

Directorate: Community Engagement Service-learning at the University of the Free State

2024

www.ufs.ac.za

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



UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA





Service-learning at the University of the Free State 2024

Index

Executive summary	3
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND	4
Message from the Director	6
Message from the Head	7
SECTION 2: REPORTS FROM FACULTIES	16
- Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences	18
- Faculty of Education	27
- Faculty of Health Sciences	30
- Faculty of The Humanities	55
- Faculty of Law	68
- Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences	71
- Faculty of Theology and Religion	86
Conclusion: Advancing social impact	92

Executive summary

This report celebrates nearly twenty-five years of Community Engaged Service-Learning (CESL) at the University of the Free State, showcasing its integration into curricula across seven faculties. It provides a conceptual and theoretical framework for CESL, outlines best practices, and presents case studies that demonstrate its transformative impact on students and communities. Through reciprocal partnerships, CESL enhances academic rigor, fosters social responsibility, and addresses societal challenges aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. The report affirms UFS's commitment to engaged scholarship as a core function of higher education—advancing knowledge for mutual benefit and measurable social impact.

1

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND







Message from the Director: Community Engagement

At the University of the Free State, community engagement is not an add-on, but a core expression of our responsibility to advance scholarship, justice, dignity, and social transformation. This Service-Learning Report reflects how Community Engaged Service-Learning (CESL) enables us to connect teaching and learning meaningfully to the lived realities of the society we serve. Across faculties, this work demonstrates the power of reciprocal partnerships, where students, academics, and communities learn from one another and co-create knowledge for mutual benefit. In doing so, CESL nurtures graduates who are not only academically capable, but also socially conscious and committed to the public good. In a time of complex societal challenges, CESL calls us to reimagine the role of higher education as an active agent of change. The impact on individuals, communities, and systems captured in this report affirms that engaged scholarship is essential to building a more just and sustainable society. I extend my appreciation to all who contribute to this work. May it continue to strengthen our shared commitment to a university that serves with purpose and impact.

Bishop Billyboy Ramahlele
Director: Community Engagement
University of the Free State



Message from the Head: Service-learning

The Directorate of Community Engagement at the University of the Free State is proud to present this report, a testament to nearly twenty five years of unwavering dedication to curriculum based Community Engaged Service-Learning (CESL). As Head of the Service-Learning Division within the Directorate since 2016, I am honoured to have contributed to this report, which reflects and celebrates the advancement of CESL over this remarkable period.

The UFS follows an integrated model of engaged scholarship, which includes the pillars of engaged research, engaged learning and teaching and engaged citizenship. As the pillar of engaged teaching and learning, CESL is more than a pedagogical approach; it is a catalyst for change. By linking theory to practice, CESL fosters reciprocal partnerships between the university and society, enabling students to apply disciplinary knowledge to real-world challenges. In doing so, we cultivate graduates who are not only competent professionals but also socially responsible citizens, equipped to navigate complexity and contribute meaningfully to the common good.

The modules presented here illustrate the diversity and depth of our engagement across faculties. They demonstrate how CESL strengthens academic rigor while nurturing empathy, critical thinking, and collaborative problem-solving. Through these efforts, we reaffirm our institutional mission to make knowledge matter for mutual benefit and lasting impact.

Transforming learning into action, and action into impact.

Dr Karen Venter

Community Engagement
University of the Free State

Bio:

Karen Venter heads the Service-Learning Division within the Directorate of Community Engagement, at the University of the Free State (UFS) since 2016. Having a PhD in Higher Education Studies, with specialisation in the field of community engagement and service-learning, she is responsible for the institutionalisation of engaged scholarship and glocal networking to advance higher education engagement. Her research focuses on an integration of Service-Learning, Appreciative Inquiry and Appreciative Leadership towards development of a praxis-model for advancing engaged scholarship. Karen has presented papers and workshops at various national and international conferences, published in journal articles and co-authored book chapters.

Introduction

Contemporary higher education has increasingly shifted toward learning approaches that are less didactic and more participatory, practical, and grounded in real-world contexts. Within this movement, Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) has become a key strategy for supporting student development and strengthening graduate attributes such as employability, professional capability, and social responsibility. According to the [Work-Integrated Learning Good Practice Guide](#), WIL encompasses a wide range of curricular and pedagogical practices, including project-based learning, cooperative education, internships, simulated environments, community-engaged learning and service-learning (CHE 2011). These pedagogical practices are all designed to give students meaningful, authentic experiences that enhance their learning and prepare them for life beyond university.

The Council on Higher Education's (CHE) Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) acknowledges community engagement (CE) and – by implication – service-learning (SL), hereafter referred to as community-engaged service-learning (CESL), as a core function of higher education institutions (HEIs), alongside learning-teaching and research (HEQC CHE, 2006) CESL is also a form of WIL.

At the University of the Free State (UFS), CESL has taken root since early 2000 ([Mouton and Wildschut, 2005](#)) and has been sustained for nearly 25 years. In celebration of this achievement, this report on CESL at the UFS first includes a brief snapshot of information on how to design, implement, and assess curriculum-based CESL programmes. In addition, the report provides a practical showcase of curricular CESL case studies delivered across diverse disciplines in 2024 and implemented within the seven faculties of the UFS (Education, Economic and Management Sciences, Health, The Humanities, Law, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, as well as Theology and Religion).

To assist HEIs with groundwork on CESL, the CHE HEQC has published a series of three guiding documents. Firstly, the [Good Practice Guide and Self-Evaluation Instruments](#) (CHE HEQC, 2006) directs the quality management of CESL, containing criteria for implementing quality SL at an institutional, faculty, programme, and module level. Secondly, [Service-Learning in the Curriculum: A Resource for Higher Education Institutions](#) (Bender, Daniels, Naude and Sattar, 2006) provides a single, comprehensive resource on the theory and practice of SL. Thirdly, [Service-Learning in the Disciplines: Lessons from the Field](#) (CHE HEQC, 2008) offers practical case study examples.

As mentioned, [Service-Learning in the Curriculum: A Resource for Higher Education Institutions](#) (Bender et al. 2006) provides a comprehensive CESL resource. Hence, the remainder of **Section One** will provide a concise overview of the theory and practice of CESL, drawing from this document (Bender et al., 2006).

