



**Vice-Chancellor's Report to Council
Quarter 2, 2022**

23 June 2022

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1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this quarterly report to Council is on student success. It gave us great pleasure that pandemic restrictions eased sufficiently so that it was possible for Nelson Mandela University to host in-person graduation ceremonies in April 2022. This was most welcome after two years of conducting graduations online and it was a joy to share in the celebrations of our graduates and their loved ones.

2. VISION 2030: STRATEGIC TRAJECTORIES

As part of Vision 2030, the University is pursuing transformative engagement and sustainability as an integral part of its strategic positioning nationally and globally. To this end, the Vice-Chancellor recently shared the unique story of Nelson Mandela University and its African-purposed solutions for global challenges on Africa Day (25 May). This virtual engagement was hosted by the King Baudouin Foundation in the United States, which is a “philanthropy architect” that serves as a bridge between American donors and a conduit for non-profit organisations abroad. During this engagement, the University’s vision was foregrounded with an emphasis on forging partnerships with like-minded stakeholders to co-create sustainable solutions to vexing challenges such as unemployment, poverty and inequality.

2.1. Medical School

In line with our student-centred ethos, our first two cohorts of MBChB students have had regular engagements with the Dean, and Faculty management. Students are encouraged to set the themes and agenda of the sessions to maximise benefit.

The MBChB programme has a dedicated student success coach who monitors the academic progress of the medical students and provides them with holistic support throughout the different years of study. There is also a programme where the second-year medical students act as peer mentors to the first-year students to promote academic and social integration. In addition, MedClub is an extra-curricular programme that has been established to provide medical students with additional support in areas such as mental health, study skills, time management, and financial literacy.

2.2. Ocean Sciences

Nelson Mandela University’s growing reputation as a leading Ocean Sciences hub was recently recognised with a top place nationally in the Life Below Water category in the international 2022 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings. Mandela University also fared well in four other categories in the rankings, which assesses the global performance of institutions against the various United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

FishFORCE

Mandela University and the Open University of Mauritius have partnered to establish a Fisheries Law Enforcement Academy (FishFORCE), signing a memorandum of understanding at the start of June 2022. This adds to the academies already established by FishFORCE in Namibia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Kenya.

Marine Robotics Unit

The Marine Robotics Unit (MRU) has designed a prototype surface autonomous vessel (SAV) that is being tested for operational conditions. A transdisciplinary group of researchers from engineering, physics and zoology designed the prototype to survey little-researched shallow reef and estuarine environments. MRU researchers are also collaborating with the Advanced Mechatronics Technology Centre to build an ocean glider to replace the use of research vessels.

Institute for Coastal and Marine Research (CMR)

The Institute for Coastal and Marine Research (CMR) oversees projects that provide excellent training and development opportunities in critical fields where knowledge gaps are addressed through a transdisciplinary approach. The South African Master's degree in Ocean Science (SAMOS) is currently being developed to complement our existing array of postgraduate programmes in ocean sciences. This programme will run over 18 months, with Nelson Mandela University leading this collaboration with seven other South African universities.

At the University's Autumn 2022 graduations, 12 CMR postgraduate students graduated, comprising one honours student, four master's students and seven PhD students. In the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences, new Business Development Manager at the Transnet National Ports Authority, Nozipho Booi, was the first graduate in the MPhil in Maritime Studies.

Master of Maritime Management

The Business School recently launched its new Master of Maritime Management degree. This cutting-edge qualification commences in 2023 and is designed to empower a new generation of maritime leaders on the African continent.

2.3. Revitalising the Humanities

The revitalisation of the humanities continues to extend across disciplines as was highlighted by the Inaugural Archbishop Thabo Makgoba Development Trust Lecture at Nelson Mandela University on 19 May. South African businesswoman and Mandela University 2021 honorary doctorate recipient, Dr Gloria Serobe, was invited to anchor a critical conversation around value-based leadership followed by three young academics, who engaged with Dr Serobe to unpack the value of ethical leadership in the face of the challenges being experienced in South Africa.

