



**OUR VISION**

is to be a dynamic African university, recognised for its leadership in generating cutting-edge knowledge for a sustainable future.

**OUR MISSION**

to offer a diverse range of **life-changing** educational experiences for a better world

**OUR CORE MESSAGES**

**CORE PURPOSE**

IN THE SERVICE OF SOCIETY

**CORE OUTCOME**

CO-CREATE A SUSTAINABLE, SOCIALLY JUST WORLD

**ATTRIBUTES**

Provide transformative, lifelong learning experiences that liberate human potential

Pursue impactful research, innovation & internationalisation to promote sustainable futures

Engage with all publics in equalising partnerships that advance agency & promote the co-creation of African-purposed solutions

**BENEFITS**

Cultivate socially conscious, globally connected citizens who serve the public good

Contribute to changing the world through discovery, scholarship & innovation

Foster a more equal, inclusive & just society through action & stewardship

# OUR VALUES

## UBUNTU

- We are a people-centred, values-driven university that seeks to foster a compassionate and caring institutional culture.
- We respect the dignity of others and strive to be human-centred and relational.
- We recognise our mutual interdependence.
- We promote socially conscious and responsible citizenship.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUALITY

- We are dedicated to the realisation of a socially just, democratic society that promotes equality for all irrespective of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, sexual orientation, age, physical and learning abilities, national origins, religion, conscience, belief, culture and language.
- We encourage mutually beneficial, equalising partnerships and engagement with our core publics to co-create sustainable, innovative solutions to persistent societal and planetary challenges.
- We cultivate living, learning and work environments that enable students and employees to realise their full potential, without fear of discrimination, harassment or violence.
- We develop our graduates as global citizens capable of developing and applying knowledge across multiple contexts to make meaningful contributions to advancing a socially just, equal society

## RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

- We reflect and serve diverse regional, national and global communities.
- We promote an open society where critical scholarship and the expression of a multiplicity of opinions and ideas are actively encouraged.
- We foster an environment in which diversity is appreciated, respected and celebrated.
- We foster a culture that welcomes and respects diverse identities, heritages and life experiences

## SUSTAINABLE STEWARDSHIP

- We are committed to environmental sustainability and recognise our responsibility to conserve, protect and sustainably manage natural resources for current and future generations.
- We promote the integration of sustainability into our governance, leadership, academic core missions, operations, as well as the design and maintenance of physical and digital infrastructure.
- We inspire students and employees to embrace responsible stewardship of all financial, human, infrastructural and environmental resources entrusted to them.

