



**Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council
Quarter 3, 2022**

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1. INTRODUCTION

As we continue to cascade our Vision 2030 strategy across every domain in the University, this third quarterly report will strive to provide Council with an overview of strategic highlights and challenges with an emphasis on transformation, as a cross-cutting theme, for Quarter 3. As a dynamic African university driven by a common sense of purpose to be in the service of society, transformation is a transversal priority and an integral part of our drive to co-create a more socially equitable and sustainable future for all.

2. VISION 2030 STRATEGIC TRAJECTORIES

A key attribute of Nelson Mandela University's Vision 2030 strategic plan is to provide transformative lifelong learning experiences that liberate human potential. As a key milestone in cascading institutional strategy, all executive management members have developed five-year (2021-2025) strategic plans which will collectively inform strategy implementation, risk management, resource mobilisation, as well as monitoring, evaluation, and reporting. Transformative engagement is one of our key focus areas, as reflected in the University's strategic trajectories of the Medical School, Ocean Sciences and Revitalising the Humanities, to name a few.

2.1 Medical School

The Medical School enrolls 60% of its students from quintile 1 to 3 schools thereby opening more medical education training opportunities to under-served communities. In addition, 60% of the students in the Medical School are female.

The Medical School has attracted professionals of the highest standard from across South Africa with 98% of all appointments achieving employment equity targets, where 60% of all employees are women. There is also a blend of skills and age categories across the Medical School, although the average age is younger, which adds to the potential for future growth and development.

The curriculum of the Medical School takes a transformative approach. It has been deliberately founded on a Primary Health Care (PHC) orientation, and students are introduced to the communities they serve from the first year of their training.

2.2 Ocean Sciences

As an outflow of collaboration with the University of Oldenburg's Helmholtz Institute for Functional Marine Biodiversity (HIFMB) since 2017, the Lower Saxony Ministry of Science and Culture in Germany has announced that it would fund an exchange programme from January 2021-December 2023. This exchange programme places specific emphasis on making travel affordable and family-friendly for Doctoral candidates.

Nelson Mandela University is leading the development of the South African Master's qualification in Ocean Science (SAMOS) in collaboration with seven other South African universities (University of Cape Town; University of the Western Cape; Cape Peninsula University of Technology; Stellenbosch University; Rhodes University; University of Kwa-Zulu Natal), and several international universities (University of Brest and Montpellier in France, Kiel in Germany, and Bergen in Norway). This programme is designed to be a unique, international and transdisciplinary Master's course with focus areas such as the blue economy and climate change. The six months coursework component would be based at our Ocean Sciences Campus, while the 18-month research project could be undertaken across any of the other South African universities or in Europe.

The South African International Maritime Institute (SAIMI) advocates for greater access for women to careers and business opportunities within the maritime industry. To this end, SAIMI launched the Imbokodo in Maritime Transformation Programme on 24 August as part of Women's Month. This programme is focused on providing sustainable support for women empowerment through collaboration with industry, government, academia, and the community.

2.3 Revitalising the Humanities

The transformative work taking place in Revitalising the Humanities is forging ahead, with numerous events taking place over the reporting period. These included three memorial public lectures to honour Sizwe Kondile, Raymond Mhlaba, Phyllis Ntantala and Prudence Mabele. The first two lectures were organised through the relaunched Raymond Mhlaba Centre, and the third by the Centre for Gender and Women Studies and the SARChI Chair on African Feminist Imagination, in collaboration with the University of Fort Hare. All lectures addressed the themes of origins, culture, heritage, and memory, as well as ethical governance and leadership.

The Faculty of Humanities is preparing for the formal handover of the Dr Hlophe Brigalia Bam Archive to the University, the first archival project in the Women's Digital Archive and Gendered Histories research. In this quarter, a team created an inventory of Bam artefacts which are now being catalogued.

The Faculty's Curriculum Conversations, drawing from the priority theme of African Vernacular Archive and Heritage Studies, are ongoing. The most recent was on 29 July when, in collaboration with the National Institute for the Humanities and the Social Sciences (NIHSS), the Faculty presented a transdisciplinary conversation on 200 years of the isiXhosa written word in the Eastern Cape.

