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UFS Exceptional Academic Achievers AWARDS

Nominees Biography Booklet

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UFS
CENTRE FOR TEACHING
AND LEARNING (CTL)



UFS Support Staff Awards

Most Valued Professional Award



Adv Shirley Hyland

Kovsie Phahamisa Academy

Adv Shirley Hyland is the founding Director of Short Learning Programmes and the creator of the Kovsie Phahamisa Academy at the University of the Free State. She oversees the governance and operations of lifelong learning at UFS, including quality assurance, financial management, and operational oversight. Shirley serves on various UFS committees and the Support Services Task Group, focusing on Credential Transparency Description Language. Her current research explores the role of Micro-Credentials in South Africa and their social justice implications in higher education. Previously, she was Director of the School of Financial Planning Law. She holds an LLB (2004), LLM (cum

laude, 2005), and a Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Planning (2007), and is a CFP® Professional.

Cathy de Lange

Faculty of The Humanities

Cathy de Lange has been a dedicated non-academic support staff member at the University of the Free State for nearly two decades. In the Programme for Governance and Political Transformation within the Department of Political Studies and Governance, she plays a key role in programme coordination. Her passion lies in student support, both administratively and personally, helping postgraduate students successfully complete their studies. Cathy is also actively involved in the broader university community, serving as a representative on the UFS Institutional Forum and the Institutional Multi-stakeholder Group. Additionally, she has been involved in senior appointment selection panels, and as a skilled public speaker, she regularly assists the Department of Organisational Development and Employee Wellness as programme director for various events.



Keitumetse Poen

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Keitumetse Poen is a Senior Academic Advisor at the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at the University of the Free State, where she supports students in the Faculty of Education and Theology and Religion. She leads the Central Academic Advising Learning Communities (CAALC) project, which earned the "Most Innovative: Student Well-Being" award at the SAASSAP Roundtable & Awards 2023. Kate holds a Bachelor of Social Sciences Honours in Psychology, a PGDip in Higher Education, and is pursuing an MEd in Higher Education Studies. She is also a facilitator and podcast host, with her podcast Unpacked with Kate, launched in 2020, focusing on mental wellness and meaningful



Zayne Mintoor

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Zayne Mintoor is the Coordinator for Student Technology Training and Support within Blended Learning Innovation Support Services (BLISS) at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, University of the Free State. His teaching philosophy emphasises that students are self-directed learners who excel in environments that offer choice and motivation. In his role, Mintoor collaborates with both academics and students to promote student success, ensuring that teaching and learning align with student interests and the institution's core values.



Tanya Scherman

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Tanya Scherman is the Senior Learning Designer for Student Technology Training and Support at the University of the Free State. Her teaching philosophy is built on three key pillars: the educator as a guide who facilitates student discovery, providing access to diverse learning opportunities, and the thoughtful integration of technology to enrich the learning experience. Scherman is committed to supporting both students and the broader academic community. She brings dedication, open-mindedness, positivity, and high expectations to her work, ensuring that her approach fosters student growth and enhances the overall learning environment.





Johan Botes

Faculty of Health Sciences

Johan Botes from the Research and Development Unit in the School of Clinical Medicine at the University of the Free State Faculty of Health Sciences, has over 20 years of experience helping students succeed in their research. He guides them through every step, from protocol development to refining dissertations and preparing manuscripts for publication. Johan also promotes research visibility by ensuring information is listed on online platforms and supporting record submissions on the RIMS platform, enhancing the school's research profile. In addition to manuscript guidance, he excels at designing award-winning scientific posters, helping researchers earn recognition at national and international conferences.

Dr Cornel Bender

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Dr Cornel Bender, a Professional Officer in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Department of Plant Sciences, has been actively involved in cereal rust research since 1993. She teaches practical Plant Pathology sessions to undergraduates and regularly mentors postgraduate students in laboratory techniques. A well-respected industry member, Dr Bender served on the National Cultivar Evaluation Committee for wheat for over 20 years. Between 2019 and 2023, she was a council member for the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology and chaired the 2024 organising committee. She has contributed to 36 peer-reviewed articles and presented 76 papers at local and international conferences. Her 2020 PhD introduced a wheat stem rust greenhouse screening protocol now used worldwide.





Learning and Teaching Awards



Innovation in Learning and Teaching Awards

Innovating my curriculum through assessment



Dr Angela Stott

Faculty of Education

Dr Angela Stott is a Science Education Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State. She holds BSc (Hons), MEd, and PhD degrees in Science Education, earned while teaching at a rural school in KwaZulu-Natal. After a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Cape Town, Angela joined UFS in 2014. She has been dedicated to mentoring science teachers and conducting learner interventions in township schools, as well as presenting workshops for teachers across the Free State. She is a C2-rated NRF scholar and also creates educational resources – managing LearnScience.co.za and a YouTube channel with over 3,000 subscribers.

Anneen Church

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Anneen Church is the Coordinator of English and Afrikaans Academic Literacy courses for first-year students at the University of the Free State. Passionate about teaching, she focuses on helping students develop their academic language skills, enabling them to grow academically. As an aspiring academic, Church aims to explore the intersection of language, community, and technology, particularly in the South African teaching and learning context. While she is dedicated to her work, she also values balance.



Annalene Nell

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Annalene Nell is an Academic Writing Specialist at the University of the Free State Writing Centre, where she collaborates with content lecturers across faculties to design and schedule workshops that help students improve their academic writing skills. With extensive experience in writing centre consulting, consultant training, and academic literacy teaching, she is passionate about enhancing students' writing abilities. Nell is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Writing Centre Research in the Department of English.





Lindi Heyns

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Lindi Heyns is a Lecturer in the Department of Zoology and Entomology at the University of the Free State. She holds master's degrees in both Zoology and Environmental Management, bringing a wide range of expertise to her teaching. With extensive experience at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, Heyns is passionate about using education as a tool for positive change. She focuses on holistic student development, using creative approaches to inspire a deep appreciation for the natural world and encourage meaningful learning experiences in her students.

Dr Alta Grobbelaar

Faculty of The Humanities

Dr Alta Grobbelaar is a Lecturer in Political Science in the Department of Political Studies and Governance at the University of the Free State. Her passion for teaching began during her undergraduate years, when she informally tutored fellow students in her residence. She progressed from tutor to facilitator, junior lecturer, and now teaches courses in Political Theory and Ideology, Research Methodology, and Advanced Political Theory. Dr Grobbelaar's research focuses on Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Africa, and she regularly presents her work at both local and international conferences.



Dr Moeketsi Tlali

Faculty of Education

Dr Moeketsi has been teaching Physical Sciences and Natural Sciences Teaching I & II at the University of the Free State for the past ten years, recently adding second-year Teaching Practice and EDUB to his responsibilities. His contributions to the scholarship of teaching and learning include curriculum renewal and guiding postgraduate students. As a leader in the NST Ed SIG and an active researcher, he supervises postgraduate projects and publishes academic work.

Dr Moeketsi's recent focus is on critical participatory approaches to natural science assessment, aiming to foster students' social participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. He advocates for personalised, integrative science learning that addresses socio-scientific issues, enhancing the quality of science education.

Dr Glen Legodu

Faculty of Education

Dr Glen Legodu lectures Agriculture Science and Natural Science modules at the University of the Free State, applying a teaching philosophy rooted in critical emancipatory theory to foster student participation and critical reflection. His research focuses on education for sustainable development, and he has published three articles in agriculture science education and extension services. Dr. Legodu has supervised nine Honours students and is currently guiding three Master's students. A Teaching and Learning Fellow, he continues to enhance his pedagogical expertise.



Dr Solomon Chibaya

Faculty of Education

Dr Solomon Chibaya is an educator and researcher at the University of the Free State, specialising in Education Leadership and Policy Studies. He holds a Doctorate from the University of Witwatersrand and has extensive experience in teaching, curriculum development, and postgraduate supervision. His research interests include ethical leadership, the internationalisation of higher education, and science/mathematics education. Dr Chibaya has received several scholarships and awards, including the prestigious Education International Scholarship, reflecting his commitment to academic excellence. He provides postgraduate students with guidance in Education, Management, Policy, and Comparative Education.



