

SENATE CONFERENCE

2023

***TURNING THE TIDE: REIMAGINING CURRICULUM
TRANSFORMATION AT UP***

PROGRAMME BOOKLET



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16 – 17 FEBRUARY 2023

TURNING THE TIDE: REIMAGINING CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION AT UP

PROGRAMME BOOKLET

The Curriculum Transformation Work Stream, initiated in 2016, concluded its work during 2017. In May 2017, Senate approved the *Reimagining curricula for a just university in a vibrant democracy* framework. The framework highlighted four drivers for curriculum transformation:

- Responsiveness to social context
- Epistemological diversity
- Renewal of pedagogy and classroom practices
- An institutional culture of openness and critical reflection

In 2021, the relaunch or review of curriculum transformation drive took place, coordinated by the Deputy-Dean of the Faculty of Law and in conjunction with the Vice-Principal: Academic.

While curriculum transformation is an ongoing facet of the academic project at UP, it is clear that much more needs to be done in a dynamic higher education landscape¹. Universities are increasingly shaped and reshaped by grand-scale societal changes² that directs us to an identity into the future³. In this context of transformative shifts and adaptation, academic and intellectual reorientation becomes another important navigational marker to reflect on our location, position, identity, and place as a university as we reimagine and embrace our collective futures aligned to the changing nature of local and global communities.

Beyond the change activated by the COVID-19 pandemic in the past three years, South African higher education institutions have, since 2015, been shaped by the 'Rhodes Must Fall' and 'Fees Must Fall' campaigns⁴. This was partly a response to the legacy of colonialism and apartheid, but also the persistent inequalities that have shaped higher education, which is marked by exclusion, marginalisation and social injustices. These movements highlighted the deep racialisation of higher education⁵ and the continued effects of a painful history on the lived reality of black students and staff⁶. In particular, this has manifested deeply in the area of the 'curriculum'. Simply put, curriculum transformation remains central to not only transformation and access, but to success in a future-oriented, reimagined university that is intentional as a visible force or site for change in an interconnected world shaped by crisis, disruption and uncertainty in several domains. The latter refers to intellectual, structural, technological, financial and many intersectional drivers such as race, class, gender, sexuality and national origin.

In this context, the 2010 and 2015 National Higher Education Summits (including the USAf Higher Education Conference in 2021) stimulated important policy, political and contextual responses to the multidimensional challenges facing our institutions. It also highlighted the need for a deeper transformation of the tertiary sector in an engaged and responsive way⁷.

Students' reaction (as evidenced by student movements, especially since 2015) against symbols of conquest represents a contestation of the coloniality of knowledge (including its visibility in symbols, signs and embedded practices), which is often also reflected in curricula and modes of teaching and learning (specifically syllabi and teaching models⁸). If access to university studies and the diversification⁹ of student profiles was an effect of the first two decades of democracy, then recent developments indicate an urgent need to return to (and revisit) the idea and meaning of the curriculum and curriculum transformation as we approach the end of the third decade of democracy. This has manifested in a variety of ways, most popularly as the 'decolonial turn'¹⁰. While decolonisation directs attention to a colonial (and apartheid) past and a postcolonial (post-apartheid) future, it simultaneously challenges structures of exploitation, inequalities and power. At its core, decoloniality pushes beyond the postcolonial (which exposed global Eurocentrism) towards the decolonial by directing the focus to the roots of epistemology (what we know) and ontology (who are we; our being). Decoloniality challenges the dominating force of monoculturalism, the dominance of a single language, Eurocentrism and Western epistemologies by foregrounding the knowledge domain in the production of pluriversity (diverse forms of knowledge) and epistemic justice (justice related to knowledge that is inclusive and visible).

However, curriculum transformation is an ongoing effect of decoloniality—an essential component of the academic enterprise—directing us to the meaning of the curriculum, in other words, *what* is taught, and *how* it is taught. Curriculum transformation is about learning as a process of conceptual and practical change where citizens of a university (through individual and collective strategies) construct new understandings of reality and where spaces are opened to encourage alternate perspectives and dissonant views (in polyphonic strategies). The latter is about the enrichment and learning that accrues by listening to a diversity of voices in the construction of knowledge (eg *Who* are the students in the lecture theatre/laboratory? *Who* teaches? *What* is the design of our syllabus and learning materials and *how* it is performed?). Curriculum transformation is therefore fundamentally about *how* we construct our knowledge from the rich diversity of sources that shape an emerging worldview in the disciplines we study, research and teach.

Beyond the disciplines, how does curriculum transformation manifest our approach to transdisciplinarity? This is not only about breaking the silos that distinguish disciplines, but also about the co-creation and co-design of knowledge that shows integration in method, ideas and expertise across disciplines. More than this, a curriculum transformation approach to transdisciplinarity should also recognise that knowledge is not shaped only inside, but also outside the university. In other words, non-academic stakeholders such as those who we research, teach and label 'communities' in community engagement activities, should also form an integral part of our (re)thinking.

