

NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

Embodying *Mandela* at Mandela University

A short mapping of key University activities
speaking to the social figure, *Mandela*



Change the World

Acknowledgements

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Towards Making a Mandela University

Nelson Mandela University has a complex history rooted in a number of organisations. Dating back to 1882, the beginnings of the institution we know today took its first steps with the founding of the Port Elizabeth School of Art, the oldest art school in South Africa. Later renamed the College for Advanced Technical Education (CATE), the institution was first located in the city's historic Central district, where the Bird Street campus is today, and in 1974, relocated to Summerstrand. It officially became the Port Elizabeth Technikon (PET) in 1979. In 1985, PET absorbed the College for Foresters in Saasveld from the Department of Forestry (previously the Tokai School for Forest Apprentices established in 1932), extending the institution's physical footprint into the Southern Cape. This 'George' Campus grew in 2001 with the purchase of the Hurteria Building in the town centre. In addition to the George Campus, PET acquired the Teachers' Training College in Summerstrand in 1994, renaming it the College Campus. In 2001, the Algoa College of Education was also integrated into PET.

The second major predecessor of Nelson Mandela University was the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE). UPE was founded in 1964 and registered its first students in 1965. Initially housed in several buildings on Bird Street in Central, UPE relocated to a contemporary, purpose-built campus in Summerstrand in 1974, which included student residences, a sporting complex and the iconic Main Building. The site formally opened in August 1975, and the final shift from Bird Street occurred in 1979, with the construction of the Summerstrand scientific buildings.

The third 'core' predecessor was Vista University, which was founded in 1982. It was decentralised across seven contact tuition campuses with a focus on township areas



with the greatest need for accessible and affordable higher education. The Port Elizabeth Vista campus, located along the national road to Uitenhage on the edge of Zwide township, had its first academic year in 1983.

Following the recommendations of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), in 2002, the South African government dismantled the higher education system of 36 racially-based institutions, universities and technikons it had inherited from apartheid. This was part of a larger strategy to restructure South Africa's higher education landscape to deliver a more equitable and efficient system to meet the needs of South Africa in the 21st century. Through a process involving mergers, rationalisations and consolidations, the system was reconfigured, producing 23 universities differentiated into 'traditional' universities, universities of technology and 'comprehen-



sive' universities (Hall, 2005). In terms of this process, a complex process of merging was mandated for the Port Elizabeth area. January 2004 saw the incorporation of Vista University's Port Elizabeth campus into UPE, followed by the merger of UPE and PET the following year. This reconfiguration process ultimately led to the launch of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (NMMU), where the University of Port Elizabeth, the Port Elizabeth Technikon, and Vista University's Port Elizabeth Campus collectively held the name Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

In 2017, to commemorate what would have been former president Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela's 99th birthday on July 18, the institution announced that it would be dropping the "Metropolitan" part of its name. As this *Mapping Document* seeks to emphasise, the decision to rename the institution was a deliberate step to foreground the name Mandela with all of its complex significance. Conceptually and symbolically, it aimed to move the institution beyond its geographical markers and, more importantly, to invest in the University the formative ideal of producing and disseminating knowledge in service of society. Since then, Nelson Mandela University has been engaging in a process of reflection and debate with its major stakeholders on what bearing the name Mandela may mean.

The University's engagement with its stakeholders – both internally and externally – has been extremely produc-

tive. It has included formal celebratory occasions, but in keeping with the University's commitment to enquiry, critical thinking, debate and reflection, it has also involved consultations with students, staff and alumni, seminars, colloquia and conferences. These have brought together leading South African and international scholars, commentators and observers of Mandela. A great deal has been learnt from these engagements; the University has made substantial strides in deepening its understanding of what it means to be the Nelson Mandela University. Significantly, emanating from the *Dalibhunga: This time? That Mandela? Colloquium*, in March of 2019, established the Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS) and is now working intensively with academic departments, students and staff to explore and excavate the significance of the Mandela name for the academic enterprise.

The purpose of this short report is to recount and highlight some of the major steps the University has taken in its engagement with its stakeholders since 2015. The following timeline attempts to showcase the making of a locally responsive, nationally active, regionally alive, and globally aware African university. The work presented here is in no way exhaustive. It should be considered in conjunction with the myriad of strategic and programmatic initiatives taken across the institution.

To learn more, visit this [webpage](#).



2015

Mandela Symbolism on our campuses

Before the University formally entered the name change process, it was already honouring the name Mandela through tributes in publications (see [Our Beating Heart](#)) and other projects. One initiative was to renew the aesthetic look and feel of the University buildings by drawing on the symbolism of Mr Mandela. NMMU committed itself to a 10-year legacy-public art project as part of this. Both staff and students formed part of the project celebrating the 10th anniversary of the NMMU name.

The Madiba Shirt sculpture formed part of the first phase of this project. The nearly 3-metre-high art installation is housed on South Campus and is linked to another element in this project, the *Beyers Naudé Garden of Contemplation*. Both the sculpture and the garden celebrate the collaborative struggle and leadership of Naudé and Mandela. The sculptural work is intended to be, at one-and-the-same time, a focal point in a student gathering place and a constant and inspirational reminder of the values embodied by the African leader, Mandela. It is a visual reminder of, and a symbolic invitation to reflect on, the University's values: *Ubuntu, Diversity, Environmental Stewardship, Integrity, Excellence, and Responsibility*.

The installation is a beautifully crafted shirt form made up of a welded wire armature supporting richly coloured patterned tiles. It is a celebration of what it means to be *African*. The basic structure is made from a hardy specialist metal, with hundreds of glazed ceramic tiles suspended in a patterned wirework of squares that make up the "fabric" of the shirt. The blue and white tiles spell out the University's values in a series of horizontal and vertical bands. The sculpture, which took many months to complete, is located on a large open grass area opposite the east entrance to the main building on the campus.

This sculpture has become a landmark for students on South Campus and is a favourite spot for photographs, commemorative events and an informal meeting place towards which students gravitate.

More information on the sculpture is available [here](#).