1.1. National higher education policies guiding CE and SL (Chapter 1, p.1)

Key South African higher education policy documents related to CESL include the Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation (DoE, 1996), White Paper on Higher Education Transformation (1997), Higher Education Act (RSA, 1997), National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001), Founding Document (CHE HEQC, 2001), Criteria for Institutional Audits (CHE HEQC, 2004a), Criteria for Programme Accreditation (CHE HEQC, 2004b), and the Framework for Institutional Audits (CHE HEQC, 2004). More recent documents include the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013), Revised Criteria Programme Accreditation (CHE HEQC, 2012), and the Framework for Institutional Audits (CHE HEQC, 2021).

While the Green Paper on Education (DoE, 1996) and the White Paper on Education 3 (DoE, 1997) articulated the need for higher education transformation to address societal challenges and promote social responsibility, the Higher Education Act (RSA, 1997) and the establishment of the CHE HEQC further solidified this commitment. The National Plan for Higher Education (DoE, 2001) provided a strategic framework for transforming the higher education system, positioning higher education as a driving force in the reconstruction and development of South African society. The Founding Document (CHE HEQC, 2001) highlighted *knowledge-based community service* as one of three key areas – alongside higher education learning-teaching and research. Thereafter, the CHE HEQC (CHE HEQC, 2004a) introduced specific criteria for institutional audits, addressing SL (Criterion 7) and CE (Criterion 18), as well as criteria for programme accreditation with minimum SL requirements

(Criterion 1) (CHE HEQC, 2004b). The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013) set out strategies to expand education and training in South Africa towards enhancing quality, integrating the post-school system, and engaging employers in developing a skilled workforce. In the revised Criteria for Programme Accreditation (CHE HEQC, 2012), *Criterion 1* remained unchanged. Criterion 1 states that HEIs with CESL should embed programmes in academic planning, align them with their mission, and provide support structures and incentives to aid implementation and develop staff and student capacity. Finally, the 2021 Framework for Institutional Audits (CHE HEQC, 2021), in contrast to the 2004 Framework (CHE HEQC, 2004), does not specifically mention the notion of CESL, but refers to the concept of ‘integrated community engagement’ (CHE HEQC, 2021:8) as:

... one of the core functions of higher education involving working constructively and co-operatively with communities which are connected to the institution, in order to make that institution more adaptive and responsive to needs that it could service. Such integrated community engagement has the potential to affect or influence almost every aspect of an institution's functioning. Community engagement should be specifically integrated with learning, teaching and research and should be based on and enhance the disciplinary knowledge and expertise of the institution.

Since the release of the White Paper (1997), the notion of ‘community service’ has evolved from being a separate function of higher education towards becoming an integral part of learning-teaching and research, enhancing their relevance and application. This shift in perception has been reflected in changing terminology, from *community service* to *community engagement*, with the next anticipated evolution being the *scholarship of engagement*, as proposed by Ernest Boyer (Boyer, 2016).

Boyer’s model of *scholarship* consists of four elements, namely *discovery*, which aligns with traditional research and contributes to human knowledge; *integration*, which emphasises the importance of contextualising discoveries by making interdisciplinary connections and interpreting data within broader intellectual and social frameworks; *application*, to highlight the dynamic relationship between theory and practice, where knowledge does not flow in a linear manner, but in both directions, and community engagement provides the context for reflective dialogue between theory and practice; and finally, *teaching*, which redefines the traditional roles of teacher and learner by creating a collaborative learning environment that includes students, academics, and community members.

At the UFS, the evolution of these concepts followed a similar pattern. The institution currently embraces a notion of *Engaged Scholarship*, which refers to the utilisation of our academic scholarly and/or professional expertise, with an intentional public purpose and mutual benefit that has a direct or indirect impact on society. Engaged scholarship is also about the generation, integration, application, and dissemination of knowledge and can inform policy and practice in local, national, regional, and global contexts. As described in the [Engaged Scholarship Report 2023](#), our model for engaged scholarship comprises three pillars, namely engaged research, engaged learning-teaching, and engaged citizenship (UFS, 2024a).

For the relevance of this report, only the notion of engaged learning-teaching (which encompasses CESL) is described, as it includes but is not limited to learning-teaching activities that proactively and positively impact society and enhance student graduate attributes. The design and delivery of learning-teaching programmes and modules should ideally be informed and responsive to societal challenges. In engaged learning and teaching, students are broadly prepared with high-quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning to gain knowledge, skills, and values required for the development of personal, professional, social, and economic/employability graduate attributes. This implies creating a more resilient, blended, technology-enhanced pedagogical approach that will enable learning-teaching that meets 21st Century demands to engage thoughtfully with societal challenges and global issues, such as those targeted through the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (UNDP, 2015). Students thereby learn to think and act on issues of real importance – from local to global – mobilising multiple forms of knowledge to make the right decisions, becoming thoughtful and employable citizens who can compete in the global and local labour markets. The focus is on engagement in collaborative and/or peer learning platforms to gain a sense of existing social, political, economic, and

ecological complex and dynamic challenges in society. To ingrain the principles of engaged scholarship, the university curricula must unify the learning of knowledge with concrete actions, so that the teaching model is anchored in real life to integrate theory and practice for the development of praxis.

1.2 Conceptual and theoretical framework for CESL (Chapter 2, p. 13)

The Carnegie Foundation describes the concept of CE as “collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (Higher Education Public Purpose, 2021: Online). Community engagement aims to enrich learning-teaching and research, and to foster education about citizenship, democracy, and social responsibility to address societal issues for the public good.

In line with the Carnegie Foundation, the UFS outlines CE in its Engaged Scholarship Policy (UFS, 2024b) as continuously negotiated reciprocal collaborations and partnerships between the UFS and the partner communities (local, regional/state, national, global) with which it directly interacts, aimed at mutually beneficial co-construction, application, exchange of knowledge, information, skills, expertise, and resources required to advance the Academic Project of the university and promote sustainable development of society.

The UFS defines the concept of CESL as follows:

*An educational approach involving curriculum-based, credit-bearing learning experiences in which students (a) participate in contextualised, well-structured and organised service activities aimed at addressing identified service needs in a community, and (b) reflect on the service experiences in order to gain a deeper understanding of the linkage between curriculum content and community dynamics, as well as achieve personal growth and a sense of social responsibility. It requires a **collaborative partnership** that enhances mutual, reciprocal teaching and learning among all members of the partnership (lecturers and students, members of the communities and representatives of the service sector).*

Drawing from this UFS definition, four pedagogical criteria highlight the essence of CESL, namely (1) relevant and meaningful reciprocal service for all partners; (2) enhanced academic learning with a clear connection between student learning outcomes and service activities; (3) purposeful learning for advancing the values of socially-just democratic citizenship (social responsibility); and structured opportunities for reflection on service experiences – not only for expanding concrete experience into knowledge, but also to enhance understanding of academic content, the discipline, personal growth, and social responsibility.

