



Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council
Quarter 3

28 September 2023

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report strives to provide Council with a narrative overview of strategic highlights and challenges for the quarter under review with a focus on **transformation** interventions. Within our niche as a comprehensive university, Nelson Mandela University seeks to consolidate gains made in the service of society while striving to be a touchstone of excellence.

2. VISION 2030 AND STRATEGIC TRAJECTORIES

Transformation is a complex and multi-faceted process of continuous institutional renewal in alignment with our vision, mission, and values. Nelson Mandela University's Vision 2030 seeks to advance social justice by providing transformative educational experiences that liberate human potential in pursuit of a better life for all. This is reflected in the University's strategic trajectories, of which four are listed below, namely Ocean Sciences, the Medical School, Revitalising the Humanities, and Transdisciplinary Sustainability Sciences.

2.1 Ocean Sciences

Master of Maritime Management

The new Master of Maritime Management degree, in the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences, is being offered for the first time in 2023. Relationships are being fostered and nurtured with Transnet, the Eastern Cape Maritime Business Chamber, Nelson Mandela Bay Exporters Club, and the National Department of Transport.

Institute for Coastal and Marine Research (CMR)

The student cohort of Institute for Coastal and Marine Research (CMR) is constituted by 74% women, while nearly two thirds (or 61%) are Black (African, Coloured, Indian). The CMR also works closely with local communities to ensure that human rights are not infringed upon by coastal development, conservation, and environmental management.

2.2 Medical School

Transformation has been an integral part of planning our Medical School and equity targets are mostly met within its staff structure. A robust student recruitment and selection policy

aims to enrol at least 60% of students from quintiles 1 to 3 schools, enhancing accessibility to medical education and training opportunities to those from under-resourced backgrounds. Two Masters of Medicine in Psychiatry and Paediatrics, as well as a Postgraduate Diploma in Mental Health, have recently been submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training for clearance.

2.3 Revitalising the Humanities

Curriculum Conversations are celebrating 2023 as the 200th year since the systematic codification of isiXhosa from an oral language. There is a deliberate focus on the scholarship of African Vernacular Archive and Heritage Studies, and Women's Digital Archive and Gendered Histories.

The recent Institutional Public Lectures, hosted by the University, including the Victoria and Griffiths Mxenge Lecture, the Florence Mabele and Phyllis Ntantala Lecture (co-hosted with the University of Fort Hare); the Brigalia Bam Lecture; the Raymond Mhlaba Lecture; and the Steve Biko Lecture, have all contributed to deepening our work in humanities, while providing platforms for engagement with our publics¹.

Following two pilot years, a new BA Philosophy, Politics and Economics (PPE) stream has now been approved. The faculty was also recently awarded a multi-institutional DHET UCDP grant totalling just over R7m over three years, to support doctoral communities of scholarship. It is shared equitably across the six collaborating institutions (UJ, NWU, UP, CPUT and DU).

Through its collaboration with Oldenburg University, the Faculty of Humanities has embarked on a research project focusing on the Digitisation of the Archive. This project will receive 2.7

¹ Victoria and Griffiths Mxenge Lecture was held on 20 July 2023 and presented by Chief Justice Raymond Zondo. This event also included the naming of the Law Building after late Judge Pius Langa; Florence Mabele and Phyllis Ntantala Lecture (co-hosted with the University of Fort Hare) was held on 27 July 2023 and presented by Dr Stella Nyanzi; Brigalia Bam Lecture was hosted on 25 August 2023 and presented by Drs Brigalia Bam, Phumzile Mlambo- Ngcuka and Sthembile Mbethe; Raymond Mhlaba Lecture was held on 6 September 2023 and presented by Professor Sydney Mufumadi; Steve Biko Lecture was held on 12 September 2023 and presented by former Statistician-General, Dr Pali Lehohla with a response by Prof Barney Pitso.

million euros in initial funding over the next three years from the state of Lower Saxony and the Volkswagen Foundation in Germany.

2.4 Transdisciplinary Sustainability Sciences

Building on our historical and current strengths in natural sciences and engineering, we are going to be doubling our efforts in assembling the work of scholars that work in the broad area of Sustainability Science, into an identifiable collaborative commons, to elevate collaborations among our scholars, and also to take advantage of available resources in an area in which we already possess so much research pedigree. The envisaged Nelson Mandela University Institute for Sustainable Futures, which is to be launched soon, will bring this work together.

