



**Vice-Chancellor's Quarterly Report to Council
Quarter 3, 2020**

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VICE CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO COUNCIL THIRD QUARTER, 2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

The constant and increasing rate of change in the higher education sector, nationally and globally, is influenced by a range of external drivers, most recently the COVID-19 global pandemic, coupled with rising societal expectations in respect of the role of universities in contributing to the public good. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly accelerated our digital transformation trajectory within a global context where social distancing, blended learning and digitalised service delivery are rapidly becoming the norm. More fundamentally, COVID-19 is challenging deep-rooted notions of when, where, and how we deliver education to promote lifelong learning, as well as how universities contribute to socially engaged and innovative scholarship to improve the conditions of those who are most vulnerable in society.

In accordance with our annual reporting cycle, the report for this quarter will focus on the theme of transformation to provide Council with an overview of strategic highlights and challenges in relation to transformative strategic priorities and goals. This report will outline a concise, high-level overview of our responses to the COVID-19 pandemic given that members of our senior management team will provide more detailed briefings to Council in this regard.

2. VISION 2030: STRATEGIC PLANNING

Although much of the attention of higher education institutions has been necessarily focused on emergency measures to mitigate the adverse consequences of COVID-19 on the 2020 academic calendar, it is crucial that universities start thinking ahead and design forward-looking strategies that will enhance their strategic positioning and future sustainability. To this end, we are currently distilling our Vision 2030 strategic priorities and goals with a view to seeking Council's inputs in the final quarter of 2020. We will seek firm approval of the Vision 2030 strategy from Council in the first quarter of next year to allow sufficient time for stakeholder engagement to promote ownership and agency in respect of our future-focused strategic directions, priorities, opportunities and risks.

2.1 Ocean Sciences

During the first two quarters of 2020, the Ocean Sciences Project Office conducted extensive engagements with Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Executive Deans and selected international partners to inform the development of a five-year (2021-2025) ocean sciences strategy as an integral part of our Vision 2030 strategic plan. We are in the process of determining the strategic priorities and goals underpinning this strategy to entrench our positioning as a destination of choice for ocean sciences on the African continent. As part of this envisioning exercise, benchmarking has been undertaken to design a fit-for-purpose Ocean Sciences campus governance and management model, including some initial proposals for a resourcing strategy that promotes transdisciplinary collaboration and synergies.

2.2 Medical School

The tragic passing of our Executive Dean of Health Sciences, Professor Lungile Pepeta, in August was a devastating blow at multiple levels. We will sorely miss his relentless passion and dedication to the University's quest to establish a progressive and transformative approach to health sciences

education and training. We will honour his legacy by bringing to fruition his dream of establishing the tenth medical school in the country for the benefit of the most marginalised, especially in his home province of the Eastern Cape.

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) officially informed the University in July that the medical programme (MBChB) had received provisional accreditation and on 17 September the CHE indicated that all prior commencement conditions had been met by the University. Therefore, as soon as we obtain SAQA accreditation we will be on course to activate the applications process for the first intake of fifty medical students, hopefully from 2021.

The appointment of the first two waves of staff is nearing completion and all those who will be teaching on the medical programme relocated to the Missionvale Campus in July 2020. The new medical school's operating model is highly dependent on technology and the installation of ICT equipment required in the refurbished Missionvale campus buildings has been completed. In addition, medical technologies for teaching and learning have been configured and the deployment of WiFi within the Dora Nginza hospital is underway.

Mandela University has been identified to partner with the National Department of Health in the Nelson Mandela Fidel Castro Medical Collaboration (NMFCMC) and all systems were in place to officially welcome the returning Cuban students on 7 September 2020. The University is hosting fifty of these students, currently in their fifth year of studying medicine and about to undergo clinical training for 18 months within the South African health system.