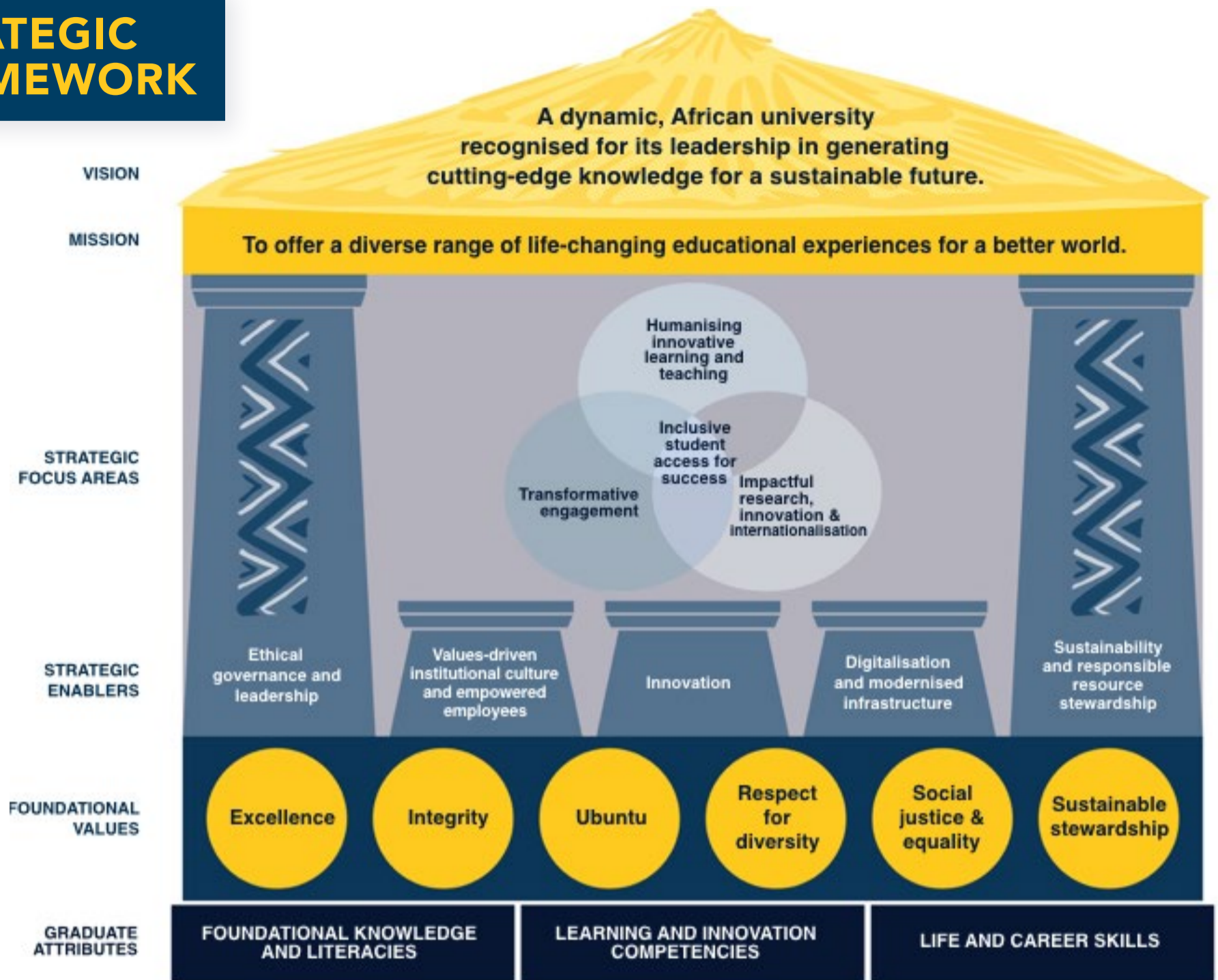
## INTEGRITY

- We commit ourselves to the highest standards of personal honesty and exemplary moral character.
- We are dedicated to cultivating an atmosphere of trust.
- We take responsibility for our decisions, behaviours, actions and the consequences thereof.
- We ensure the integrity of our policies, information, systems and processes.

## EXCELLENCE

- We encourage the pursuit of the highest levels of academic, civic and personal achievement.
- We provide a supportive and affirming environment that enables our students, employees and publics to reach their full potential.
- We pursue inclusive excellence by embedding equality of access and opportunity in our policies, processes, systems and practices.
- We seek to foster a culture of intellectual and personal growth and lifelong learning.
- We promote, recognise and reward excellence in our teaching, learning, research, innovation, creative outputs, engagement and service delivery.

# STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



## DECOLONISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**Institutional racism** is still part of the fabric of university spaces, texturing the experiences of students, employees and communities. In South Africa, continuing dissatisfaction with this led to the emergence of student-led **#RhodesMustFall** and **#FeesMustFall** campaigns in 2015/16 to call for the decolonisation of higher education and the reintegration of previously outsourced employees who were being exploited and paid poverty wages.

Students highlighted several other concerns which impact their experiences negatively such as **unequal access to higher education for financially disadvantaged**, academically deserving students, continuing institutional racism, **unwelcoming institutional cultures**, **curricula which continue to be Eurocentric**, and a **lack of demographic diversity among academic staff, especially at the senior levels**.

According to Zeleza, Eurocentrism frames African humanity and history as less than and perpetually infantile, which serves to distort, disparage and demean African realities, lives, and experiences. The term **decolonisation** is the epistemic desire for decentring Eurocentric knowledges. It is imperative that the various key stakeholders in African higher education raise the **value proposition of African higher education for 21st century African societies, economies, and polities**.

This requires **commitment** to the provision of **education** that develops the whole person, **inclusion and valuing institutional diversity, innovation and cultivating creative and entrepreneurial mindsets**, and impact through fostering cultures of continuous assessment. Only then will our universities serve as **powerful engines for building the kind of Africa we all wish to live in and be proud of**.