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

3.1 Artificial Intelligence and Pedagogy

Globally and nationally, academia is grappling with the application and use of generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI). Nelson Mandela University has been exploring approaches applied by other South African universities, along with policies or guidelines developed to ensure the ethical use of AI. To this end, the Dean: LT is leading a drive to prepare an institutional position statement to promote academic integrity in the age of AI.

3.2 Transformation in Teaching Development and Support

The Teaching Development (TD) unit continues to infuse transformative approaches and content to instil critical reflective ways of engaging in LT and curriculum transformation. The Faculty of Science curriculum renewal symposium held on 19-20 June was a recent highlight and covered important topics such as critical and humanising pedagogy, AI's impact on education, and preserving basic science disciplines while embracing transdisciplinary approaches to solve complex global challenges.

3.3 Technology-rich Learning and Teaching and the Virtual Academy

Nelson Mandela University's new Virtual Academy is being incubated as a catalytic, strategic innovation in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor. The Virtual Academy encompasses a large interconnected system for human-centred digital innovation. It is being designed to leverage technology for impact as we prepare our students, staff, and communities for the future world of work. We anticipate that the official launch of the Virtual Academy will take place in February 2024.

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

4.1 Transformation within flagship research instruments

Research chairs

Mandela University hosts 17 research chairs, of whom eight are Black (A, C, I) and 11 are females. The Research and Innovation strategy has a target of six new Research Chairs between 2020 and 2024. Just over 50% of this target had been achieved by 2023. It is particularly pleasing that the three most recent chairs have all been Black, with two of them contributing to the strategic area of Revitalisation of the Humanities, and the third, linked to the Medical School.

Future endeavours will focus on growing the number of research chairs, with an emphasis on tapping into external and industry funding for this purpose. For example, the newly established Research Chair in Automotive Engineering, Mr Martin Sanne, was appointed through a partnership with the Automotive Industry Development Centre – Eastern Cape (AIDC-EC). AIDC-EC endowed R14m for an initial three-year period to strengthen the University's position as a centre of excellence in the automotive industry.

Research entities

Overall, the University research entities contribute significantly to research outputs, postgraduate training, as well as the strategic imperatives of transformation and financial sustainability. Of the twenty-one research entities, five (5) have Directors nearing or at retirement age pointing to the urgent need for talent continuity planning.

NRF rated researchers

Mandela University has 95 National Research Foundation (NRF) rated researchers of whom 17 (25%) are Black and 28 (37%) females. Although there is an increase in new applications by both black and female academics, the diversity of rated researchers requires urgent attention. It is encouraging that the number of rated researchers, which had previously remained stagnant, is beginning an upward trend, with eight successful new applications in 2022 and a further 12 submitted in 2023.

4.2 Research Week

The second annual Research Week took place on our Ocean Sciences Campus from 11 to 15 September 2023 and successfully showcased research excellence at Mandela University. Through a myriad of engaging sessions, discussions, workshops, and exhibitions, internal and external participants converged to celebrate the boundless potential of research and innovation in addressing contemporary global and local challenges. This year, over 500 delegates registered to participate with an average of 260 attendees per day.

4.3 Internationalisation

Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) Ministerial visit

International ties that have been actively explored over the past quarter with visiting Brazilian, Russian, Indian, and Chinese Ministerial officials and academic leaders are encouraging. The University and the delegations discussed areas of mutual research cooperation and possible staff and student exchanges.

University of Oldenburg, Germany

In June 2023, a delegation from Mandela University visited Oldenburg to commemorate the 25th anniversary of our academic partnership with the Carl Von Ossietzky University. Both universities have agreed on a Roadmap for Cooperation 2023-2028, which is intended to strengthen existing relations in areas such as education, sustainability and marine sciences, humanities and social sciences, medicine and health sciences, and renewable energy.

5. TRANSFORMATIVE INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE THAT PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

5.1 Engagement Office

The University was awarded funding by DHET to host interns as part of the Presidential Youth Employment Stimulus (YES). The University has placed more than 130 interns out of the maximum 170 allocated. Furthermore, career fairs have strengthened industry ties, helping students connect with potential employers and boost their confidence. Active social media engagement has also reinforced connections and supported the transition of students into the world of work.