2.3 Revitalising the Humanities and Promoting Transdisciplinarity

Several scholarly projects are directly contributing toward revitalising the humanities and promoting transdisciplinarity. On 9 July 2020, CriSHET hosted the webinar *(Re)Assessing Mandela* in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Foundation. The purpose of the webinar was to explore fresh lines of enquiry and distil critical questions in giving content to the work of the Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS). About 120 people from across the globe registered for the webinar and a video recording is available at [https://crishet.mandela.ac.za/Events/July-2020/\(Re\)Assessing-Mandela](https://crishet.mandela.ac.za/Events/July-2020/(Re)Assessing-Mandela)

Over the past months, the Faculty of Humanities has been pursuing a series of strategic interventions to reposition and recentre the humanities and social sciences and foreground social justice. As part of these endeavours, the Faculty is engaged in rearticulating the BA undergraduate degree programme to ensure that this important general formative qualification cultivates critically conscious graduates.

The University has furthermore approved seed funding to revive the Raymond Mhlaba Centre for Public Management and Leadership with the aim of transforming this entity into a transdisciplinary hub of excellence. The Centre will serve as a vehicle for research, engagement and professional development in critical public policy areas such as good governance, ethical leadership and effective service delivery.

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

3.1 Progress in Completing the 2020 Academic Year

As Council is aware, the University adopted flexible, blended learning pathways to complete the first semester. In identifying categories of students who could return at each risk-adjusted level, we have prioritised vulnerable students who could not complete their learning off campus. While increasing numbers of students return to campus, according to each risk-adjusted level, the teaching of content will remain online and will include virtual classes and tutorial sessions as many students will be in more conducive, technology-enabled learning environments on campus or in residences. The health and safety of our students and staff remain a top priority.

3.2 Learning and Teaching Development Programmes

In support of blended learning, all LT development programmes for students and staff were migrated onto online platforms including Moodle, MS Teams, Zoom, and WhatsApp. Teaching development continued to focus on creating platforms to support academics in transitioning to online teaching and assessment, including the use of tools to counter plagiarism and promote academic integrity.

A further innovation initiated by the LT Collab was the facilitation of *iingxoxo* to provide opportunities for academic staff to critically reflect on how to adapt their pedagogical approaches to promote student success in a blended learning context. The explicit inclusion of the student voice in these dialogues has been particularly encouraging since it is cultivating inclusive practices at all levels. Students have expressed appreciation for the various learning resources shared by their lecturers, while also surfacing some of the challenges such as the coverage of large volumes of content in a short space of time, as well as too many assessment activities across various modules.

3.3 Emthonjeni Student Wellness (ESW)

Since March 2020, student wellness services have undergone a rapid transformation by moving from face-to-face, onsite service delivery to fully online. This has required changing traditional mind-sets of how psychological services are provided and the current situation is a springboard for new possibilities in providing highly reliable, accessible, quality online counselling services as per HPCSA standards. From January to date, ESW has consulted with a total of 2 180 students. Individual counselling support was provided to a total of 1 083 students in 2 539 sessions. In addition, group interventions were implemented to reach more students in a non-threatening manner. Peer helpers have also been appointed in the accredited off-campus accommodation spaces given the unique learning challenges that these students are confronted with.

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

Despite the disruptions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Research, Innovation, and

Internationalisation (RII) portfolio has made significant strides in contributing to the University's transformation agenda.

4.1 Research Outputs

The University has shown an improvement in the number of research units awarded for articles, books and conference proceedings between 2018 and 2019, with an increase from 428.58 units in 2018 to 473.93 units in 2019. That said, a corresponding decrease was seen for both Masters' and Doctoral research outputs in units over the same period, with Masters' outputs decreasing from 292.74 in 2018 to 262.15 in 2019 and Doctoral outputs decreasing from 306 in 2018 to 291 in 2019. This resulted in a slight decrease in total research outputs unit from 1027.32 in 2018 to 1027.08 in 2019.

The mapping of the University's research outputs against global, continental and national development priorities, as reported on in the previous quarter, is still ongoing albeit in more depth at the level of individual researchers. Research publications published from 2015 to 2020 are currently being mapped using an automated topic modelling algorithm. Once completed, the findings of a bibliometric analysis will be summarised in a comprehensive report by the end of 2020 to be updated annually to track progress.

4.2 Mandela International Office

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been acutely felt by the Mandela International Office (IO). Approximately 130 study abroad students will not be enrolling for the second semester, which will result in a shortfall of approximately R1.6m in income by the end of 2020.