Dr Pearl Larey

Faculty of Education

Dr Desiree Pearl Larey is a Lecturer in the Department of Education Management, Policy, and Comparative Education at the University of the Free State. She holds an LSED BA, ACE in Education Management, BEd Hons, a Master's in Education Policy Studies, and a PhD in Philosophy and Policy Studies in Education. Dr Larey teaches Education Leadership and Management, Comparative Education, and International Studies. Her research focuses on post-apartheid education policy, school development, leadership, curriculum, and pedagogy, drawing from Pierre Bourdieu's social theory, Critical Race Theory, and Neoliberalism. She is currently exploring comparative leadership practices in the developing world, using qualitative methods to study school effectiveness in historically disadvantaged communities.





Dr Ntombizandile Gcelu

Faculty of Education



Dr Ntombizandile Gcelu is a Senior Lecturer at the University of the Free State and an Emerging Scholar in the UFS Learning & Teaching Fellowship program (2022–2024). She was awarded the Women Academic Advance Program 2024 to support her journey to the professoriate and received the ERASMUS+ International Credit Mobility Programme award in 2023, teaching Comparative and International Education at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Spain. A staunch believer in collaboration and ubuntu, she was a uthuka Grantholder (2019–2021) and collaborated with colleagues at UFS and Walter Sisulu University. Dr Gcelu is also a member of EASA and the World Education Research Association (WERA) International Research Networks (IRN).

Innovating my curriculum through student engagement and/or motivation

Dr Roné Vorster-de Wet

Faculty of Health Sciences

Dr Roné Vorster-de Wet has a PhD in Health Professions Education from the University of the Free State and an MSc in Physiology from Stellenbosch University. She has been teaching Physiology for over 25 years to both undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Department of Basic Medical Sciences. Passionate about student self-efficacy, blended learning, curriculum development, and student support, she is dedicated to using innovative methods to enhance student learning.

Dr Vorster-de Wet is continuously exploring new ways to inspire and assist her students. In recognition of her efforts, she received the Khothatsa Award for the Most Inspirational Lecturer in the Faculty of Health Sciences in 2019.



Mart-Mari Els

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences



Mart-Mari Els earned her B.Sc. and Honours degrees in Quantity Surveying from the University of the Free State (UFS) and completed her MSc in 2011, focusing on project manager profiles in the building industry. Recently, she earned her PhD in Higher Education Studies, aiming to improve teaching methodologies for first-year students in Building Measurement. She has been a lecturer at UFS since 2008, teaching courses in Descriptive Quantification, Building Economics, Professional Practice, and Property Development Economics. Els also owns MMEQS, a freelance Quantity Surveying practice, and previously worked at MK Quantity Surveyors. She has served as Programme Director in her department and mentored numerous students in

research. Her work has earned her multiple awards, including Best Lecturer at UFS in 2017 and two Best Paper Awards in 2021 and 2023. She is also involved in community initiatives, including the Women in Construction Networking Event.

Dr Valentine Okwara

Faculty of Education

Dr Valentine Okwara holds a PhD in Education and is a lecturer in the Department of Mathematics, Natural Science, and Technology at the University of the Free State's Faculty of Education. Passionate about enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes, he researches innovative teaching methods and mentorship. He has presented research at local conferences and serves as a peer reviewer for journals and conferences, including BERA/WERA UK. A former researcher in the National Teacher Pedagogy Research Program (NTPRP), Dr Okwara is currently studying the impact of Ink-Pair-Share as a teaching strategy to boost student confidence in science education modules within the Scholarship for Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Prof Marius Coetzee is a semi-retired academic





Dr Grey Stopforth

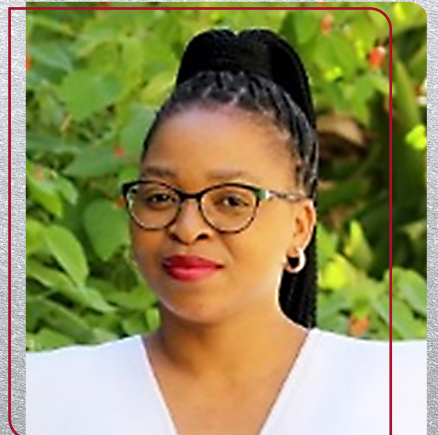
Faculty of Law

Dr Grey Stopforth is a Lecturer in the Department of Mercantile Law at the University of the Free State, focusing on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and its impact on work and skills development in South Africa. In 2023, he completed his doctoral thesis, "Decent Work for On-Demand Workers in the Modern-Day Gig Economy," addressing key challenges around balancing social justice and equitable working conditions. Dr Stopforth co-authored a book on legal skills and has published extensively in Labour Law. As part of the UFS SoTL Teaching and Learning Fellowship Programme, he researches innovative teaching methods, including AI-powered assessments and the responsible use of generative AI in legal education. Grey regularly presents at national and international conferences, with a particular interest in collaborative learning, flipped classrooms, and the vulnerability of gig workers.

Zinhle Mvelase

Faculty of Health Sciences

Zinhle Mvelase is a Lecturer and Researcher in the Department of Basic Medical Sciences at the University of the Free State, where she is involved in curriculum development, module coordination, and postgraduate student supervision. Before joining UFS, she lectured at the University of Limpopo and served as an Academic Development Officer at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. In this role, she coordinated academic intervention programmes for underperforming students and managed the academic mentorship programme for the MBChB students (1st to 3rd years) at UKZN, focusing on supporting student success and academic growth.



Dr Somarie Holtzhausen

Faculty of Education

Dr Somarie Holtzhausen is a Senior Lecturer in Higher Education Studies at the University of the Free State, with over 30 years of dedicated service, recognised by her 30-year service award in 2023. She leads the Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education Studies, sharing her extensive knowledge with academics across the country. Dr Holtzhausen supervises master's and doctoral students, fostering the next generation of scholars. In 2020, she earned a second PhD, focusing on the intersection of higher education and student affairs. Her commitment to innovation and research is evident through her involvement in various academic committees.



Anna-Marie Welman

Faculty of Health Sciences

Anna-Marie Welman is a Lecturer at the University of the Free State, where she teaches first-year Bachelor of Nursing students. With 19 years of experience in Nursing Education and Research, she has played a key role in preparing students for the workforce. Anna-Marie holds a master's degree in nursing from UFS and has been actively involved in community engagement, teaching, learning, assessment, and research supervision. She is currently a UFS Teaching and Learning Fellow, contributing to the enhancement of educational practices and supporting the development of future nursing professionals.



Rethabile Marumo

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Rethabile Marumo is the Chief Officer overseeing the Student Learning and Employability focus area at the Centre for Teaching and Learning on the Qwaqwa campus of the University of the Free State. She the Academic Student Tutorial and Excellence Program (A_STEP) and the Senior Student Experience. Her work focuses on enhancing teaching and learning practices related to student development, access, and success. Rethabile has held roles as a Teaching and Learning Coordinator, Academic Advisor, and Tutorial Programme lead. She recently completed Short Learning Programs in Engaged Leadership for Middle Management and Learning Design in Higher Education.

Zimbini Coka

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Zimbini Coka is a Lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of the Free State, currently pursuing her PhD in Agricultural Economics with a focus on virtual farming in South Africa. She is a passionate advocate for food security and sustainable agriculture. Zimbini holds a Master's, Bachelor's, and Honours degree in Agricultural Economics from the University of Fort Hare. She has published articles in academic journals and popular agricultural magazines such as Farmers Weekly and Stock Farm Magazine. Zimbini is actively involved in community outreach programs and co-founded the "Let Kids Be Kids" book donation drive with Ms Chuma Twetwa.



Petso Mokhatla

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Petso Mokhatla is a Lecturer in Agricultural Economics at the University of the Free State and is currently pursuing his PhD in Agricultural Management, focusing on Agro-Processing. He is passionate about supporting small-scale agro-processing enterprises and land reform initiatives. In 2014, he participated in the Economic Empowerment Fellowship Program, organised by the US Department of State with Oklahoma State University. With over 17 years of experience, Mokhatla provides advisory services and training programs to developing farmers. He teaches both undergraduate and graduate courses and is a committee member of the Free State Provincial AgriBEE Charter Structure, contributing to the advancement of the agricultural sector.



Danilda Els

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Danilda Els is an Academic Facilitator in the Academic Language and Literacy Development unit at the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of the Free State. She is pursuing a PhD in Language Practice, focusing on the intersection of multimodality and social semiotics, exploring how different communication modes influence understanding in educational contexts. As a facilitator, Danilda promotes critical thinking and communication skills among her students, creating a space for intellectual growth and scholarly engagement. Committed to pedagogical innovation, she continuously seeks new approaches to enhance teaching methodologies in higher education.

