likely to shift their corporate social investments from education to health.

At a sectoral level, the Finance Executive Forum (FEF) of Universities South Africa (USAf) has been meeting regularly with invitees from DHET to assess how to support universities in accommodating the additional budget implications flowing from COVID-19. The University submitted a costed activity plan to the DHET to enable multimodal remote teaching, learning and assessment and campus readiness plans at a total budget of R110.5million.

MANCO approved a budget reprioritisation process for the virement of budgets to assist in addressing new and reprioritised needs arising from COVID-19. To this end, savings in salaries due to vacant posts, utilities, travel and telephone costs, catering and general consumables will be redirected to cater for increased costs in special consumables for cleaning, investment in personal protective equipment, data and laptops, and so forth. This process of reprioritisation is likely to be continuous during the course of 2020 to allow for budget transfers to the COVID-19 contingency fund as future savings and additional costs become known.

FFC of Council has approved additional budget on a bridging basis depending on potential stimulus funding from government. This made provision for R30million for devices for students on a loan or sale basis, as well as student data at a cap of six months at R2.8million per month. The plan provides for four months amounting to R11.2million. This leaves a potential shortfall of R7.6million.

The May 2020 report, which is the latest to date, has required an adjusted forecast for the 2020 financial year. The forecast reflects an operational deficit of R11.9million before investment income, with R26.1m surplus after investment income.

It must also be noted that the DHET has advised universities that its spend is limited to 55% of original estimates for the period May to July 2020 since Parliament has not yet approved the budget. This will result in a cash flow shortfall of R175.9million in June and July. The DHET has advised that this will be rectified later in the year, but the University has revised cash flows to absorb this material shortfall.

10. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has surfaced deep societal cleavages across the world and this requires that we lead Nelson Mandela University towards the right side of history by responding to prevailing challenges in a manner guided by our social justice ethos and praxes. Our leadership, employees and students have been responding to the crisis with extraordinary dedication to address the devastating consequences of the pandemic, especially for those who are most deprived and vulnerable. Looking to the future, the centrality of social solidarity and inclusion needs to extend beyond the current crisis and become the defining characteristic of Nelson Mandela University in its quest to be in the service of society. This will require intentionality and a common sense of purpose guided by our core values, mission and emerging Vision 2030 strategic priorities.