On a positive note, the University had received 1 716 applications from prospective under- and postgraduate international students as at 20 August 2020. To date, 311 students (276 under- and 35 postgraduate students) have been accepted while 877 applications are still under review with academic departments.

The IO is conducting an audit of the University's international partnership portfolio to assess how these can be expanded and strengthened. The University has finalised memberships in the Global Challenges University Alliance 2030 (GCUA 2030) and the Australia-Africa Universities Network (AAUN). The IO has developed a proposal for the effective management of memberships and engagement in international networks and associations, including a procedure for the review of existing memberships and a procedure for proposing new institutional memberships. Work is also underway to finalise the African expansion project and implementation plan, which is based on Nelson Mandela's travels on the African continent in 1962. The implementation of this project is expected to start in 2021.

4.3 Postgraduate Studies and Research Development

The COVID-19 lockdown phases have required significant adjustments for postgraduate students to access different University resources, especially for those in the final stages of completing their qualifications. In total, 195 eligible applications out of 249 Master's and Doctoral submissions for 2021 funding have been processed and submitted to the National Research Foundation (NRF) for

consideration. A recent release of funds that were not utilised in 2020 by the NRF has resulted in more students possibly being supported this year. In addition, although the numbers are still preliminary, the monetary value of Postgraduate Research Scholarships (PGRS) awarded by the University in 2020 (R42.5m) is expected to be approximately double that granted in 2019 (R20.5m).

Between April and the end of August 2020, Research Development facilitated 32 online workshops. A blended approach to research development has enabled more part-time and off-site postgraduate students to be reached, including those located on the George Campus.

The Examinations Office has revised the dates for handing in examination copies of theses and dissertations for the December 2020 and April 2021 graduations. Secure systems have been put in place for the electronic submission and examination of postgraduate theses and dissertations.

4.4 Innovation

During the last quarter, the University, through its commercialisation vehicle, Innovolve, received royalty income from a license agreement which was concluded with a private company in 2019, related to the product Gamma Tutor educational software developed by the Govan Mbeki Mathematics Development Centre. In addition, the Innovation Office also facilitated the partnering with one of the start-up companies based on the technology developed by a former student, QSystems (Pty) Ltd, with a Black-owned pharmaceutical company, Vida Pharmaceutical. Through this partnership, a new company was formed aimed at commercialising the University-funded QCare System.

4.5 Library and Information Services

Although the libraries have been closed during the COVID-19 lockdown period, LIS repurposed its activities in support of remote access to online journals, theses and dissertations, databases, and e-books. The Library has been engaging with several publishers and this has facilitated access to a total of 421 additional e-books for students since the start of the lockdown. The LIS return-to-campus plans are currently underway and UV-light equipment is being procured to disinfect books and regularly clean equipment and surfaces in high-touch areas.

5. ENHANCING STUDENT LIVING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

5.1 Student Leadership Development

The student leadership development programme continues to be implemented mainly through two flagship programmes, namely Beyond the Classroom (BtC) and Leaders for Change (LFC). It is encouraging that the participation of students in these programmes has been growing on average over the last three years. The other flagship programme aimed at sculpting leaders for society is the Annual Mandela Youth Development Convention. This year's convention will be hosted virtually with a focus on *Young People as Agents of Own and Collective Development*.

5.2 Student Entrepreneurship Development and Career Advice

The University has 107 student entrepreneurs who are at various phases of entrepreneurship development. The University has established a Student Entrepreneurship Service Desk to create an ecosystem of support for student entrepreneurship development. This year, the Student Entrepreneurship Week was run through an online weekly five-series webinar hosted during Women's Month and a total of 197 students participated. In addition, an online Foundational Course in Entrepreneurship is being offered to 22 student entrepreneurs with business ideas or early start ups through a partnership with the Whadwani Foundation.

5.3 Student Governance

As part of the response to the extended academic year, the SRC elections have been postponed to the first quarter of 2021. A roadmap towards the elections has been developed and the current term of the SRC will be extended by three months.

5.4 Student Financial Aid

All NSFAS and postgraduate students continue to be paid allowances and, to date, the University has administered R1 274 627 706 for student financial aid during 2020.