Dr Doreen Tivenga

Faculty of The Humanities

Doreen Rumbidzai Tivenga is a Lecturer at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, Faculty of The Humanities, English department. Her research focuses on urban youth cultures, performances and identities, youth literatures, popular and celebrity cultures, and new media. She has presented papers at both local and international conferences, exploring topics such as music's role in shaping youth identities in Zimbabwe, media and popular culture's influence on political injustices, and literary depictions of South African youth in the post-apartheid era. Doreen is the author of *Music and Urban Youth Identities* and co-editor of *The Zimdancehall Revolution: Critical Perspectives*.





Ané Church

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences



Ané Church is a Lecturer in Auditing and Corporate Governance within the School of Accountancy at the University of the Free State. She is a Chartered Accountant (SA) with a Master's degree in Accounting, specializing in Auditing. Church is passionate about ethics and leadership and frequently presents training on ethics and related topics both locally and internationally. She is dedicated to shaping future leaders by promoting integrity, professionalism, and ethical leadership and also serves on the Central Region Council of the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants, contributing to the profession's development.

Innovating my curriculum through the use of technology and/or online tools



Dr Bennie Botha

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Dr Benjamin S. Botha is a Lecturer in the Department of Computer Science and Informatics at the University of the Free State, responsible for the Introduction to Computer Hardware and Networking modules. His research focuses on using extended reality technologies to enhance human-computer interaction. Dr Botha is a reviewer for several national and international journals and serves on the boards of various national organisations. He is a member of the South African Association of Health Educationalists, where he serves as the regional ICT portfolio representative and national treasurer. Additionally, he is involved with several professional bodies, including the Institute for Electronic and Electrical Engineers, and aims to advance extended reality adoption in Africa.

Nadean Barkhuizen

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

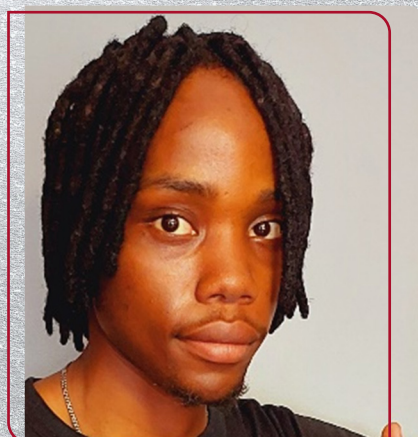
Nadean Barkhuizen is a Junior Lecturer for first-year computer literacy students at the University of the Free State. She is pursuing a Master of Science in Computer Science and Informatics, focusing on educational technology. Driven by a love for learning and personal growth, Barkhuizen aims to inspire her students, just as her lecturers inspired her during her undergraduate studies. For her Honours project, she developed a virtual reality application to teach computer assembly, now successfully integrated into the first-year computer hardware module.



Buhle Kasumba

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Buhle Bashi Kasumba is a 24-year-old Junior XR (Extended Reality) Developer at the University of the Free State with a lifelong passion for gaming. He holds a BSc in Computer Information Systems from the University of the Free State, where he pursued his dream of game development. Known for his creativity and problem-solving skills, Kasumba uses C# scripting to create immersive environments and gameplay mechanics in his projects. In his free time, he enjoys gaming, working on personal projects, and staying informed on the latest tech trends. His ambition is to create innovative XR simulations that inspire and educate tech enthusiasts globally.



Dr Motsekiso Letuma

Faculty of Education

Dr Motsekiso Calvin Letuma is lecturer at the University of the Free State, Faculty of Education in the Department of Education Management, Policy, and Comparative Education on the Qwaqwa campus. His research focuses on leadership practices that create conducive learning environments, with a particular interest in addressing disruptive behaviors in educational settings. Additionally, he explores incorporating leadership strategies into curriculum design to foster student engagement.

Dr. Letuma aims to connect scholarly research with effective teaching methods to create optimal learning environments and improve student outcomes.



Henda Kleingeld

Faculty of Law

Henda Kleingeld is the Programme Director for the Postgraduate Diploma in Financial Planning Law at the School of Financial Planning Law, University of the Free State. She developed the Advanced Diploma in Estate and Trust Administration, accredited by FISA and STEP. Kleingeld holds a BCom (Law), LLB, Postgraduate Diplomas in Financial Planning Law, and an LLM. She is an admitted attorney, a CFP® Professional, and a registered Fiduciary Practitioner of SA (FPSA®). In 2023, she received the prestigious FISA Chairperson Award for her contributions to the fiduciary profession. Her research interests include "Swift Trust," "Financial Therapy," and innovations in tertiary education, advocating for continuous improvement in financial planning law education.





Johan Coetzee

Faculty of Education

Sybrand Johannes Coetzee holds multiple degrees from the University of the Free State and is currently pursuing a PhD. He has been a lecturer at UFS since 1999, specialising in Technology Education, Wood Science, Engineering Graphics and Design, Metal Science, and Business Management. His academic focus lies in incorporating digital and online resources into teacher education using the TPACK perspective. Coetzee has served on numerous educational committees and received the Excellence in E-learning Prestige Award in 2010. He gained international experience through a workshop on 3D Printing and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) in China. His research explores the application of digital technology in education, including ICT, cloud-based resources, Google classrooms, and 3D printing. Coetzee also contributes to community and professional development projects, advancing Technology Education.

Zaynab Mobara Links

Faculty of Education

Zaynab Mobara-Links is a lecturer in Technology Education at the University of the Free State's Faculty of Education, specialising in STEM teacher training and educational technologies. She previously served as programme director for the intermediate phase in Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Technology Education. Mobara-Links holds a Master's degree in Education, with research focused on enhancing technological literacy through assessment. Her PhD research explores blended learning in practical courses like Technology Education. Her expertise includes Technology Education pedagogy, curriculum development, and leadership in education.



Prof Thuthukile Jita

Faculty of Education

Thuthukile Jita is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies and Higher Education and the Programme Director for Work Integrated Learning (WIL) at the University of the Free State. She also serves as the Research Coordinator for the Instructional Leadership and Curriculum Implementation Studies (ILCIS) group and is a member of the Faculty of Education ethics committee. A recipient of the 2022-2023 Teaching Advancement of Universities (TAU) Fellowship, her research interests include curriculum studies, pre-service teacher education, ICT in teaching, e-learning, WIL, and science education.



Wonder Tekula

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Wonder Tekula is a dedicated Academic Facilitator at the University of the Free State, QwaQwa Campus. He completed his schooling in Harding and Greytown, KZN, before learning a Social Work degree from the University of the Free State in 2016. After graduation, Tekula worked on developing small businesses and start-ups in Bloemfontein. With the birth of his daughter, he shifted his focus to higher education, where he is now committed to enhancing the academic experiences of students. He uses technology and innovative teaching methods to support learning, reflecting his passion for education and student success.

Dr Joleen Hamilton

Faculty of Education

Dr Joleen Hamilton, an academic at the Department of Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Technology Education, University of the Free State, taught secondary school mathematics for 14 years before joining the UFS as a mathematics mentor in the School Partnership Programme. She mentored mathematics teachers in rural and township schools before joining the Short Learning Programme Unit, where she developed, evaluated, and presented numerous mathematics-focused short learning programmes. After completing her PhD in 2019, she launched the Creative Clubs programme, aimed at developing high-achieving grade 9 learners from township schools. Additionally, she contributed to an In-Service Training Programme, enhancing the content knowledge and teaching methods of grade 8 and 9 mathematics teachers.



Matheko Thamae

Faculty of Education

Matheko Thamae is a Lecturer at the University of the Free State who taught mathematics in Lesotho for over 10 years, covering grades 8 to 12, and contributed to the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) as a member of the mathematics panel at the National Curriculum Development Centre and as an examiner for the Junior Certificate. In 2010, she moved to the Free State, teaching mathematics at a high school before joining UFS as a mathematics mentor in the School Partnership Programme (SPP). There, she supported mathematics teachers in underperforming schools in Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape.

After the project ended, she facilitated Short Learning Programmes (SLPs) at UFS South Campus, developing study materials and delivering workshops for in-service teachers in various provinces. Thamae is currently finalising her PhD.