The concept of CESL integrates CE with student learning-teaching and research, ensuring a balanced approach of service and learning for mutual and reciprocal benefit to both communities and students, unlike other CE forms such as volunteerism/student engaged citizenship, community outreach, internship, and co-operative education (see Fig 1).

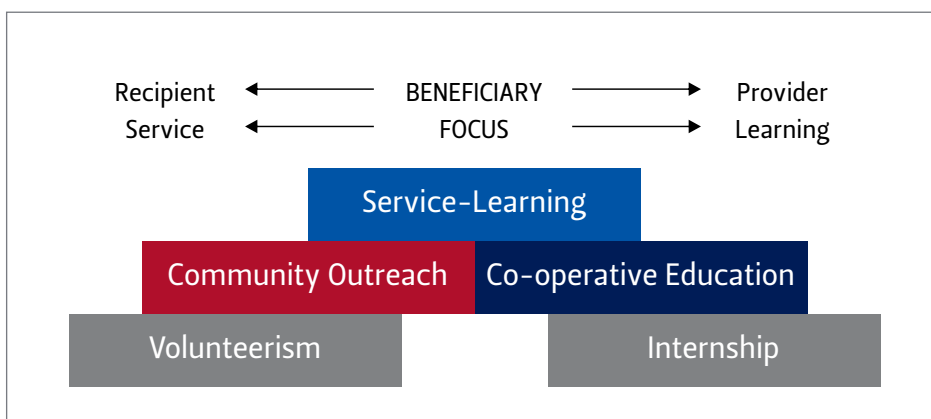


Figure 1: Forms of community engagement (Bender et al. 2006).

In line with the conceptual framework, the theoretical framework of CESL finds its foundation in theories that emphasise *reflective learning*, such as constructivism, experiential learning, progressive education, self-efficacy, social justice, and action research (Bender et al., 2006). The pedagogy of CESL, with its focus on student-centred *experiential learning*, differs from *traditional classroom teaching* – with its focus on knowledge transfer of theoretical content from lecturer to student.

Ten principles for the practice of good CESL pedagogy

Good CESL practice should follow ten guiding principles (Bender et al. 2006), namely:

1. Academic credit is for learning, not for doing service.
2. Do not compromise academic rigour.
3. Set clear learning outcomes for students.
4. When establishing a collaborative learning partnership, carefully select community partners to align community-identified learning needs with and to complement student learning outcomes.
5. Provide educationally sound assignments to support students in gaining learning from service experiences.
6. Provide student support for skills on how to gain learning from the service experiences.
7. Create consistency between students' learning roles in the classroom and the community.
8. Rethink the teaching role of academic staff – from seeing teaching as disseminating information to facilitating learning.
9. Be prepared for uncertainty and variation in student learning outcomes, because CESL can lead to unpredictable learning outcomes.
10. Design collaborative learning outcomes that would benefit all partners in the partnership.

1.3 An integrated curriculum model for CESL (Chapter 3, p. 29)

Drawing from the theoretical framework underpinned by reflective pedagogy, CESL requires a specific integrated curriculum model, using four phases that apply to the integration of CESL, namely: (1) Development and design, (2) Implementation, (3) Reflection and assessment; and (4) Evaluation (see Figure 2). As depicted in Figure 2, each of the four phases involves a specific set of activities.

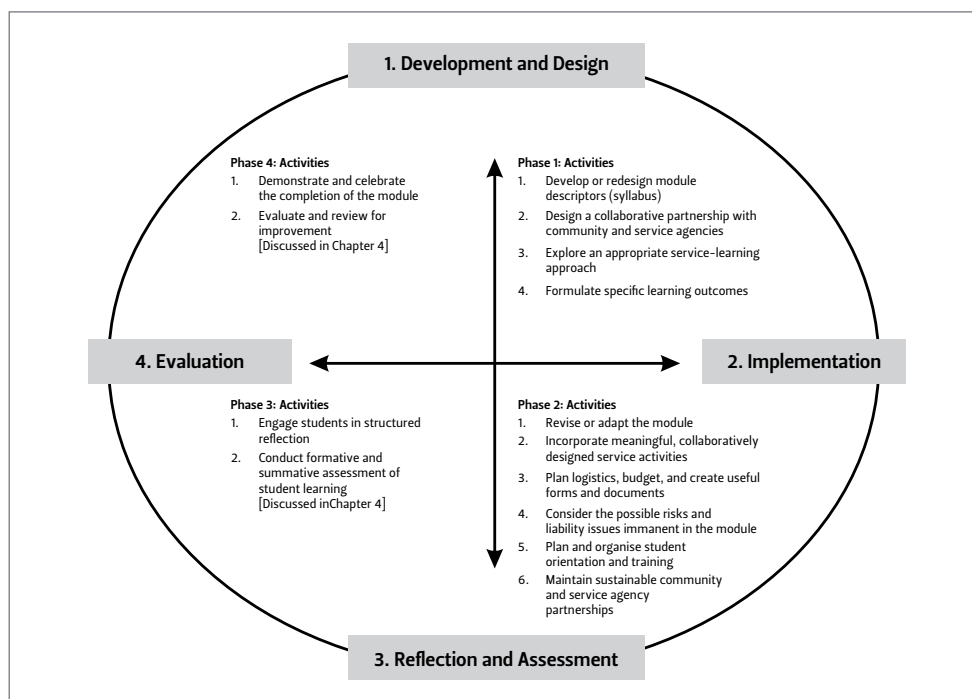


Figure 2: An Integrated service-learning model (Bender et al. 2006).

Integration of CESL into the curriculum at a HEI cannot be approached as an add-on to the existing responsibilities of academic staff and administrators. Instead, integration of CESL necessitates a substantial commitment of strategic planning, time, and financial resources to redesign/design existing and new modules. Moreover, the process of integration requires rigorous implementation, evaluation, and iterative refinement of innovative learning-teaching and facilitation methods.