2013 – 2017

The Institutional Culture Enlivening Process

The University's five-year *Institutional Culture Enlivening Process* (ICEP) was a pioneering programmatic intervention designed to offer new paradigms for organisational change and sought to cultivate new ways of being and doing that emphasise active listening and enable the participation of diverse voices in co-creating and re-imagining the future of the University. The ICEP's theory of change was rooted in a complexity paradigm embedded within a social and organisational justice orientation. Culture change processes were pursued through deepening transversal 'courageous conversations', which could lead to a qualitative difference in the institutional culture of the organisation. Through providing opportunities to engage in generative and healing conversations, the ICEP sought to enliven and facilitate a process of internal alignment with the University's vision, values and transformative intentions. The intention was to stimulate reflection about the significance of the Mandela name for everybody in the institution at both a personal and organisational level.

The ICEP process created new spaces for these emerging and established voices within the institution to collaborate around a commitment to social justice. It included opportunities for rethinking curricula across the multiple knowledge fields and disciplines within the University, the development of new teaching and learning methodologies and pedagogies, and exploring new work practices and ways of re-imagining our future as Nelson Mandela University.

For more information, consult the piece on [Deepening the Conversations](#).

2016

Council Considers the Name Change

When the merger process started in 2005, the wish had been expressed by stakeholders within the University that the new institution would be called the Nelson Mandela University. While this hope did not materialise, important University community members continued to advocate for the change. The possibility and implications of the name change were debated in Council in 2014 and 2015, and approval was requested from the Minister of Higher Education and Training to rename the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University as the Nelson Mandela University.

23 June 2016

Government Gazette: Notice of change of name of Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University to Nelson Mandela University

Approval was granted for the name change to occur. On the 14th of June 2016, Dr BE Nzimande, Minister of Higher Education and Training, signed the Government Gazette issuing the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University with its new name, Nelson Mandela University. The name change was Gazetted on 23 June 2016.

View the Gazette [here](#).



7 August 2016

Symphony Orchestra Concert: *His Day is Done* - Remembering Mandela

On Sunday, 7 August 2016, the NMMU Symphony Orchestra, NMMU Singers & the TwoTone Band presented the world premiere of '*His Day is Done*' written for the University's Symphony Orchestra, Choir, and Jazz Soloists. Composed and conducted by Professor Ed Sarath (Department of Jazz and Contemporary Improvisation at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theatre & Dance), the title of the five-movement work comes from a poem by Maya Angelou. The poem was written in honour of Nelson Mandela. The US State Department circulated a recorded recital and translated copies of the work as a tribute to Mandela. As one of Maya Angelou's longer poems, *His Day is Done* is among the most moving depictions of Mandela's extraordinary ordeal following 27 years of imprisonment and his transformative role in shaping the history of South Africa and that of the world.

Given the highly charged conversations on race in America at the time and the prominence of ethnic tensions in so many parts of the world, the composer believed the piece and its boundary-crossing musical and societal horizons offered a timely message for artists and audiences across the globe. The piece reflects Professor Sarath's interests in bridging diverse musical languages – European classical, jazz, popular, including hip hop elements, and various global influences – as well as addressing social justice issues and questions of spirituality and consciousness.



April-July 2017

University Survey: *What does the name Nelson Mandela mean to you?*

While the renaming and rebranding of the University was, ultimately, overseen by executive management, it had always been understood, in the social justice and inclusion spirit of Nelson Mandela himself, that the question of the institution's identity would be developed through a process of open engagement with the wider University community and its major partners within the various communities and stakeholder groups associated with the University. In preparation for launching the new name, Nelson Mandela University, the University opened an internal anonymous online submission platform between April and July 2017, inviting members of the University community to express their thoughts and feelings about the anticipated name change. Separate *New Name Conversations* were hosted for staff and students, and information sessions were hosted. Through these avenues, the institution sought the input of its wide internal and external community to assist in the

collective process of imagining the type of university it wished to become, in line with its namesake's hopes, aspirations, and values. The community was asked: "*How do we live Nelson Mandela's legacy?*", "*How do we make his name come to life?*" The following areas of interest emerged from the survey:

- Transparency
- Naming & post-merger identity
- Institutional culture, diversity management, transformation
- Service to all
- Values & descriptors of the Mandela Name
- Deep critique
- Media and communications

View some of the survey responses [here](#).

19 July 2017

Alumni Award Recipients: What does the name Nelson Mandela mean to you?

As part of the collective process to create and build a Mandela identity for the yet-to-be officially launched Nelson Mandela University, the institution asked some alumni what the name Nelson Mandela meant to them. Predominant responses included the importance of Mandela in South Africa's history, the personal significance of the Mandela name, and descriptors/representations/values of the Mandela name for the country and the University.

A short video clip of these responses was compiled and is available at this [link](#).



20 July 2017

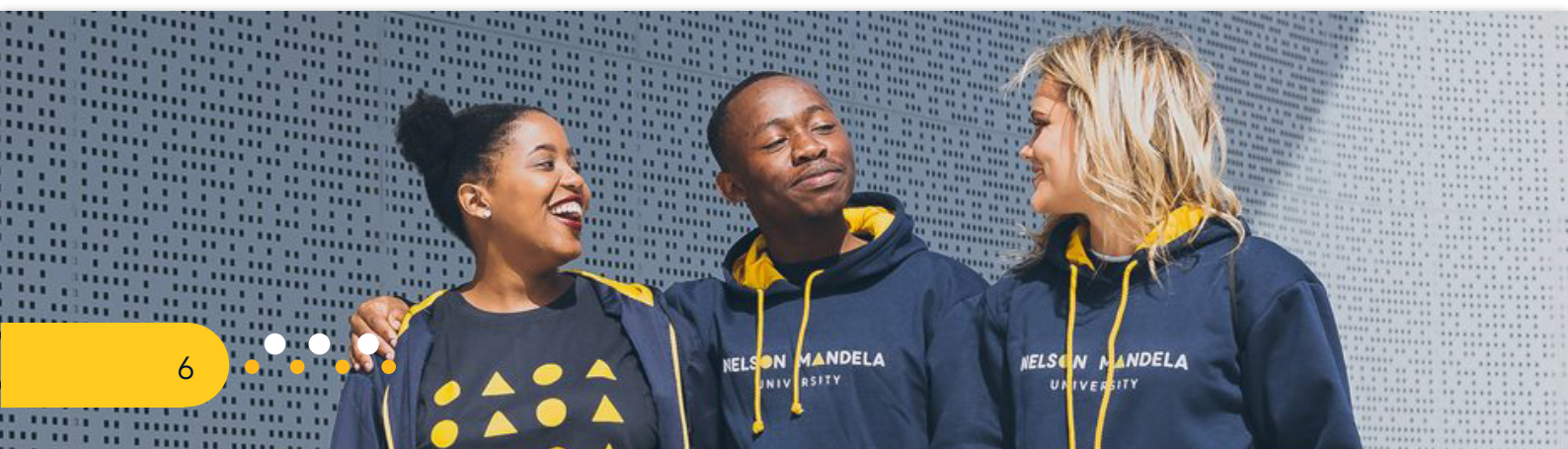
Launch of Name: Nelson Mandela University