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

3.1 Learning and Teaching Plan for 2023

Vision 2030's aspiration is for the University to have a responsive, blended mix of face-to-face (FTF) and online components, which may vary across courses, as well as student and lecturer capabilities, but will be infused by a humanising, student-centric philosophy. This has relevance for Mandela's Learning and Teaching (LT) 2023 Plan as we envisage a significant shift in the mode of LT from this year to next. We aim to achieve three main LT goals in 2023, namely:

- Restarting F2F teaching balanced with some online LT.
- Pilot innovative online LT in selected programmes at an Advanced Diploma and postgraduate level.
- Scale up the development of a suite of fully online programmes and Short Learning Programmes (SLPs).

During this semester, the DVC: LT and the Deanery will lead discussions with other portfolios at the University to raise awareness of the 2023 blended mix of LT modes. These engagements will also promote the readiness of venues, IT infrastructure, administrative processes and systems, timetabling, libraries, and support services to welcome all students and academics back to campus in 2023.

3.2 Learning and Teaching Collab

Curriculum transformation

Curriculum transformation and changing approaches to assessment are key priorities in the LT portfolio. Under the leadership of the Learning Experience Design and Innovation cluster (LXD) in this portfolio, Coursetune, a curriculum mapping tool, has been procured to speed up the curriculum of the University's first fully online programmes.

A budget and resourcing model for SLPs and formal qualifications also needs to be developed, along with the processes to seek CHE approval to offer formal programmes online. Resourcing will be sought to either buy out the time of academics to undertake the curriculum development work, or to appoint curriculum developers on contract to do so in collaboration with the lecturers concerned.

Digital Learning Experience Design and Innovation (LXD)

The LXD activated the Intelliboard analytics platform in July. This platform provides real-time analytics in the form of fully customisable dashboards that can present different information to different users. To enable proactive learning, students are also provided with a dashboard to monitor their progress online.

Teaching Development (TD)

The foundations of Teaching Development (TD) are anchored in transformative LT to instil critical and reflective thinking in both staff and students. Offered collaboratively across the LT Collab and Research Development, the Early Career Academics Advancement Programme (ECAAP) recently facilitated workshops with themes focusing on transformation of higher education in South Africa and the decolonisation of learning and teaching in the Mandela University context. Other Teaching Development (TD) initiatives, such as the Teaching Enhancement Programme (TEP), focus on curriculum review, module guide development, and re-curriculation.

Learning Development (LD)

The 2022 First Year Success (FYS) programme benefitted over 4900 first-time entering students and focused on assisting them to adapt to the rigours of university studies. To complement this, senior student leaders identified the importance of supporting students from quintile 1-3 schools as they transition into higher education. A pilot project was initiated and implemented under the guidance of the LD staff to assist these first-year students to achieve their fullest academic potential. Similarly, Student Success Coaching (SSC) continued during the first semester of 2022, with more than 500 students interacting with coaches on 1186 occasions, most of which (64%) were held online.

3.3 Post-pandemic LT lessons

Our immersive experience of online LT and assessment over the past two years has taught us valuable lessons, such as the need to constantly enhance the digital and technological competencies of staff and students to teach and learn in virtual spaces. Furthermore, it will also be necessary to devote attention to the design of online learning materials and activities. Expanding tutorials, supplemental instruction sessions and simulated work experiences into virtual spaces worked well and is likely to continue. We acknowledge that while shifting LT online enabled students to take greater responsibility for regulating their learning, the academic staff workload is of concern, as many lecturers find it difficult to have downtime when learning can occur 24/7. The reality is that it will be a few years before all our LT venues are technology-rich, and there are sufficient quiet spaces for students to engage fully in online LT between F2F classes, in the evenings and over weekends. These matters are cardinal to our LT delivery approach in 2023.

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

4.1 Research and postgraduate studies

Postgraduate and research funding

Externally sourced income generated from research contracts has remained stable over the last five years and generally accounts for about 3.3% of the University's annual income. For 2022, NRF-awarded grants (including bursaries and fellowships) are valued at R42 559 451.

As of 29 August 2022, 571 Honours, 455 Master's and 219 Doctoral scholarships received funding from Council, the NRF and other external sources. Of these numbers, 85% were Black (African, Coloured, Indian, and Asian) students and 68% were female.

The projected investment in postdoctoral and research fellowships for the 2022 academic year is R14.4m. Of the 137 postdoctoral and research fellowships awarded over the review period, 68% were Black and 39% female. Going forward, it will be important to increase the proportion of women who take up these opportunities.

