

# FACULTY OF SCIENCE NEWSLETTER 2024

» TERM 1



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## Prof Tshentu Appointed Acting Dean

In the dynamic landscape of academia, leadership transitions are moments of both challenge and opportunity. Such is the case at Nelson Mandela University as Professor Zenixole Tshentu steps into the role of Acting Dean for the Faculty of Science, standing in for the esteemed Professor Azwinndini Muronga during his sabbatical.

Prof Tshentu’s appointment comes as no surprise to those familiar with his illustrious career. With a robust background in academia, research, and leadership roles within the University and beyond, he embodies the qualities essential for guiding the faculty through this period of transition.

Having served as the Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Science since May 2022, Prof Tshentu has already proven his mettle in fostering academic excellence and driving strategic initiatives. His tenure as Head of Department of Chemistry and subsequent directorship of the School of Biomolecular and Chemical Sciences attests to his ability to navigate complex academic environments with finesse.

A distinguished scholar, Prof Tshentu’s contributions to the field of Chemistry are both prolific and impactful. With over 90 articles, four book chapters, and two patents to his

name, his research has garnered recognition both locally and internationally. Awards such as the Research Excellence Award from the University and the prestigious Raikes Medal from the South African Chemical Institute underscore his commitment to advancing scientific knowledge and innovation.

Beyond his scholarly pursuits, Prof Tshentu is renowned for his passion for teaching and mentorship. His teaching philosophy, rooted in contextual understanding and interdisciplinary collaboration, resonates deeply with students and colleagues alike. By championing a holistic approach to education, he equips students with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in an ever-evolving academic landscape.

As Acting Dean, Prof Tshentu is poised to build upon the foundation laid by the Dean, Prof Muronga. With a keen eye for innovation and a collaborative spirit, he aims to propel the Faculty of Science to new heights of excellence. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and interdisciplinary collaboration, he seeks to harness the collective expertise of faculty members and students to address pressing societal challenges.

Prof Tshentu states that “It is a great opportunity to serve our faculty in the absence of Dean Muronga. The next stage for the Faculty of Science, after the strategy development process, should be the question of resourcing to achieve its mandate in key areas of the academy, and this affects both human and physical resources. The growth in faculty student numbers demands a recalibration of our processes and advancing our plans to meet the demands. This needs to be driven alongside the other priorities such as curriculum renewal, science for society, and contribution to transformative societal-relevant research”.

The appointment of Prof Tshentu represents a pivotal moment in the journey of the Faculty of Science. As the university community rallies behind him, there is an air of anticipation for the transformative initiatives and dynamic leadership that lie ahead. With Prof Tshentu at the helm, the future of the Faculty of Science shines brightly, guided by a steadfast commitment to excellence, innovation, and academic integrity.

As we bid farewell to Prof Muronga on his sabbatical, we extend our gratitude for his dedication and leadership. In his absence, we are confident that Prof Tshentu will lead

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with vision and determination, steering the faculty towards continued success and distinction. Let us unite in our support for Prof Tshentu as he embarks on this new chapter, together shaping the future of science education and research at Nelson Mandela University.





## Navigating the Path to Success: First-Year Orientation Program

The 3rd of February marked the commencement of a week-long journey for our newest members of the academic family – the first-year students of the Faculty of Science. The festivities began with a heartfelt address from the University's Vice-Chancellor, setting the tone for what promised to be an engaging and enlightening orientation programme.

From the 5th to the 9th of February, the faculty orchestrated a series of events aimed at acclimating our incoming students to the exciting and dynamic world of higher education. The agenda included invaluable insights into subject choices, unravelling the mysteries behind prerequisites, captivating lab tours, and opportunities for students to engage personally with their lecturers.

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*FYS Buddies 2024*





One standout figure among the faculty members was Dr Hlangothi, who played a pivotal role in assisting students with the intricacies of registration and patiently addressing any queries that arose. This personal interaction created a welcoming environment, fostering a sense of connection and support crucial for the academic journey ahead.