Over the decades¹¹ much has been written about curriculum transformation in shaping higher education, and there is an ongoing discussion and debate about decoloniality in higher education in local and global contexts. In this sense, much of the rationale underpinning the need for transformation takes into account changing contexts, varied development needs and shifting national priorities within South Africa. Most important for us is to break the stigma (and perceptions) that exist about curriculum transformation as a reactive rhetoric and to rather embrace a stance that asks: Why should curriculum transformation matter to us as citizens of the University who are contributing in direct and indirect ways to the future world of work?

For these reasons the theme of this Senate Conference is *'Turning the Tide: Reimagining Curriculum Transformation at UP; Reassessing, Repositioning, Recovery and Praxis'*. 'Turning the tide' should be viewed as a conference that is future-oriented (while taking stock of past and present interventions) and is deliberative in that existing gaps and lacunae are intentionally reversed to change direction, problems are addressed and reinforcement is provided with a triple imperative to:

1. describe, reflect and assess current interventions in curriculum transformation with g(l)ocal insights across the University (within/across faculties) and relevant directorates;
2. strengthen and consolidate opportunities for further curriculum changes (including extracurricular work); and
3. address 'hidden curriculum' changes and developments that reimagine the identity of a transforming and engaged university.

Reassessing consciously directs us to revisiting canonical ideas and concepts. *Repositioning* has much to do with intentional objectives, making possible the creation of new knowledge spaces or, in different terms, a new ecology of knowledge. *Recovery* compels us to map curriculum change over time and return to those ideas and concepts that might have been lost, erased, marginalised and minimised in rethinking inclusivity in the knowledge domain. *Praxis* directs us to action-oriented strategies that demonstrate how we navigate repositioning, reassessment and recovery in thinking about the academic project in our conscious attempts at curriculum transformation. More importantly, praxis also enables us to describe, examine and assess the 'hidden curriculum' (eg influences functioning at the level of organisational structure and culture¹¹) found in the spaces, symbols, narratives and embedded practices that constitute the University and in the diversity, or lack thereof, of staff and student cohorts¹².

Based on the above, the conference curates a range of conceptual, empirical, strategic and practical suggestions to engage and reflect on how we remain relevant, up-to-date and agile in continuous learning while leveraging the possibilities, prospects and challenges of Curriculum Transformation (including the 'hidden curriculum').

Notes

¹ See for example, Bergmark, U. & Westman, S. (2016). 'Co-creating curriculum in higher education: promoting democratic values and a multidimensional view on learning' in *International Journal for Academic Development*, 21(1): 28-40; Knight, P. (2001). 'Complexity and Curriculum: A process approach to curriculum-making' in *Teaching in Higher Education*, Vol. 6(3): 368-381; Lattuca LR & Stark J.S. (2009). *Shaping the College Curriculum: Academic Plans in Context* (2nd ed). San Francisco: Jossey Bass; McDonald, R. & Van Der Horst, H. (2007) Curriculum alignment, globalization, and cation, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 39(1): 1-9.

² See for example, Barnett, R. (2018). *The Ecological University: A Feasible Utopia*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge; Brink, C. (ed.) (2021). *The responsive university and the crisis in South Africa*. Leiden, Netherlands: Brill; Clark, B.R. (2004). *Sustaining Change in Universities: Continuities in Case Studies and Concepts*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press; Frank, D.J. & Gabler, J. (2006). *Reconstructing the University: Worldwide Shifts in Academia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press; Hrabowski III, F.A. (2019). *The Empowered University: Shared leadership, culture change and Academic Success*. Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University; Kezar, A (2018) *How Colleges Change: Understanding, Leading, and Enacting Change*. New York: Routledge; MacFarlane, V; O Donoghue, T and Vidovich, L (2020). *University Curriculum Transformations in Context: Global-Local Dynamics of Policy Processes*. Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press.

³ Barnett, R. (2018). *The Ecological University: A Feasible Utopia*. Abingdon and New York: Routledge.

⁴ See Booysen, S. (ed.) (2016). *Fees Must Fall: Student revolt, decolonisation and governance in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press; Ray, M. (2016). *Free Fall: Why South African Universities are in a Race Against Time*. Johannesburg: Bookstorm.

⁵ Badat, S. (1999). *Black student politics, higher education and apartheid: From SASO to SANSCO, 1968-1990*.

Pretoria: HSRC; Badat, S. (2009). "Theorising Institutional Change: Post - 1994 South African Higher Education." *Studies in Higher Education* 34 (4): 455-467; Jansen, J. (2016). *Leading for Change: Race, Intimacy and leadership on divided university campuses*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge; Khunou, G., Phaswana, E., Khoza-Shangase, K. & Canham, H. (eds.) (2019). *Black Academic Voices: The South African Experience*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

⁶ Jansen, J. (2009). *Knowledge in the Blood: Confronting Race and the Apartheid Past*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; Jansen, J. (ed.) (2019). *Decolonisation in Universities: The politics of knowledge*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

⁷ See also, DoE (Department of Education). (2008). *Report of the Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions*. Pretoria: Department of Education; DoL (Department of Labour). (1998). Employment Equity Act, Public Law Government Gazette no 19370.

⁸ See for example, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. and Zondi, S. (eds.) (2016). *Decolonizing the University, Knowledge Systems and Disciplines in South Africa*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press.