Dr Nkosinathi Mpalamani

Faculty of Education



Dr. Nkosinathi Mpalamani is the Subject Head for Research and Postgraduate Studies and a Mathematics Education Lecturer at the Qwaqwa Campus, University of the Free State. He holds a PhD in Mathematics Education from Dublin City University, Ireland, and earned his BSc Honours and MSc in Mathematics Education with distinction from the University of the Witwatersrand. Dr Mpalamani teaches undergraduate courses and supervises postgraduate students, while also serving as a co-researcher for the ETDP _ SETA mathematics chair. He is involved in delivering Short Learning Programmes for Lesotho secondary school mathematics teachers, and his research has been

published in Pythagoras and the EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education. Additionally, Dr. Mpalamani is the Deputy President of AFRICMA, a continental association for mathematics education, and is passionate about community engagement.

Dr Phindile Shangase

Faculty of Health Sciences



Dr Phindile Shangase is the Senior Lecturer at the University of Free State, South Africa in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Her current role involves academic leadership within the Division of Public Health. She holds a PhD in Public Health, with a special interest in smoking cessation and social determinants of health. She has over 11 years Higher Education teaching, supervision and research experience & holds a Bachelor of Education degree, including trainings in digital learning & learning analytics. She is the first editor of the recently published open access book: Co-Teaching and Co-Research in Contexts of Inequality: Using Networked Learning to Connect Africa and the World: <https://vernonpress.com/book/1656>



Educational Technology as well as co-teaching is a passion of hers, including blended learning and multimodal pedagogies that contribute towards innovative and interactive teaching, learning & assessment practices. She is keen to use technology to enable a better experience for the disabled.

Innovating my curriculum through a redesign or renewal of my module



Prof Lynette Van der Merwe, Elzana Kempen and Christolene Saaiman

Faculty of Health Sciences

Elzana Kempen, a qualified optometrist, delves deep into the realm of Health Professions Education (HPE) with a passionate focus on research and teaching innovation. Her interests are intricately woven around uncovering innovative strategies to enhance pedagogical approaches and equipping future healthcare educators with skills to enhance their professional identity and experience. Christolene Saaiman, an experienced physiotherapist, is deeply engaged in HPE, particularly in areas such as Engaged Scholarship and Interprofessional Education. Her pursuit of excellence led her to embark on a PhD journey focusing on entrustable professional activities in HPE.

Finally, Lynette van der Merwe, a medical practitioner specialising in HPE, leads the Division of Health Sciences Education, FoHS, UFS. Her comprehensive involvement in research, training, and faculty development underscores her commitment to nurturing the holistic development of current and future healthcare professionals. United by their shared vision, they are steadfast in their mission to achieving impact through commitment.

Dr Anke van der Merwe

Faculty of Health Sciences

Dr Anke van der Merwe, a registered Physiotherapist with the Health Professions Council of South Africa, has been with the University of the Free State (UFS) since 2014. She lectured in the Department of Physiotherapy until 2021, supervising postgraduate students and training future physiotherapists. After completing her PhD in 2021, she developed a framework for integrating simulation into undergraduate physiotherapy education. Dr van der Merwe now serves as the Undergraduate Programme Lead in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences, focusing on digitalisation and curriculum development. She is a Teaching and Learning Fellow, published researcher, and active member of the Southern African Association of Health Educationalists.



Prof Lizemari Hugo-Van Dyk

Faculty of Health Sciences

Lizemari Hugo-Van Dyk is an NRF-rated associate professor at the School of Nursing and coordinates the Postgraduate Diploma in Nursing Education. Lizemari holds a PhD degree in Nursing. Her speciality is clinical learning in health professions education, and she has published several articles on this Keynote Address title Shifting Mindsets: One Health in a 21st-Century Higher Education Context subject. She designed and is presenting a short learning online clinical facilitator training programme for healthcare professionals. Lizemari won several awards for her research in learning and teaching and holds several grants for international and interinstitutional interprofessional

research. Recently, she was selected for the TAU fellowship programme. She has successfully completed and is supervising several master's and PhD students and has acted as an external postgraduate assessor for various higher education institutions. She contributes to several educational-focused committees. Regionally, she serves on the Southern African Association of Health Educationalists (SAAHE) Central Committee, holding the academic portfolio and nationally, on the National SAAHE Board as Vice-President.



Prof Corlia Janse van Vuuren

Faculty of Health Sciences



Prof Corlia Janse van Vuuren is the Vice-Dean for Teaching & Learning and Head of the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences in the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State. Her passion for student and staff success drives her research in finding innovative, evidence-based solutions to enhance teaching and learning processes. With a strategic focus, she aims to integrate teaching, research, engaged scholarship, and leadership to improve societal impact and elevate academic staff as leaders. She emphasises refining curricula to not only develop disciplinary knowledge and skills but also cultivate graduate attributes, ensuring 21st-century graduates excel in the competitive workforce.

Dr Frelét de Villiers

Faculty of The Humanities



Dr Frelét de Villiers is the Academic Head at the Odeion School of Music, University of the Free State. She leads methodology modules, lectures in music pedagogy and arts management, and supervises postgraduate students. Dr de Villiers serves on various committees, including the Faculty of Humanities Research Committee, Faculty Management Committee, and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Digital Futures. Passionate about integrating technology into education, she focuses on seamless learning as a teaching strategy. She also enjoys serving as an external examiner, adjudicating competitions, and accompanying choirs such as the UFS Bloemfontein Campus Choir and Bloemfontein Children's Choir.





Kobus Swanepoel, Prof Alta Koekemoer, Celesté Brittz, Elmarie Goodchild and Prof Cobus Rossouw

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

The lecturers in the Post-Graduate Chartered Accountancy (PGCA) programmes at the University of the Free State bring a combined teaching experience of over 80 years. Their

diverse personalities, gender mix, and expertise in various subject areas create a holistic and well-rounded approach to postgraduate education. As subject specialists, they continuously strive to enhance teaching and learning, with innovation evident in their curriculum redesign to meet professional body expectations. They engage with students both formally and informally, through initiatives like the Amazing Exploration, fostering a learning-centred approach that emphasises professional values and competencies. The team includes Kobus Swanepoel (Management Accounting), Prof Alta Koekemoer (Taxation), Celesté Brittz (Financial Accounting), Elmarie Goodchild (Auditing and Governance), and Prof Cobus Rossouw (Financial Accounting).

The team: (from left to right)

Kobus Swanepoel CA(SA) is a senior lecturer in Management Accounting and Financial Management.

Alta Koekemoer CA(SA) is an associate professor in Taxation.

Celesté Brittz CA(SA) is a senior lecturer in Financial Accounting.

Elmarie Goodchild CA(SA) is a senior lecturer in Auditing and Governance.

Cobus Rossouw CA(SA) is an associate professor in Financial Accounting.



Dr Ina Gouws

Faculty of The Humanities

Dr Ina Gouws from the University of the Free State Faculty of the Humanities, Political Studies and Governance, earned her BA, BA Hons, MA, and PhD in Public Management and Governance from North-West University. She began her academic career as a Lecturer at North-West University's Vaal Campus in 2003 before joining the UFS in 2016 as a Senior Lecturer in the Programme for Governance and Political Transformation. Dr Gouws has played a key role in revitalising the Public Governance programme, introducing new modules at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. She was awarded a UFS SoTL Fellowship to ensure the quality of these curriculum developments. Her current research focuses on Digital Ethics in Higher Education, specifically through the HEDE-AI project, in collaboration with UFS colleagues. This project contributes to drafting UFS guidelines on AI use and detecting AI misuse.

Zaynab Mobara Links

Faculty of Education

Zaynab Mobara-Links is a lecturer in Technology Education at the University of the Free State's Faculty of Education, specialising in STEM teacher training and educational technologies. She previously served as programme director for the intermediate phase in Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Technology Education. Mobara-Links holds a Master's degree in Education, with research focused on enhancing technological literacy through assessment. Her PhD research explores blended learning in practical courses like Technology Education. Her expertise includes Technology Education pedagogy, curriculum development, and leadership in education.



Prof Thuthukile Jita

Faculty of Education

Thuthukile Jita is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies and Higher Education and the Programme Director for Work Integrated Learning (WIL) at the University of the Free State. She also serves as the Research Coordinator for the Instructional Leadership and Curriculum Implementation Studies (ILCIS) group and is a member of the Faculty of Education ethics committee. A recipient of the 2022-2023 Teaching Advancement of Universities (TAU) Fellowship, her research interests include curriculum studies, pre-service teacher education, ICT in teaching, e-learning, WIL, and science education.