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Recognising the digital era’s significance in education, the science faculty hosted a Moodle training session. Moodle, a free and open-source learning management system, emerged as a central tool for our students. This platform serves as a hub for receiving assignments, accessing learning materials, completing quizzes, and staying connected with lecturers. The session aimed to equip our first-year students with the essential skills needed to navigate this virtual space seamlessly.

The orientation programme succeeded not only in providing academic guidance but also in nurturing a sense of community among our incoming students. Through various events, students had the opportunity to form connections with both their peers and faculty members, creating a supportive network that will undoubtedly prove invaluable throughout their academic journey.

As we bid farewell to the orientation week, the science faculty extends its best wishes to the first-year students. May this newfound knowledge and camaraderie serve as a solid foundation for your academic endeavours, propelling you towards a successful and fulfilling journey in the faculty of Science. Welcome to the beginning of a transformative chapter in your lives.

*First-Year students 2024 with the Undergraduate Coordinator, Dr Buyiswa Hlangothi*



## New Science Centre: Transforming Education and Inspiring Careers

Nelson Mandela University has recently unveiled its cutting-edge Science Centre, marking a significant milestone in the institution's commitment to advancing education, fostering innovation, and inspiring the next generation of scientists. The launch of this state-of-the-art facility, including the impressive Digital Dome, represents a transformative step forward for the university and its stakeholders.

At the heart of the Science Centre lies a bold vision to democratise access to science and ignite curiosity among learners, students, scholars, academics, and the wider public. With a substantial investment of R54 million from the Department of Higher Education and Training, the Centre stands as a beacon of excellence in science education and engagement.

The Digital Dome, a 15-meter immersive auditorium, stands as the centrepiece of the Science Centre, revolutionising the traditional learning experience. Drawing parallels to an IMAX theatre but on a grander scale, the Dome offers visitors an unparalleled journey into the realms of cosmology, astronomy, ocean science, and beyond. Through captivating 3D shows and interactive exhibitions, learners are transported to distant galaxies, explore the mysteries of the deep ocean, and engage with cutting-edge scientific research in an enthralling manner.

This innovative approach aligns seamlessly with Nelson Mandela University's philosophy of Technology-Enhanced Teaching and Learning. By harnessing the full potential of immersive technologies, the Digital Dome creates rich





and engaging educational experiences that resonate with students. It serves as a prime example of how advancements in educational technology can be leveraged to enhance learning outcomes while maintaining a student-centered approach.

Moreover, the Science Centre represents a gateway to a myriad of career opportunities in science and technology. Aspiring scientists and researchers are provided with firsthand exposure to the wonders of the universe, sparking their curiosity and passion for exploration. Through professional development programs and workshops, educators are equipped with the tools and knowledge to inspire the next generation of scientists, laying the foundation for a knowledge-based, innovation-driven economy.

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sibongile Muthwa emphasises the pivotal role of the Science Centre in shaping the future of science education and research. “This Centre will go a long way in making real our ambition of advancing science for society,” says Professor Muthwa. “It will inspire young people to become the next generation of scientists and innovators.”

Beyond the university campus, the Science Centre serves as a hub for community engagement and collaboration. By opening its doors to the public, the Centre fosters a culture of scientific curiosity and inquiry, empowering individuals from all walks of life to explore the wonders of the natural world.



The launch of Nelson Mandela University’s Science Centre heralds a new era of innovation, collaboration, and discovery. With its state-of-the-art facilities, immersive technologies, and commitment to excellence in science education, the Centre stands poised to shape the future of education and inspire generations to come. As we look towards the horizon, the Science Centre serves as a beacon of hope, illuminating the path towards a brighter, more prosperous future fuelled by the power of science and imagination.

*The new Science Centre located on the Ocean Science Campus*





**“His role involves overseeing the planning, execution, and evaluation of various initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching, research, and student support services.”**

## A Warm Welcome to New Faculty Operations Manager

Nelson Mandela University’s Faculty of Science is proud to announce the appointment of Lubabalo Saba to the newly created position of Faculty Operations Manager. With an impressive academic background and extensive experience in science education and administration, Saba brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the faculty’s leadership team.