On 20 July 2017, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University was officially launched as Nelson Mandela University. The naming of the University had the full support of the Mandela family, including Nelson Mandela's eldest grandson, Mandla Mandela, the head of the Mvezo Traditional Council and the custodian of the family according to some. Speeches were delivered in honour of the name-change launch by South African Vice-President Cyril Ramaphosa, Mandela University Chair of Council Justice Ronnie Pillay, Chancellor Santie Botha, Vice-chancellor Professor Derrick Swartz, and Advocate George Bizos. Speakers urged the University and its community to:

- Moving beyond branding
- The name change makes a statement about justice, rehabilitation, and reconciliation.
- Mandela represents values that South Africans cherish and uphold
- Adoption of responsibility by bearing the Mandela name
- Challenges that the Mandela University will need to confront
- Towards an African university
- Physical location and community of the University
- What Mandela University shouldn't do

Mindful of the many challenges facing the higher education sector, the University announced that the rollout of the new identity and the institution's new look would take place in phases. In terms of this, the academic project would be given priority, and the transition from the old branding to the new would happen over time as funding became available. This watershed moment was hugely significant for strategically positioning the University in South Africa, continentally and globally. At the same time, it offered a unique opportunity to advance our transformation imperatives and align the University with Mandela's ideals, values and vision for a more equal, fair and just world.

The University developed a special interest publication on the Name Launch that is available at this [link](#).



Institutional Identity and Brand

During 2017, the institution focused on introducing and building its new brand. A modern, font-based logo was developed to communicate a forward-thinking concept for the University consisting of shapes and symbols. The use of the circle and the triangle in the name creates a playful feel while alluding to ingenuity and creativity, two vital ingredients for change. The colour palette was specifically chosen to reflect the University's values and to add gravitas to the logo. The blue symbolises heritage, strength, trustworthiness, and a sense of self-confidence. The bright yellow was chosen to add approachability, freshness, and warmth to the logo.

The slogan, *Change the world*, is powerful and multi-dimensional, as it works on both an individual and institutional level. It implies that people everywhere have within their hands the power to change the world in both big and small ways. It encourages students and staff to actualise the University values authentically. The slogan was

developed from the famous Mandela quote, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". It is fitting for a university that bears his name.

This [link](#) will direct you to the University's Brand Manual. Drawing inspiration from the new University brand, a customised collection of branded graduation attire was created. Patterns were created from different configurations of linework and motifs; Mandela University branding elements and colours were used to reference the diversity that Nelson Mandela University celebrates.

The University brand extends across all sports kits, following the recognisable geometric designs used for academic attire. The designs are intricate and detailed when viewed close-up, yet bold and angular when seen from afar, representing the multidimensional quality of the institution.



September 2017

Ocean Sciences Campus Launch

To ensure that Mandela University differentiates itself strategically within the higher education landscape nationally and globally, Council mandated two transdisciplinary, game-changing academic trajectories for the University. Namely, positioning the University as the leading Ocean Sciences university in the country and transforming health sciences education towards establishing the 10th medical school in South Africa.

The Ocean Sciences Campus is the University's newest campus and the country's first dedicated ocean sciences campus. The campus is a hub for creative, pioneering, transdisciplinary, postgraduate ocean sciences research, teaching, innovation and engagement that builds, maintains and develops critical mass and strategic impact in key niche areas. The campus's mission spans the three interdependent spheres of sustainability, namely, environmental, social, and economic.

Please view this [link](#) for more information on the Ocean Sciences Project.



December 2017

Swartz & Muthwa Council Think-Piece: *What Identity and Posture for Nelson Mandela University?*

Following the adoption of its new name, Nelson Mandela University, the institution's Council debated the meaning and implications of the University being named after South Africa's first democratically-elected President and great statesman of the 20th century, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. University Council members reflected on the moral and social responsibility associated with embracing this name, its implications for its identity and strategic choices, as well as the transformations it needed to make to align itself more appropriately to the name.

In this think-piece, Swartz and Muthwa suggested that role players needed to understand that the University was no longer named after the metropole in which it is located but after Mandela himself and what he stood for namely a more equal, socially just, and democratic world

order. They explained that this is an intellectual and philosophical project of significance, which the University ought to undertake in consultation with all its stakeholders. It was in the co-creation of the desired identity of the institution that all its publics would feel a sense of membership and belonging. This was especially true for significant numbers of the student body and faculty, for whom, despite the efforts by management to effect positive institutional culture changes, the University still felt and sounded exclusionary. This identity creation project, therefore, ought to challenge and transcend the widely accepted notions of tolerance and co-existence and ensure that all stakeholders truly feel they belong.

Read the full think piece [here](#).

2018

Vice-Chancellor's Listening Campaign

As part of a comprehensive stakeholder engagement strategy, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sibongile Muthwa, led an institution-wide listening campaign throughout the first and second quarters of 2018. The overarching objective of this campaign was to contribute, over time, to address contextual issues facing the University whilst enabling active stakeholder participation in shaping its institutional strategic aspirations beyond 2020. The Vice-Chancellor used the campaign to provide senior leadership the opportunity to listen to the various publics of the University. The aim of the process was to develop a comprehensive baseline on the state of the University to inform a forward-looking strategy and

to refine the priorities and goals articulated in the final three years (2018-2020) of the University's Vision 2020 strategic plan while simultaneously expanding its planning horizons to 2030. Underpinning the process was a commitment to strengthen the capacity of the University through its qualification mix, curricula, scholarship and innovation, engagement and partnerships, institutional culture, and service delivery to honour the legacy and values of Nelson Mandela by changing the world for the better.

The consolidated report for the Listening Campaign is accessible [here](#).