Dr Jacques Matthee

Faculty of Law



Dr Jacques Matthee is a Senior Lecturer and Vice-Dean for Learning, Teaching, Innovation, and Digitalisation in the Faculty of Law at the University of the Free State. He specialises in Legal Pluralism, African Customary Law, Criminal Law, and Medical Law, with a research focus on the conflict between culture, religion, and crime. Dr Matthee dedicated much of his career to enhancing teaching and learning in law. He has contributed to educational law textbooks and led various projects on blended and innovative teaching. Currently, he is establishing a research focus area on teaching and learning in law. Additionally, Dr Matthee is an Advocate of the High Court of South Africa and has served as a member of the National Bar Council of South Africa and the National Forum of Advocates.

Adv Inez Bezuidenhout

Faculty of Law



Advocate Inez Bezuidenhout graduated from the University of the Free State with Baccalaureus Iuris, Baccalaureus Legum, and Magister Legum degrees, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Procedural Law. After completing her pupillage at the Free State Society of Advocates, she practiced as an advocate before joining Legal Aid South Africa in 2004. In 2007, she began working at the UFS Law Clinic, serving as its Director from 2010 to 2019, and occasionally acted as a Magistrate in district and regional courts. In 2019, she became a full-time lecturer in the Department of Public Law, teaching Criminal Procedure to third-year students and Capita Selecta from the Law of Evidence to LLM students. Advocate Bezuidenhout is also a mediator and deeply committed to access to justice.



Kovsie Phahamisa Short Learning Programme



Dr Anke van der Merwe, Prof Mathys Labuschagne, Dr Riaan van Wyk

Faculty of Health Sciences



The Simulation Workgroup within the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) at the University of the Free State, coordinates the Certificate in Simulation for Health Professions Educators Short Learning Programme, with support from various staff across the FHS. As UFS employees, the group members, Dr Anke van der Merwe, Prof Mathys Labuschagne, and Dr Riaan van Wyk are actively engaged in teaching and learning through simulation in their academic and support roles. All members hold postgraduate degrees and have published work in the field of simulation-based education. Additionally, most members (n=3) are involved in postgraduate supervision, with two focusing specifically on simulation-based research and education.

Dr Joleen Hamilton



Dr Joleen Hamilton, an academic at the Department of Mathematics, Natural Sciences, and Technology Education, University of the Free State, taught secondary school mathematics for 14 years before joining the UFS as a mathematics mentor in the School Partnership Programme. She mentored mathematics teachers in rural and township schools before joining the Short Learning Programme Unit, where she developed, evaluated, and presented numerous mathematics-focused short learning programmes. After completing her PhD in 2019, she launched the Creative Clubs programme, aimed at developing high-achieving grade 9 learners from township schools. Additionally, she contributed to an In-Service Training Programme, enhancing the content knowledge and teaching methods of grade 8 and 9 mathematics teachers.



Dr Nkosinathi Mpalami

Faculty of Education



Dr. Nkosinathi Mpalami is the Subject Head for Research and Postgraduate Studies and a Mathematics Education Lecturer at the Qwaqwa Campus, University of the Free State. He holds a PhD in Mathematics Education from Dublin City University, Ireland, and earned his BSc Honours and MSc in Mathematics Education with distinction from the University of the Witwatersrand. Dr Mpalami teaches undergraduate courses and supervises postgraduate students, while also serving as a co-researcher for the ETDP SETA mathematics chair. He is involved in delivering Short Learning Programmes for Lesotho secondary school mathematics teachers, and his research has been

published in Pythagoras and the EURASIA Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education. Additionally, Dr. Mpalami is the Deputy President of AFRICMA, a continental association for mathematics education, and is passionate about community engagement.



Matheko Thamae

Faculty of Education

Matheko Thamae is a Lecturer at the University of the Free State who taught mathematics in Lesotho for over 10 years, covering grades 8 to 12, and contributed to the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) as a member of the mathematics panel National Curriculum Development Centre and as an examiner for the Junior Certificate. 2010, she moved to the Free State, teaching mathematics at a high school before joining UFS as a mathematics mentor in the School Partnership Programme (SPP). she supported mathematics teachers in underperforming schools in Mpumalanga and the Eastern Cape.

After the project ended, she facilitated Short Learning Programmes (SLPs) at UFS South Campus, developing study materials and delivering workshops for in-service teachers in various provinces. Thamae is currently finalising her PhD.



Prof Marius Coetzee

Faculty of Health Sciences



Kobus Marais is a Professor of Translation Studies at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein and his research focuses on translation studies, semiotics, biosemiotics, complexity theory, and development studies. He has authored three monographs: Translation Theory and Development Studies: A Complexity Theory Approach (2014), A (Bio)Semiotic Theory of Translation: The Emergence of Social-Cultural Reality (2018), and Trajectories of Translation: The Thermodynamics of Semiosis (2023), along with the edited volume Translation Beyond Translation Studies (2022). He has co-edited several works, including Translation Studies Beyond the Postcolony (2017) with Ilse Feinauer and The Routledge Handbook of Translation Theory and Concepts (2023) with Reine Meylaerts.

Dr Claire Armour

Faculty of Health Sciences

Dr Claire Armour is the Head of the Research and Development Unit at the School of Clinical Medicine, University of the Free State. As a Specialist Physician, she is passionate about Patient Blood Management (PBM), anaemia, and blood health. Dr Armour enjoys teaching and collaborating, serving on several international committees related to transfusion and PBM. She is the co-chair of the Global Transfusion Forum Education Subcommittee and a member of the Global Standards Committee, contributing to the 2nd edition of the Fundamental Standards for Blood Collection and Transfusion.

Dr Armour also serves on the Clinical Working Party of the International Society of Blood Transfusion and is an active member of the Africa Society for Blood Transfusion.





Isabella du Preez

Faculty of Health Sciences



Isabella du Preez is an Instructional Designer at the University of the Free State, where she develops online learning material for the School of Clinical Medicine. She specialises in creating effective and engaging content, particularly for distance learners, with a strong emphasis on the balance between pedagogy and visual design principles. Isabella is currently pursuing her PhD, focusing on the quality of instructional design. Her passion for creating impactful learning experiences drives her work, ensuring that both educational content and visual elements contribute equally to the success of the learning material.

Dr Karin van den Berg

Faculty of Health Sciences



Dr Karin van den Berg is the Medical Director of the South African National Blood Service, a board member of the South African Bone Marrow Registry, and an affiliated lecturer at the University of the Free State. A medical doctor with a Master's in Transfusion Medicine, she serves on the steering committee of the Global Transfusion Forum and co-authored the Model Framework for Global Transfusion Medicine Education. She is also actively involved with the International Society for Blood Transfusion, the Association for the Advancement of Blood and Biotherapies, and WHO Working Parties. Her primary research focuses on the intersection of the HIV epidemic and blood donation in South Africa, which is also the subject of her PhD.



Ninette Aucamp

Centre for Teaching and Learning



Ninette Aucamp is the Academic Coordinator for the Academic Advising Professional Development Programme (AAPD) at the University of the Free State, which was launched in 2018. As a key initiative of the University Capacity Development Grant, this programme has certified over 500 academic advisors across 18 South African universities. The AAPD is a collaborative effort between academic advising staff at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, supported by a dedicated team including an academic coordinator, logistical coordinator, registrations officer, finance officer, and line manager. Eight presenters facilitate each session, working together to plan, prepare, facilitate, assess, and ensure quality through moderation.



Research Awards





Dr Frelét de Villiers

Faculty of The Humanities

Dr Frelét de Villiers is the Academic Head at the Odeion School of Music, University of the Free State. She leads methodology modules, lectures in music pedagogy and arts management, and supervises postgraduate students. Dr de Villiers serves on various committees, including the Faculty of Humanities Research Committee, Faculty Management Committee, and the Interdisciplinary Centre for Digital Futures. Passionate about integrating technology into education, she focuses on seamless learning as a teaching strategy. She also enjoys serving as an external examiner, adjudicating competitions, and accompanying choirs such as the UFS Bloemfontein Campus Choir and Bloemfontein Children's Choir.

Anneen Church

Centre for Teaching and Learning

Anneen Church is the Coordinator of English and Afrikaans Academic Literacy courses for first-year students at the University of the Free State. Passionate about teaching, she focuses on helping students develop their academic language skills, enabling them to grow academically. As an aspiring academic, Church aims to explore the intersection of language, community, and technology, particularly in the South African teaching and learning context. While she is dedicated to her work, she also values balance.