The University is also committed to transforming the equity profile of academic staff with doctoral degrees and has leveraged funding from the NRF and DHET to this end. There are 17 active Thuthuka grant holders, of whom 82% are Black and 59% female. The Black Academics Advancement Programme (BAAP) currently funds seven academics, five of whom are female. These grant holders are committed to postgraduate student training to augment supervisory capacity. The New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) cohort at Mandela University comprises 17 Black academics, 10 of whom are female.

Transformation in research chairs, entities, and researchers

Mandela University hosts 16 research chairs, of whom four are black females, four black males, three white females, and five white males. We plan to grow this number, emphasising externally or industry-funded research chairs. Of the 22 research entities at the University, nine (41%) are headed by females, while only six (27%) of the entity leaders are Black.

We have 85 National Research Foundation (NRF) rated researchers of whom 17 (20%) are Black and 28 (33%) females. The demographic profile of the established and rated researchers remains largely white, middle-aged males. Both the A- and B-rated researchers are entirely white with only two B-rated females out of 12 researchers. It is of concern that the number of rated researchers has remained stagnant over time, and the demographic diversity of these researchers requires urgent attention.

4.2 Internationalisation

The International Office (IO) supports internationalisation initiatives that address the University's mandate to serve local and global communities through pioneering and transformative scholarship and innovation.

International Student Enrolments

International enrolments stood at 1026 students as of 25 August 2022. We continue to engage with faculties on strategies to attract and increase the number of international postgraduate students.

The enrolment of students from the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) declined from 7.5% in 2013 to 4.3% in 2020, below the agreed SADC Agreement of 10%. However, with lockdown regulations easing earlier this year, the IO accepted and

registered 89 study-abroad students in the second semester of 2022, the highest number recorded since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The IO hosted a hybrid workshop on immigration issues within higher education from 21 to 22 July 2022. More than 50 representatives from 20 South African universities, as well as Visa Facilitation Services (VFS) Global and Home Affairs officials, attended. Participants raised ongoing concerns regarding the steady decline of international student enrolments nationally and the need to eliminate bottlenecks.

African Engagements and Partnership Programme

Of our more than 150 partnerships with universities across the world, over 80% are with European and North American universities, and less than 5% with African institutions. Viewing this as an opportunity to build relations and respond to the goals of the African Union Agenda 2063, the University has embarked on strategic engagements across the African continent.

A delegation of 13 executive, academic and support staff took part in the Vice-Chancellor's Africa Engagements and Partnership Programme, starting in East Africa with engagements at universities in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya from 25 June to 02 July 2022. A total of five Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with strategic partner universities, have already been signed to date. Recruitment of, and marketing to, prospective international students was also a significant focus of the programme. The IO is now working on the next phases, which will cover the West, Central and Southern African regions. There is significant potential for growth as we drive a deliberate agenda which prioritises African scholarship and indigenous knowledges.

4.3 Library and Information Services (LIS)

The pandemic had the welcome effect of fast-tracking digital transformation, with LIS reimagining platforms such as the institutional repository and other services. Service models transitioned toward self-service, online and independent access to information for users, as well as online training. Other digital developments include the development of a new library app, training in the Figshare repository platform, and use of the LibGuides content management system that includes research support tools.

5. TRANSFORMATIVE INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE THAT PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

5.1 Celebrating the name of Mandela

Starting from July 2022, the Engagement and Transformation Portfolio (ETP) has been rolling out six months of programmatic and scholarly work as part of the broader University five-year name change celebrations. This will seek to mobilise the Mandela name in favour of the social justice, transformation and sustainability work being done across the University. As an example, the Mandela University Food Systems (NMUFS) Programme

hosted international Mandela Day and Mandela Month 2022 in support of the Nelson Mandela Foundation and in collaboration with multiple external stakeholder-communities.

5.2 Hubs of Convergence (HoC)

The HoC are facilitating, coordinating, and supporting the roll-out of the End Period Poverty Programme at the University through a multi-layered approach that seeks to join interested groups towards driving awareness of, and responding to menstrual health and hygiene-related issues. This includes collaborating with the Mina Foundation and the Gift of the Givers to distribute 1000 menstrual cups at the University. The HoC has also partnered with the Umphanda Foundation, which aims to assist and support autistic learners, and communities who have a stake in the development of various approaches to understanding the condition. A collaboration between the HoC, the NMUFS Programme, the Department of Visual and Performing Arts, five Community Kitchens, alongside the Ikhala Trust, which commenced in 2021, is continuing to bear fruit.