5.2 Transformation Office

Gender-based violence

The Transformation Office (TO) has experienced an increase of 19% in reports of equality-related violations in the period between January and July 2023, when compared to the same period in 2022. The case count rose from 58 in 2022 to 69 in 2023. Specifically, harassment and bullying saw a substantial surge but there was slight reduction in complaints related to sexual misconduct. Most of the documented cases involved instances of male-on-female harassment, and the focal points for these violations remain on- and off-campus residences. Individual counselling support for GBV-related matters is provided on an ongoing basis, with 63 students receiving psychological support for GBV-related issues from January to 21 August 2023. Of these, 58 are recorded as victims or survivors, three as alleged perpetrators, and two as observers.

Awareness and education

To extend the reach of the TO, 60 trained Peer Helpers facilitated several workshops and webinars relevant to students' needs. In addition, a two-day Safe Campus workshop played a pivotal role in enhancing collaboration between the University and South African Police Service (SAPS) in addressing GBV complaints. The workshop was organised as part of the implementation of the National GBV Strategy and included a national SAPS delegation.

Other transformational advocacy events undertaken by the TO in this quarter included a workshop for Student Housing employees aimed at enhancing sensitivity to unconscious

biases, as well as a comprehensive social justice mediation training session for staff and students. A webinar was hosted in collaboration with the Unit for Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS) on the prevalence of GBV against women with disabilities, especially given the stigma associated with disability and abuse.

5.3 Centres, Chairs, Working Groups, and Units

The Centre for Women and Gender Studies (CWGS) and DSI-NRF SARCHI Chair for African Feminist Imaginations (AFEMI)

We congratulate Professor Babalwa Magoqwana on her appointment as the Centre's new Director from the start of August. Ongoing projects undertaken by the CWGS and AFEMI to advance gender equality include developing a Gender Transformation Framework and a Gender Mapping Database. CWGS and AFEMI are also designing and implementing two new postgraduate degree programmes in gender studies.

CWGS and AFEMI have expanded global collaborations, partnering with the Centre for Interdisciplinary Women's and Gender Studies at Oldenburg University. In June, a Mandela contingent presented Summer School guest lectures at Oldenburg on decolonising gender and queer studies in both South Africa and Germany.

Chair incumbent Professor Pumla Gqola, along with Chair members Aphiwe Ntlemeza and Tumi Mampane, presented at the African Feminisms Conference in July 2023 in Makhanda. The Centre and the Chair also successfully partnered with the University of Fort Hare to present the *Speaking Truth to Power* Institutional Joint Public Lecture in memory of Dr Phyllis Ntantala and Prudence Mabele in East London on 27 July.

Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET)

This year, the award of the National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences Catalytic Programme Grant for Advancing Critical University Studies contributed to the sustainability of CriSHET's work. The infrastructure for the user-friendly, searchable archive, Online Resource in Higher Education Transformation (ORHET), has been developed and is being populated for the launch in late 2023 or early 2024. The fortnightly Madibaz Reading Group run by the student research assistants has been a notable contributor to building a transformative intellectual culture.

Research Chair for Youth Unemployment, Employability and Empowerment (CYUEE) and Centre for Integrated Post-School Education and Training (CIPSET)²

In this quarter, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with Durban University of Technology to establish Mandela University as an Articulation Hub in the Eastern Cape. In addition, the Africa Peer Network has made advancements that focus on the political economy of polytechnics in Zimbabwe.

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

CANRAD introduced Black History Month into its calendar for the first time this year, with the inaugural event held on 28 February. An Africa Month event was held on 31 May with the theme: *Higher education in Africa today: roles, challenges, and possible solutions*.

To inaugurate Women's Month, a Men's Conference was hosted on 4 August 2023 at the Second Avenue Campus. On 22 August, CANRAD hosted an event titled: *South African Youth Perspectives towards National Elections: A Critical Analysis*, supported by funding from Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS). Another event on Artificial Intelligence, co-hosted with the Independent Electoral Commission and The Herald, took place on 29 August.

Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS)

TIMS has made progress across all three tracks of its strategy in 2023, namely:

- Ingraining the Mandela identity within the University, led by Professor Crain Soudien.
- Engaging with emerging Mandela-related scholarship to enhance the academic and social identity of the University, guided by Professor Verne Harris.
- Developing a Mandela lens for decolonial work, in collaboration with the Africanisation-Decolonisation Working Group (ADWG).