Dr Grey Stopforth

Faculty of Law

Dr Grey Stopforth is a Lecturer in the Department of Mercantile Law at the University of the Free State, focusing on the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and its impact on work and skills development in South Africa. In 2023, he completed his doctoral thesis, "Decent Work for On-Demand Workers in the Modern-Day Gig Economy," addressing key challenges around balancing social justice and equitable working conditions. Dr Stopforth co-authored a book on legal skills and has published extensively in Labour Law. As part of the UFS SoTL Teaching and Learning Fellowship Programme, he researches innovative teaching methods, including AI-powered assessments and the responsible use of generative AI in legal education. Grey regularly presents at national

and international conferences, with a particular interest in collaborative learning, flipped classrooms, and the vulnerability of gig workers and AI to enhance legal education, as highlighted in recent presentations and workshops on AI-powered assessments and the responsible use of generative AI in law courses.





Dr Oyinola Adebola

Faculty of Education



Dr Oyinola Omolara Adebola is an experienced lecturer who began her academic career at the University of the Free State in 2015. After earning her Master of Arts degree in 2018, she joined the Faculty of Education as a Junior Lecturer and was later promoted to Lecturer. She completed her PhD in 2023, a testament to her passion and dedication to learning and teaching. A prolific researcher, Oyinola has published over 10 articles in high-impact journals within four years and was recognised as one of the top 10 researchers in her faculty in 2022. She is also a UFS Scholarship of Teaching and Learning fellow, focusing on enhancing education practices.

Dr Angela Stott

Faculty of Education



Dr Angela Stott is a Science Education Lecturer in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Free State. She holds BSc (Hons), MEd, and PhD degrees in Science Education, earned while teaching at a rural school in KwaZulu-Natal. After a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Cape Town, Angela joined UFS in 2014. She has been dedicated to mentoring science teachers and conducting learner interventions in township schools, as well as presenting workshops for teachers across the Free State. She is a C2-rated NRF scholar and also creates educational resources—managing LearnScience.co.za and a YouTube channel with over 3,000 subscribers.



Prof Liezel Massyn

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences



Liezel Massyn is an Associate Professor and Programme Director for the Bachelor of Management and Leadership (BML) programme at the University of the Free State Business School. She began her academic career in 1999 as a lecturer and became the first Teaching and Learning Manager for the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences in 2004. In 2010, she received the UFS Excellence in Teaching Award for Outstanding Scholarly Contribution in Teaching and Learning. Since joining the Business School in 2013, Liezel has taught in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and supervises MBA and PhD students. Her research interests include adult learning, leadership, skills development, well-being, work-life integration, and postgraduate supervision.



Exceptional Young Achievers' Award



Dr Tafadzwa Maramura

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Dr Tafadzwa Clementine Maramura, Senior Lecturer at the University of the Free State Public Administration and Management Department has a PhD in Public Management and Water Governance from North-West University, where she graduated as Valedictorian. Her research focuses on water governance, sustainable service delivery, and public policies across Africa. She is a Brightest Young Minds (BYM) in Africa alumnus and is currently a Senior Lecturer and Researcher at the University of the Free State. Dr Maramura is also a Berkley Initiative for Transparency in the Social Sciences (BITSS) Catalyst for the University of California, Berkeley, where she has been working since 2017 to promote research transparency and reproducibility in Africa.

She is a Y2-rated researcher by the National Research Foundation (NRF), and her research findings have been presented at international and regional conferences.

Dr Gerard Kamga

Faculty of Law

Dr Gerard Kamga is a Senior Lecturer and Programme Director for Research and Postgraduate Studies in the Faculty of Law at the University of the Free State, as well as the Coordinator of the Research and Postgraduate Division at the Free State Centre for Human Rights. He holds a Doctor of Laws from the University of Pretoria. His research focuses on societies operating outside the law, particularly in the context of gender-based violence, patriarchal and heteronormative structures, and illicit financial flows across Africa. Recently, he was recognised in the UFS's research impact report. Dr Kamga is also a Commissioner of Oaths and a sworn translator in English and French at the High Court of South Africa



Dr Hlonipani Ndebele

Faculty of The Humanities

Dr Hlonipani Ndebele is a sociolinguist and Senior Lecturer in the Department of African Languages at the University of the Free State. He earned his PhD in African Languages from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2015, where he also completed two years of postdoctoral research. Currently a fellow in the Department of Higher Education and Training's Future Professors Programme (2023 & 2024), Dr Ndebele has been awarded funding for a research visit to the Institute of Natural Language Processing at Stuttgart University in Germany.

His research interests include language management, intellectualisation, digitalisation, and academic literacies – areas in which he has published, collaborated, and presented globally. He holds a Y2 NRF rating.



Prof Martin Rossouw

Faculty of The Humanities

Martin P. Rossouw is an NRF-rated Associate Professor of Film and Visual Media and Head of the Department of Art History and Image Studies at the University of the Free State. His research focuses on the philosophy and ethics of cinema, aesthetics, image studies, and media theory. He authored *Transformational Ethics of Film* (Brill, 2021) and co-edited *What Film is Good For: On the Values of Spectatorship* (University of California Press, 2023), which won the Popular Culture Association's award for Best Edited Collection in 2024. Rossouw is the editor of Brill's Contemporary Cinema series and serves on the editorial board of *Short Film Studies*.



Prof Michael Pienaar

Faculty Health Sciences

Michael Pienaar is an Associate Professor and Paediatric Intensivist in the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health at the University of the Free State. He holds a PhD in Paediatrics and is a Fellow of the College of Paediatricians of South Africa with a subspecialty in critical care. As a clinician scientist, he focuses on using machine learning to enhance care for critically ill children and improve critical care systems. His work has been published in both local and international journals. Prof Pienaar is involved in supervising master's and doctoral research and training paediatricians and intensivists, with a clinical interest in heart surgery, ultrasonography, and trauma care for children.



Dr Arun Gokul

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Dr Arun Gokul is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Plant Science at the University of the Free State Qwaqwa Campus. His research focuses on exploring the role of plant-associated microorganisms in the biocontrol of phytopathogens. In February 2024, Dr Gokul was nominated by the NRF Specialist Committee to review research portfolios for rating applications, and he was also appointed to serve on peer review panels for grant applications submitted by Next Generation and Emerging Researchers (2024–June 2026).

Additionally, in 2024, he was appointed Chairperson of the Advisory Committee for the Department of Agriculture at the University of Zululand. Dr Gokul has successfully supervised 28 honours, 14 master's, and 1 PhD student, and currently supervises 11 postgraduates. He has 30 published articles and three book chapters.



A portrait of Dr Christian Budde, a man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a dark blue blazer over a white shirt. He is smiling and looking towards the camera.

Dr Christian Budde

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Dr Christian Budde, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics at the University of the Free State, completed a PhD and a postdoctoral fellowship at North-West University. His research focuses on evolution equations and partial differential equations, using functional analytic methods to study the behaviour of dynamic systems over time. Dr Budde has published 22 articles and has secured funding from the NRF, CoE-MaSS, and DFG. His work notably investigates operator semigroups and time-dependent dynamical systems, with real-world applications such as predator-prey dynamics and tumor growth.

His contributions are globally recognised and he is currently preparing a book on bi-continuous semigroups, which will be published by Birkhäuser.

A portrait of Prof Danre Strydom, a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing a black top with a ruffled collar. She is smiling and looking towards the camera.

Prof Danre Strydom

Faculty of The Humanities

Professor Danrè Strydom, woodwind lecturer at the Odeion School of Music at the University of the Free State, is one of South Africa's leading solo, chamber, and orchestral musicians. After attending the Interlochen Arts Camp, USA, she began her formal studies with Heinrich Armer at the UFS. She continued her studies at Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music and holds three Master's Degrees from the Royal Conservatory at Ghent University. Prof Strydom completed her PhD in Clarinet Performance at the UFS and received numerous awards, including the ATKV Cultural Diversity Award, FAK Music Award, R. Muller Award for Cultural and Academic Excellence, and the First National Bank Prize of Excellence. From 2009 to 2013, Prof Strydom performed on clarinet and bass clarinet with the award-winning Brussels Philharmonic, is a Bujet Crampon Artist, and currently serves as the Continental Chair of the International Clarinet Association.