Under the auspices of the Engagement and Transformation Portfolio (ETP), the Raymond Mhlaba Centre for Governance and Leadership has had its first advisory board meeting and has initiated various activities, including numerous collaborations with the Faculty of Humanities.

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

3.1. Graduation

To comply with the COVID-19 health regulations and protocols, 26 Autumn graduation ceremonies took place with three held in George and 23 in Gqeberha. In total, we capped more than 7000 graduates including 5925 under- and 1168 postgraduate students. Graduating students were issued with secure digital graduation certificates in addition to printed copies.

The University awarded three honorary doctoral degrees to prominent individuals who have made significant contributions to society namely, Mr Sindiso Mfenyana in the Faculty of Business and Economic Sciences, Ms Noxolo Grootboom in the Faculty of Humanities and Prof Lungile Pepeta (posthumous) in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

3.2. Assessment

Various assessment activities are included in the continuous assessment approach which has been adopted in many modules during COVID-19. A declaration relating to academic honesty needs to be completed by students and staff when accessing the Moodle Learning Management System. This has been rolled out across the institution and has proven to be useful in student disciplinary hearings relating to academic dishonesty charges.

3.3. Institutional Audit

The University has been preparing for the forthcoming Institutional Audit by the South African Council on Higher Education (CHE). Over the past months, the University has developed a reflective Self-Evaluation Report (SER) to address the various focus areas and standards set out by the CHE. This will be submitted to the CHE ahead of an external audit panel visit to the University, which is estimated to take place towards the end of August. In terms of the national Quality Advancement Framework (QAF) set to roll out from 2024, universities deemed by the CHE to have stable, mature quality systems in place could be granted the opportunity to approve their own academic programmes rather than submitting these for external accreditation.

3.4. LT Collab Development and Support

While close to half (45%) of our programmes remain online, the first semester of 2022 has seen a marked increase in mask-to-mask (M2M) learning and teaching activities on campus for programmes that are following a mix of online and M2M teaching.

The LT Collab provides a range of academic and personal development initiatives including success coaching, academic writing development, and a range of peer facilitated learning initiatives. To date, the Student Success Coaches have had 647 student engagements with the four most frequent topics dealt with being academic progress, time management, goal setting and learning skills.

The Enhance Academic Progression (EAP) document has been finalised and will be informed by data sourced from RADAR, which monitors students' performance and identifies referral support needed. Supplemental Instruction (SI) continues to be a flagship programme with 93% of the modules that implemented SI in 2021, no longer being considered at risk. The high improvement rates are significant, with 71% of these modules showing pass rates of 70% or higher.

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

4.1. Postgraduate Funding

Enhancing access and success for postgraduate students has been supported through funding for scholarships and research capacity development interventions. Overall, 501 Honours, 415 Masters and 205 Doctoral scholarships were awarded as of 13 May with funding from Council, the National Research Foundation (NRF) and other external funders. The total of 1121 awards comprised 85% Black (African, Coloured, Indian and Asian) students, of whom 63% were women. Uptake of the awards is ongoing with 661 (59%) of the 1121 scholarships taken up so far. There were also 105 postdoctoral and research fellows registered by 13 May.

4.2. New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP)

The DHET-funded New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP) cohort currently consists of 17 Black academics, of whom ten are women. A highlight over the review period was that two more academics obtained their doctoral degrees in April, bringing the total of nGAP doctoral graduates to three.

The 2022 call for applications for the Nelson Mandela University Internal Research Grants was published on 31 January with new grant recipients to be approved throughout the course of the year. Over the period under review, a combined investment of R378 000 was awarded to ten early-career researchers for research running costs, teaching relief and

conference participation. Of the ten grant recipients, four were Black and seven were women.

4.3. Staff accolades

The University wishes to congratulate Prof Pumla Gqola for the national recognition of her book *Female Fear Factory*, which was awarded the Humanities and Social Sciences Best Non-Fiction Monograph at the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) Awards on 31 March. Furthermore, George Campus Principal Dr Kaluke Mawila was recently appointed to serve as an advisory panel member for the South African Institute of Aquatic Biodiversity (SAIAB) for a period of five years. Two Mandela University professors have also been recognised by the Institute of Information Technology Professionals of South Africa (IITPSA): Prof Kerry-Lynn Thomson from the School of ICT has been awarded Professional Membership of the Institute and Prof Jean Greyling, HOD of the Department of Computing Sciences, has been made a Fellow.