⁹ Smith, D.G. (ed.) (2014). *Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education: Emerging perspectives on Institutional Transformation*. London and New York: Routledge.

¹⁰ See for example, Cupples, J. & Grosfoguel, R. (eds.) (2019). *Unsettling Eurocentricism in the Westernized University*. London and New York: Routledge; Mignolo, W. & Walsh, C.E. (2018). *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*. Durham and London: Duke University Press; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, S. (2020). *Decolonization, Development and Knowledge in Africa: Turning over a new Leaf*. London and New York: Routledge.

¹¹ Margolis, E. (ed.) (2001). *The Hidden Curriculum in Higher Education*. New York: Routledge

¹² For a perspective on visual redress at Stellenbosch University see also Fataar, A. & Constandius, E. (eds.) (2021). *Evoking Transformation: Visual Redress at Stellenbosch University*. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.

PROGRAMME

DAY 1: 16 FEBRUARY 2023 | 12:15 - 19:00

Future Africa Auditorium

12:15 - 13:00

Delegates connect after enjoying light lunch packs, Future Africa Hub
Streaming of conference, corporate video and the VC video

SESSION 1: 13:00 - 15:00

Chair: **Professor Loretta Feris**, Vice-Principal: Academic, UP

13:00 - 13:10

Welcome: Professor Loretta Feris
Explains purpose, focus, rationale and structure of the hybrid Senate Conference

13:10 - 13:20

Speaker: Professor Tawana Kupe, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, UP
Topic: *Scene setting: Reimagining Curriculum Transformation at UP*

13:20 - 13:40

Speaker: Professor Margaret Blackie, Centre for Higher Education, Research, Teaching and Learning, Rhodes University
Topic: *Curriculum Transformation in STEM*

13:40 - 14:00

Speaker: Professor Siona O'Connell, School of the Arts, Faculty of Humanities, UP
Topic: *In Search of Freedom: Imagining New Ways of Knowing*

14:00 - 14:30

Moderated Q & A session

14:30 - 14:50

Comfort Break (Featuring streamed recorded conference-related material/corporate videos/music)

SESSION 2: 15:00 - 16:00

The Case For Curriculum Transformation (1)

Chair: **Professor Caroline Nicholson**, Registrar, UP

15:00 - 15:20

Speaker: Professor Mbulungeni Madiba, Dean of Education Stellenbosch University
Topic: *The Role of African Languages in Curriculum Transformation*

15:20 - 15:40

Film Screening and panel discussion: *Turning the Tide* (Professor Siona O'Connell)

15:40 - 16:00

Facilitated by the chairperson

Panel:

- Prof Siona O'Connell (HUM)
- Prof Mbulungeni Madiba (US)
- Dr Ntombenhle Gama (NAS)
- Prof Sumaiya Adam (HS)
- Prof Chika Sehoole (EDU)
- Mr Njabulo Sibeko (SRC)

SESSION 3: 16:00 - 17:00

Chair: **Professor Loretta Feris**, Vice-Principal: Academic, UP

16:00 - 16:40	Case Studies from UP (4 x 10 minute presentations): Panel: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dr Lelanie Smith and Mr Thabang Ngwenya (EBIT) – <i>Vertically Integrated Projects: Rethinking the Engineering Curriculum Group</i> (EBIT)• Dr Heather Thuynsma, Mr Roland Henwood and Ms Yanga Malotana (HUM) – <i>Comparative Regional Politics: the Global Classroom</i>• Prof Liz Wolfaardt et al. (HS) – <i>The Online PG Diploma in Public Health</i>• Prof Louise Whittaker (GIBS) – <i>Gamification in PDBA or SDGS in the MBA</i>
16:40 - 17:00	Moderated Q & A session

SESSION 4: 17:00 - 18:00

Group Discussions

Chair: **Professor Sunil Maharaj**, Vice-Principal: Research and Postgraduate Education, UP

Group discussions in four discussion rooms (25 minutes for discussion).

NB: Virtual participants will be randomly assigned to hybrid breakout rooms.

17:00 - 17:25	Breakaway discussion in groups
17:30 - 17:50	Feedback from group sessions

GROUP 1

Facilitator: **Prof Dirk Human** (THEO & RELIG)
Alternate: Prof Louise Whittaker (GIBS)

Rapporteur: **Prof Joel Modiri** (LAW)
Alternate: Prof Ronel Callaghan (EDU)

Topic:

Institutional culture and hidden curriculum

- What staff and student insights were evident from the recent institutional culture survey regarding curriculum transformation (and the hidden curriculum)?
- What kind of institutional ecosystem do we want to design for the UP community (staff, students, graduates, alumni) in engaging curriculum transformation that also addresses systemic racism and other forms of institutionalised or systematic discrimination in higher education and, by extension, society?

GROUP 2

Facilitator: **Prof Alta van der Merwe** (EBIT)
Alternate: Prof Gerrit Stols (EI)

Rapporteur: **Prof Morris Mthombeni** (GIBS)
Alternate: Prof Gyebi Duodo (NAS)

Topic:

A reimagined university

- What does Curriculum transformation mean in relation to a reimagined and transformed university?
- What are the trends that are helping to shape curriculum transformation, and what impact might change have across faculties and disciplines? What shifts and changes are we witnessing?