Prof Danie Brand

Faculty of Law



Danie Brand is a Professor and Director of the Free State Centre for Human Rights at the University of the Free State. Before joining UFS, he spent 24 years as an academic at the Faculty of Law at the University of Pretoria. His expertise lies in constitutional and administrative law, as well as constitutional theory. Prof Brand's research and publications focus on the relationship between law and poverty, specifically how the law regulates, enables, and limits access to essential livelihood resources like housing, food, water, land, healthcare, and education. His commitment to this area extends into legal practice, where he runs a human rights impact litigation practice as an advocate, concentrating on access to these basic resources. He has also occasionally served as a judge in the High Courts of Pretoria and Johannesburg.

Prof Maryke Labuschagne

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences



Maryke Labuschagne is a Professor of Plant Breeding in the Department of Plant Sciences at the University of the Free State and leads the NRF South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARChI) in disease resistance and quality in field crops. For the past 30 years, she has trained PhD students from across Africa, serving as the main supervisor for 69 and co-supervisor for 12 PhD students from countries such as Cameroon, Ethiopia, and SADC nations. She has also supervised 54 MSc students. Prof Labuschagne and her students have published 278 papers, mainly in ISI-listed journals, with a research focus on improving the nutritional value of food security crops in Africa in the context of climate change.





Collaboration Awards





Department of Education Management, Policy and Comparative Education

Faculty of Education



The Department of Education Management, Policy, and Comparative Education is one of the seven Departments housed by the Faculty of Education. It is guided by the University of the Free State's vision and the Faculty of Education's values. The department prides itself on providing an inclusive, caring, and supportive teaching and learning environment to the diverse students. Our academic programmes attract local and international students and are available at the Bloemfontein and Qwaqwa Campuses. Our academic staff members and postgraduate students are involved in cutting-edge research activities about Education Leadership and Management, Policy, and Comparative Education. The Department has seven lecturers, three on Qwaqwa and four on Bloemfontein Campus.

Exceptional Academic Achievement for Team Research



Prof Melanie Walker

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Melanie Walker is a Distinguished Professor at the University of the Free State and holds the South African Research Chair in Higher Education and Human Development. She is an A1-rated scholar, an honorary professor at both the Universities of Nottingham and Pretoria, and a fellow of the Academy of Sciences of South Africa (ASSAF). A past president of the Human Development and Capability Association, she has received numerous research grants, delivered keynotes across the globe, and is widely published. Her research focuses on higher education's role in promoting sustainable human development and expanding capabilities in the global South. Mikateko Mathebula, an Associate Professor and Y2-rated scholar, researches students' experiences in higher education and how inequalities affect their human flourishing. Faith Mkwanzani, also an Associate Professor and a Y1-rated scholar, focuses on arts-based participatory methodologies and youth experiences both in and out of higher education.

Prof Martin Nyaga

Faculty of Health Sciences

The University of the Free State Next Generation Sequencing (UFS-NGS) Unit, led by NRF B3-rated researcher Prof Martin Nyaga, is a WHO Collaborating Centre with a diverse team. Prof Nyaga provides postgraduate training while his team delivers advanced genomic and bioinformatics services. With funding from BMGF and WHO, the unit conducts cutting-edge research with a focus on enteric and respiratory diseases, producing significant public health impact. Their collaborative efforts have led to numerous publications and conference presentations, earning several awards. The UFSNGS Unit is committed to excellence, teamwork, and transformation, striving to become a leader in genomics and bioinformatics.



Prof Deon Visser

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Prof Elizabeth Erasmus, Prof Marietjie Schutte-Smith, and Prof Deon Visser, all from the Chemistry department, comprise the original team. The expanded interdisciplinary team includes Dr Anwar Noreljaleel, Prof Vladimir Azov, Prof Anke Wilhelm, and Prof Karel von Eschwege from Chemistry, Dr Lisa Rothman from Plant Science, Dr Mariana Erasmus from the Centre for Mineral and Biogeochemistry, and two social scientists, Prof Katinka de Wet and Dr Nola Redelinghuys. Their research spans several areas, including extracting chitin from mushroom mycelia using eco-friendly methods, gold extraction from e-waste (with a registered patent), menstrual health management and designing reusable sanitary pads with antimicrobial properties, creating super absorbent polymers from waste materials for agricultural use, developing new fertilisers and methods to combat stem rot in crops, establishing a Small Molecule Manufacturing Laboratory, and creating antimicrobial paints.



Prof Hendrik Swart

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Prof Hendrik C. Swart, a B1 NRF-rated researcher and Senior Professor in the Department of Physics at the University of the Free State, leads a prominent research group on Luminescent and Advanced Materials. He introduced luminescence materials to South Africa in 1996 following a productive sabbatical with Paul Holloway at the University of Florida, Gainesville. This laid the foundation for ongoing research at UFS and led to the creation of several smaller groups across South Africa. He was awarded a SARChI Research Chair in Solid State Luminescent and Advanced Materials in 2012, which has been renewed in both 2017 and 2022.





Special Recognition Awards



Hesma Van Tonder

Research Librarian



Xolelwa Xorile

Library and Information Services



Nambitha Manqola

Digital Environmental Librarian



Tebogo Makhurupetsi

Library and Information Services

Teaching Advancements at Universities (TAU) Fellowship



Prof Corlia Janse van Vuuren

■ ■ ■ Faculty of Health Sciences



Prof Thuthukile Jita

Faculty of Education ■ ■ ■



Dr Mabohlokoa Khanyetsi

■ ■ ■ Faculty of The Humanities



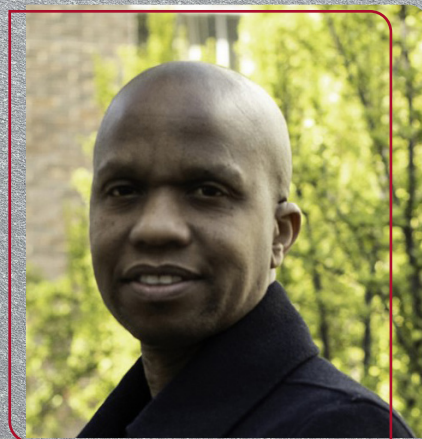
Dr Frelét de Villiers

Faculty of The Humanities ■ ■ ■



Rentia du Plessis

■ ■ ■ Faculty of The Humanities



Motsaathebe Serekoane

Faculty of The Humanities ■ ■ ■

National Science and Technology Forum (NSFT)



Prof Peter Taylor

— Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences



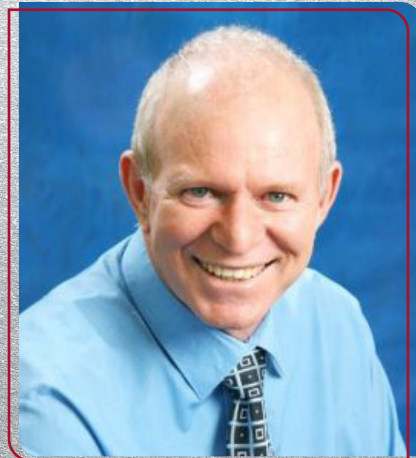
Prof Sandy-Lynn Steenhuis

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences —



Dr Bimo Nkhatha

— Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences



Prof Anthony Turton

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences —

National University Teaching (NUTA): UFS Nominees



**Kobus Swanepoel,
Prof Alta Koekemoer,
Celesté Brittz, Elmarie Goodchild
and Prof Cobus Rossouw**

— Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences



Jana Lamprecht

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences —



Dr Grey Stopforth

— Faculty of Law



Prof Gerhard Bosman

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences —



Dr Rosaline Sebolao

■ ■ ■ — Faculty of The Humanities



Dr Henriëtte van der Berg

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences ■ ■ ■



Prestige Academic Achievers Awards



Prof Lochner Marais

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Lochner Marais is a Professor of Development Studies at the Centre for Development Support, University of the Free State, and an honorary professor at the Sustainable Minerals Institute, University of Queensland, Australia. He is the executive editor of *Research Directions: Mine Closure and Transitions* by Cambridge University Press and serves on the editorial boards of *Habitat International* and *Sustainable Cities and Society*. His work focuses on the social consequences of mine closures, place attachment related to mining, and the link between mine closure and social disruption. As the first researcher to link mine closure and social disruption, he warns against dependencies on mining booms and identifies mine closure as the 6th phase of boomtown development.