4.4. Library and Information Services

To date, 80% of the LIS resource budget is spent on electronic information resources. In addition, the library has acquired 2 561 single e-book titles in various disciplines has ensured access to 1153 of printed recommended and core study materials required by students. The University has purchased Get-It-Now, an article delivery service developed by the Copyright Clearance Centre for academic institutions. This solution complements the institution's Inter Library Loans services by providing full-text articles from journals that no library subscribes to. LIS is working collaboratively with ICT services on a chatbot which will be embedded in the library's website. The chatbot will be the virtual gateway to the library by providing users with personalised information without needing to physically visit the library.

4.5. Internationalisation

International enrolments

International enrolments stood at 916 students on 23 May 2022 and, in comparison to the same time last year, there has been a slight improvement in numbers. The deadline for registration passed on 30 April but, in the spirit of expanding access, faculties continue to process late registration appeals with exceptional circumstances. The IO expects increased numbers of semester study abroad students in the second semester and this will have a positive effect on financial sustainability. However, despite an increase in applications, the numbers of students taking up offers remains lower than before COVID-19.

International partnerships

Nelson Mandela University is an active participant in research networks, alliances, and associations such as the South Africa Sweden Universities Forum (SASUF) and Global Challenges University Alliance (GUA). The IO is establishing the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), which is a type of virtual exchange where faculty members in any discipline use online technology to facilitate sustained student collaboration thereby

enhancing intercultural competence. The IO is exploring implementing COIL with the resuscitated partnerships emanating from the African footprint project.

5. TRANSFORMATIVE INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE THAT PROMOTES DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL COHESION

5.1. COVID-19 Coordinating Committee

The COVID-19 Coordinating Committee (CCC) is being reconfigured due to the changing landscape of the pandemic. The current proposal, under consideration by members, is that the CCC be reimagined as a Convergence and Responsiveness Working Group with a close relationship with the Engagement Forum.

5.2. Institutional Culture

Key themes of the revised Institutional Transformation Plan (ITP) will feed into the conceptualisation and implementation of catalytic programmatic interventions designed to foster a transformative and affirming institutional culture on all campuses. This will include the critical role of arts, culture, symbols, rituals, naming, heritage, and language in fostering inclusion.

Fostering intellectual renewal and transdisciplinarity is taking shape through various entities. Among these, TIMS intends to facilitate and sustain institutional awareness of critical Mandela scholarship by facilitating focus group discussions at faculty and disciplinary levels.

Five-Year Naming Anniversary

2022 marks the five-year naming anniversary of the University with institution-wide activities that address aspects of Mandela's scholarly legacy. The Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS) and the Nelson Mandela Foundation are collaborating on developing a programme for the celebration of Mandela Month in July and the five-year renaming anniversary. This quarter also saw the establishment of a Mandela Month Coordinating Committee (MMCC) – a multi-portfolio team that will conceptualise and coordinate Mandela Month. As part of this planning, a mapping activity is underway to unpack events and activities relating to the name *Mandela* since the University's name change in 2017.

Chair for Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (CriSHET)

The Chair hosted a collaborative ACUSAfrica webinar entitled *Decolonising African Higher Education: Cultivating Healing Across the Continent*. Timed ahead of Africa Day on 25 May, CriSHET's Research Associate Dr Sybille Ngo Nyeck launched her book *African(a) Queer Presence: Ethics and Politics of Negotiation* in conversation with Prof Zethu Matebeni. The event was a collaboration between CriSHET, the Centre for Women and Gender Studies (CWGS), the NRF-DSI SARChI Chair in African Feminist Imaginations at Mandela University, and the NRF-DSI SARChI Chair in Sexualities, Genders and Queer Studies at the University Fort Hare.