5.5 Student Housing

The re-integration of students into the residences has progressed relatively well and students have adapted to the new environment through the implementation of re-orientation programmes. As at 16 September, there were 1452 students in on-campus residences in Port Elizabeth and George, while 4370 students were in off-campus residences. These numbers are expected to increase as further cohorts of students return to campus.

5.6 Student Health Services

The University has implemented containment measures to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on our students. Ten of the students invited back to campus were infected by the virus, but all the cases have since been cleared and there are currently no positive student cases on campus.

The University will continue to take measures to avoid complacency and intensify mobile and random screening in spaces where there is a concentration of students. As part of the re-integration of students into campus life, the nutrition support programme has been fully re-activated and the demand is high.

5.7 Student Conscientisation and Social Compacting

The Mandela Student Brigade (MSB) conscientisation initiative led by the SRC has played a significant role in engaging students through social media and other platforms to deepen mindset shift and behavioural change. The efforts of the MSB will be scaled up as we aggressively bolster public education and awareness with more students returning to campus.

6. TRANSFORMATIVE INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE THAT PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

The University's Institutional Transformation Plan (ITP) is underpinned by three strategic dimensions namely, academic excellence, fostering an enabling institutional culture and sustainable resource stewardship. Significant developments with respect to each of these transformation dimensions will be reported below.

6.1 Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CRISHET)

The Chair of CriSHET, in partnership with the Director of the Ali Mazrui Centre for Higher Education at the University of Johannesburg, Prof Michael Cross, is relaunching the book series *On Higher Education Transformation* with African SUN Media. In collaboration with the Central University of Technology, Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town, CriSHET is developing an Online Resource for Higher Education Transformation (ORHET) for the sector. This is envisaged as an extensive interactive archive and collaborative platform for transformation-related teaching and learning resources, training modes and platforms, research and good practices.

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

Two webinars were hosted by CANRAD during Women's Month on 13 and 25 August, respectively, focusing on the themes of *Precarity from a Feminist Perspective* and *Doing Man/Woman: A dialogue on gender socialisation*. In addition, CANRAD's Living History Series will be hosted from September to December, in partnership with the Department of History and Political Studies. The series provides a public platform to those who have lived through significant historical moments to share critical reflections on key aspects of their lives and times.

To advance national and international collaboration, the following Honorary and Adjunct Professors have been appointed by CANRAD, namely, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela (Stellenbosch University, SA); Mumbi Mwangi (St Cloud University, USA); Josephine Ahikire (Makerere University, Uganda); and Karen Zoid (award-winning musician, producer and television host)

6.3 Gender Transformation and Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Centre for Women and Gender Studies (CWGS)

CWGS continues to grow its footprint, contributing to the national discourse on women and gender-related issues. CWGS has been hosting the online Author Fridays', where deliberate efforts are being made to focus on archiving African women's intellectual histories in Southern Africa. The August readings concluded with a colloquium on 28 and 29 August, with keynote addresses by Dr Brigalia Bam and Prof Shireen Hassim. The Centre has been contributing to the growth of next generation of academics by including postgraduate students as respondents in all Author Friday's readings giving them the opportunity to interact with world renowned feminist scholars. CWGS is also in the process of a mapping project in which the gender content of the curricula will serve as a reference point for building a network of gender-conscious scholars across faculties.

Equality Working Group

The EWG has been focusing on the development of resources and online platforms, such as an Equality Facebook page, to engage in equality promotion and advocacy projects. This includes creating awareness of the online reporting mechanisms that are available to students and employees to report incidents of unfair discrimination, sexual harassment and related offences.

Anti-GBV Advocacy

The Amanda_MEMEZA Facebook page story line has taken the form of Lockdown Chronicles to address topical GBV issues through thought-provoking narratives of GBV survivors who are speaking out. The Singamadoda small group programme, aimed at fostering positive masculinity, was abruptly interrupted by the lockdown, but the trained facilitators are currently planning alternative ways of reaching students using online platforms.