17 April 2018

Inaugural Address: Vice-Chancellor Professor Sibongile Muthwa

Professor Sibongile Muthwa's inaugural address drew on the themes flowing from her engagement with the University community and on her reading of the state of higher education nationally and internationally. The new VC re-asked the great question posed by scholars before her, 'What are universities for?*' This question has confronted higher education for centuries and re-surfaced in the protests of the Fallist movements. Professor Muthwa's address spoke to several points:

- Social justice, poverty, inequality, unemployment;
- Public, transformative leadership;
- University and higher education transformation;
- Non-racialism, equality, human rights, democracy;
- University, community and society;
- The Mandela identity and posture;
- Renewal of the academy and curriculum;
- Humanising pedagogy;
- Transdisciplinarity;
- Revitalising the humanities; and
- Student-centrism.

The full speech is available [here](#).

25 May 2018

Mandela Bench

In May 2018, Nelson Mandela University commemorated National Africa Day by establishing a public art piece to reflect best the institutional culture transformation process that was underway on the campus and deliver on the intent to live up to the Mandela name. The goal was for public art to be seen on campus as a physical manifestation of the institutional mission and to contribute to the construction and preservation of areas where the University community can learn, live, and dialogue in a meaningful context.

The Mandela Bench is part of the University's public art programme, and it aims to strengthen and reinforce the University's vision by encouraging critical reflection, motivating creative thinking, and allowing viewers to move beyond our taken-for-granted everyday knowledges, which can only be gained through deeper interaction and thought. This bench is located on the University's South Campus, directly across from the library in Summerstrand. The public art on campus honours the pursuit of knowledge while encouraging the free exchange of ideas. The bench's unveiling formed part of the Mandela Centenary Celebrations, which took place that year.

*See Brink, C. (2018). *The Soul of the University: Why Excellence is Not Enough*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

The artwork is an interactive, functional installation featuring a life-sized sculpture of Madiba relaxing on a park bench. The informal and friendly pose of the global icon invites symbolic and physical engagement. Members of the public are able to sit beside the figure and experience a moment of intimacy with Tata Madiba as his arm rests on the back of the bench, indicative of a quasi-embrace. Staff and students enjoy the companionship this bench offers, making it a popular place for photographs and commemorative events.

This [link](#) will direct you to the artists' concept note for the Mandela Bench.



6 August 2018

Social Consciousness and Sustainable Futures Course

The Social Consciousness and Sustainable Futures (SCSF) module emerged out of the #Must Fall Movements 2015-2016 – a decolonial 'moment' in South African higher education that was characterised by demands for open access in terms of curriculum, culture and history of the future university. South African students demanded to be *visible* in the curriculum and cultures of higher education. One of the key ways to 'visibilise' students and ensure their success upon accessing the higher education system is to assist students in being part of the co-production of the curriculum that reflects their history and humanising futures.

At Nelson Mandela University, students demanded a foundational course through which all students could understand the basic social issues tied to justice, fairness, freedom, sustainability, dignity and recognition. A number of meetings and discussions by students and a collective of interdisciplinary staff for two years (2016-2018) facilitated the eventual piloting of the course on August 6, 2018.

The Social Consciousness and Sustainable Futures course prioritises deep, historicised human-planet-centred conversations. It requires a different teaching and learning approach to that which is considered 'normal' in the standard

July 2018

Mandela Centenary Celebrations

The centenary anniversary of Nelson Mandela's birthday was marked by a yearlong Centenary Celebration Programme. The Mandela Centenary Year saw heightened efforts to mark the life, times and legacy of a man who dedicated the bulk of his life to being in service of society. Annually, Mandela's birthday on 18 July is marked by communities and individuals taking part in various acts of kindness under the 'My 67 Minutes' campaign, effectively emulating the peaceful and charitable spirit of the man who gave 67 years of his life to the liberation and emancipation of the country's majority people, as well as rebuilding the country. The University's approach to the centenary was rooted in the academic project and focused on the scholarship of Mandela, in line with the importance he placed on education as the most powerful weapon for transformation.

The Centenary Year it also marked the first anniversary of the Nelson Mandela University name, following its official launch on 20 July 2017. The previous year saw a focus on introducing and developing the University's identity by changing some of its physical and visual brand symbolism, such as signage and marketing material. The Celebration Programme was a series of institution-wide activities planned and championed by its seven faculties, along with other University entities, which spoke to various aspects of Mandela's scholarly legacy. Activities took the form of conferences and colloquia, public lectures and talks, as well as book launches, which enabled spaces for conversations which contributed to the enhancement of Mandela's legacy during this celebratory period.

For more information on the Centenary Celebrations, visit this [link](#).

university curriculum. This course is centred on generating deep conversations around the issues of *being* and the role of science in the future of the university and society at large. It includes collaborative learning and engagement with students participating in small group sessions prior to a plenary lecture for the purpose of facilitating their engagement in reading and discussion to enable the development of different perspectives from different disciplinary points.

Information about the course is available [here](#).

2019

Naming and Renaming Project

The official name change of the University presented an ideal opportunity to revisit the names of existing buildings, streets, campuses and other named features and components of the University. In August, the Naming and Renaming policy document was revised and provided a progressive guide for both revisiting existing names and the naming of future buildings, spaces and roads. The revised policy is in keeping with the vision of the University, the ethos and values of Nelson Mandela, and the principles underpinning the South African Constitution.

The guidelines underpinning the naming and renaming include utilising the names of individuals who contributed significantly to advance the cause of the people of South Africa and the continent. In considering the names of people, guidelines indicate that considered names need to have an identifiable national and international significance. Further to this, name consideration ought to include the fields of culture, politics, sport, education and scholarship and should reflect an appreciation of the need for 'race' and gender equity. Selected names should, as far as possible, build social cohesion at the University and inspire present and future generations. Individuals under consideration would thus embody the values and principles of the University.

Please visit this [website](#) for more information about this project.



March 2019

Leaders for Change (LFC) Programme

The Leaders for Change (LFC) Programme, designed by the Department for Student Governance and Development, provides students with opportunities to develop and enhance a personal philosophy of leadership that includes an understanding of self, others and community and acceptance of responsibilities inherent in community membership. This extra-curricular programme is aimed at developing elected student leaders. The programme commenced in March 2019 with the Leaders for Change Seminar. Workshops cover topical issues such as: How to hold an Effective Meeting, CV Building, Conflict Resolution, Diversity, and the Art of Delegation. Students are required to give back to their communities and commit 20 hours of volunteer service. As part of the programme, students are expected to complete a reflective component and build a portfolio of learning.