*“ A university that associates itself with Nelson Mandela... must remain rooted in answering the challenges that confront our society in a global economy. This must be an African University that serves the continent and her people. ”*

- CYRIL RAMAPHOSA  
at launch of Nelson Mandela University



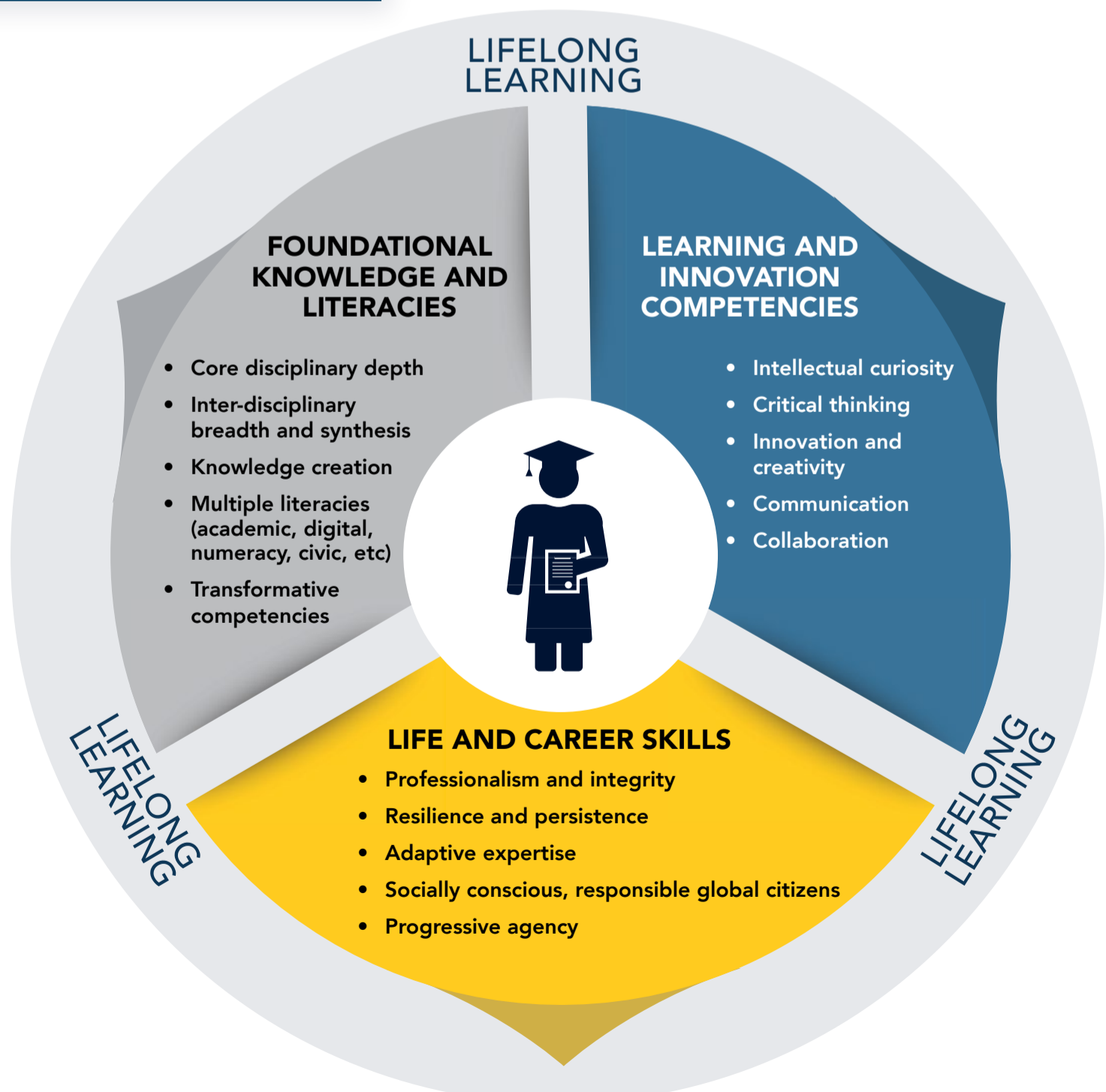


## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS



## GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

Through benefitting from a life-changing educational experience, Nelson Mandela University graduates will be known for demonstrating the following attributes:



# STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO AN INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

**Nelson Mandela University is committed to inclusive excellence and values that celebrate all forms of diversity.**

**Diversity** includes race, colour, culture, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, religion, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, and/or class.

We recognise that the university is both a contested and generative space, supporting the concurrent existence of multiple perspectives and experiences.

**Our mission, vision and values** require us to engender an inclusive culture, free from bias, prejudice, discrimination and hurtful/hateful conduct towards our students, employees, alumni and other relevant stakeholders.

We support educational experiences and conditions that encourage social inclusion and cohesion, contributing to a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights.

**We denounce all forms of behaviour that conflict with our values.**

We are committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination and exclusion, including discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, consciousness, belief and culture.