GROUP 3

Facilitator: **Prof Vinny Naidoo** (VET SC)
Alternate: Prof Paulette Bloomer (NAS)

Rapporteur: **Prof Flavia Senkubuge** (HS)
Alternate: Prof Tivani Mashamba-Thompson (HS)

Topic:

Institutional ecosystem / Faculty understanding

- Is there a 'one size fits all' with respect to curriculum transformation? If not, with regard to differentiation across disciplines and Faculties, what are the elements that matter? Are there limitations to curriculum transformation in respect of discipline, or field of study?
- Is decoloniality synonymous with curriculum transformation? What are their synergies/divergences? What may their respective strengths and weaknesses be for the academic and transformation project? Why does it matter to all faculties and the institution in general?
- What are the elements of curriculum transformation aligned to the future of the University and its citizens (eg current trends, applications and relevance for the business of higher education at UP)?

GROUP 4

Facilitator: **Prof Barend Erasmus** (NAS)
Alternate: Prof Pineteh Angu (HUM)

Rapporteur: **Prof JP Chamunorwa** (VET SC)
Alternate: Prof Innocent Pikirayi (HUM)

Topic:

Impediments / Barriers and opportunities

- What are the stumbling blocks that impede curriculum transformation within disciplines, including interventions in respect of the 'hidden curriculum'?
- What changes are the citizens of the University bringing into curriculum transformation (including the hidden curriculum)? What do they look like? What else needs to be done?

17:30 - 17:50	Feedback from rapporteurs (5 min x 4) [Future Africa Auditorium]
17:50 - 18:00	Closure and wrapping up of Day 1: Prof Loretta Feris
18:00 - 19:00	Delegates attend cocktail function hosted by Prof Feris at the Future Africa Hub

DAY 2: 17 FEBRUARY 2023 | 07:45 - 13:00

Future Africa Auditorium

07:45 - 08:15

Delegates connect following tea/coffee

Streaming of conference, corporate video and VC video

SESSION 1: 08:15 - 10:00

Chair: **Professor Carolina Koornhof**, Executive Director: Finance and Business Initiatives, UP

08:15 - 08:25

Welcome and purpose: Professor Carolina Koornhof

Welcomes attendees and explains the purpose, focus, rationale and structure of the Senate Conference (Day 2)

08:25 - 08:45

Speaker: Mr Buyani Zwane, CEO: Breakthrough Development

Topic: *Industry Perspectives for Learning and Preparing for the World of Work*

08:45 - 09:05

Speaker: Professor Charles Maimela, UP

Topic: *Curriculum Transformation is Not a Future Event: Initiatives, Goals, Failures and Achievements at UP*

09:05 - 09:25

Speaker: Ms Rutendo Ngara, African Indigenous Knowledge Systems Practitioner and Transdisciplinary Researcher, Electrical and Biomedical Engineer (STEM & Social Sciences)

Topic: *Integrating Knowledge Outside of the Academy*

09:25 - 09:45

Moderated Q & A session

09:45 - 10:00

Comfort Break (Featuring streamed recorded conference-related material/music)

SESSION 2: 10:00 - 11:10

The Case For Curriculum Transformation (2)

Chair: **Professor Vasu Reddy**, Dean: Faculty of Humanities, UP

10:00 - 10:50

Case Studies from UP (5 x 10 min presentations):

Panel:

- Prof Madeleine Stiglingh and Mr Randy Seda (EMS) - *Transformation of the CA2025 Curriculum*
- Dr Hennie Fisher and Ms Tiwi Mhere (Alumnus from NAS) - *Transforming the Culinary Curriculum: the Future of the Training Kitchen*
- Prof Dietmar Holm (VET SC) - *Transformation of the Veterinary Science Curriculum*
- Dr Susan Thuketana, Dr Makwelete Malatji, and Ms Matshedisho Lekgetho (EDU) - *Transforming South Africa's Foundation Phase Home Language Pedagogy: A Case of the BEd Foundation Phase Teaching, Literacy Practices: Sepedi, IsiZulu and Setswana Curriculum Initiative*
- Prof Jaco Beyers (T & R) - *Curriculum Transformation in T & R*
- **Note:** Student participation to be incorporated in presentations

10:50 - 11:10

Moderated Q & A session

SESSION 3: 11:10 - 12:10

Group Discussions

Chair: **Professor Wynand Steyn**, Dean: Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology, UP

Group Discussions in 4 discussion Rooms (30 minutes for discussion; 30 minutes feedback time)
NB: Virtual participants will be randomly assigned to hybrid breakout rooms.

11:10 - 11:40

Breakaway discussion in groups

GROUP 1

Facilitator: **Prof Tiaan de Jager** (HS)
Alternate: Prof Karin Barac (EMS)

Rapporteur: **Prof Saloshna Vandeyar** (EDU)
Alternate: Prof Shakila Dada (HUM)

Topic:

Developing an evidence base

- What demonstrable case studies exist at UP to show evidence of real meaningful curriculum transformation initiatives, including the hidden curriculum?
- What are curriculum transformation indicators and how should they be measured in terms of targets within faculties?
- How does curriculum transformation manifest in the remit of educational innovation (EI) at the University? What concrete suggestions could promote curriculum transformation?