Centre for Women and Gender Studies

The CWGS is carving out a unique niche in the sector along with the Chair in African Feminist Imaginations. Notable initiatives include collaboration with the Faculty of Humanities in respect of the Dr Brigalia Bam Archival Project and the development of a Masters in Gender Studies.

The Centre and Chair celebrated Africa Month with a live-streamed discussion entitled *Black Women in the Postcolony* by Prof Yolande Bouaka of Queens University, Canada, and Zintle ka Nobuhlaluse from Pennsylvania, US, on 25 May 2022. Prof Gqola has given several talks this quarter, including a three-hour masterclass to the Auwal Socio-Economic Research Institution (ASRI) Future Leaders Programme Fellows on *Understanding Femicide* and a public lecture entitled *Against Rape: Thinking Obliquely for Safe Campuses* hosted by the University of Fort Hare. Dr Babalwa Magoqwana gave an invited talk on *Women, Indigenous Knowledge and Social Progress in Africa in the 21st Century* for the Institute for African Development at Cornell University.

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

Prof Christi van der Westhuizen spoke at the online launch of her co-edited book, the *Routledge Handbook of Critical Studies in Whiteness*. Prof Vini Lander, Director of the Carnegie Centre for Race, Education and Decoloniality at Leeds-Beckett University hosted the webinar on 11 May. Prof Van der Westhuizen was also invited to present a lecture to postgraduate students at Ruhr University in Germany, as well as two lectures on critical race studies to students visiting from the United States.

CANRAD postdoctoral research fellow Dr Olivia Loots presented a webinar titled *Memory bumping up against the Anthropocene: An examination of their intersection* on 19 May. For Africa Week, CANRAD partnered with the Department of Music to show two concert films on 25 May, namely *Madosini at Home* and *Afrisonic Kollektiv*. In partnership with the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Present Democracy Series 2022, CANRAD also hosted a webinar entitled *COVID-19 Pandemic and its Impact on the Young Women Subject: Exploring the Complexities* on 27 May.

CANRAD has partnered with UNAKO and Lovelife in a learner leadership programme in Metro schools. The Centre is also involved in a Young Leaders workshop in partnership with Pamoja Activists from New Brighton.

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

CIPSET has joined the international adult learning group CONFINTEA and presented the Africa Regional Report at an international webinar. The Centre also joined the Editorial Board of the *MOJA Journal of Adult Education*. While not accredited, the journal creates a space for adult educators on the African continent to share experiences and knowledge in this important field.

5.3. Repositioning Engagement

Dr Bruce Damons started as the new Director of the Engagement Office on 1 April. He will play a key role in repositioning engagement through notable projects such as the Hubs of Convergence (HoC), the Food Systems Programme, and the Amajingqi Project. In addition, the first draft of the Stakeholder Community Engagement Strategy Framework has been completed and is in circulation for consultation.

The research team of the HoC has established a Community of Practice (CoP) and developed an international network with Living Education Theory professors from the University of Cumbria, UK. Through transversal linkages across the University, the six “hubs” in the HoC are making significant strides.

The HoC has revitalised Hub 1 with a focus on Individual and Collective Wellness by exploring community-driven responses to substance abuse. It is also creating a Sports, Arts and Culture sub-hub to underline their social value in promoting wellness. Under Hub 2 (Community-based Food Systems), the HoC is confronting the issue of student hunger through the Sol Plaatje Vegetable Garden. Collaborations and projects are expanding under Hub 3 which focuses on Gender-Based Violence. Community-based Economic Initiatives is the focus of Hub 4 and encompasses the Sewing Project, in collaboration with 12 community schools and the Centre for the Community School (CCS). The HoC has partnered with the Zwide Community Farming project under Hub 5 (Community Driven Projects) to focus on supporting the community to produce healthy food safely and sustainably. The HoC is due to complete its research report by the end of this quarter as part of the work of Hub 6, which encompasses Knowledge Communication and Application.

Food Systems Programme

Our Food Systems Programme seeks to explore upscaling and coordinating food-related interventions. Recognising student hunger as not only a social ill, but also an integral dimension of student success, it has prioritised student engagement this quarter.

The Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF) hosted its Mandela Day Launch on 4 May when it announced it would partner with the Mandela University Food Systems Programme to bring Mandela Month to the Eastern Cape. At the launch, the Vice-Chancellor committed to planting 300 000 indigenous trees in the Eastern Cape, which the Food Systems Programme will help facilitate in partnership with the NMF.

The Amajingqi Project

The AmaJingqi project started in 2012 and is being renewed as an integral part of the University's intention to reimagine rural engagement. The University met virtually on 23 May with stakeholders from government, Chief Dumalisile and members of the Amajingqi Council to formulate a National Blueprint for converting a small village into a smart village.

Chair for Youth Unemployment, Employability and Empowerment (CYUEE)

The CYUEE has been holding dialogues with both TVET college management and students. The Chair has also been appointed to the Council on Higher Education (CHE) articulation working group. The TVET Convergence Working Group (TVET-WG) met this quarter and established several sub-working groups to tackle different aspects of this work.

5.4. Transformation and Social Justice

Consultations with all MANCO portfolios are currently underway as part of the process to develop the 2023-2027 Institutional Transformation Plan (ITP). The Transformation Office embarked on a virtual roadshow in March 2022 to increase the awareness of employees and students regarding the equality-related policies within the University. Several training sessions were also held this quarter, focusing on GBV, LGBTQIA+ and Equality. The Online First Responder Training Course continues to be well-received, with 341 students and employees receiving certificates of attendance. Collaborative efforts between the Transformation Office and Madibaz Sport have led to a continuation of biweekly self-defence classes and, to date, 176 female students have participated.

The Transformation Office has also hosted talks on gender-related topics this quarter. Vuyokazi Gwam presented a seminar entitled *What does Freedom Day mean to a Woman in South Africa* and Mx Busisiwe Deyi presented a talk on *Queer Liberation after Democracy*. The HIV and AIDS Research Unit is conducting a research project focusing on *South African Police Services Gender-Based Violence Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, and Behaviour* at every police station in the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality. The data collection phase is currently underway.

6. ENHANCING STUDENT LIVING AND LEARNING EXPERIENCES

6.1. Student accommodation

For the 2022AY, the residence admissions office processed 23 380 applications, of which 17 524 students were admitted to on- and off-campus residences. Of those admitted, 14 691 registered, with 3742 residing in on-campus residences and 10 949 in accredited off-campus residences. The demographic profile of residence students is 98% African and 56% female. With student residences now fulfilling multiple roles as places of living and learning, they have become even more central to student success. We are therefore working towards revising our student housing strategy and model to accommodate this.

6.2. Student life and development interventions

Our Student Representative Council (SRC) was successfully invested and sworn into office on 19 April 2022.

Various sporting, financial, leadership and psycho-social programmes have been revived and introduced to enhance a vibrant student life. This includes a Men's Conference entitled

Ndingunmntu Nam ("I am a Human Being too") and the establishment of student water champions who raise awareness regarding water saving imperatives and strategies.

The Madibaz YouthLab Imbadu Dialogues were launched this year to deepen a culture of dialogue on complex social issues facing students. Themes so far have included: leadership and activism in a modern society; re-imagining quality; realistic and impactful engagement; reflecting on the philosophy, values and praxis of President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere in creating an education system for African renewal; and reconstructing the decaying moral fibre of society.

6.3. Student entrepreneurship

Student entrepreneurship continues to be a flagship at Mandela University, and we are hosting the Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) National Lekgotla in July. This is part of our multi-stakeholder approach to consolidate and advance the employability of our graduates.

A multi-disciplinary stakeholder team has been established to drive the establishment of an Entrepreneurship Incubator, with the support of the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA). This is envisaged to be a one-stop support ecosystem for student entrepreneurs.

The annual EDHE Intervarsity is another platform for innovative ideas for business development at regional and national level. Mandela University's internal competition on 26 May saw six out of 95 entrants qualify to represent the University at the Eastern Cape regional competition.

