

UFS panel discussions at the Vrystaat Literature Festival

The University of the Free State (UFS), in collaboration with the Vrystaat Literature Festival, invites you to two thought-provoking panel discussions that explore the enduring value of reading, creativity, and the arts in contemporary society.

Bringing together voices from academia, literature, and the broader cultural landscape, these conversations will reflect on the role of ideas, storytelling, imagination, and critical engagement in shaping more thoughtful, inclusive, and future-focused societies.

Join us for two stimulating conversations at the intersection of literature, culture, higher education, and society.

Reading still matters

In a fast-moving digital world shaped by artificial intelligence, social media, and shrinking attention spans, reading remains essential for critical thinking, empathy, imagination, and informed citizenship. This engaging discussion explores the enduring power of books, storytelling, and deep engagement with ideas in shaping both individuals and society.

DATE | Tuesday 7 July 2026 • **TIME** | 15:00–16:00 • **VENUE** | Centenary Complex

[CLICK TO RSVP](#)

FACILITATOR | Prof Susan Brokensha, Associate Professor: Department of English, Faculty of The Humanities

PANEL MEMBERS



Dr Hanta Henning
Subject Head:
Department of English



Dr Francois Smith
Head of Department:
Afrikaans and Dutch,
German and French



Jeannet Molopyane
Director: Library and
Information Services



Prof Johann Rossouw
Professor: Philosophy
and Classics

Reimagining the role of the arts in universities and society

Beyond entertainment, the arts shape identity, inspire creativity, challenge perspectives, and help societies make sense of an increasingly complex world. This compelling discussion explores the role of the arts in higher education and public life, and why creativity and culture remain essential to building inclusive and forward-looking societies.

DATE | Wednesday 8 July 2026 • **TIME** | 15:00–16:00 • **VENUE** | Centenary Complex

[CLICK TO RSVP](#)

FACILITATOR | Prof Vasu Reddy, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies

PANEL MEMBERS



Prof Anthea van Jaarsveld
Associate Professor:
Drama and Theatre
Arts



Carin Bester
Performance artist,
actress, set designer,
and art director



Sethembiso Zulu
Multidisciplinary
artist, educator,
filmmaker,
photographer



Tlotlisang David Mhlambiso
Author, poet, and
educator

Inspiring excellence, transforming lives through quality, impact, and care.

www.ufs.ac.za



vrystaat
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