The department also runs a number of other student-centred development programmes, some of which have been running for years, most notably *Beyond-the-Classroom* (2009) and *67 Hours* (2014), which also require students to commit to volunteering their knowledge and skills and empowering themselves through personal growth.

For more information, consult this [link](#).



6-8 March 2019

Mandela Colloquium

The Mandela Colloquium (*Dalibhunga: This time? That Mandela? Colloquium*) was organised as a highlight of the Mandela Centenary Celebrations, as well as to showcase the historic name-change of the University in 2017. As part of the event, a range of Mandela scholars were invited to provide critical animations on the social figure of Mandela. The Colloquium was, on the one hand, a significant step in the process of opening up the name and figure of Nelson Mandela as an important contemporary site of scholarly enquiry, and to mark the University as a leading global agency in that endeavour, and, on the other, to take significantly further the process already underway of exploring how an academic expression of Mandela could be mediated into and take expression in the University's relationships with its publics, communities, and society. This method of practice and interrogation proposed *Mandela* as a social figure, a dense and fertile area of academic enquiry to understand how history and human subjectivity come together to produce social life. Significant about the approaches and frames of mind in evidence at the colloquium, in the best spirit of an open-minded and generative university, was the recognition and acknowledgement of Nelson Mandela as a multi-faceted and complex human being. He was presented, received and offered in the colloquium in his multiple guises and personas. Mandela landed in the University through the Colloquium, in the plural. An important outcome of the Colloquium was the proposal for the establishment at the University of a critical 'Mandela Studies' programme, which would be formulated around a transdisciplinary approach. It was out of this that the thematic groundwork for the idea of a Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS) would come.

It was determined that Critical Mandela Studies would be a strategic humanities project that would draw from and converse with the richness of African intellectual traditions and would redraw the frontiers between the sciences and the humanities. Key themes for exploration by TIMS were identified. Namely, Mandela, feminism, and intersectionality; Mandela, social justice, and "the



university"; Mandela, transformation and decoloniality; Mandela, knowledge production, and "the sciences"; Mandela, modernity, auto/biography, and history; Mandela the revolutionary; Mandela, context, critique, contestations, and "the archive"; Mandela, political economy, and neoliberalism; and Mandela and the arts.

This Colloquium was accompanied by two art exhibitions: *We Are Present* and *Provoke/Ukuchukumisa/Daag-Uit*. Anticipating the idea of TIMS, the exhibitions raised in important ways the questions of transdisciplinarity and alternative ways of knowing. The *We Are Present* exhibition portrayed the work of staff and students in the visual arts, which reflected their own understanding of Dalibhunga through their creative disciplines. The *Provoke/Ukuchukumisa/Daag-Uit* exhibition spoke to the multitude of perceptions, images and discourses associated with the name Nelson Mandela across time and space. This was thus a way of responding to Mandela in the plural but through the medium of art. Furthermore, the themes of this exhibition aimed to provide a space to interrogate, reflect and redefine the Mandela name and legacy as a strategic inheritance and responsibility. The launch of the exhibitions engaged Mandela through food, song, and dance. Notably, the food was prepared by Ms Xoliswa Ndoyiya, Mandela's chef, during and after his presidency. As a guest speaker, she provided a personal perspective of Mandela as a man who loved home-cooked food and had both deep humility and a great sense of humour. This added a personal and intimate take on Mandela, a reminder of the human being behind the social figure of justice, the president, the revolutionary, and the embodiment of the 'rainbow nation'.

A report on the colloquium is available [here](#), and a catalogue for the *Provoke/Ukuchukumisa/Daag-Uit* is accessible [here](#).

July 2019

Formation of the Engagement and Transformation Portfolio

In 2019, the University embarked on an organisational redesign process to align its structure with its recalibrated strategic goals and the emerging strategic priorities of Vision 2030. The Executive Portfolio of Engagement and Transformation (ETP) was established in July 2019 and clustered a range of existing and new programmes, units, and entities together. To oversee the University's transformation work, including the ETP, a new Deputy Vice-Chancellor post was established and DVC: Engagement and Transformation, Prof André Keet, was appointed in October 2020. The ETP confirms Mandela University's commitment to reimagining, repositioning, and reframing



its character as a transformative, responsive university. The core purpose of the Portfolio is to provide intellectual and strategic leadership and oversee engagement and transformation in support of the vision and strategic objectives of the University.

The ETP has a substantive coordination and facilitative function, interwoven with the institution's seven faculties, which represent a diverse range of disciplines and fields.

Please visit the [ETP website](#) for more information.

23 August 2019

Compl [y,x]: The Gender Debate

The Archives & Exhibition Centre of the University presented *Compl [y,x]: The Gender Debate*, which highlighted gender in relation to Mandela and was a supplement to the *Provoke/Ukuchukumisa/Daag-Uit* exhibit that took place earlier in the year. It formed part of the University’s Mandela Centenary Celebrations, as well as the *Dalibhunga: This Time? That Mandela? Colloquium*. A number of themes were showcased through several installations:

- Mandela and gender
- Mandela and fashion
- Mandela and music
- Mandela and animism
- Mandela and agency
- Mandela and Africa
- Mandela and feminism
- MaXhosa Navigation

November 2019

Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies (TIMS)

In 2019, the Nelson Mandela University Council approved the University’s proposal to put in place a transdisciplinary institute for ‘Mandela Studies’: A hub and engine for ideas, lines of enquiry, and modes of engagement with the world. The decision was rooted in the conviction that carrying the name ‘Nelson Mandela’ offers the opportunity to give a uniquely African and social justice substance and direction to how the University works with the responsibility universities the world over bear – of knowledge-creation, the nurturing of critical thinking and the production of civic and social-minded leaders.



3 February 2020

Partnership between Mandela University and the Nelson Mandela Foundation

Nelson Mandela University and the Nelson Mandela Foundation cemented a strategic partnership that seeks to take Madiba’s legacy forward into the next 30 years and beyond. The University and the Foundation – which share a common vision of deepening Mandela’s legacy in their respective contributions towards an equal and just society – have been in collaboration on a number of projects.

On Monday, 3 February 2020, this partnership was formalised with the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in the areas of social justice advocacy, scholarship and research and human rights activities, as defined by the parties. This MOU was subsequently renewed in 2023.

More information is available [here](#).