GBV Counselling and Support

Individual counselling support for GBV survivors is provided on an ongoing basis. Going forward, it is foreseen that a hybrid model will be adopted, with a combination of face-to-face counselling and tele-consultations aimed at providing survivor support and women empowerment. Ongoing support to the GBV Survivors' Support Group has been maintained using online platforms.

Gender Transformation Strategy

The work of the Gender Transformation Working Group (GTWG) is focused on the broader principles that should inform the University's gender transformation strategy. Professor Pumla Gqola from the CWGS has been tasked with drafting this strategy based on the year-long consultations conducted with various stakeholders.

6.4 BBBEE

The 2020 BBBEE verification process has been delayed due to the pandemic, but it is expected that the process will be completed and the BBBEE certificate issued during September 2020. Executive management has established a task team to draft a BBBEE strategic framework and implementation plan. This strategic framework will seek to make a meaningful impact on sustainably developing emerging black-, women- and youth-owned enterprises. Furthermore, the development of a multi-year affirmative procurement plan is being prioritised along with ICT-based systems to improve BBBEE monitoring and reporting against targets across all MANCO portfolios.

6.5 Reimagining Engagement

The Hub of Convergence (HoC) initiative has been repurposed to facilitate and support the work of both the Community Convergence Workstream (CCW) and the University Convergence Fund Deployment Committee (CFDC). This has presented an opportunity for a study focusing on the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic to deepen scholarship around the conception of community engagement and its practical realisation, both immediately and in the longer-term.

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

As at the 31 July 2020, the University employed a staff complement of 2 475 permanent and long-term contracted employees. The Employment Equity Plan 2019-2024 serves as a reference point to ensure that the University meets its employee equity targets at all occupational levels to diversify the workforce.

A total of 20 permanent and long-term contracted employees were appointed from May to July 2020 with 11 Academics and 9 PASS staff. All appointments were from the underrepresented groups.

7.1 Early Career Academics Advancement Programme (ECAAP)

ECAAP aims to enable early career academics' professional development by instilling in them skills, knowledge(s) and abilities that are required to advance their academic progression. ECAAP is running online as scheduled, and thirty (30) early career academics signed up for the programme in quarter two of this year.

7.2 Faculty-Based Equity Interventions

Faculties are all engaged in wide-ranging interventions to diversify the academic staff profile, such as the following:

- **Business and Economic Sciences (BES):** The Faculty has filled 30 vacancies since 2018, of which 24 appointments were from designated (A, C, I) groups.
- **Education:** The Faculty has filled two vacancies during this quarter and both employees are African. This will increase the overall percentage of black African employees to over 40%.
- **Engineering, the Built Environment and Technology (EBET):** Historically, the Faculty has had a low staff turnover which has impacted negatively on its ability to achieve equity targets. Currently, the Faculty has 20 academic vacancies at various stages of recruitment and concerted efforts are being made to advertise as widely as possible to attract candidates from designated groups. The Faculty has various strategies in place to support a growing group of early career academics (ECAs) to become the next generation of academic leaders.
- **Health Sciences:** As of July 2020, 59% of academic staff in the Faculty were from designated groups. Mentoring programmes are in place to ensure that emerging scholars are guided by senior academic staff, such as the Interprofessional Health Research Network (IPHRN).
- **Humanities:** New NGAP appointments are currently being advertised and shortlisted, with further vacancies in the Departments of Visual Arts and Sociology and Anthropology to be filled. To date, ten new academic staff members have joined the Faculty in 2020 bringing new ideas and contributing to transformation.
- **Law:** The Faculty endeavours to appoint black and female academics whenever vacancies arise. The Faculty is also seeking to attract top black candidates as part of the next generation of academics, particularly in the area of ocean governance and marine law. The Faculty's Postgraduate Associates (PGAs) programme is thriving and approximately 20 PGAs are appointed annually, of which most are black LLB graduates with an average above 65% who are registered for an LLM or LLD qualification within the Faculty.

- **Science:** The Faculty has strategically embarked on concerted efforts to attract employees from designated groups. Of the 31 permanent appointments (14 academics; 5 PASS) made in the Faculty over the last year, 19 are from designated groups.

7.3 Terminations

A total of 22 (7 Academic and 15 PASS) employees terminated their employment for the period 1 May 2020 to 31 July 2020. Of this number, 12 (54.5%) were from under-represented groups. Nine (41%) of the terminations were due to resignation.