The role of Faculty Operations Manager was established to streamline academic projects, enhance strategic planning, and ensure the efficient functioning of the faculty under the guidance of the Executive Dean. Saba’s appointment signifies the faculty’s commitment to advancing its core ideology and improving overall performance and productivity.

### Strategic Academic Projects Management

At the heart of Saba’s responsibilities lies the management of strategic academic projects within the Faculty of Science. His role involves overseeing the planning, execution,

and evaluation of various initiatives aimed at enhancing teaching, research, and student support services. By providing strategic advice and support to the Executive Dean and Faculty Management Team, Saba will contribute to the realisation of the faculty’s long-term goals.

### Policy Development and Execution

Another crucial aspect of Saba’s role is the development and streamlining of policies and procedures within the faculty. With his deep understanding of institutional frameworks and academic structures, he will ensure that all activities align with the faculty’s core ideology and adhere to university and statutory requirements. His expertise will be instrumental in driving innovation and fostering a conducive academic environment.

### Operational Efficiency and Staff Wellbeing

Efficient operational management is essential for the smooth functioning of any academic institution. Saba will



play a key role in planning, monitoring, and evaluating the faculty's operations to improve performance and productivity. Additionally, he will oversee staff management and development, ensuring that faculty members are supported in their roles and provided with opportunities for growth and advancement.

### **Building Interpersonal Relationships and Stakeholder Engagement**

As Faculty Operations Manager, Saba will engage with a wide range of stakeholders, both within and outside the University. His ability to build interpersonal relationships and foster partnerships will be invaluable in strengthening collaborations and advancing the faculty's strategic objectives. By serving as a liaison between the faculty and various stakeholders, he will promote a culture of inclusivity and collaboration.

### **Qualifications and Expertise**

Saba's qualifications, including a BSc in Genetics, a BSc Hons in Botany with a focus on Plant Analytical Biochemistry, and an MSc in Botany with a focus on Plant Analytical Biochemistry, make him uniquely suited for the role of Faculty Operations Manager. His extensive experience in science education and academic administration, combined with his project management skills, positions him as an ideal candidate to lead the Faculty of Science towards excellence.

The appointment of Lubabalo Saba as Faculty Operations Manager marks an exciting chapter in the Faculty of Science's journey towards academic excellence and operational efficiency. With his expertise and leadership, the faculty is poised to achieve its strategic goals and continue making meaningful contributions to the fields of science and education.

**“His ability to build interpersonal relationships and foster partnerships will be invaluable in strengthening collaborations and advancing the faculty's strategic objectives.”**



## A Holistic Bursary Approach

Nelson Mandela University's Computing Sciences Department has embraced a comprehensive approach to support its diverse student body, which largely consists of students from outside Gqeberha. With nearly 20,000 students residing both on and off-campus, adapting to university life can be a significant challenge.

Under the leadership of Prof Jean Greyling, the department has integrated a holistic approach into its bursary philosophy over the past eight years. This approach focuses on providing not only financial support but also addressing the social, medical, and academic challenges faced by students.

Greyling credits the department's success to its dedicated team, including Geraldine Fraser, who oversees student residences and is attuned to their social needs, and Carol van Onselen, who manages the bursary programme and provides administrative support while actively addressing various challenges.

The department offers bursary recipients more than just tuition fees, books, and accommodation. They provide financial flexibility, meal allowances, and even living allowances when bursary funds are delayed. Additionally, students receive support such as eye tests, medical and dental assistance, psycho-social support, transport assistance, and academic tutoring.

Former bursary recipients like Jessica-Bianca Cordier and Daniel Holmes have expressed their gratitude for the comprehensive support they received during their studies. Cordier described the bursary scheme as a guiding light during the often-confusing process of funding university studies.