2020

Responding to the pandemic (COVID-19 Coordinating Committee)

The COVID-19 Coordinating Committee (CCC) was established by a MANCO decision on the 31st of March 2020 to coordinate and facilitate the University's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in support of state and other efforts at a local, provincial, and national level. The CCC played a pivotal role in guiding the University's interventions to address the stark inequalities and disparities in healthcare access and health protection that became evident during the pandemic.

In line with its mandate of being a transformative, responsive university – reimagining engagement – the Nelson Mandela University co-constituted the Community Convergence Workstream (CCW), which reported to the CCC. The CCW aimed to reimagine community engagement and identify areas where the University could leverage its expertise, research capabilities, and engagement skills to contribute to the fight against the pandemic. This initiative specifically focused on several

marginalised groups, including community-based workers, individuals affected by gender-based violence (GBV), vulnerable populations experiencing food insecurity, education stakeholders, farmworkers, casual labourers, and unemployed youth, among others. The CCW undertook various activities such as tele-counselling, providing essential materials and support, and establishing community food gardens. It worked in close collaboration with the Mandela University Convergence Fund to further its mission and impact.

In response to the changing contexts, the CCC has been dissolved. However, key learnings from this endeavour continue to inform engagement at the University. The CCC and its function have thus become a notable illustration of what an iterative and adaptable approach to engagement might mean – an example of responsiveness and the value of lessons learnt that inform transformative praxes in the long term.

IT IS IN YOUR HANDS

the fight against COVID-19

October 2020

Mandela Studies Concept Note

After Council's decision in 2019 to establish a Transdisciplinary Institute for Mandela Studies, a concept note was developed for the emerging field.

For the University, 'Mandela Studies' ought to embrace (and integrate) two frames of signification. The first references the development of scholarly and reflective literature, a self-consciously critical discourse and a realm of research, and a publishing intervention focused on the life and times of the historical figure Nelson Mandela. The University must have something valuable to contribute to this space. The other frame of signifi-

cation references the significance, individually and organisationally, of understanding the deeper and more transformative dimensions of the social figure of Nelson Mandela. The concept note reflects on a conceptual framing, research areas and themes, as well as a preliminary mapping of the definition against, on the one hand, the University's structures and research themes and, on the other, an emerging research agenda for Mandela-related scholarship.

Read the full [concept note](#).

13 April 2021

Mandela Posture, Identity & Scholarship workshop

A virtual workshop was convened with the aim of engaging with current scholarship related to Mandela in order to identify and explore new avenues of inquiry. The objective was to distil critical questions that could be instrumental in shaping the area of Critical Mandela Studies and contributing to the development of the Mandela University's identity and stance. The Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sibongile Muthwa, extended a warm welcome and provided an introduction. Following this, Professor Verne Harris from the Nelson Mandela Foundation (NMF) elaborated on various global manifestations of Mandela studies and the ongoing process of knowledge generation in this field.

Professor Harris argued that the production and presentation of Mandela-related knowledge continue to evolve. He highlighted persistent patterns observed in the piece titled *Representing Madiba*, emphasising the need for more profound scholarly research and enhanced engagement with the Mandela Archive. Questions were raised regarding who controls and has access to this archive.

Professor Harris then presented what he proposed to be the six most pressing and potentially fruitful lines of inquiry and areas for scholarly exploration within the realm of Mandela Studies: i) Exploring the pre-colonial history of the Eastern Cape; ii) Investigating the work of feminist economists in the context of South Africa's embrace of neoliberalism during the transition to democracy; iii) Examining the interplay of patriarchal systems, modernism, and other intersecting sources of oppressive power; iv) Delving into the histories of non-racialism and black consciousness; v) Analysing Mandela's influence on the arts; and vi) Studying the commercialisation of Mandela's image and legacy.

The workshop participants engaged in break-out room discussions, focusing on the question, "What do Mandela Studies signify for Nelson Mandela University?"

A report on the workshop is available [here](#).

27 August 2021

Politics & Cultures of Naming workshop

The second workshop of 2021 aimed to explore the academic expression of Nelson Mandela and the broader topic of how naming cultures operate. In her opening remarks, Professor Sibongile Muthwa revisited the journey the University had embarked on since renaming the institution in June 2017. She emphasised that the institution had undertaken a deliberate and introspective examination of the significance of Mandela for its community. The Vice-Chancellor explained that the University community consistently seeks the best approaches to uphold the honour and responsibility associated with bearing Mandela's name, ensuring its relevance within the University context. Furthermore, she presented the ongoing Mandela scholarship initiatives at the University, focusing on several key aspects:

- Exploring the essence of Mandela, particularly his leadership, his commitment to social justice, and the transformative power of education in bettering the lives of marginalised and vulnerable individuals in society.
- Evaluating the alignment of the University's core scholarly missions, including teaching, research, and engagement, with the iconic legacy of Madiba. This extends to the broader vision and values of a free, equal, and democratic world for which he tirelessly advocated.
- Reflecting on the institutional culture, practices, and symbols that will define the University, aiming to break free from the legacies of the past.
- Ensuring that the governance ethos of the University council and related governing bodies prioritise cooperative governance, setting the ethical tone for the University and upholding its public image while safeguarding its reputation.

Professor Crain Soudien delved into the politics of naming institutions and introduced the field of toponymic theory to the discussion. Toponymic theory analyses how regimes and movements strategically employ place names to assert territorial claims, erase linguistic traces of original populations, gain political legitimacy, delegitimise opposing political forces, establish preferred versions of history, and stifle dissent.



Ms. Judy Sikuza, CEO of the Mandela-Rhodes Foundation, emphasised the importance and complexity of names. She highlighted the deliberate intention behind naming the Foundation, recognising that the Mandela name encompasses a broader part of Madiba's legacy. She discussed the tension inherent in the names of both Mandela and Cecil Rhodes, inviting people to see the potential for flourishing and collaboration when transcending fear and division. She also pointed out the transformative possibilities in confronting the Rhodes and Mandela aspects within ourselves and within society.

Mr. Sello Hatang, CEO of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, shared key lessons learned during the 20 years of carrying the Mandela name and being custodians of a significant portion of Mandela's intellectual property. He emphasised the idea of custodianship and urged against drawing lines between who is "in" and who is "out." Mr Hatang argued that there is room for everyone at the table, aligning this inclusivity with Mandela's call to protect the records, archives, and the space for critical examination rather than safeguarding his personal legacy.