7.4 COVID-19 Impact on Employees

The University established a COVID-19 centre to curb the spread of the disease through early diagnosis and referral for appropriate treatment. A COVID-19 screening app has been developed in collaboration with ICT Services for disease surveillance to screen on-site activity across all campuses. To date, a total of 14 968 screenings have taken place using this monitoring mechanism. COVID-19 employee statistics as at 17 August 2020 were as follows:

Total Screenings	23 040
Confirmed Cases	74
Cleared Cases	68
Active Cases	1
Deaths	5
Confirmed Contacts	120
Cleared Contacts	120
Active Contacts	0
Persons under Investigation	0

7.5 Employee Wellness

The University has introduced various interventions, such as webinars facilitated by industrial psychologists, to assist staff to adapt to new working norms. On-site counselling services and grief support sessions are now also available to assist staff in coping with the loss of colleagues, friends and/or family members. The total year-to-date utilisation of the Wellness@Mandela Programme has seen an increase in participation to 541 individuals, equating to 23% of the total staff population, which is substantially higher than the industry benchmark of approximately 10%. The projected annual utilisation indicates an anticipated increase from 12% in 2019 to 33% in 2020.

7.6 Organisational Redesign

Despite COVID-19 disruptions, organisational redesign has continued using digital platforms and currently, 7 out of the 11 portfolios are 100% completed. It is envisaged that implementation in the remaining portfolios will be completed within the next two months.

7.7 Human Resource Development (HRD)

The digitalisation of work has resulted in a complete change in the training and development environment with almost all interventions now conducted remotely using digital platforms. The University has also sponsored the attendance of the annual HERS-SA Academy by four female staff members selected by management.

7.8 Employee Relations

There has been a significant increase in the number of ER-related queries from various departments regarding the interpretation and application of remote working guidelines. ER has implemented a management protocol to assist line managers in dealing with the increased rate of absenteeism mostly among essential and critical service employees. Ongoing stakeholder engagements, including fortnightly meetings with organised labour, have assisted management in resolving most of the issues which could have resulted in disputes.

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

8.1 2021 Student Applications

System enhancements were employed to simplify the application process and a recent survey conducted by the Office for Institutional Strategy revealed that 70% (413/587) of the participants indicated that the process was easy or pleasant. However, 66% indicated that they had to wait between a month to six months to receive the outcome of their application and this is a clear area of improvement as we seek to convert more admissions to registrations going forward.

The shift to the new online recruitment strategy has seen incredible results in a short period of time. The student recruitment websites (MyFuture@Mandela and Study@Mandela) and social media student recruitment efforts have reached over 620 000 people. The traditional on-site Open Days in Port Elizabeth and George were converted to digital roadshows with each faculty hosting webinars, anchored by the respective Deans, to reach prospective students.

As at 15 September 2020, acceptance offers had increased by 34% from 9 578 in 2020 to 11 541 in 2021. These increases can be attributed to more quality applicants applying to the University and an expansion of the national footprint with marked increases in provisional offers to applicants across all provinces. As part of our transformation agenda, the University has consistently sought to attract talented applicants from quintile 1-3 schools, and it is encouraging that 58.2% of our 2021 applicants are from Q1-3 schools compared to 55.6% at the same time last year.

8.2 Adjusting the Academic Calendar for 2020/21

The 2020 academic year has been adjusted to end in February 2021 to provide enough time for learning and teaching so that no student is left behind. In addition, the 2021 academic calendar

has been realigned to commence in mid-March 2021 to accommodate the timeframe for the Grade 12 examinations and the date when the results will be released.

8.3 Student Laptop Initiative and Off-Campus Residence Connectivity

To date, just over 4 400 laptops have been delivered to students that have opted into the student laptop initiative, while a further 285 laptops will be delivered to non-NSFAS students that opted in late. Furthermore, WiFi connectivity has been installed in 47 accredited off-campus accommodation establishments since last year and an additional 18 accredited sites have been proposed for connection as part of Phase 3 to be completed by the end of 2020.