The department also encourages bursary recipients to give back to the community by volunteering their time. They serve as student assistants within the department or at external organisations, such as schools or NGOs. This not only allows students to contribute to their community but also helps them develop valuable skills for their future careers.

The tutoring programme, led by Fezi Fani, offers tailored academic support to students, enabling them to grasp complex concepts and excel in their studies. This initiative not only benefits bursary recipients but also provides an opportunity for senior students to gain teaching experience.

Omega Lodge Student Accommodation Residence Manager, Geraldine Fraser, plays a crucial role in ensuring the well-being of off-campus students. She works closely with the department to address any issues that may arise and provides a supportive environment where students can thrive socially and academically.

Former bursary recipients like Cwenga Ndudula credit the department's holistic approach for their academic success. Ndudula praised the dedicated team, including Carol van Onselen and Prof Greyling, for their unwavering support throughout his university journey.

The Computing Sciences Department has established a robust support system that goes beyond financial assistance to ensure the overall well-being and academic success of its students. Through mentorship, academic support, and community engagement, the department continues to make a significant difference in the lives of its students.

***Fezi Fani, Carol van Onselen, and Geraldine Fraser comprise the Dream Team for the bursary recipients from Nelson Mandela University's Computing Sciences Department***





# Advancing Mathematics Education

In a bid to revolutionise mathematics education and promote STEM careers, the Govan Mbeki Mathematics Development Centre (GMMDC) at Nelson Mandela University has unveiled a series of transformative initiatives set to make waves in the educational landscape.

## Maths Incubation & Technology Support Programme (MITS)

Isuzu, a stalwart in corporate social responsibility, has stepped forward to champion the Maths Incubation & Technology Support Programme (MITS). With a commitment of R500 000 annually for the next three years, Isuzu's sponsorship will fuel this groundbreaking project in three metro schools.

MITS aims to nurture 45 promising mathematics learners by providing them with the GMMDC's structured Technology-assisted After-school Programme Support (TAPS). Additionally, teachers will undergo accredited professional development, and all learners will gain access to the comprehensive online MobiTutorZA Mobile-learning STEM platform. Each selected learner will also receive a quality tablet pre-loaded with digital Maths & Science support materials, empowering them to excel in STEM fields.

**“With a commitment of R500 000 annually for the next three years, Isuzu’s sponsorship will fuel this groundbreaking project in three metro schools.”**

## Flip Potgieter Mathematics Project

In memory of the late Mr. Flip Potgieter, a beloved figure in the Mathematics Department at Nelson Mandela University, the Flip Potgieter Mathematics Project continues its legacy of support. Originally established as a bursary fund, it has now evolved into a R120k annual donation towards a project in an under-resourced Karoo school, administered by GMMDC. This initiative aims to uplift educational standards in rural areas while continuing to reward top-performing undergraduate maths students at the University.

## Provincial STEAM Seminar for In-Service Educators

Looking to the future of education, GMMDC is spearheading the first Provincial STEAM Seminar for in-service Maths and Science teachers. Set to take place in Makhanda in May 2024, this collaborative effort between GMMDC and ISASSA will spotlight “Innovative STEAM Teaching and Learning Practices: Fostering Sustainable Development in Education.”

With objectives ranging from fostering networking opportunities to advocating for STEAM adoption in classrooms, this seminar aims to elevate Mathematics and Science teaching practices across private and public secondary schools. International and national education experts will grace the event, offering insights and strategies to enhance pedagogical approaches.

The GMMDC's initiatives underscore its unwavering commitment to revolutionise mathematics education, cultivate STEM talent, and pave the way for a brighter, more innovative future. With partnerships forged and resources mobilised, the stage is set for transformative change in mathematics education across South Africa.

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**“Magaya attributes his success to the unwavering support of his family, mentors, and the guidance of God.”**

## Triumph Over Adversity in Academic Journey

In the realm of academia, stories of perseverance often inspire and remind us of the resilience of the human spirit. Aphiwe Magaya's journey from adversity to achievement exemplifies this spirit. Despite facing daunting challenges, Magaya not only earned his master's degree in mathematical statistics but also aspires to pursue a PhD. His story serves as a beacon of hope and determination within the Faculty of Science.