A report on the workshop is available [here](#).

November 2021

Medical School Launch

On November 30, 2021, the University officially inaugurated its new Medical School, realising a long-cherished aspiration to offer transformative medical education and research to enhance the quality of healthcare in public hospitals and clinics. This Medical School stands as a central pillar of strategic growth for the institution and serves as a symbol of hope on the Missionvale Campus in Gqeberha. As South Africa's 10th Medical School, Mandela University's programme is poised to significantly contribute to the development of skills and the expansion of capacity for delivering healthcare services to underserved populations.

The approach adopted for this Medical School is community-centric, with the goal of producing socially conscious medical professionals who are not only competitive on a global scale but also possess a deep commitment to improving the lives of marginalised local communities. This commitment is realised through a strong emphasis on preventive and promotive healthcare practices. The special interest publication on the launch is available [here](#).

The Politics and Cultures of Naming Seminar Report and Recording now available

The seminar held in August earlier this year aimed to explore the academic expression of Mandela, and the broader question of how naming cultures work. The seminar was facilitated by Professor Verne Harris, with a formal introduction by Professor Sibongile Muthwa, and featured a provocative panel discussion by Professor Crain Soudien, Ms Judy Sikuza (CEO, Mandela Rhodes Foundation) and Mr Sello Hatang (CEO, Nelson Mandela Foundation).

"Is there an essence to Mandela? Which Mandela?"

This discussion builds on the workshop presented in April which sought to engage with current Mandela-related Scholarship, exploring fresh lines of inquiry, and distilling critical questions which would be helpful for the processes related to configuring Critical Mandela Studies and informing Nelson Mandela University's identity and posture.

"If the institution is to be reflective of Mandela, and critical, what would such critique look like?"

- Report link: <https://tinyurl.com/TIMS-August-Seminar-Report>
- Recording link: <https://tinyurl.com/TIMS-August-Seminar-Recording>



10 February 2022

Transformation Indaba Panel Discussion: Mandela in the context of University Transformation

The University hosted a campus-wide Transformation Indaba at the beginning of February 2022. It invited the TIMS team to host a panel discussion as part of the Indaba. The primary objective of the panel discussion was to delve into the idea of the Mandela Identity and its significance within the Nelson Mandela University community. In preparation for the Indaba, a media campaign was launched towards the end of 2021 with the following objectives:

i) Making past learnings, thoughts, and discussions more accessible to the University's communities through social media and the University's MEMO platform; ii) Generating and sustaining interest in the upcoming TIMS panel discussion at the Transformation Indaba; and iii) Collecting empirical data from various media platforms to inform the discussion. The media campaign incorporated a survey consisting of five key questions:

- What does the name Mandela mean to you?
- To whom does the name Mandela belong?
- Does the name Mandela have any implications for your field of study or discipline? If so, what are they?
- How should the name Mandela affect teaching and learning at our University?
- How can we make sure that the size of the Mandela name does not intimidate us into not taking critical stances in relation to it?

The TIMS panel discussion featured prominent contributions from notable individuals, including Dr Muki Moeng, Executive Dean for the Faculty of Education; Professor Pamela Maseko, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities; Ms Patsanani Tokwana, a recent alumnus and Mandela Cultural Fellow (2019); and Mr Siyanda Qoto, a current Master's student and Mandela-Rhodes scholar (2017). Professor Crain Soudien also provided crucial insights based on the survey data. The panel presentations revolved around the following key themes:

- The leveragability of the Mandela name
- Becoming an institution in service of those in need
- Responding as an institution
- A humanising element

During her address, Professor Maseko worked with two crucial facets of Mandela's life. Firstly, she shed light on the pivotal role played by Mandela's mother, Nosekeni Mandela, in shaping his character, particularly with regard to integrity and resilience. Secondly, she explored



the transformative moment when Mandela crossed paths with the renowned Xhosa poet Samuel Mqhayi. Professor Maseko underscored the tendency to overlook these moments in academic discussions concerning Mandela's character. She also advocated for a re-evaluation of the conventional interpretation of the concept of Ubuntu, which is often associated with Mandela's values.

Ms Tokwana stressed the importance of one's name and shared personal anecdotes illustrating how her own name had served as a source of inspiration and purpose bestowed upon her by her parents, family, and ancestors. She emphasised the significance of the name associated with an institution, expressing her preference for referring to Mandela as Rolihlahla, which translates to 'causing trouble' or 'troublemaker' in isiXhosa. From this perspective, Ms Tokwana drew two key lessons: maintaining a positive outlook on life, as Mandela, despite being labelled a 'troublemaker,' harnessed his influence for positive change, and recognising the role of education as a stepping stone, with innovation being the key to success.

Dr Moeng opened up the question of the connection between Mandela and the field of education, learning, and teaching while highlighting the inherent complexities in his learning journey. She recounted her own experiences growing up in the late 70s and participating in education-related protests against apartheid injustices in the 80s. Dr Moeng described this as a cathartic moment of reflection on Mandela. Additionally, she raised questions regarding the assignment of Mandela's English name, underlining that in South Africa, names carry profound significance, reflecting the aspirations and dreams of families. In this context, Mandela University encapsulates the nation's aspirations, dreams, and hopes, with names also intertwined with natural and historical events surrounding a child's birth.

A report of the panel discussion is available [here](#).

25 May 2022

Africa Day Celebration: Advancing the Academic Expression of Mandela

The King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS), in close collaboration with the International Social Impact Institute (ISII) and in partnership with Nelson Mandela University and others, hosted an Africa Day celebration that featured Mandela University's Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sibongile Muthwa. The celebration took the form of a virtual fireside chat with the VC showcasing the University, its purpose, its strategic intent as an embedded university committed to promoting social justice and its impact as the academic expression of Nelson Mandela.

This event coincided with the date and mission of Africa Day – celebrating accomplishments and advancements throughout the African continent. In her conversation with Elizabeth Ngonzi (CEO and Founder of the International Social Impact Institute), Prof Muthwa covered stories and realities about the University's global ecosystem through its leadership, students, alumni, honorary doctorate recipients; its consistent initiatives to build a global ecosystem to develop education and African-purposed solutions to develop a sustainable and socially just world. Watch a recording of the event [here](#).