8.4 COVID-19 ICT Systems Development

With the rapid transition to blended learning and remote ways of working, ICT has developed a wide range of systems to support digital transformation, including the following:

- An electronic permit system to allow faculties to indicate which students could return to campus.
- Timetable venue booking system enhancements to allow lecturers to book venues for multiple class groups of fewer students per class in alignment with social distancing requirements. This system enables the uploading of class attendance lists, which is fed through to the student transport system to indicate which students are expected on campus each day.
- The meal booking and collection system has been rolled out to the Laboria kitchen, with other kitchens to follow soon.
- The student success tracking system (Radar) has been modified to enable lecturers to indicate the students' pathways, as well as their progress for the purposes of calculating final marks.
- Specialised software packages have been procured to promote the academic integrity of online summative assessments and proctoring.
- Line managers can electronically approve 10GB of data per month for staff members working remotely.

8.5 Communication and Marketing

The digital first strategy is proving its value as a cost-effective, efficient and sustainable approach to positioning the Nelson Mandela University brand nationally and internationally on various platforms. Focusing on building digital and social media platforms on which to share relevant content has enabled the University to reach greater numbers of new stakeholders than ever before. This is evidenced by the following analytics which compare the first half of 2020 with the last half of 2019:

- News Website: There has been an increase of 74% in visitors (116 477 vs 66 902) and an increase of 82% in page views (166 323 vs 91 256).
- Facebook: The daily number of people who view University posts has doubled.
- Twitter: The reach has increased by 40%.
- LinkedIn: Page views of the content published has doubled.
- YouTube: The number of videos posted has increased from 17 to 57, with a concomitant increase in people reached (268 000 vs 383 000) and videos viewed (33 000 vs 61 400).

The University has distributed 10 000 mask-up campaign flyers to indigent communities, schools and NGOs, and posters were freely made available for uploading. The free poster download opportunity has received 47 000-page views to date, and ranks second, after the SA government resource page for COVID-19 information.

The COVID-19 staff survivor series and the tribute stories featuring the University's frontline employees have been particularly successful in fostering social solidarity. The highly interactive and constantly evolving institutional Coronavirus Website has become a go-to destination with 118 735 visitors and more than 230 700-page views since 10 March 2020 (see <https://www.mandela.ac.za/coronavirus>).

The Arts, Culture and Heritage unit has run a number of successful digital arts packages such as the comic book 'e-Rona Times' series available in isiXhosa, Afrikaans and English. The multi-disciplinary Youth Day (16 June) and Mandela Day (18 July) celebrations, built around the #It'sInYourHands Campaign video packages have received over 3 750 views thus far.

The work of the Coronavirus Co-ordinating Committee (CCC) has also been profiled through a series of opinion pieces written by academics and support staff and published in regional and national media. An immediate benefit has been an increase in media calls for expert opinions from the University. A full list of Op-Eds is available at: <https://news.mandela.ac.za/Opinion-pieces>

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

9.1 Strategic Resource Mobilisation

The mobilisation of bursary and scholarship funding for financially needy, academically deserving "missing middle" and postgraduate students remains a key priority of the University. The target this year is to mobilise at least R85m for bursaries to support these students and to diversify our donor base. In 2019, about 70% of our donations were from SETAs and we aim to secure more private sector donations. As at the end of August 2020, SRMA had mobilised R38.2m bursary funding from foundations, corporates and public service entities with 416 undergraduate and 70 postgraduate students benefitting from this funding.

Highlights to date include an increase in private sector donations with 12 new donors and almost R10m mobilised from corporates in the first semester. Critical issues emanating from socio-economic challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic include: delays in payments of commitments partly due to lengthy internal administrative systems and processes around receipt of donations; businesses have reduced income available for donations; and some SETAs have reduced their allocations to universities due to the impact of the three-month skills levy payment holiday during the lockdown.

9.2 Mandela University Convergence Fund

The engagement project funding that is mobilised through the Trust contributes to the transformative, social justice orientation of Mandela University. As at the end of August 2020, just

over R19m had been mobilised for a range of projects, including the Mandela University Convergence Fund.