5.3 Transformation Office

All MANCO portfolios have been consulted regarding the development of the new five-year Institutional Transformation Plan (2023-2027). The final version will serve at MANCO and other governance structures, including Council, for approval during the fourth quarter, following which it will be submitted to the DHET. Equality promotion and social inclusion awareness and advocacy interventions are ongoing, with numerous events hosted to mark Mandela Day and Women's Month. A total of 64 equality-related complaints have been lodged with the Transformation Office, of which nine related to unfair discrimination.

5.4 Centres, Chairs, Working Groups and Units

Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET)

CIPSET is exploring relationships with organisations such as the International Federation of Workers' Education Alliance and the MOJA Digital Platform in building capacity on the continent. It continues to work on funding proposals to support transformative work, and with colleagues in the Community Convergence Workstream (CCW) in supporting community gardeners.

Centre for the Advancement of Non-Racialism and Democracy (CANRAD)

CANRAD, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, and the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation are primary constituent members of the national civil society formation, the Anti-Racist Network South Africa. On 1 and 2 July 2022 the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation-initiated "Conference for Democratic Renewal and Change" attracted more than 130 organisations striving to defend SA's constitutional democracy. CANRAD chaired one of the conference commissions. In partnership with the Faculty of Humanities, CANRAD also launched Research Associate Prof Gilingwe Mayende's *The Land and Agrarian Question: The First Frontier of Decolonisation in South Africa* at the South End Museum on 23 August.

Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET)

CriSHET and CANRAD co-hosted Prof Breitner Tavares from the University of Brasilia for two weeks in July and August, strengthening South-South collaboration. His visit focused on collective health and the sociology of racial relationships.

The Chair is also working to build stronger relationships across the South African Higher Education sector by establishing a Critical University Studies – South Africa (CUS-SA) network, which hosted a seminar on 25 August on *The De/Recompositional Grounds of the University in Techno-Rational Times* at the University of Johannesburg.

The Centre for Women & Gender Studies (CWGS) and SARChI Chair: African Feminist Imaginations

The CWGS is developing two new Masters' degrees to highlight gender studies as an interdisciplinary scholarly engagement that can, and should, stand on its own merit. This is a significant step towards implementing gender mainstreaming strategies and creating a gender-conscious University, as well as foregrounding African intellectualism. The Centre and the Chair hosted a notable hybrid event on 3 August focusing on *The Apartheid Archive and Women's Rage as Radical Refusal*. The CWGS is also finalising its Gender Mapping Project, which explores the ways in which the curriculum can be analysed along gendered lines.

HIV & AIDS Research Unit

The HIV & AIDS Research Unit has designed three short learning programmes that are accessible to academics, government departments and civil society organisations. They focus on HIV & AIDS curriculum integration, gender-based violence and workplace wellness.

Chair: Youth Unemployment, Employability and Empowerment (CYUEE)

It is noteworthy that the Chair has secured two contracts, the first of which is the HSRC-funded TVET colleges audit that aims to determine the occupational and skills programmes offered at South African TVET colleges. The second is funded through the PEER Network and seeks to review Zimbabwe's TVET sector.

Institutional Culture Working Group (ICWG)

The ICWG has developed an implementation plan (2022 to 2026) to cascade and embed the Statement of Commitment to an Inclusive Institutional Culture, in alignment with Vision 2030 and the institutional values, into the University to ensure that it is better understood and adopted by all staff.

Africanisation Decolonisation Working Group

The newly formed Africanisation Decolonisation Working Group had its first steering committee meeting with heads of portfolios across the University. Members highlighted how the University has had different sets of interventions to address Africanisation and decolonisation and how follow-up work should focus on aligning these efforts.

6. STUDENT LIFE AND DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Student Housing

In collaboration with other portfolios, the Department of Student Housing has hosted regular discussions in the residences on GBV, substance abuse, water preservation, LGBTQI+, leadership, mental wellness, and other issues. Various residences, and Madibaz Youth Lab, have collaborated by hosting joint events this quarter that have included various speakers at book launches and discussions with students to enhance vibrancy within the residences as living and learning spaces.

6.2 Student health and wellness

Emthonjeni Student Wellness (ESW) is facing growing demand for its services, both face-to-face and virtually. To address this, ESW has reduced its waiting period to 30 days, with at-risk students prioritised for quicker intervention. It has also adopted strategies that engage students through alternative pathways while they wait for individual sessions.