The integrated model is underpinned by a choice of four specific CESL approaches to structure curricular activities, namely: (1) problem-based CESL, where students act as consultants, working with community members to address a specific societal challenge/problem and apply their academic knowledge to develop recommendations or solutions, e.g. Architecture students designing a park; (2) capstone modules, where students (mostly final-year) integrate their learning with CESL, which in turn helps to integrate theory and practice, fostering professional development, e.g. a physiotherapy professional development capstone; (3) service internships, which help students to engage in intensive community-based work (10–20 hours per week), producing valuable outputs for the community, and the use of reflection is key to distinguishing ‘service’ from ‘traditional’ internships, e.g., educational psychology internships; (4) community-based action research, where students conduct research in partnership with communities, using action research cycles. The action research approach suits experienced students/ small groups and focuses on reciprocal learning, e.g. social work or business management research projects. Each of these approaches shapes the type of partnerships and collaborations needed.

1.4 Reflection, assessment, and evaluation of CESL in the curriculum (Chapter 4, p. 56)

Using structured reflection as an intentional process to make meaningful connections between service experiences and academic learning is key to quality CESL. Petersen and Osman (2013) emphasise that structured reflection should be contextually relevant, transformative, open to critically examine power dynamics, aware of personal biases, and prompt students to view their social responsibility role from a socially just perspective. They advocate the use of diverse reflection methods, such as journals, storytelling, discussions, and creative writing to deepen learning. Key aspects of structured reflection include critical thinking, linking theory to practice, and focusing on personal growth, using multiple reflective formats to enhance students’ learning experiences.

Academics practising CESL in the curriculum are advised to follow any of three reflection models. The *Three-Stage Model* (Toole and Toole, 1995) guides reflection through analysis (what?), critical thinking (so what?), and decision-making (now what?). The *ORID Model* (CSU, 2005) structures reflection into objective, reflective, interpretive, and decisional phases. Lastly, the *DEAL Model* (Ash, Clayton & Atkinson, 2005) proposes a structured approach where students describe service experiences objectively, analyse them in relation to module outcomes, and articulate their learning through reflection on meaningful service experiences. The first two models are recommended for the first to third years of programmes, whereas the DEAL model is recommended for the last year of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. As mentioned in the definition, the implementation of CESL requires a collaborative learning partnership.

1.5 Partnership development (Chapter 5, p. 92)

The UFS follows a triad partnership model for the implementation of CESL (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: Triad partnership model.

As shown in Figure 3, the triad partnership model comprises three sectors, namely university, service, and community. While the university sector includes academic lecturers and students, the service sector can include government departments, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private sector businesses, industries, and enterprises. The community sector includes the people served by the service sector. The implementation of CESL requires a knowledge-based *collaborative partnership that enhances mutual, reciprocal teaching and learning among all members of the partnership (lecturers and students, members of the communities, and representatives of the service sector)*.

Establishing an effective ethical partnership requires a shared understanding among all partners of the guiding philosophy, mission, vision, goals, values, roles, responsibilities, and a clear implementation timeline. Successful integration of CESL within the partnership involves joint action planning and collaboration to deliver service-learning activities and achieve shared goals. Sustaining such a partnership demands continuous coordination, communication, feedback, reflection, and evaluation. Given the central role of human interaction, a risk management plan is essential.

1.6 Risk management (Chapter 6, p. 112)

Risk management is an essential component of best practices in CESL, promoting awareness and a commitment to quality service. Academic staff should identify and communicate potential risks associated with a CESL module, e.g. physical demands, health concerns, or safety issues in the module study guide. Students must be equipped to carry out their CESL activities safely, ensuring the well-being of both themselves and those they serve. The effective risk management of a CESL module requires the implementation of the following policies, procedures, and processes: conducting site visits, ensuring supervision, providing orientation, obtaining indemnity and consent forms, maintaining clear communication, arranging safe transportation, and preparing loss reporting documentation as part of risk prevention measures. The UFS has established risk management guidelines for guiding academic lecturers and students. Risk management is a shared responsibility among all partners of the partnership, and while risks exist, the benefits of service-learning generally outweigh them.

1.7 CESL in practice (Chapter 7, p. 123)

The implementation of CESL in practice involves the *roles and responsibilities* of an academic lecturer, students, and service sector partners in developing, implementing, and evaluating a CESL module. Thus, it is important to clearly structure roles and responsibilities throughout the process. To ensure effective planning and execution, schedule

activities according to a proposed timeline that includes key phases: before the module starts, during the first weeks of the module, throughout the duration of the module, at the end of the module, and after the module concludes. This structured approach facilitates purposeful engagement, continuous reflection, and the achievement of both learning and service outcomes.

Putting the pedagogy of CESL into practice is complex, yet it is transformative. When well supported, it enhances academic learning, fosters personal growth, and deepens social responsibility. Despite its challenges, effective strategies guide the planning, implementation, and evaluation of meaningful CESL modules (see Chapter 7, p. 123).

1.8 Institutionalising CESL at the UFS (Chapter 8, p. 138)

As a teaching strategy/pedagogy, CESL in HEIs supports the transformation goals of the White Paper (1997) by fostering socially responsible graduates equipped with the critical thinking, communication, and analytical skills needed to navigate diversity and change. Successful implementation of CESL relies heavily on the commitment and support of academic lecturers. Institutionalisation of CESL involves developing shared language and guiding principles, along with allocating appropriate resources.

Widespread faculty support is essential, with the formation of a committed academic core being an early step in advancing CESL. Establishing a Directorate of Community Engagement and appointing a dedicated institutional coordinator for CESL are key to this process. This foundation enables the UFS to distinguish CESL from other experiential education approaches and to integrate it meaningfully into both the curriculum and institutional mission (Engaged Scholarship Policy 2020 – under review). The UFS currently has 64 modules (across faculties) driven by CESL champions, as proudly portrayed in the second section of this report.

1.9 Quality assurance of CESL (Chapter 9, p. 147)

The UFS ensures quality promotion of CESL through capacity building of academic lecturers to monitor, review, evaluate, and improve CESL in the curriculum, guided by the Good Practice Guide and Self-evaluation Instruments (CHE HEQC, 2006).