Of the R626 591 that has been mobilised for the Convergence Fund, R300 000 was contributed by the Nelson Mandela University Trust for sustainable food production and the remainder was raised through donations. The distribution of this funding is overseen by the Convergence Fund Disbursement Committee. To date, we have partnered with credible civil society organisations to implement three cycles of distributions of safe food relief to assist vulnerable and marginalised communities. Some challenges experienced in mobilising resources for the Convergence Fund require of us to keep the campaign in the eye of donors through more personalised and targeted appeals focused around specific proposals for convergence projects.

9.3 2020 Financial Year and Short-Term Financial Planning

EXCO of Council approved the Annual Report and Consolidated Annual Financial Statements for 2019 on 20 August 2020 for ratification by Council. The University once again posted a positive set of financial results during the year under review. The statement of comprehensive income reflects a consolidated surplus of R479m (2018: R358m) after other comprehensive income, of which Council-controlled operations amounted to R261m (2018: R259m) or 10% reserve accumulation in line with Councils' performance indicator of 5% to 10%. The consolidated surplus before other comprehensive income and finance income amounted to R215m (2018: R167m), of which Council-controlled operations amounted to R72m (2018: R111m).

Although the institutional financial indicators show that the University has maintained a relatively healthy financial position, the full extent of the financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic for the University also remain to be seen. COVID-19 academic and campus readiness plans at a total budget of R110.5m have largely been funded through the 2020 budget reprioritisation (R52.3m) and the virement of funding from Infrastructure and Efficiency Grant interest (R9.3m) to a COVID-19 Responsiveness Grant, as approved by the Minister. This leaves a shortfall of R48.9m. FFC approved additional budget on a bridging basis for student laptop devices and data, leaving a potential shortfall of R7.6m. The DHET has identified funding that could be reprioritised to assist universities with the implementation of COVID-19 response plans, which will be distributed using a rational distribution model.

The DHET has advised that the 2020 Supplementary Budget Review has resulted in a downward revision to the Higher Education and Training vote for University Education of R382m. This cut equates to about 1.07% which will be pro-rated amongst universities. We estimate that the University's 2020 subsidy cut will be around R13.5 million.

The August 2020 report, which is the latest to date, has required an adjusted forecast for the 2020 financial year and further updates may be required as we continue to operate in a fluid environment. It reflects a R27m operational deficit before investment income, with R12m surplus after investment income. The following material assumptions relating to COVID-19 have been made:

- Increase in bad debt provision for tuition fees of 2%: R15.34m
- Increase in bad debt provision for student accommodation fees of 2%: R1.88m
- Net decrease in facilities deficit (catering students receiving food allowances): R3.00m

- Investment income forecast decreased: R11.00m
- Decrease in subsidy: R13.50m
- Total: R44.72m

9.4 Long-Term Financial Planning

Our University, and indeed the sector as a whole, faces many layers of uncertainty as we grapple with short term solutions while also keeping our eye on sustainability in the longer term. In recent meetings with DHET, the sector has been advised that the revised Ministerial Statement on funding for 2020 is to be used as a baseline for 2021 with no increase. This will have a significant impact of approximately R70m for the 2021 budget. Given the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, it will not be possible to agree on a fee regulatory framework for 2021-2023 as was originally planned and it is likely that a further system-wide agreement will be necessary for 2021. Universities have also been urged to make every effort to contain the additional costs of extending the 2020 academic year into 2021. NSFAS is modelling the additional costs and will submit a motivation for any additional expenditure required to National Treasury, with the support of the Department. Our financial modelling will be updated as new information is received, but we anticipate that the higher education sector will be under significant financial pressure in the foreseeable future.

10. CONCLUSION

As we approach the close of the third quarter for 2020, the persistent inequalities confronting our country have deepened further as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and this requires of us to boldly co-create innovative and sustainable solutions in partnership with our key stakeholders. As evidenced in this report, this global crisis has catalysed and unlocked many creative and transformative responses and we can be exceedingly proud of the extraordinary dedication and fortitude demonstrated by our leadership, employees, students and communities in this regard. We also wish to express our gratitude to Council for their guidance and foresight in supporting the University as we collectively seek to contribute towards a more socially just and sustainable future.