A total of 1222 students consulted ESW over 2579 sessions from 1 January to 25 August 2022. Individual counselling support for GBV-related matters is also provided on an ongoing basis. A total of 69 students received psychological support for GBV-related matters over this same period, of which 65 were recorded as victims, and four as alleged perpetrators. Thirteen trained peer helpers facilitated several workshops and webinars and continued to support GBV-related counselling.

A corporate funder has expressed interest in supporting student hunger-related initiatives and has been supplied with a short-term proposal for immediate food relief for the rest of the 2022 academic year, which would significantly support students with nutritious food.

6.3 Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS)

Over this reporting period, UADS has provided training for staff from UADS, ICT, LIS, as well as laboratory coordinators on how to use adaptive technology for students with a visual impairment. The idea is for these employees to transfer their understanding to others who will need assistance on how to use these devices in their respective venues.

UADS launched a campaign, "In Our Shoes", to raise awareness on the needs of people with physical disabilities. The three-day initiative audited all residences on North, Second Avenue and South campuses. This revealed that the only residence fully accessible for students who are using wheelchairs is the Postgraduate Student Village (PGSV), which has the potential of isolating first-year students from their peers.

With effect from July 2022, the Reasonable Accommodations Committee approved applications for reasonable academic accommodations for 20 students. These will assist students with disabilities to be on par with their peers when writing assessments.

6.4 Madibaz Sport

Madibaz Sport developed and implemented a comprehensive Recruitment Strategy over 2021 and the first part of 2022 to ensure that the objectives in the Madibaz Sport transformation plan are met. The recruitment of students who are talented both academically and in sports is the key objective, assisted by sport bursaries awarded according to strict criteria. During 2022, a total of 210 sport bursaries have been allocated to deserving candidates, funded from various sources.

6.5 Student entrepreneurship

Nelson Mandela University successfully co-hosted the national Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) Lekgotla from 19 to 22 July. This event reflected on strategies to empower students, youth, and entrepreneurs to contribute to socio-economic transformation in priority sectors. In August, staff members attended the launch of Student Entrepreneurship Week at the University of Venda, which included capacity-building workshops.

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

7.1 Review of committees

The University's approval of its Vision 2030 Strategic Plan brought with it a review of the governance system as it pertains to Management and Senate committees. This process has assessed the fitness-for-purpose of all committees and the renewed committee framework is being implemented.

7.2 Water and energy management

The University has put emergency measures in place to mitigate and manage the ongoing water crisis and power outages in the Nelson Mandela Bay Metro. The focus has now shifted to integrating these into medium- to long-term institutional sustainability plans, which will involve using more boreholes and reclaimed (return effluent) water, as well as installing photovoltaic (PV) farms on each campus. The increased use of alternative sources of water and energy, and the implementation of an efficient energy management system for the remainder of our campuses, are gradually transforming the way utilities are managed.

7.3 Communication and marketing

A communication campaign aimed at encouraging staff and students to reduce the consumption of water and energy on campus, has been activated.

An external communication campaign is using social media and direct communication to reach prospective students, as well as opinion editorials in mainstream media, to tackle negative public perceptions about water and electricity security and enhance confidence.

In addition, student recruitment efforts have been redoubled, with visits by the two faculty deans (Education and Science), as well as Communication and Marketing department to KwaZulu-Natal and Limpopo and, different parts of the Eastern Cape. The University's Science for Society philosophy and programme was shared as part of national Science Week activities. The Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences Faculty also increased its presence through targeted communications.

7.4 Transforming infrastructure and spaces

Major construction projects that will transform the campus landscape are nearing completion. These include the new 1800-bed student residences on the South and North campuses, as well as the Science Centre and infrastructure upgrades on the Ocean Sciences Campus. The new Transportation Hub is now operational and the new entrance from Strandfontein Road to South Campus, will be opened soon. This is part of the envisaged "closed-campus" project.

Focused management of the Missionvale, Second Avenue and Bird Street campuses is beginning to bear fruit, with the maintenance backlog being steadily cleared. Staff members from the three campuses, led by the Senior Director, meet on a monthly and quarterly basis to resolve intractable or cross-cutting challenges.

7.5 Digital transformation

More academic spaces are being digitalised in support of hybrid modes of learning and teaching. This entails the installation and integration of video and audio equipment and systems, with switching option capabilities as well as interactive whiteboards. The progressive shift in LT delivery mode is being supported with the upgrade of the Moodle Learning Management System, ongoing automation of academic and administrative support work processes, and digital training for staff and students. The expansion of the institution's digital footprint is accompanied by the continuing prioritisation and strengthening of cybersecurity measures.