References

- Bender CJG, Daniels P, Naudé L, & Sattar K. 2006. *Service-learning in the curriculum: a resource for higher education institutions*. Pretoria: Council of Higher Education, Higher Education Quality Committee and JET Education Services.
- Boyer EL. 2016. The scholarship of engagement. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* 20(1):15–28.
- Council on Higher Education (CHE). 2006. *A good practice guide and self-evaluation instruments for managing the quality of service-learning*. Pretoria: CHE.
- Council on Higher Education (CHE). 2008. *Service-learning in the disciplines: lessons from the field*. Pretoria: CHE.
- Council on Higher Education (CHE). (2011). Higher Education Monitor 12. *Work-integrated learning: A good practice guide*. Pretoria: CHE.
- Mouton J & Wildschut L. (2005). Service-learning in South Africa: Lessons learnt through systematic evaluation. *Acta Academica: Critical Views on Society, Culture and Politics*, (3), 116–150. <https://doi.org/10.38140/aa.v0i3.1070>
- Petersen N & Osman R. (2013). Analysing service-learning in South Africa: 'disrupting' the deficit discourse? *Education as Change*, 17(3), 21–35.

UNDP (United Nations Development Programme). 2015. Sustainable development goals 2030. Retrieved from https://knowledgehub.health.gov.za/system/files/elibdownloads/2023-04/SDGs_Booklet_Web_En.pdf

University of the Free State (UFS) (2024a). Engaged Scholarship Report 2024. [online] Available at: https://www.ufs.ac.za/docs/librariesprovider43/community-engagement-documents/all-documents/engaged-scholarship-report-2024.pdf?Status=Master&sfvrsn=720c1f20_5 [Accessed 6 May 2025].

University of the Free State (UFS) (2024b). Engaged Scholarship Policy (under revision). Bloemfontein: UFS.



2

SECTION TWO: REPORTS FROM FACULTIES







Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences



Lecturer

Prof Arno van Niekerk
E: niekerka@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Prof Arno van Niekerk holds a PhD in Economics, which he obtained from the University of the Free State (UFS). As an economist, he has since published extensively in national and international academic journals, focusing on globalisation, governance, international trade, and inclusive economics. He has also presented research papers at various national and international conferences. Since 2011, he has been presenting annual lectures in the master's programme at the Salzburg University of Applied Sciences (FHS) in Austria. More recently, he wrote the book, *The Inclusive Economy: Criteria, Principles and Ubuntu*, which was published in 2022. He received wide recognition for this significant academic work, which has led to numerous economic projects in communities.

Module name

Financial Instruments, Markets, and Institutions
EFES2724

(Second semester/ six months, second-year students)

Brief description of the module

This semester module introduced 200 students to the dynamics of financial markets, instruments, and institutions in both the local and international environment. The aim of the module is to provide the student with sufficient knowledge and the ability to explore, analyse, and explain the modern financial system and markets on a basic level, as well as to share their gained knowledge with low-income community members.

Community partners

- Low-income community members

Service sector partners

- South African banks (Capitec, FNB, Standard Bank, Absa, and Nedbank)

Service-learning component

Participating in group format, students integrate theory and practice by studying literature and engaging with the community. Students speak with community members they have identified and then design questionnaires to record and analyse data they have gathered via the questionnaires. Students discuss the results and share the findings with the community to develop community members' understanding regarding key concepts in economic literacy (e.g. interest rates, exchange rates, economic growth, and trade).

Outcomes for the students

Students develop the ability to

- evaluate knowledge in the community about the economic financial sector to improve financial literacy;
- gain valuable research skills, especially in gathering and analysing primary data; and
- gain group-work skills in constructing and executing the project.

Impact on the community

Students' knowledge sharing with the greater community has changed 200 community members' perspective on economic finance and how to manage money, as they now have the economic financial literacy to do so.



Module name

International Economics EINT3715

(First semester/ six months, third-year students)

Brief description of the module

This semester module introduced 120 students to the inclusive world of international economics, enabling them to define, describe, comprehend, and apply the concepts and terminology used in international economics, such as international trade, exchange rates, globalisation, international capital flows, terms of trade, interest rates, economic convergence, and regional economic integration.

The three main objectives for courses in economics are to master economic principles; to acquire skills in applying the principles to reality; and to learn to analyse policy issues systematically.

Community partners

Low-income community members residing in the greater Mangaung area.

Service sector partners

Institutions that offer low-income transactional banking accounts, i.e. Mzansi accounts.

Service-learning component

After studying relevant literature, students visit the community in group format to enquire about the community's knowledge about international economics (e.g. interest rates, exchange rates, economic growth, and trade). Students then design questionnaires and speak to people they have identified, record the data gathered, conduct data analysis, and compile discussions of the results. Students then share knowledge with community members about how the global economy works (i.e. financial literacy) and to stress the importance of savings (e.g. interest rates).

Outcomes for the students

The module introduces students scientifically to the inclusive world of international economics, enabling them to

- define, describe, comprehend, and apply the key concepts and terminology used in the field of international economics;
- explain and clarify international trade between countries;
- describe international payments between countries;
- comprehend and indicate where South Africa stands in the international economy (trade, payments, and relations);
- interpret the role of globalisation in global economic cooperation and integration;
- use comparative analysis to draw unique research findings/conclusions;
- enquire into community knowledge about international economics and globalisation;
- learn that the world is a set of related systems and that problem solving does not occur in isolation, even more so when the impact of economic knowledge on low-income groups is considered, enhancing their sense of social responsibility; and
- grow in their capacity to work with various individuals to achieve joint goals. As they explain these concepts to community members, deeper learning takes place within themselves (personal growth).

Impact on the community

This module significantly enhances the economic literacy of 120 community members by involving them in activities that build understanding of key international economic concepts and personal financial management. By exploring key international economic concepts and knowledge engagement with students, community members gain understanding of personal finance and improved financial knowledge, adopting informed money management and stronger economic decision-making skills.



Lecturer

Dr Ekaete Benedict
E: BenedictE@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Lecturer in the UFS Department of Business Management on the Bloemfontein Campus, Dr Ekaete Benedict is an academic and entrepreneur. Her teaching and research interests revolve around entrepreneurship and small business management. Her teaching philosophy is rooted in providing her students with the information, tools, and skills they need to navigate today's ever-evolving business environment. It is important to her that students not only learn business and management theories but also get the chance to practise the theories and concepts and engage with real-life business scenarios. This philosophy has stimulated her interest and involvement in engaged scholarship and service-learning.