Prof John Mubangizi

Faculty of Law

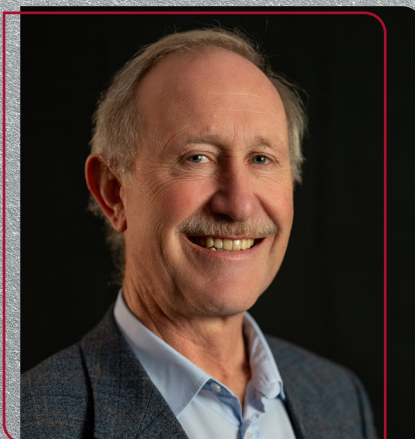
John C. Mubangizi is a Research Professor at the Free State Centre for Human Rights in the Faculty of Law at the University of the Free State. He joined the UFS as Dean of the Faculty of Law at UFS from 2018 to 2023 after serving as Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Head of the College of Law & Management Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal from 2007 to 2017. He is the author of *The Protection of Human Rights in South Africa: A Legal and Practical Guide* (2004, 2013) and has published extensively. Prof Mubangizi, NRF-rated since 2005 with a current C2 rating, is a Member of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) and served on its council from 2012 to 2015. He also chaired the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) and served on the Council on Higher Education (CHE) from 2015 to 2018.



Prof Kobus Marais

Faculty of The Humanities

Kobus Marais is a Professor of Translation Studies at the University of the Free State, Bloemfontein and his research focuses on translation studies, semiotics, biosemiotics, complexity theory, and development studies. He has authored three monographs: *Translation Theory and Development Studies: A Complexity Theory Approach* (2014), *A (Bio)Semiotic Theory of Translation: The Emergence of Social-Cultural Reality* (2018), and *Trajectories of Translation: The Thermodynamics of Semiosis* (2023), along with the edited volume *Translation Beyond Translation Studies* (2022). He has co-edited several works, including *Translation Studies Beyond the Postcolony* (2017) with Ilse Feinauer and *The Routledge Handbook of Translation Theory and Concepts* (2023) with Reine Meylaerts.





Prof Luzelle Naude

Faculty of The Humanities

Luzelle Naudé is a Professor of Psychology at the University of the Free State and an NRF-rated researcher, registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as a Counselling and Research Psychologist. She serves on the editorial boards for Emerging Adulthood and Identity and collaborates on research with colleagues from Africa, Europe, and the USA. She has published over 60 peer-reviewed articles and presented at around 80 national and international conferences. Luzelle teaches postgraduate courses in Psychotherapeutic Approaches, Ethics, and Applied Research, and supervises numerous Master's and PhD students. Her research focuses on identity formation in contexts of change, and she recently established the IDEaS interdisciplinary identity research hub.

Prof Dirk Opperman

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Prof Dirk Opperman earned his PhD in Biochemistry in 2008 and completed postdoctoral research on directed evolution at the Max-Planck-Institut für Kohlenforschung in Germany. Since joining the Department of Microbiology and Biochemistry at the University of the Free State in 2010, he has pioneered structural biology research. His work focuses on the evolutionary and structure-function relationships of biocatalysts and their applications in Green Chemistry. As an NRF B-rated researcher, Prof Opperman has co-authored papers in Science, Nature Communications, and Angewandte Chemie. His research, funded by local and international organisations, includes a long-standing collaboration with Delft University of Technology, focusing on biocatalysts for waste upcycling. He also serves as an editor for Molecular Catalysis and Frontiers in Catalysis.



Prof Hendrik Swart

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Prof Hendrik C. Swart, a B1 NRF-rated researcher and Senior Professor in the Department of Physics at the University of the Free State, leads a prominent research group on Luminescent and Advanced Materials. He introduced luminescence materials to South Africa in 1996 following a productive sabbatical with Paul Holloway at the University of Florida, Gainesville. This laid the foundation for ongoing research at UFS and led to the creation of several smaller groups across South Africa. He was awarded a SARCHI Research Chair in Solid State Luminescent and Advanced Materials in 2012, which has been renewed in both 2017 and 2022.





Dr Jared McDonald

Faculty of The Humanities

Koesan and Imperial Citizenship in Nineteenth Century South Africa

Dr Jared McDonald is the Chief of Staff in the Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, as well as a Senior Lecturer in the Department of History at the Qwaqwa Campus of the University of the Free State. He has been with the UFS since August 2014 and holds a PhD in History from SOAS, University of London. His research focuses on indigenous responses to British colonialism in the Cape Colony during the nineteenth century, the work of the London Missionary Society in southern Africa, the histories of children as victims of genocide, and teaching for critical citizenship. Dr McDonald's first monograph, *Khoesan and Imperial Citizenship in Nineteenth Century South Africa*, was published by Routledge in 2023.

Dr Arno van Niekerk

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

The Inclusive Economy: Criteria, Principles and Ubuntu

Dr Arno van Niekerk, Senior Lecturer at the University of the Free State Economics and Finance Department, holds a PhD in Economics. His research focuses on two main areas: global economic governance and globalisation at the international level, and economic inclusion and equity at the local level. While completing his PhD research at the World Bank and IMF in Washington, he expanded his work to address Africa's local challenges, aiming to find local solutions to global issues. His recent focus on economic inclusivity seeks to align economic growth with social equity and environmental parity. He incorporates Africa's moral principle of Ubuntu as a guiding factor in his work, including how he integrates engaged scholarship into the undergraduate and postgraduate courses he teaches. Dr van Niekerk also lectures annually at FHS University in Salzburg, Austria.



Prof Henco van der Westhuizen

Faculty of Theology and Religion

Faith Active in Love: On the Theology of Michael Welker

Henco van der Westhuizen is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Consultant of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches. He is the founding editor of *Journal of Systematic Theology* (www.journalofsystematictheology.com). His books include *Faith Active in Love* (Peter Lang), *Letters to a Young Theologian* (Fortress Press) and *Beauty and Justice* (Acta Theologica). His latest article is "Constructive after Systematic? On Doing Theology in South Africa Today" (<https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/opth-2024-0020/html>)



Vice-Chancellor's in Learning and Teaching



Dr Carmien Tolmie

Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Dr Carmien Tolmie is a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Microbiology and Biochemistry in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, University of the Free State. She has a PhD in Biochemistry, with her research focusing on Structure based Drug Discovery and Biocatalysis. With over 14 years of experience in teaching and learning, she adopts a pedagogy of kindness, approaching students with compassion and teaching with energy and enthusiasm. Dr Tolmie teaches second year undergraduate biochemistry and honours-level techniques in biochemistry microbiology, and has successfully supervised several MSc, PhD, and BSc Honours students.

Jana Lamprecht

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Jana Lamprecht is a forward-thinking Chartered Accountant and Senior Lecturer in Auditing at the University of the Free State with over two decades of experience. Passionate about Accountancy and driven by curiosity, she focuses on empowering students to learn better and faster. Jana incorporates a BRAIN EMPOWERED segment into each lecture, aiming to be a tool that helps students achieve their dreams. Her Master's in Higher Education Studies enables her to innovate teaching methods, and she shares her expertise through guest lectures and committee work across South Africa. As part of the TAU 5 programme, she is committed to becoming a change agent in education.



Dr Anchen Froneman

Faculty of The Humanities

Dr Anchen Froneman is a Senior Lecturer at the Odeion School of Music (OSM), University of the Free State, where she teaches music theory and embodied practices. She became a Certified Movement Analyst in 2018 and has been part of the African Faculty for the Laban Bartenieff Institute of Movement Studies since 2021. She is also a Registered Somatic Movement Educator (RSME). Dr Froneman's research focuses on embodied musical performance and pedagogies, and well-being. As Programme Director of OSM since 2017, her interest in Teaching and Learning has grown, and as a 2022 UFS SoTL Fellow, she explores contemplative practices and pedagogies.





Herkulaas Combrink

Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences



Dr Herkulaas Combrink is a Lecturer and Co-Director of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Digital Futures at the University of the Free State. He has made notable contributions to data science, particularly in education, healthcare, and society. During the COVID pandemic, he provided senior strategic data science support and was a BRICS Young Scientist nominee in 2020 and 2022. Dr Combrink lectures in data analytics, focusing on business and financial analytics for decision-making. He holds a PhD from the University of Pretoria and his research, industry collaborations, and passion for solving real-world problems shape his teaching and curriculum development.