### Overcoming Adversity

Magaya's path to success was fraught with obstacles. Tragedy struck in 2020 when he lost his brother in a car accident. This loss was compounded by his parents' divorce the year prior. Living alone after his father's passing in 2022, Magaya found himself on the verge of giving up on his Master's degree and life itself. However, with unwavering support from his family and faith in God, he found the strength to persevere.

### Academic Journey

Hailing from a humble background in the former Transkei, Magaya's academic journey began with a bursary to study BSc Computing Sciences at Mandela University. Discovering his passion for mathematics and statistics, he obtained his BSc degree in 2020. Undeterred by personal tragedies, he pursued further studies, culminating in a master's degree in mathematical statistics. His research on statistical learning methods for photovoltaic energy demonstrates both his

academic prowess and commitment to addressing real-world challenges.

### Acknowledgements and Gratitude

Magaya attributes his success to the unwavering support of his family, mentors, and the guidance of God. He expresses profound gratitude to his supervisors for their invaluable assistance throughout his academic pursuits. Additionally, he acknowledges the sacrifices made by his loved ones and their role in his achievements.

### Future Endeavours

With his Master's degree in hand, Magaya looks forward to embarking on a new chapter in his academic journey by pursuing a PhD. His determination to continue pushing boundaries and contributing to the field of science serves as an inspiration to his peers and future generations of scholars.

### Conclusion

Aphiwe Magaya's story underscores the transformative power of education and resilience in the face of adversity. His journey from hardship to academic success serves as a testament to the indomitable human spirit. As we celebrate his achievements within the Faculty of Science, let us draw inspiration from his story and reaffirm our commitment to supporting each other in our pursuit of knowledge and excellence.



## Advancing Academic Careers: Insights from ECAAP Programme

The Early Career Academics' Advancement Programme (ECAAP) at Nelson Mandela University is designed to support and develop emerging academics, providing them with the tools, knowledge, and community necessary to thrive in their roles. The programme focuses on several critical areas, including curriculum development, assessment practices, teaching methodologies, and research, while fostering a supportive network of peers and mentors. Recently, Sboniso Mzulwini, an associate lecturer in the Mathematics Department, shared his experiences and reflections on participating in ECAAP.



**Sboniso Mzulwini**

### Overall Experience with the ECAAP Programme

Mzulwini describes his participation in ECAAP as transformative, highlighting how it broadened his understanding of the multifaceted role of education in society. The programme not only illuminated the responsibilities of higher education institutions like Nelson Mandela University but also clarified his role as an academic. Through a comprehensive exploration of curriculum development, assessment practices, teaching strategies, and research methodologies, Mzulwini found himself part of a vibrant community of early career academics. This network provided him with substantial support and practical solutions to various challenges, reigniting his passion for academia.

### Motivation to Participate

The decision to join ECAAP was influenced by observing the career progression of a colleague who benefited from the nGAP (New Generation of Academics Programme). Motivated by the support his colleague received, Mzulwini sought out a similar programme within the university, leading him to ECAAP.

### Valuable Lessons and Skills Acquired

Before ECAAP, Mzulwini's academic focus was primarily on teaching and research in mathematics. However, the programme taught him the importance of understanding his students and fostering productive relationships with them. This new perspective helped him cater to his students' needs more effectively. He began collecting extensive student and peer evaluations, which provided insights into the effectiveness of his teaching methods and learning

environment. One significant change was the incorporation of technology into his lessons and assessments, a suggestion derived from these evaluations, which yielded positive results.

### Impact on Career Development and Goals

ECAAP has had a significant impact on Mzulwini's career trajectory. After being denied a promotion in 2022 due to a lack of supervisory experience, the programme encouraged him to collaborate with a senior staff member on supervising an honors student. Successfully co-supervising a student to completion in 2023 has bolstered his confidence and qualifications, and he is now preparing to reapply for a promotion.