Module name:

Entrepreneurship EBUS 2714

(First semester/ six months, second-year module)

Brief description of the module

This module provided a comprehensive understanding of entrepreneurship to 555 students. The module integrates theory and practical implementation of the module through service-learning.

Community partners

- In the context of this module on entrepreneurship, the majority of participating students originate from underserved communities across South Africa. As such, the student cohort itself embodies many of the lived realities and socio-economic challenges typically associated with the 'community' sector within the university-service sector-community partnership triad. This unique configuration positions students not only as learners, but also as representatives of the community, allowing them to engage reflexively with both the theoretical content and practical interventions of the module. The dual role of students as beneficiaries and agents of community-based knowledge enriches the pedagogical framework and deepens the transformative potential of the learning experience.

Service sector partners

- Free State Provincial Government
- Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA)
- Standard Bank

Service-learning component

Representatives from the service sector provided guest lectures to share real-life practice on lessons and challenges of business development. The guest presenters included Dr Johan van Deventer, UFS Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences – Faculty Advisory Board member, also former director of Shoprite Group of Companies as well as former director of Checkers Freshmark; and Elbie Louw, the director of Spoudazo Social Enterprise.

After successful completion of this module, the student should be able to

- demonstrate his/her expertise in entrepreneurship relating to the basic principles and historical development and application thereof – given the entrepreneurial environment – and interpret the concept of entrepreneurship along with the characteristics of the entrepreneur;
- argue the importance of creativity and innovation, as well as feasibility and viability in entrepreneurship;
- employ all the different management and operational aspects that are part of starting and growing a business and demonstrate the different ways that exist when he/she wants to start a business; and

- develop a viable and effective business plan in order to launch a feasible business.

Outcomes for the students

The students will be able to argue the importance of creativity and innovation, as well as feasibility and viability in entrepreneurship. They will be able to develop a viable and effective business plan to launch a feasible business. Furthermore, students will be able to employ all the different management and operational aspects that are part of starting and growing a business and demonstrate the different ways that exist when he/she wants to start a business.

Impact on the community

Students themselves must establish business plans for their own business. The module equips students with the necessary skills to grow as an entrepreneur and focuses on identifying the challenges that they may encounter while growing their businesses and how to solve them effectively. Guest lectures by industry leaders provide students with practical insights into business development. These engagements

- bridge the gap between academic theory and real-world practice;
- inspire entrepreneurial thinking and innovation;
- enhance students' understanding of socio-economic challenges and opportunities;
- strengthen community-university-industry partnerships; and
- through sharing lived experiences and lessons learned, contribute to more informed, socially responsive graduates who are better equipped to contribute to community development.



Module name:

Small Business Management ESBM2724

(Second semester/ six months, second-year students)

Brief description of the module

This module aimed to develop 387 students into confident and competent business owners and/or managers.

Community partners

- Small business owners and non-governmental organisations/ enterprises. These included Let's Grow Food with Thabo Olivier; Maeven Motseki – CEO of Metro Force Security, Botshabelo; Matseliso Achilonu – CEO of Devoni Naturals, Bloemfontein; and the UFS student organisation ACCESS (Active Community Citizens working through Engaged Scholarship for Sustainability), Bloemfontein.

Service sector partners

- Free State Provincial Government (DESTEA)/ Treasury
- Prime Apex (travel agency)
- Webaware

Service-learning component

Representatives from the community and service sectors provide guest lectures about real-life businesses.

- Introduction to small business management

- The entrepreneur and small business manager
- Entrepreneurial and management skills
- Entrepreneurial strategy
- Business ethics and social responsibility
- Entrepreneurial management
- Marketing
- Operations
- Managing human resources
- Financial planning and budgeting
- Legal aspects
- Business cycles and the entrepreneur
- Managing growth and harvesting
- Decline and turnaround

Outcomes for the students

Students have to define a small business venture and its characteristics, explain the essential skills that managers must have, determine the resources needed to successfully operate a small business, and demonstrate their ability to start and operate a small business enterprise by compiling a strategic analysis document for a new or existing business of community partners.

Impact on the community

- Students share knowledge about business and equip small business owners and non-governmental organisations/ enterprises with the necessary knowledge that they can use to their advantage to improve their enterprises.



Lecturer

Naquita Fernandes

E: FernandesN@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Naquita Fernandes is a dedicated lecturer, engaged scholar, and researcher. Her research covers consumer behaviour, digital strategies, and customer experience management, focusing on adapting global trends to help local businesses thrive. Through applied learning and participatory action research, she ensures that students gain hands-on experience while businesses benefit from research-backed strategies. By connecting the classroom to the business world, she fosters long-term collaborations that drive meaningful impact. Currently a PhD candidate actively conducting research in the fields of local business marketing, consumer psychology, and relationship marketing, she has a passion for collaborating with local businesses to bridge the gap between theory and real-world application, ensuring that both her students and the community benefit from innovative and practical insights.

Module name:

Digital Marketing EBMA3724

(Second semester/ six months, third-year students)

Brief description of the module

The module aims to shape students into competent marketing strategists by equipping them with the practical skills that will enable them to succeed in the industry. This allows them to assist businesses with their marketing strategies based on their theoretical knowledge.

Community partners

- UFS Marketing students themselves
- Community served by the service sector

Service sector partners

- Loch Logan Hotel
- Royal Roastery
- GloLooks Kids
- Brave Nation

Service-learning component

The students are equipped to have a bigger picture and a clear understanding of marketing principles by disseminating new research that goes beyond



theory to application and practical implementation. Moreover, this module aims to shape students into competent marketing strategists by equipping them with the skills needed to succeed in the industry.

Outcomes for the students

The students are guided to outline the role of relationships in marketing and illustrate the customer-centric approach of businesses in building relationships with their customers. They are ultimately enabled to demonstrate companies' approach to building relationships with other stakeholders.

Impact on the community

The students reciprocally share knowledge with real-life businesses, providing them with practical knowledge that allows them to adapt to the

marketing industry towards a real-life context to solve marketing problems.

By equipping students with applied marketing knowledge and strategic skills, this module enhances their ability to contribute meaningfully to local businesses and social enterprises. The community benefits through

- improved marketing practices in small and medium enterprises;
- support for local economic growth through student-led initiatives;
- knowledge transfer from academic research to practical implementation; and
- empowerment of community organisations with strategic insights.