HIV and AIDS Research Unit (HAU)

The HIV and AIDS Research Unit (HAU) partners with the Office of the Premier and mobilises research that adds value to the effective implementation of the National Strategic Plan on GBVF, addressing sub-cultures that perpetuate vulnerabilities through cultural practices. In doing so, the Unit maintains active partnerships with various civil society organisations.

² The possibility of streamlining this engagement entity and research chair into one joint capability is currently being explored.

Africanisation-Decolonisation Working Group (ADWG)

At the start of 2023, the Africanisation-Decolonisation Working Group (ADWG), invited interested individuals to join its work. A steering committee led by Dr Jacqueline Lück and working group coordinators developed a two-page template for mapping transformative and decolonised LT initiatives across the institution. The steering committee is hosting a Decolonisation Indaba on 30 and 31 October, to showcase its work and plans.

6. ENHANCING STUDENT LIVING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

6.1 Student governance and development

Student governance

This year, the office of the Registrar partnered with Student Governance and Development to host an inaugural induction for all student leaders who serve in governance structures. This intervention aims to develop a sound understanding of University governance and develop the capacity of student leaders to contribute meaningfully in discharging their responsibilities.

Student training and development

A joint leadership development session focusing on cultivating authenticity as a key leadership characteristic was hosted by Beyond the Classroom (BtC) and Leaders for Change (LFC) in July, with 64 students participating. The basic leadership programme was expanded to George Campus in July 2023 as a strategic response to ensure a solid foundation and reorientation to Mandela University values, particularly for first years. Furthermore, a newly launched programme focusing on the development of women in leadership, LeadHER, in partnership with Ebuhlanti Men in Leadership, held a *Women's Day Celebration Seminar* in August, focusing on the attributes and embodiments of positive masculinity. The seminar was attended by more than 100 students.

6.2 Student entrepreneurship and youth employability

The Madibaz Student Entrepreneurship Lab organised an indaba to reflect on challenges and successes in cultivating student entrepreneurship with participants drawn from Eastern Cape universities, TVET colleges, and other key external stakeholders. With approximately 80 people in attendance, it was resolved that this indaba becomes an annual event.

The annual student entrepreneurship week was held in August 2023 on both the Gqeberha and George Campuses. The theme *Innovation for Social Impact* focused discussions on driving catalytic initiatives that solves the complex problems to contribute to business development and socio-economic transformation.

The Mandela University ENACTUS team was placed second in South Africa in business solutions for community development in the *ENACTUS National Competition*. A further highlight of this quarter was a gathering held at the University's new Centre for Rapid Incubation of Entrepreneurs Youth Incubators. It was agreed that a community of practice (COP) be established for youth incubators in Gqeberha. Mandela University, in collaboration with the Office of the Premier and the Eastern Cape Human Resource Development Council, will host this COP.

An institutional convening group has been set up to better coordinate institutional efforts to promote student entrepreneurship and youth employability. This cross-functional team is co-convened by the DVC: Engagement and Transformation and the Dean of Students.

6.3 Student housing

About 400 students have been placed through the Student Housing Living and Learning Communities programme to support Residence Managers in ensuring that our residences exude our values. The Living and Learning programme also offers holistic and transformative development initiatives for all residence students such as: courageous conversations focusing on co-existence; awakening dynamic activists; residence name-sake discussions; reading groups; and wellness sessions focused on navigating the University and life.

6.4 Student wellness

The demand for psychological services remains high, and Emthonjeni Student Wellness (ESW) is committed to facilitating inclusive access to holistic psychosocial and mental health support. From 3 January to 21 August 2023, a total of 1 220 students consulted over 2 260 sessions. Given the growing demand for the resolution of family-related challenges, a Social Work intern has been placed within ESW and funded by the HWSETA. ESW is also contributing to student wellbeing by offering mindfulness and art expression programmes.

An increased number of attempted suicide cases have been reported and the details of these students were forwarded to ESW for follow up post hospitalisation. A further major concern is the increase in the number of pregnancies amongst the female students. With 45 pregnancies confirmed in June and July, multi-pronged family planning services are being initiated by the University.