## ACTION STATEMENTS:

### Embedding our values can be realised by:

- Fostering mutual respect, collaborative relationships, unambiguous communication, explicit understandings about expectations and critical self-reflection.
- Honouring freedom of expression, ideals of citizenry, and civility of discourse, as fundamental to personal, professional, and organisational growth.
- Challenging and dismantling systemic oppression.
- Freely expressing who we are, our own opinions and points of view.
- Fully participating in teaching, learning, work and social activities.
- Feeling safe from abuse, harassment, bullying and/or unfair criticism.
- Providing effective leadership in the development, coordination, implementation and assessment of a comprehensive range of programmes and services to promote diversity and understanding of differences.
- Offering educational opportunities toward the development of socially responsible leaders who are willing to engage in discourse and decision-making that can lead to co-creative, transformational change within the University and our broader society.
- Intentionally nurturing a culture of open-mindedness, compassion, and inclusiveness among individuals and groups.
- Purposefully building teams/groups whose members have diverse cultures, backgrounds and life experiences.
- Creating and maintaining opportunities for engagement, education, and discourse related to issues of equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Providing effective reporting mechanisms to address any form of exclusion and discrimination at the University.

## DISTINCTIVE KNOWLEDGE PARADIGM

Nelson Mandela University adopts a distinctive knowledge paradigm guided by the following principles:

- The University as an open society of students and employees committed to generating knowledge that has a liberating effect on our world.
- Application of ethical knowledge to advance social justice, the public good and a sustainable future for our planet and all its inhabitants.
- Freedom of expression and thought in speech, writing and all art forms.
- Advancement of disciplinary depth while embracing collaborative inter- and transdisciplinary approaches to address complex and intractable challenges.

## EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

We strive to be in the service of society through our learning and teaching, research, innovation and engagement activities. To achieve this:

- We are committed to liberating the full human potential of our employees and students in the pursuit of responsible, democratic global citizenship.
- We advance the frontiers of knowledge to contribute to a socially just and sustainable future in the service of society.
- We adopt innovative, humanising pedagogies and practices that affirm diverse knowledge paradigms and world views.
- We inspire our stakeholders to be passionate about and respectful of an ecologically diverse and sustainable natural environment.
- We are known for our values-driven, inclusive institutional culture that encourages all members of the University community to contribute optimally to the vibrancy of intellectual discourse and the respectful contestation of ideas.
- We place students at the centre of all we do to enable them to deploy their agency during their studies and in their future lives as alumni.
- We seek to address the grand challenges confronting society & the planet through the co-creation of sustainable solutions with all our publics.

As an elaboration of our values, distinctive knowledge paradigm and educational purpose and philosophy, we recognise that an inclusive institutional culture is a foundational enabler of excellence in all its manifestations.

“ It is therefore up to all of us to take Nelson Mandela University boldly to the next level in the service of society

- PROF SIBONGILE MUTHWA  
VICE-CHANCELLOR



# STRATEGY-ALIGNED PLANNING

## STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS AND ENABLERS

**STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 1:**  
Liberate human potential through humanising, innovative lifelong learning experiences that prepare graduates to be socially conscious, responsible global citizens who serve the public good

**STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 2:**  
Pursue impactful, pioneering research, innovation and internationalisation to address grand societal challenges and promote sustainable futures

**STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 3:**  
Engage with all publics in equalising partnerships to co-create transformative, contextually responsive solutions in pursuit of social justice and equality

**STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA 4:**  
Catalyse dynamic, student centric approaches and practices that provide life-changing student experiences within and beyond the classroom

**STRATEGIC ENABLER 1:**  
Ethical governance and leadership approaches and practices that embody the values of the University and seek to promote service before self

**STRATEGIC ENABLER 2:**  
Inclusive, values-driven institutional culture to position the University as an employer of choice for talented and empowered employees

**STRATEGIC ENABLER 3:**  
Enabling innovative ecosystem where students and employees can collaboratively engage with external partners to co-create pioneering discoveries that advance the frontiers of knowledge and promote the public good

**STRATEGIC ENABLER 4:**  
Efficiencies and value creation through digitalisation, integrated systems, agile service delivery, and modernised infrastructure

**STRATEGIC ENABLER 5:**  
Long-term sustainability through strategy-aligned resource mobilisation and responsible stewardship

## VALUES

RESPECT  
FOR  
DIVERSITY

UBUNTU

EXCELLENCE

INTEGRITY

SOCIAL  
JUSTICE AND  
EQUALITY

SUSTAINABLE  
STEWARDSHIP

## MISSION

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## VISION

A dynamic African university, recognised for its leadership in generating cutting-edge knowledge for a sustainable future