This approach fosters innovation and strengthens the capacity of local stakeholders to navigate market challenges effectively.

Faculty of Education





Lecturer

Dr Angela Stott
E: StottAE@ufs.ac.za



Lecturer

Mariette Erwee
E: ErweeM@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Dr Angela Stott is a Science Education lecturer in the Department of Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Technology Education. She holds BSc(Hons), MEd, and PhD (Sci Ed) degrees, earned while teaching in rural KwaZulu-Natal. After a postdoctoral fellowship at UCT, she joined UFS in 2014. Before 2023, she mentored teachers, led township interventions, and presented workshops across the Free State through South Campus Social Responsibilities Projects. She has over 30 peer-reviewed publications, a C2 NRF rating, and serves as editor-in-chief of AJRMSTE. Passionate about ICTs, she's contributed to textbooks, self-published science workbooks, and developed materials used by UP and the Free State Department of Education. Her LearnScience.co.za platform includes 600+ videos and 4 000+ subscribers.

Bio

Mariette Erwee holds a BSc and BSc Honours in Physics and Astrophysics. She has been involved in science communication since 2005, starting at Boyden Observatory before coordinating the EARTHwise initiative in the Department of Geology up to 2010. Since 2011, she has been part of the Science-for-the-Future Unit, now housed in the Faculty of Education, where she contributes to various community engagement programmes. One of these is the **Family Science** initiative, integrated into the second-year Natural Sciences module for Education students. Additionally, she has been a part-time presenter at the Naval Hill Planetarium since 2013.



Module name:

Elementary Natural Sciences and Technology for Intermediate Phase NSTC2614

(First semester; second-year students)

Brief description of the module

This module develops future teachers' content knowledge for teaching the chemistry, physics and technology aspects of the Intermediate Phase Natural Sciences and Technology curriculum. It also empowers these future teachers to use practical demonstration presentations to communicate this knowledge effectively.

Community partners

- Teachers at schools served by the service sector

Service sector partners

- Division of Family Science at the University of the Free State and schools where the service-learning occurs

Service-learning component

We have partnered with the Division of Family Science in the UFS Science for the Future Centre for greater experience with practical work, as well as to offer our students a service-learning experience. All students attend five practical sessions at the Science Centre, and volunteers spend one day teaching at a school. These activities are under the supervision of Mariette Erwee from Family Science. We also hold two demonstration presentation expos at the Science Centre.

Outcomes for the students

- Apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings by engaging in and co-facilitating science-based learning activities during sessions at the Science Centre and in school environments.
- Demonstrate effective communication and teaching skills through engagement with learners during practical sessions and presentation expos.
- Reflect on the role of experiential learning in education by evaluating their own teaching practices and the impact of science community engagement on diverse learning communities.

Impact on the community

The partnership with the Division of Family Science in the UFS Science for the Future Centre provides Education students with hands-on teaching experience and science community engagement opportunities. These activities benefit the community by

- enhancing science literacy among school learners through engaging, curriculum-aligned demonstrations;
- strengthening educational support in under-resourced schools via volunteer teaching;
- fostering community-university collaboration that promotes lifelong learning and curiosity; and
- empowering learners and teachers with practical tools and interactive learning experiences.

This initiative builds capacity in both future educators and the communities they serve during their studies.



Faculty of Health Sciences



Lecturer

Dr Ansie Janse van Rensburg
E: JanseVanRensburgSJ@ufs.ac.za



Lecturer

Dr Carl van Ramesdonk
E: VanRamesdonkC@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Dr Ansie Janse van Rensburg is a family physician and clinical trainer in the Department of Family Medicine at the University of the Free State. After completing postgraduate studies in Family Medicine, Dr Janse van Rensburg gained valuable experience in diverse health-care settings, including a small mission hospital in Nepal, a district hospital in Bloemfontein, and the Department of Paediatrics at a tertiary hospital. This broad background allows her to effectively engage with students through their family medicine rotations, including hospital and clinic work, as well as community-based activities.

Bio

Dr Carl van Ramesdonk, a specialist family physician, serves as the Undergraduate Teaching and Learning Coordinator in the Department of Family Medicine within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State. He has extensive experience in primary health care, having worked in both the public and private sectors across rural and remote areas of South Africa and the South Atlantic.

Passionate about emergency medicine, sedation and anaesthesia, as well as sports medicine, he balances his professional interests with a love of music, reading, and wholeheartedly supporting local sports teams – much to the dismay of his wife and children.

Module name

Family Medicine M4818/4828CBE

Brief description

The aim of this module is for students to learn about health care in rural areas and to gain insight into primary health care as the backbone of our health system.

Community partners

- Communities of Trompsburg and Springfontein
- Trompsburg Secondary School
- PT Sanders School, Trompsburg
- Springfontein Secondary School
- Farming community through the Mobile Clinic

Service sector partners

- Department of Health
- PT Sanders, Trompsburg, and Springfontein secondary schools

Outcomes for students

Students interact with the communities through various activities, including clinic consultations, home visits, community groups, school visits, mobile clinic visits. These interactions give them the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the various aspects of primary health care. Bringing them closer to the communities also gives them the opportunity to get to know and experience people in their everyday life circumstances, which helps them to develop a holistic understanding of health care.

Service-learning component

Students have the opportunity to see patients alongside clinic sisters, community health-care workers, and primary care physicians. Through this, they not only learn clinical skills, but also develop a deeper understanding of primary health and holistic health care. By leading community and high school learner group work, they learn the dynamics of group work and interaction and develop their own abilities to work with groups. They also learn to work together as a group and to work with students from other disciplines in these different contexts.

Impact on community

The impact on the community can be seen in terms of both short-term and long-term impact. Regular home visits help the community members to better understand their illnesses and help them to integrate the management thereof into their lives. Being part of a Healthy Lifestyle group helps them to meet other community members with the same challenges. Together with the students, they learn in a relaxed and sometimes fun environment how to live healthier lives.

Learners are exposed to students for clinical health screening, and the Leadership Development

Programme helps learners address various issues in their school situations as well as their personal lives.

Referral for specialised services takes place after these interaction sessions when the need arises.

Module name

Family Medicine MFAM5818/MFAM5828

Fifth-year students

Brief description

The aim of this module is to gain an understanding of the role of family medicine and primary care in the continuum of care in the South African context.