July 2022

African Engagements and Partnership Programme

Nelson Mandela University will follow in Mandela's 1962 footsteps in order to expand its African footprint and forge stronger connections within the continent. The specific purpose will be to establish and revitalise strategic partnerships with universities in other African countries by identifying specific areas for collaborative engagement, research, innovation, learning and teaching. In doing so, the University hopes to rekindle the spirit of collective responsibility for the problems in the continent. The first leg of this journey began on the 25th of June 2022, when a Mandela University delegation left Gqeberha for East Africa.

Read the [Connecting the Continent](#) article for more information.

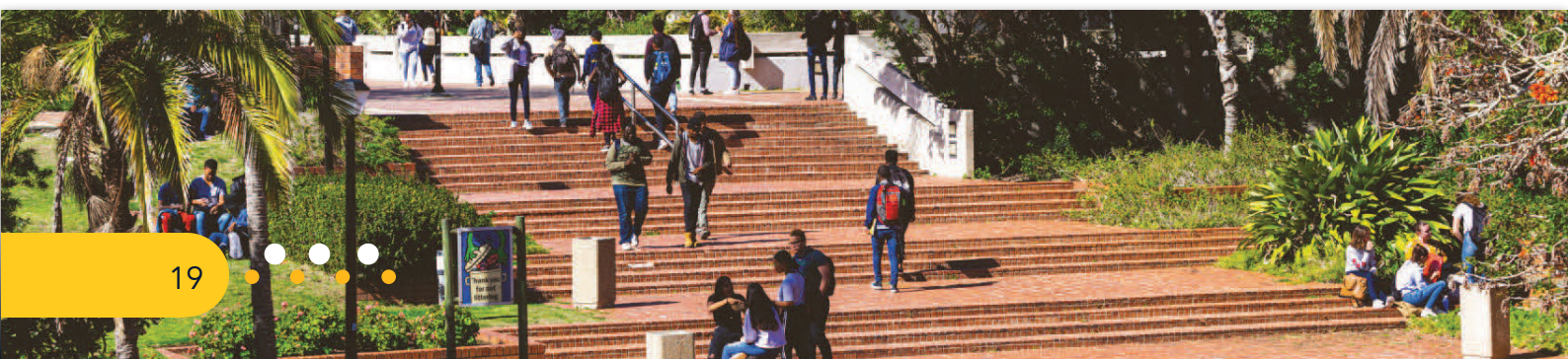
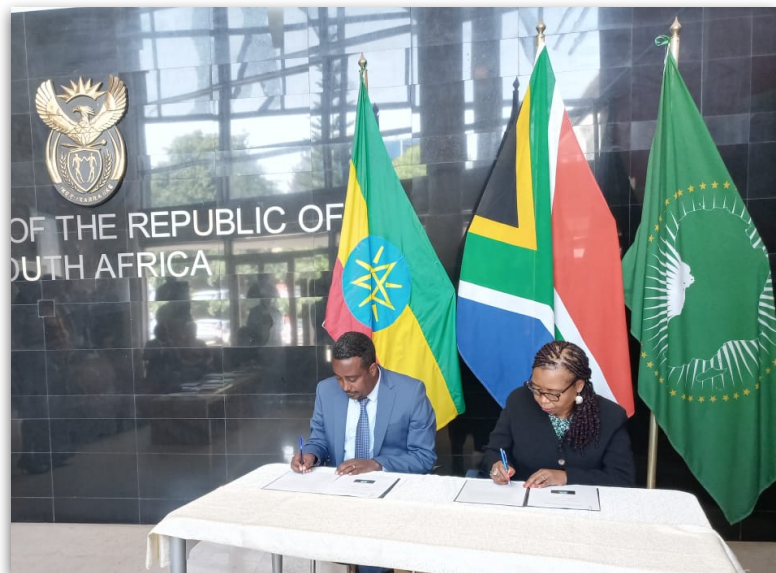
4-5 August 2022

Student Focus Group Discussions

Subsequent to the 2021 social media survey conducted with the University community and the February 2022 Transformation Indaba, it was proposed that TIMS engage with the University community on a departmental and discipline level by hosting semi-structured focus group discussions.

These focus group conversations sought to gather subjective meanings attributed to the name and the implications these meanings may have for teaching and learning, a particular discipline, and our sense of community at Mandela University. These focus groups were open discussion spaces where students and staff could freely and safely share their thoughts and opinions. In some disciplines, student and staff referred to active foci in their courses, which picked up and reflected a deliberate Mandela-informed social justice commitment. The overarching themes from the discussions were:

- Newfound appreciation for how any academic discipline has potential for social justice.
- Ambivalence/disinterest toward the name of the institution – the quality of education is perceived as more important, and we should strive to be beyond Mandela.
- The name Nelson Mandela University has the potential to open opportunities if used as a marketing tool.



3 November 2022

Advancing Critical University Studies across Africa (ACUSAfrica) Colloquium: Radical Openness

This event formed part of the 5-Year Name-Change Celebrations and the international colloquium, *Reflexive Solidarities in Techno-Rational Times*, hosted by the ACUSAfrica (Advancing Critical University Studies across Africa) Network and CriSHET.

TIMS hosted an intergenerational critique on institutional names and the effects those names have on the institutions and their interconnectedness to institutional culture. The invited provocation was posed by Prof Crain Soudien, and the response panel was made up of Mx Keneilwe Natu, Ms Rachel Collett, Prof Nomalanga Mkhize, and Prof Xolela Mangcu.

Prof Soudien's provocation synthesised concepts and concerns raised during the colloquium's proceedings with his ideation on the topic of practices. Specifically, the importance of practices, how practices are constructed, and the conceptualisation of critical university praxes engendered by the social figure of Mandela.

Mx Natu spoke about the contrast between values and practice. Ms Collett explored how critical studies on Mandela can be transferred from its isolated field of scholarship to the consciousness of the broader university community using visual arts and media. Prof Mkhize spoke about the importance of appropriate culture and its critical significance to the work of TIMS. Prof Mangcu advocated for a reading of Mandela through the lens of tragedy in order to develop a comprehensive critical stance that reconciles the paradoxes and ironies around the social figure.

A comprehensive report on the event is available [here](#).



Taking Mandela into the Future

This document captures a range of *Mandela* works in their various expressions at the Nelson Mandela University. This mapping document, however, is not exhaustive and only covers key events between 2015 and 2022. Making a *Mandela* University is a continuous and evolving process. Therefore, future *Mandela* works will appear in the anticipated *Mandela* Observatory.



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