6.4. Student health and wellness

While the National State of Disaster has ended, transitional COVID-19 prevention measures are still in place. The online COVID-19 screening app has been adapted to be much more user friendly, University clinic screening continues, as does on-campus COVID-19 testing. A team of compliance officers is now operating across the Gqeberha campuses to ensure ongoing adherence to COVID-19 protocols.

The mental health of our students continues to be a concern, and an increase in attempted suicides has been reported by the emergency services which transport students to hospital. These cases are reported to Emthonjeni Student Wellness (ESW) Centre for further management. There is a clear need to scale up psychotherapeutic intervention, with 668 students seen in 1279 individual sessions from 1 January to 27 May. Individual counselling support for gender-based violence (GBV) related matters is also ongoing, with 42 students (40 female and two male) receiving psychological support over the same time frame.

This year, our Medical School took an innovative approach to addressing mental health by participating in the international #CrazySocks4Docs initiative on 3 June. This initiative encourages conversations on behaviours that promote mental well-being, key in a

profession where students work extremely long hours and go beyond the call of duty in service to others.

Student Nutrition

Student hunger continues to be a challenge and the demand for nutritional packs has increased during this reporting period, with bookings increasing to 48 per day. This has led to the rapid depletion of stock with all 1100 nutritional packs from Tiger Brands being issued to students within a week. ICT has been requested to link the booking system to financial aid, to ensure that once the students return from recess, only unfunded students will be able to book for a nutritional pack.

6.5. Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS)

UADS recently launched the *In Our Shoes* campaign to raise awareness on wheelchair use and accessibility on campus. The Unit also introduced two learning interventions to assist students with learning difficulties. The purpose is to provide mentoring and coaching support before, during and upon exiting university. Among those students who reported disabilities, 96 graduated during the Autumn graduations.

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

7.1. Digital transformation

The development of a Digital Transformation Strategy is progressing well. Automation to improve the Student Access Value Chain is also underway and the University Mobile App has been upgraded to include additional functionality.

The University continues to enable student participation in flexible learning through a focus on data provision, wi-fi densification, and the expansion of uncapped wi-fi on campus. The project of connecting accredited off-campus residences to the University grid covers 74 residences and more than 9000 students have benefitted.

The student digital device scheme has now issued more than 14 700 laptops since its launch in 2019 and a further 3000 NSFAS funded first-time entrants have been issued with a laptop this year. On our George Campus, assistance has been extended in the form of loan devices for students who are unable to access the campus. We estimate that 80% of our students now have access to a suitable personal device, as corroborated by participation in online learning and teaching platforms. This is supplemented by over 3800 PCs in computer laboratories across all campuses.

Preparatory work to modernise venues to accommodate the hybrid mode of academic delivery has been completed. Consequently, the number of smart venues with hybrid capability will be expanded. Cybersecurity remains a real threat as a result of increased

digitalisation and remote working, and efforts to safeguard University information resources are in top gear.

7.2. Emergency Management

Water Crisis

The seven-year drought in Nelson Mandela Bay has reached a tipping point with the dams from which the Summerstrand area and several of our campuses draw water, now less than 10% full. Mitigation plans are being finalised to maintain ongoing minimum levels of water supply for drinking, cleaning ablution blocks, and showering in student residences. Alternative water sources are being sought to ensure campuses are water secure to the greatest extent possible.

Load shedding

The almost daily loss of electricity supply, particularly in the evenings, is beginning to have a negative impact on University operations and academic activities, particularly for students living in on- and off-campus residences. Institutional power outage mitigation plans are being revised to ensure that disruption and inconvenience are minimised.

7.3. Staff appointments and terminations

Attracting, developing, and retaining talent is critical in contributing to the University's efforts to promote student success. Human Resources has focused on reducing the time it takes to fill vacancies with 37 appointments made between 1 February and 30 April 2022. These include 22 academic and 15 PASS staff, all of whom are from underrepresented groups. A total of 30 (13 Academic and 17 PASS) employees left the employ of the University over the same period. Two senior management appointments have been made recently, with Mr Simbongile Gegeza commencing duties as the Senior Director: Management Accounting and Analytics, and Advocate Mbongeni Mateta as Senior Director: Legal Services.