6.5 Madibaz Sport

Madibaz Sport launched the campus league sport programme to elevate social sport and enhance cohesion. This is inclusive of all athletes not only top performers, and intentionally includes male netball and female rugby participants. A total of 59 teams have entered this year's competition and accumulative participation during the competition will total 18 096, excluding spectators and supporters.

It is encouraging to note that ten players from the Madibaz rugby women's team have been selected to represent the Eastern Province, showing growth in the sport from an equity perspective. Madibaz Sport has also partnered with the Transformation Office by offering self-defence classes for staff and students from August to October 2023 with 20 members participating in this initiative.

6.6 Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS)

UADS has initiated a collaboration with three mainstream Mandela University feeder schools to support learners in grades 8, 9, and 10 who have learning disabilities. The project aims to empower educators with support mechanisms to remediate learning barriers.

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

7.1 Human Resources

Human Resources (HR) submitted its Institutional People Strategy, a roadmap for HR activity for 2022 to 2027, to MANCO for consideration and input, over this reporting period.

Appointments and terminations

For the period 1 January to 31 July 2023, 127 posts were advertised. A total of 100 new employees were appointed of which 35 were academic and 65 were PASS staff. The appointments made so far have contributed to employment equity targets.

Recruitment processes for four senior management posts are underway, including:

- Executive Dean: Education
- Deputy Vice Chancellor: People and Operations
- Senior Director: International Office.

A total of 72 permanent and long-term contract staff members terminated their employment with the University over this period. This included 22 academic and 50 PASS staff.

Institutional culture

The Institutional Culture and Equality Working Group approved a proposal for a signature culture socialisation programme sponsored by HR to be initiated in the fourth quarter. HR is also partnering with the Office for Institutional Strategy to craft a conceptual framework to underpin the development of an institutional culture strategy.

Employment equity

In April 2023, the Employment Equity Amendment (EEA) Bill of 2020 was signed into law to amend the EEA of 1998 (Act No 55 of 1998). This legislation introduced EE sector targets and proposed that the current EE plans of institutions should come to an immediate end. As a designated employer, the University must therefore now prepare and implement a new EE plan to demonstrate reasonable progress in achieving its equity targets.

Employee relations

The Employee Relations Unit saw a decline in the number of disputes lodged with the CCMA by the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) in the last quarter. This is largely due to bi-monthly meetings which have allowed parties to deal with their issues proactively. Bi-monthly meetings with the National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU) have been revived, and it is hoped this will further improve the relationship with organised labour.

7.2 Information and Communication Technology Services

Digital transformation

The DHET has foregrounded digital transformation and has allocated R131m to Mandela University in its sixth cycle of Infrastructure Efficiency Grant (IEG) funding for this purpose. This will fund various projects, such as the densification of Wi-Fi across campuses and the use of online platforms. ICT Services has made progress on the University's Digital Transformation (DX) Strategy in this past quarter and MANCO has established a Senior Transversal Management team to steer the strategy once it has been approved.

Student mobile devices, data, and connectivity

The University is deliberate in promoting digital inclusion. To this end, the University's Student Devices Initiative (SDI) project has distributed 17 000 laptops to date from 2019 to 2023, with 2 456 devices issued this year. MANCO has approved ongoing disbursement of monthly data bundles to all registered students. This, coupled with a project that links accredited off-campus residences to the university network, has gone a long way to facilitate digital access.

7.3 Infrastructure Services and Space Optimisation

Energy management

The University is revisiting its power generator strategy and a new solution is being designed to combine the already approved photovoltaic (PV) installations with additional generators. This will enable energy to be extracted from the PV installations during load shedding, which is not currently the case. The solution will include residences not previously covered by generators.

Water management

The 2023 winter rains have raised the Nelson Mandela Metro combined dam levels to above 40%, which considerably reduces the risk of Day Zero. South Campus now has three boreholes with sufficient volumes to provide for the entire campus. The University is also holding meetings with the George Municipality on securing a sustainable supply of water for the George Campus.

Infrastructure developments

Notable infrastructure developments in this quarter include the construction of new residences on North Campus, which have added another 772 beds. The R86m Science Centre on the Ocean Sciences Campus is now complete. The specialised installation of the digital dome screen and the projection equipment will be completed in October 2023.