GROUP 2

Facilitator: **Prof Chika Schoole** (EDU)
Alternate: Prof Vanessa Steenkamp (HS)

Rapporteur: **Prof Ntebogeng Mokgalaka- Fleischmann** (MC)
Alternate: Prof Theuns Steyn (EMS)

Topic:

Student learning, success and well-being

- What are ideal curricula approaches for student learning beyond the lecture hall?
- What will or should the future of our teaching and learning look like if aligned to curriculum transformation (and the hidden curriculum)? Some of the questions that flow from here address pedagogic imperatives that require some self-reflection: Why is it important to consider the renewal of teaching practices? How can we best locate educational practices in time and place? What are the necessary conditions for students' effective participation and learning? What are the attributes that should be developed in graduates? What makes for good education? What learning accrues across faculties/disciplines?
- What evidence exists of curriculum transformation in respect of transdisciplinary initiatives, and how could this be intensified?

GROUP 3

Facilitator: **Prof Margaret Chitiga-Mabugu** (EMS)
Alternate: Prof Zozo Dyani-Mhango (LAW)

Rapporteur: **Prof Salome Human-Vogel** (EDU)
Alternate: Prof Dietmar Holm (VET SC)

Topic:

The changing nature of self and work

- How do we think about and put into practice curriculum transformation to enable citizens of the University to achieve their goals in a hybrid workforce?
- What are the attributes of a changing self (change in beliefs, values, attitudes and mind-sets) in respect of being a scholar and academic in a dynamic environment? (Reflect on the following: Deep and lasting transformation requires internal change first, which then spreads outwards).

GROUP 4

Facilitator: **Prof Innocent Pikirayi** (HUM)
Alternate: Prof Chrisna du Plessis (EBIT)

Rapporteur: **Prof Gerald Ouma** (DIP)
Alternate: Prof Marinda Oosthuizen (VET SC)

Topic:

Research

- What will or should the future of our research look like if it is aligned to curriculum transformation (and the hidden curriculum)? Some of the interrelated questions that flow from here address research questions: What are the commonalities and differences in terms of debates, problems and questions being raised and addressed? Who are the academics, students and public actors involved in the discussions and decisions? What models are being put into practice? How does the curriculum transformation materialise or manifest in actual experiences? And finally, what can we learn from those experiences that could help us advance towards an ecology of knowledge within the Global South?
- What evidence exists of curriculum transformation in respect of transdisciplinary initiatives, and how could this be intensified?

11:40 - 12:10

Feedback from Rapporteurs

TOWARDS CLOSURE

12:10 - 12:20

Closure and wrap up of Day 2 and Conference: **Prof Tawana Kupe**

12:20 - 13:00

Delegates enjoy a light lunch at the Future Africa Hub before departing

BIOSKETCHES AND ABSTRACTS



Prof Tawana Kupe
Vice-Chancellor and Principal, UP

Prof Tawana Kupe is the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the University of Pretoria. He holds a master's degree in English from the University of Zimbabwe and a DPhil in media studies from the University of Oslo, Norway. An honorary doctorate in Humanities was bestowed on him by Michigan State University in December 2019 and he was also awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Montpellier, France in October 2021.

Prof Kupe has a notable publication record, having authored journal articles, books and book chapters in his main discipline, media studies and journalism. He is an active member of several civil society organisations, including the AmaBhungane Centre for Investigative Journalism, and is Chairman of the Board of Media Monitoring Africa. He has been a judge and convener of multiple major journalism awards in South Africa and is a member of the Council of the International Association of Media and Communication Research.

He was recently appointed as a board member of the Association of African Universities (AAU) and a council member and trustee of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). He is also a member of the National Advisory Council on Innovation (NACI) in South Africa, and the Advisory Committee of the South African Sustainable Development Goals Policy Support Initiative.

Prof Kupe is a popular invited speaker, academic expert and regular commentator for local and international media on issues of media performance on radio, television and in the printed media.



Prof Loretta Feris

Vice-Principal: Academic, UP

Prof Loretta Feris was appointed as Vice-Principal: Academic at the University of Pretoria (UP) on 1 July 2022. The portfolio includes responsibility for all nine faculties and GIBS and focuses on promoting excellence in teaching and learning at the undergraduate level. Prof Feris also oversees and ensures the implementation of the University's academic plans and policies.

From 2017 to March 2021, she was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Transformation and Student Affairs at the University of Cape Town (UCT), where she developed a framework for transformation that draws on her scholarly work on spatial justice, and spearheaded an approach that introduced transformation benchmarks for higher education.

Prior to taking up her current position at UP, she had a brief stint as professor of Environmental Law at the University of Pretoria. At UCT (2009–2016) she was a law professor and director of the Institute of Marine and Environmental Law. She was an associate professor of Law at UP from 2004 to 2009, before which she had been a research fellow and Assistant-Director of the International Legal Studies Programme at the American University Washington College of Law in the USA. She received BA (Law), LLB and LLD degrees from the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa and an LLM degree from Georgetown University in the USA.