7.4. Communication and Marketing

News relating to the 2022 University graduation ceremonies was viewed several million times across broadcast, print, and social media platforms, generating approximately R7.8-million worth of coverage. On social media, stories were shared on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and LinkedIn with the graduation hashtags garnering significantly more views than in previous years. The most popular video clip that aired on Facebook reached 1.45-million people.

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

8.1. Strategic Resource Mobilisation

The target this year is to mobilise at least R90-million for bursaries and scholarships to support undergraduate “missing middle” and postgraduate students, most of whom (more than 65%) are African. From January to 15 May 2022, an amount of R31.1-million was received for bursaries and scholarships and R33.8-million is still to be paid. Most funds not yet paid are from the SETAs, where the delays can be attributed to administrative issues, such as the signing of MoAs, which must be concluded before payment is made. While the SETAs and public sector are still the main sources of bursary funding, concerted efforts are being made to diversify the donor base.

8.2. Responsible resource stewardship

The Council-approved budget aims at resourcing the academic project while driving strategic initiatives and growth areas in a sustainable manner. The latest forecast at the end of April 2022 forecasts an operating surplus of R11.1-million, with R73.6-million surplus after forecasted investment income. A detailed financial report and the 2021 consolidated financial statements will be tabled at Council.

The University was required to implement significant interventions to balance the 2022 budget, reprioritising and resetting baseline budgets while prioritising the academic project. There will be continued pressure on the budget, so a reprioritisation process continues in 2022 to assist in addressing new and reprioritised needs as we transition into an adjusted operating model. Savings on institutional overheads and earmarked accounts, if realised, will be transferred quarterly to the COVID-19 Contingency Fund.

The DHET recently engaged with the Finance Executive Forum (FEF) of USAf regarding a further shortfall on NSFAS funding for 2022. National Treasury has awarded R32-billion additional funding to NSFAS over the MTEF, but there is still a shortfall of R1386.4-million for 2022/23. Treasury has indicated that the shortfall will need to be reprioritised from the Department’s baseline allocation. There was consensus among the members of the FEF that the block grant subsidy should not be considered as part of the reprioritisation exercise to address this shortfall, since this would destabilise university operations.

As of 31 May, 18 843 NSFAS-funded students were registered at Mandela University out of 32 226 enrolled students and there was concern regarding the exclusion of an upfront payment in 2022. This payment has now been received but, if this is repeated in 2023, it must be planned for as it requires significant cash flow interventions to ensure that NSFAS beneficiaries receive their allowances timeously. As indicated previously to Council, the N+1 rule for NSFAS bursary students will be another area to monitor.

The University received 9149 applications for financial concessions for qualifying students up to and including the “missing middle” students. 7104 concessions have been approved, of which 2991 were ultimately funded by NSFAS, leaving 4113 students registered as receiving concessions.

BBBEE

BBBEE remains high on the MANCO and Council agenda. The University has concluded the latest verification based on the 2020 financial year. Various workshops have been rolled out to promote a better understanding of BBBEE so that the University system can respond appropriately. A separate report on BBBEE will be tabled to Council.

Sustainability and Institutional Viability Task Team (SIVTT)

The SIVTT Working Groups have been meeting to propose various interventions to promote long-term sustainability, including the key areas of academic optimisation, improved efficiencies, and strategy-aligned resource mobilisation, budgeting and resource stewardship. SIVTT will fulfil a key role in reviewing the Budget Directives/Guidelines and RAM funding model for 2023.

9. CONCLUSION

Nelson Mandela University remains committed to advancing student access for success, as reflected in our annual graduation statistics. Although the easing of national lockdown restrictions has seen a gradual resumption of campus life and M2M learning and teaching, the University is now also confronted with the complexities of the water crisis and disrupted electricity provision. Within this context, we pay tribute to our students, employees and communities who continue to ensure that students are provided with a quality living and learning experience despite the difficult and volatile prevailing circumstances.

As a Management team we, again, thank Council for visionary leadership and guidance as we work to fulfil our academic missions, while straining forward towards our aspiration to be in the service of society.