7.4 Communication and Marketing

The University has renewed its partnership with The Herald for the annual Citizen of the Year awards programme which recognises outstanding contributions to community development. Award winners were announced at a gala event on September 8, accompanied by a newspaper supplement highlighting the University's engagement and transformation efforts. During Women's Month, Communication and Marketing produced profiles of at least 20 women from various University departments, to highlight their contributions to leadership and academia. The Herald featured Vice-Chancellor Prof Sibongile Muthwa and Prof Marshall Sheldon as part of Women's Month.

Student recruitment

Student Recruitment, along with the Faculty of Science and the Centre for Community Schools, participated in the Presidential Imbizo on 10 and 11 August. This event targeted unemployed graduates and matriculants, providing information about further study opportunities and postgraduate programmes.

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

8.1 Strategic Resource Mobilisation and Advancement (SRMA)

Bursaries and scholarships

The target for 2023 is to mobilise at least R94m for bursaries and scholarships to support undergraduate "missing middle" and postgraduate students. Of the R80.8m total funding mobilised to date, by mid-August 2023, more than R52m had been paid out, with around R28m still to be paid. More than 770 students have received bursaries mobilised through the Trust, with most beneficiaries (90%) being black students, with a greater number of female

student beneficiaries across all population groups. Of this funding, R7m was mobilised for medical students and R16m was mobilised for students with historical debt.

Giving Campaign

On 3 July this year, Nelson Mandela University launched its multi-year global Giving Campaign to raise R30 million for four projects. Concerted efforts are being made to diversify the donor base and, as a result, private sector donors constitute the highest number of donors although they give less funding on average compared to public sector donors.

Resources mobilised for engagement projects

The target for funding mobilised for engagement projects in 2023 is R12m, and by mid-August, more than R16m had been received. Of this amount, R8.7m was allocated to the Hydrogen Economy project.

8.2 Short-term financial planning

At the end of July, the forecast is for an operating surplus of R13.1m (R11.8m budget) with R132.6m (R131.2m budget) surplus after forecasted investment income. The forecast considers key financial assumptions that will be reviewed and updated monthly. A detailed financial report will be tabled at Council.

Management conducted a budget review at the end of June as a response to unforeseen short-term resource requirements in navigating a difficult academic year with cost pressures and funding policy instability. Underspending is being monitored throughout the year to redistribute funds, where necessary, thereby enhancing allocative efficiencies.

NSFAS funding and concessions

From July 2023, NSFAS students were due to receive their allowances through a third-party payment provider, NORRACO. At the time of writing this report, NSFAS had transferred 94% of its funded students to this system.

It is of concern that NSFAS defunded significant numbers of students due to changes in the eligibility criteria. Initially, 836 of our NSFAS-funded students were defunded but this has since dropped to 455. However, the tuition costs for these defunded students amounts to just under R19m.

To date, 7 451 concession applications have been made and 2 971 have been approved. However, these concessions only cater for registration and deferment of university fees. This again will be a pressing issue, especially with off-campus accommodation.

NSFAS has introduced a R45 000 cap for all NFAS-funded student accommodation. This has a potential R13m impact on the University, mainly for new residences that have been commissioned. All Universities affected by the cap have been asked to submit data to DHET and NSFAS indicating the scale of the financial impact of this policy initiative. We await further guidance in this regard.

8.3 Long-term financial planning

MANCO has approved the 2024 Budget Directives that served at the Finance and Facilities Committee for noting, and which will inform the 2024 Council Budget.

8.4 Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE)

B-BBEE remains high on the MANCO and Council agenda and will be reported on through the Governance and Ethics Committee. The 2022 B-BBEE verification process is in progress, with a target date of October 2023 for the issue of the certificate. MANCO has approved funding of an additional R10.5m to close the gap, with R6m for supplier development and R4.5m for enterprise development. The aim is for a B-BBEE level 5 for this year's verification outcome as the baseline of our five-year strategy.

9. CONCLUSION

As a dynamic African university in the service of society, transformation is a transversal priority as we work towards creating an equitable, inclusive, and sustainable future. We wish to thank all our stakeholders for their collective efforts and sustained contributions to positioning Mandela University as a socially embedded and responsive higher education institution. We also wish to thank Council for its oversight as we collectively advance our mission of offering a diverse range of life-changing educational experiences for a better world.