Loretta Feris is a transdisciplinary scholar with an interest in environmental justice, environmental human rights, indigenous knowledge systems, trade and the environment. As an environmental law consultant, she has worked with various government departments, industry and international organisations, such as the IUCN and UNEP, where she was part of a group of international experts on the Programme for the Development and Periodic Review of Environmental Law (Montevideo Programme).

Prof Feris has always maintained a strong relationship with civil society. She currently chairs the board of Natural Justice, a non-profit organisation that focuses on social and environmental justice in Africa, and is also a board member of Biowatch South Africa, another non-profit organisation that works with small-scale farmers to promote agroecology.



Prof Margaret Blackie

Centre for Higher Education, Research,
Teaching and Learning, Rhodes University

ABSTRACT

Transforming Curricula in STEM: What is the Imperative?

The notion of decolonisation first hit the zeitgeist of the wider university community in the wake of the #FeesMustFall protests. There was a strong kneejerk response from many in the STEM environment arguing that 'science is objective' and therefore decolonisation was irrelevant. This response fails to recognise two substantial elements. First, there is a difference between what we teach and the social environment we create in our departments. Second, while scientific knowledge does transcend cultural barriers, the creation of scientific knowledge is always embodied by specific people in specific social contexts. We need to bring the person of the scientist into view. When we think about curricula in STEM, we tend to focus exclusively on what is taught and in what order. In this talk I will explore the reasons why we need to take a broader view.

Prof Margaret Blackie holds a PhD degree in chemistry from the University of Cape Town and a PhD in education from Stellenbosch University. She taught and did research in the field of organic chemistry at Stellenbosch for 12 years. In 2022 she joined the Centre for Higher Education Research, Teaching and Learning at Rhodes University, where she is pursuing her interest in tertiary science education. She is the lead editor of a book entitled *Enhancing science education* and a co-editor of *Decolonising knowledge and knowers*. One of her current research interests is exploring how one understands the impact of the creation of scientific knowledge on one's teaching.



Prof Mbulungeni Madiba
Dean of Education, Stellenbosch University

ABSTRACT

The Role of African Languages in Curriculum Transformation

South Africa is a multilingual country with eleven official languages. However, 29 years into democracy, indigenous African languages continue to be marginalised in domains such as higher education. The existing language policies in higher education (LPHE 2002, 2022), language curricula and language practices in education show government and higher education institutions' ambivalence towards the use of indigenous African languages for academic purposes (SAHRC Report, 2014). The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training clearly indicates that African languages are facing serious challenges, which may lead to their demise in the academic sphere and threaten their vitality and use in education. Although the ambivalence with regard to indigenous African languages may be attributed to politico-historical, economic and social factors, the more serious problem is the lack of knowledge and understanding of the potential role these languages have in teaching and learning programmes, and in transforming institutional cultures or promoting the decolonisation of the curricula in disciplines other than language. As the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training points out, an approach is required that will promote the development of indigenous African languages as languages of literature, science and academia, and as established languages for teaching. In this presentation, I will argue that the teaching and use of indigenous African languages in higher education can make a significant contribution to the decolonisation of the curricula and the transformation of the institutional environment. I will show how the University of Cape Town (UCT), a historically English-medium university, has—in line with its language policy, which emphasises 'the need to prepare students to participate fully in a multilingual society, where multilingual proficiency and awareness are essential' (UCT, 1999, revised 2013)—used multilingualism to decolonise the curriculum. I will draw examples from the Multilingualism Education Project, which coordinates the integration of isiXhosa in disciplines such as education, health sciences (nursing, physiotherapy and occupational therapy), the humanities, philosophy, psychology, law and so on.

Prof Mbulungeni Madiba has been the Dean of the Faculty of Education at SU since September 2019. He has served as the director of the Multilingual Education Project (MEP) in the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED) at UCT and has served as deputy dean and acting dean of the CHED a number of times. He has also chaired UCT's Senate Language Committee and served on the UCT Council. Prof Madiba has 30 years' teaching experience and a wealth of experience in leadership and management. He has received research fellowships and study awards from a number of higher education institutions abroad, including the universities of Cologne, London (Oppenheimer fellow), Birmingham and Harvard (Mandela fellow). His main research interests are language planning and policy, with a special focus on multilingual education.



Prof Charles Maimela

Deputy Dean (Teaching and Learning),
Faculty Of Law, UP

ABSTRACT

The University of Pretoria (UP) is turning the tide and reimagining its position as a leader in higher education in South Africa and Africa with a global presence when it comes to curriculum transformation in a democratic South Africa. Various initiatives have been put in place in order to achieve a transformed and inclusive curriculum across all disciplines at the University. These include the Policy Framework on Curriculum Transformation, developed and adopted in 2016 after extensive consultations; work done in faculties; and the involvement of students and various stakeholders since the University operates in a society and must be proactive and align with the changing needs of that society. In 2021, while the COVID-19 pandemic was raging, the University relaunched its drive on curriculum transformation in order to assess progress made, identify challenges and come up with solutions five years after the Policy Framework had been developed and adopted by Senate. This lecture aims to assess and interrogate the work done during the relaunch and to share with the University community and stakeholders the University's readiness to move from a paper and rhetoric exercise on curriculum transformation towards the implementation of an enabling institutional culture for diverse knowledge and people.