### Advice for Early Career Academics

Mzulwini strongly recommends ECAAP to early career academics. He praises the programme's presenters for their excellence and support, emphasising that the benefits of participating far outweigh any reservations.

### A Catalyst for Academic Growth

The ECAAP programme is an invaluable resource for early career academics at Nelson Mandela University. It offers a structured platform to develop essential academic skills, provides mentorship, and creates a supportive community. As evidenced by Mzulwini's experience, ECAAP not only enhances individual capabilities but also significantly contributes to career advancement and professional fulfillment. For those at the beginning of their academic careers, ECAAP represents an opportunity to grow, innovate, and succeed in the dynamic environment of higher education.

***Congratulations to Sboniso Mzulwini (first row, second from right) and Dr Anthea van der Hoogen (front row, third from right) on their outstanding achievement as winners in the ECAAP on 6 March. A well-deserved recognition from the Faculty of Science.***





## Congratulations to Winner of 2023 GCUA 2030 Award

We are thrilled to announce that Olwethu Poswayo, a doctoral student in the Chemistry Department has been awarded the prestigious 2023 Global Challenges University Alliance (GCUA) 2030 award.

Poswayo's groundbreaking project titled, "Optimization of utilization of biomass for production of bio-oil and its hydro-processing to produce quality biofuel," has earned her the first prize of 3500 Euro. This remarkable achievement showcases her dedication, innovative thinking, and commitment to advancing sustainable solutions in the field of chemistry.

In addition to the cash prize, Poswayo has also won an all-expenses-paid trip to Sweden, where she will present a seminar on her research during the GCUA's meeting from 30 January to 1 February at Haga Slott, Enköping, Sweden

The adjudicators were highly impressed with Poswayo's research, stating, "This high-quality research focuses on the important topic of combining algae and coal into coalgae composites, which can be a part of meeting the energy demand, protect the environment and can be further optimised to reduce the greenhouse gases."

They further praised Poswayo's ability to effectively communicate her results and highlight how her research contributes to global sustainable development, particularly

focusing on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7 – "Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all" and SDG 13 – "Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts."

We are immensely proud of Poswayo's accomplishments and her dedication to making a positive impact on our world. Her success serves as an inspiration to all of us at Nelson Mandela University and reinforces our commitment to fostering excellence in research and innovation.

Congratulations once again to Poswayo Poswayo on this well-deserved recognition. We look forward to witnessing her continued success and contributions to the field of chemistry and sustainable development.



*Olwethu Poswayo at the GCUA conference.*

# Zimbabwean Christian Brothers College visit to Physics Department

*By Chanie Neveling*

On 1 February 2024, scholars from Christian Brothers College in Zimbabwe paid a visit to our department. They really enjoyed the tour of our facilities, ranging from the PV lab, optical fibre, CHRTEM and semiconductor development. It's always enriching when scholars from different institutions come together to share knowledge and experiences. Exploring various research facilities can truly broaden perspectives and inspire collaboration.

## SASEC 2023 Hosted by the Physics Department

Nelson Mandela University hosted the Southern African Sustainable Energy Conference (SASEC) from 15–17 November 2023 at The Boardwalk Convention Centre in Gqeberha. The conference specifically focused on research, development and deployment of methodologies, technologies and systems within the Southern African context related to sustainable energy (i.e. energy that can be replenished in the short-term, with no long-term environmental damage). The conference provided the opportunity for researchers, engineers, technologists and individuals to share and discuss recent developments in the field. It was a particularly good opportunity for postgraduate students to showcase their research progress, and to develop knowledge and networks in the field. Presentations at SASEC were subject to the acceptance of an abstract and full paper.