In addition, the project to provide students with data bundles, and the drive to expand uncapped Wi-Fi on campus, are ongoing, as is the initiative to connect accredited off-campus residences to the University ICT network grid. More than 9000 students now have access to unlimited internet services across 74 residences. For the benefit of Health Sciences students, the University's Wi-Fi and connectivity infrastructure has been extended to Livingstone and Dora Nginza hospitals. The student device initiative is being expanded with the assistance of NSFAS, and 14 500 devices have been distributed to date.

7.6 Enabling systems for employees

Mandela University is committed to enhancing social justice through interventions that foster an affirming, transformative institutional culture. While our Employment Equity Plan seeks to increase the proportions of designated groups, there is a consistent challenge with under-representation at occupational levels 3 and 4 (i.e., professional, specialist and mid-management, and skilled, junior management and supervisory positions). With the approval of new sectoral equity targets, Mandela University will be required to prepare a new five-year employment equity plan in line with the revised Employment Equity Act amendments and sectoral targets.

Human Resources, working in collaboration with line managers, has focused on reducing the turnaround time to fill vacancies and 35 appointments were made from 1 May to 31 July 2022. These appointments are constituted by 14 academic and 21 PASS staff, mostly from under-represented groups. One senior management appointment was made with Advocate Mbongeni Mateta being appointed as Senior Director: Legal Services. A total of 23 (10 Academic and 13 PASS) employees left the employ of the University in this period.

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

8.1 Strategic resource mobilisation

As of the end of August 2022, R59.6m was received for bursaries and scholarships out of the total target of R90m for 2022. As reported in the second quarter, most funds not yet paid are from the SETAs, and the delays are due to administrative issues.

The Strategic Resource Mobilisation and Advancement Office has also mobilised funding for engagement projects that contribute to the transformation imperatives of the University, with a target of R10m for 2022. By the end of August, R4.6m funding had been received for engagement projects and an additional R6.2m had been secured, but not yet received.

8.2 Responsible resource stewardship

The Council-approved budget and Annual Performance Plan (APP) aim to resource the academic project while driving strategic initiatives in a sustainable manner. The latest projections, at the end July 2022, forecast an operating surplus of R11.8m, with R74.3m surplus after forecasted investment income. A detailed financial report will be tabled at Council.

Council approved the 2021 consolidated financial statements with an unqualified audit report. Council financial performance indicators on the staffing benchmark and annual surplus were achieved. This included a positive move towards the sustainability indicator of accumulating Council-controlled reserves that can fund the annual Council-controlled expenditure.

As reported in the second quarter, a reprioritisation process for the virement of budgets is continuing, and the University has been called upon to implement significant interventions to balance the 2022 budget. Identified savings to the end of May have been transferred to a Water Contingency Fund to cater for the various risk response levels of the water crisis plan.

NSFAS bursary funding

As of 31 August, 19 205 NSFAS funded students were registered at Mandela University out of 32 592 enrolled students (i.e., 59%). The University has now received 9471 applications for financial concessions, up from 9149 in the second quarter. 7264 (previously 7104) concessions are now approved while 3599 (up from 2991) were funded by NSFAS, leaving 3665 (down from 4113) students on concessions.

8.3 Long-term financial planning

The South African economy contracted in the second quarter of 2022 and the implications of this on the higher education sector are unlikely to be favourable. International economic challenges compound the need for universities, including Mandela University, to continue a trajectory of financially responsible stewardship.

Executive Management approved the 2023 Budget Directives which will inform the 2023 Budget. The Sustainability and Institutional Viability Task Team (SIVTT) has also been reconfigured and streamlined to ensure that it can accelerate progress in respect of shaping the parameters for sustainable, strategy-aligned institutional resource mobilisation and budgeting from 2024 onwards. As a precursor to this, the five-year strategic plans compiled by members of executive management will inform the annual budgeting process for 2023.

9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the transformation agenda of Nelson Mandela University calls for the unwavering commitment and concerted efforts from all stakeholders to ensure that we achieve our Vision 2030 aspirations. As outlined in this report, there are multiple dimensions to consider in the process of being, and becoming, a dynamic African university whose composition, strategic intent, and scholarly endeavours reflect the best of the broader society we serve. We thank all our students and employees for their contributions to positioning Mandela University as a humanising and transformative higher education institution of choice.

Again, we also wish to express our appreciation to Council for its ongoing support and wise oversight as we journey towards our aspiration of becoming a truly socially embedded and responsive university.