Prof Charles Maimela is the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Law and is passionate about teaching and learning. He teaches African Customary Law and Law of Damages to undergraduate students in the Faculty. He is also involved in postgraduate studies, supervising both master's and doctoral students. Professor Maimela is active in research and has published a number of articles on his areas of expertise, which are medical law, law and religion and African customary law. He has also contributed chapters to books and has published a monograph titled *Law and Religion in South Africa*, in which he interrogates the relationship between the law and religion in the South African context due to the pluralistic nature of South African law and religion. He also participates in local and international conferences and was a visiting professor in Italy before the outbreak of COVID-19. He recently participated in the PHASA Conference where, as a plenary speaker, he spoke about the effect of COVID-19 on the overall health care of the South African community and how the law can be used to effectively address, among other things, the challenges of access and equality.

Apart from serving as the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Law, Professor Maimela also acts as a facilitator and administrator in the University and the coordinator of the recently relaunched Curriculum Transformation Drive to take stock of progress made five years after the adoption of the Curriculum Transformation policy document by Senate. Furthermore, he serves on a number of committees in the Faculty and is a member of various Senate committees, including the Committee on Student Life, the Inaugural Lecture Committee and the Teaching and Learning Committee. His role also extends to the community: He is involved in several community engagements initiatives in Mamelodi and has been a member of the Review Committee for the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for the past two years, participating in the review process of research outputs submitted by universities nationally for purposes of subsidies.



Ms Rutendo Lerato Ngara

African Indigenous Knowledge Systems
Practitioner & Transdisciplinary Researcher,
Electrical & Biomedical Engineer

ABSTRACT

COGNITIVE JUSTICE AT THE MARGINS OF THE ACADEMY: THE JAGGED ROAD TO CURRICULUM TRANSFORMATION

Subtheme: 'Integrating knowledge outside of the academy'

Knowledge—and consequently also its production and utilisation—has a double-pronged character: It can be used as a tool, a resource to develop, congregate and create, or as a weapon, an instrument to dominate, separate and destroy. The Western knowledge paradigm—with its ways of knowing, ways of seeing and its notions of reality—has dominated the global knowledge arena, rendering many indigenous knowledge systems as invalid, illegitimate and irrelevant. This paradigm has in turn siloed knowledge within its walls in disciplinary prison cages, while simultaneously silencing other ways of knowing beyond the borders of the Academy. These 'othered' knowledge system now struggle to articulate their voices from the marginalisation imposed by colonialism, globalisation and modernity. This paper proposes that in order to 'turn the tide' and reimagine curriculum transformation in the Academy, it is necessary to unpack the paradigmatic tenets that inform knowledge systems. It suggests that, if carefully excavated, explorations into such cosmologies and epistemologies can make meaningful contributions to knowledge brokerage, thus promoting inclusivity and integration in the Academy and knowledge societies. It therefore makes a case for cognitive justice—'the right of different traditions of knowledge to co-exist without duress' (Visvanathan; Odora Hoppers).

Rutendo Ngara is an African indigenous knowledge systems practitioner and transdisciplinary researcher whose professional interests range from clinical engineering, health care technology management, socioeconomic development, mathematics, leadership and fashion design to the interface between science, culture, cosmology, nature and paradigms of healing.

She coordinates Ancient Wisdom Africa, the Ancient Wisdom Foundation and the Earthrise Collective, and serves on a number of boards and advisory committees, including the Credo Mutwa Foundation (Chairperson) and the People's World Commission on Drought and Floods (Commissioner). Rutendo has worked in research in clinical engineering and health care technology management at the University of Cape Town and development education at UNISA, and has been responsible for website management and teaching mathematics, English and science.

She holds a BSc degree in electrical engineering, an MSc in medicine in biomedical engineering, a number of certificates—including a fashion designing diploma—and is currently pursuing a transdisciplinary doctorate.



Mr Buyani Zwane
CEO, Breakthrough Development

ABSTRACT

'Crisis reveals leaders from pretenders' (Simon Sinek, 2020).

When in September 2020, Boris Groysberg and Katherine Connolly Baden from the Harvard Business School suggested that leaders [then] faced two great questions, namely how to survive, and how to capitalise on new opportunities, they proposed what they called the COVID two-step for leaders: protect and pivot. Many industry leaders followed the advice and made arrangements for cross-functional teams to contribute by generating solutions to the prevailing problems and thinking creatively about organisational processes while keeping people accountable and adjusting their deliverables. The creation of agile enterprises from the top down while generating insights into where to focus would facilitate the exploitation and exploration of strategies for survival and eventual growth and thriving.

The Higher Education academic project, in the main, also followed the advice and protected its core by initially turning to pandemic-induced online teaching only before moving on to hybrid teaching and learning methods. Ronald Heifetz's Adaptive Leadership model offered an approach for leaders that challenged them to pivot beyond the pandemic conditions impacting on business-as-usual, navigating their business environments, embracing leading with empathy—becoming emotionally intelligent—enabling the creation of mutually beneficial solutions for organisations and employees, and embedding learning through reflection.