The topics of interest that were covered within the conference program were as follows:

- Solar thermal energy systems
- Solar PV energy systems
- Wind energy systems
- Hydrogen, hydro and ocean energy
- Renewable energy resource assessment
- Demand side and energy storage applications
- Power systems planning and operations.
- Bioenergy (Thermochemical, biological, chemical, and physical conversation systems)

Delegates really enjoyed the high-quality academic papers and the expertise of the keynote speakers, Dr Claudia Buerhop-Lutz and Mahandra Rooplall. Their contributions undoubtedly added great value to the conference. It was also enjoyable hearing from our dinner guest speaker, Dr Morné du Plessis from World Wide Fund South Africa (WWFSA).





# Staff Exchange with Reutlingen University

*By Dr Mandla Khumalo*

In April 2024, the Chemistry Department's Dr Mandla Khumalo was invited along with three colleagues from other departments within the University to create research collaborations and present at Hochschule Reutlingen (Reutlingen University) in Germany. The general overview of the presentations was holistic, covering synthesis and modification of polymer materials, textile, 3D printing and their characterisation and theoretical investigation, up to processing and testing. A special feature of the institute's activities is the close cooperation of scientists and engineers, and a broad range of modern instruments and methods which are available, including pilot plants allowing material and technology development under industry- relevant conditions.

The research focus was material problems and needs which can be approached by control of interface-related properties as well as interactions at interfaces and surfaces. A deep understanding of techniques and processes as well as of underlying physical aspects will provide the basis to develop long-term concepts for technological implementation and applications of new polymer materials.

**“It is a lively group of people and all highly intellectual and straight to the point. We are looking forward to the collaboration.”**  
– Dr Mandla Khumalo



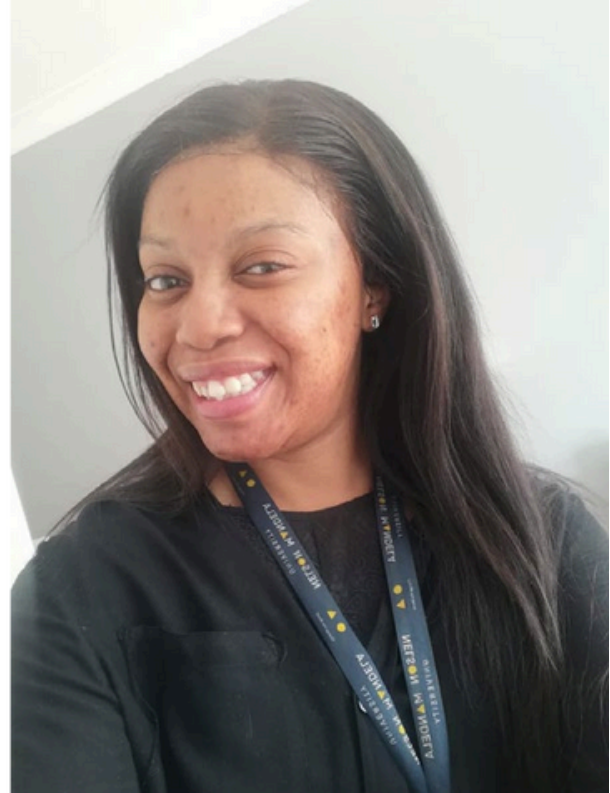
## New Science Marketing Interns



**Vanessa Mphikela**

The Faculty of Science is delighted to welcome Vanessa Mphikela to our team as an intern in the Marketing and PR Coordinator role. Vanessa is a final year student in Public Relations Management, specialising in PR and Communication Science. With her experience as a Public Relations Officer in the student housing committee, she brings valuable skills and enthusiasm to our marketing team.

**Favourite quote:** *"Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise"* - Thomas Gray



**Sithabile Matiwane**

We Welcome Sithabile Matiwane to our Science Marketing Team. With a background in Genetics and Cell Biology from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and currently pursuing a Master's in Human Physiology, she brings enthusiasm and expertise to our team. We are excited for the insights and impact she'll bring to our upcoming events.

**Fun Fact:** *"I love living near bodies of water i.e. waterfalls and sea. it brings tranquillity, calmness, and peace. It connects me to my ancestors."*