Industry yearns for leaders ready to contribute to business success for academic and business school graduates. The VUCA, casually approached during the pre-pandemic period, has taken on a stronger and determined transformation of thinking and action, turning crisis agility into sustainable agility, making collaboration and co-creation the norm, and dismantling hierarchal structures in favour of network formations for the free flow of information and ideas to build nimble enterprises operating in environments acutely aware of generational influence on organisational behaviour. Real 'How to?' and clear 'Why?' thinking is required for purposeful leading and working to shape the desired high-performance culture with care and repurpose roles for tech-enabled workplaces. Are we ready to equip students and programme participants to deliver to such requirements, and more, with our unique South and Southern African challenges exacerbated by unpredictable power cuts and increasing levels of unemployed and unemployable youth?

How do we help position organisations to switch from pursuing being best in the world/industry to becoming best for the industry, society and world? For ESG and DEI to become front and centre would demand authentic and ethical leadership that will influence a shift from a strong reverence of STEM to STEAM, with appreciation of the arts/humanities and whole-person leadership paradigm, allowing for vulnerability, checking in versus checking up, productivity versus being physically in the workplace and a revision of great resignation to great exploration. Let's explore together!

Buyani Zwane is the founder and Managing Director of Breakthrough Development, a leadership and management consultancy that has been helping organisations find their true north and achieve great results for more than two decades. As master strategist with extensive experience in human resources management and leadership development, he believes that all people are born capable and can, with the right guidance, transform and step into their greatness as individuals and as contributing team members. Having grown up in rural KwaZulu-Natal, he has navigated many different work environments, including leading Franklin Covey Southern Africa, represented in 14 Southern African countries and Indian Ocean islands. He understands and knows how to negotiate the complexities faced by individuals and organisations in South Africa and the rest of Africa. This enables him to work with organisations in different sectors, from blue-chip companies to different spheres of government and state entities.

Buyani brings his wealth of experience and compassion to his other engagements as a keynote speaker, business and leadership coach and adjunct faculty member of the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS), one of South Africa's leading business schools. There he engages programme participants on strategy formulation and execution, leadership, management, transformation and change management, which enables him to remain up to date with the latest developments and practices.

In addition, Buyani does community work, from capacitating school leaders across South Africa to working with NGOs to cultivate healthy male identity and behaviour in communities.



Prof Siona O'Connell

School of the Arts, Critical African Studies
Project, Faculty of Humanities, UP

Prof Siona O'Connell (PhD) is an African Studies scholar/practitioner in the School of the Arts at the University of Pretoria. Her research focuses on three areas, namely Memory Studies, Creative Studies and Restorative Justice in postcolonial and post-apartheid South Africa. She is widely respected for her work on the effects of race-based land dispossession. Her co-edited book, *Hanging on a Wire*, won the 2018 National Institute for the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS) Humanities and Social award for the best non-fiction edited volume, and her monograph on forced removals in Cape Town, *An impossible return: Cape Town's forced removals*, continues to garner broad recommendations. O'Connell was a Trilateral Reconnections Project Fellow (Brown University), is a Brown International Advanced Research Institutes (BIARI) alumnus, was the NEH Distinguished Visiting Professor of the Humanities at Colgate University in the USA in 2018–19 and a visiting professor at Aarhus University in Denmark in 2021 and 2022. She is the South African lead PI on an international interdisciplinary project bringing together climate change, heritage and vulnerability, and a founding member of Critical African Studies at the University of Pretoria.



Prof Vasu Reddy
Dean: Faculty of Humanities

Prof Vasu Reddy is Professor of Sociology, and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. He is a former Executive Director of the Human and Social Development Programme at the Human Sciences Research Council. Prior to that he was Associate Professor of Gender Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. He is a member of the Academy of Sciences of South Africa. He is an NRF B1 rated researcher with primary research interests in genders, sexualities, poverty, inequalities and HIV/AIDS. He is the Principal Investigator of the multi-year Mellon Foundation 8 university project titled: Unsettling Paradigms: The Decolonial Turn in the Humanities Curriculum at Universities in South Africa, Grant Number G-41600689. Beyond journal articles, more recent book length publications are *Queer in Africa: LGBTQI Identities, Citizenship and Activism* (with Zethu Matebeni & Surya Monro, 2018; Routledge); *Queer Kinship: South African perspectives on the sexual politics of family-making and belonging* (with Tracy Morison and Ingrid Lynch, UNISA Press & Routledge, in 2018); *State of the Nation: Poverty and Inequalities – Diagnosis, Prognosis, Responses* (with Crain Soudien & Ingrid Woolard, HSRC Press, 2019); *The Fabric of Dissent: Public Intellectuals in South Africa* (with Narnia Bohler-Muller, Greg Houston, Maxi Schoeman & Heather Thuynsma, HSRC Press, 2020); *State of the Nation: Ethics, Politics, Inequalities: New Directions* (with Narnia Bohler-Muller & Crain Soudien, HSRC Press, 2021), *University on the Border: Crisis of Authority and precarity* (with Liz Lange & Siseko Kumalo, 2021, SUN Press) and *Texture of Dissent: Defiant Public Intellectuals in South Africa* (with Narnia Bohler-Muller, N; Greg Houston, Maxi Schoeman and Heather Thuynsma, HSRC Press, 2022).

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