Community partners

- Community of Mangaung

Service sector partners

- MUCPP Community Health Centre

Outcomes for students

Students assess the quality of treatment and the control of patients' chronic or subacute conditions (e.g. hypertension, diabetes mellitus, asthma, COPD, epilepsy, HIV/Aids, and TB) based on the relevant South African guidelines. They are then encouraged to reflect on where meaningful improvements can be made in the management of their patients' medical conditions.

Service-learning component

Students evaluate the control and management of patients' chronic condition by providing a thorough biopsychosocial assessment of their patients and provide advice and management according to South African Department of Health guidelines, which are sometimes neglected in the busy clinic.

Impact on community

By ensuring that patients receive the best medical care according to guidelines, the control of their medical conditions should improve, and complications can be prevented, or their onset can be delayed as long as possible. As the students spend more time with their patients, they also receive more information about the non-medical and medical management of their diseases, which encourages them to take ownership of their conditions.



Lecturer

Carel Masemola
MasemolaHC@ufs.ac.za

Bio

A lecturer in the UFS Department of Optometry, Carel Masemola is an academic optometrist and public health practitioner. A prestigious fellow of the American Academy of Optometry, he is also a member of PHASA and the South African Optometric Association (SAOA). His academic journey includes an Optometry degree from the University of Limpopo, an Ocular Diagnostic Certificate from the University of Johannesburg, and postgraduate qualifications in Public Health and Psychology from UNISA. He earned his Master of Public Health (cum laude) from the University of Pretoria and is pursuing a PhD in Public Health at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

His research interests include health promotion, health communication, mental health, quality of life, epidemiology, climate change, and strengthening health systems. Recognised as one of Mail & Guardian's Top 200 Young South Africans and a finalist in Africa Inside Education's 100 South African Shining Stars (Health Category, 2023), he is passionate about advancing health care through research, education, and community engagement.

Module name

Public Health and Compulsory Residency PHCR3704

Third-year students

Brief description

This module is developed from the social constructivism theory, which focuses on the collaborative nature of learning. Student learners will be guided to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for a career in the field of optometry and to obtain a sound knowledge and understanding of public health, as well as South African health policy, epidemiology, and health promotion. Knowledge develops from how people interact with each other, their culture, and society at large. The module works towards an inclusive education system in which all students are accepted and fully included, educationally and socially. Students will rely on others to help create their building blocks; learning from others helps them to construct their own knowledge and reality. This will be a pathway for aspiring optometrists to connect with the needs of the communities, to understand their individual role, and also to meet an objective

of the university that works towards social justice, while at the same time participating in global knowledge production.

Service sector partners

- Boikhuco Old-age Home
- Trans-50 Fichardt Park Retirement Village
- MUCPP
- Albert Nzula District Hospital

Community partners

- Xhariep District community
- Mangaung District community

Outcomes for students

- Primary goal – To address eye health and visual needs.
- Secondary goal – To address the social determinants of health by providing general

health support and education, as well as finding ways to improve the living and social climate in sustainable ways.

Service-learning component

Community service-learning projects run for eight months of the year, starting in February and ending in September. Students are placed in groups, as the projects are group-based activities. The students are assessed through summative evaluations. Upon completion of their CSL project, students compile a report and also develop a health education brochure for their designated communities.

Impact on community

Members of the community, including children and older persons, benefit from eye care provided by Optometry students.





Lecturer

Franco Prinsloo

E: PrinslooPWF@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Franco Prinsloo is a lecturer and Optometry Clinical Coordinator in the Department of Optometry within the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of the Free State (UFS). His work bridges academia, clinical practice, and community service, with a focus on expanding access to affordable eye care while enriching the clinical training of Optometry students.

As the CEO and founder of the Kingdom Vision Foundation NPO, he has played an important role in establishing two academic eye clinics and multiple outreach sites, creating opportunities for hands-on learning and service delivery in underserved communities.

A graduate of the UFS with a Bachelor of Optometry (2017), Prinsloo also operates a successful private optometry practice in Bloemfontein. His commitment to social innovation was recently recognised when he was a finalist in the 2024 SAB Foundation Social Innovation Awards, highlighting his dedication to developing sustainable solutions for eye-care accessibility in South Africa.

Module name

Clinical Optometry I CLPT3706

Third-year students

Brief description

Clinical Optometry (CLPT3706) introduces students to primary eye care while learning under the supervision of a qualified optometrist. In this module, students apply optometry procedures and skills in diagnosing, treating, and managing visual problems and ocular diseases. Students are also introduced to a broader aspect of screening for systemic diseases and the management of ocular manifestations. They are expected to integrate knowledge and clinical skills acquired in Optometry Theory and Methods modules (in first and second year), together with information gathered from patients to determine various methods/procedures to diagnose patients' eye and visual conditions in order to tailor a management plan that is fit for purpose.

This module is delivered on the principle of decentralisation of clinical training in optometry and reorienting health services, and forms part of the Ottawa charter by providing community outreach



where students rotate through various clinical sites, including the Optometry Clinic at the Universitas Hospital Annex. While the module strengthens teaching and learning in optometry, it also promotes social justice by providing greater access to health services and support to people who are disadvantaged or discriminated against in society.

Service sector partners

- Universitas Hospital Annex
- MUCPP
- Albert Nzula District Hospital
- Kowsie Health
- Kingdom Vision Eyecare Centre

Community partners

- Xhariep District community
- Mangaung District community
- Other Free State communities

Outcomes for students

- Primary goal – To equip students with practical skills and competencies necessary for effective clinical optometry practice.

- Secondary goal – To cultivate a sense of professionalism, empathy, and social responsibility among students by engaging them in community service initiatives.

Service-learning component

Through designed structured clinical rotations in diverse optometry settings, including hospitals, clinics, and community health centres, students are involved in the assessment of patients from January to September. Students are provided with hands-on training in various optometric procedures, such as refraction, slit-lamp examination, and ocular health assessment. There are opportunities for facilitated regular feedback sessions and mentorship opportunities with practising optometrists to support students' skill development and address areas for improvement. Students are assessed through summative evaluations such as selected technique assessment and also formal clinical evaluation.

Impact on community

Members of the community, including children and older persons, benefit from eye care provided by Optometry students.



Lecturer

Dr Nashua Naicker

E: naickern@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Dr Naicker is a lecturer in the Department of Optometry within the Faculty of Health Sciences and is involved in academia, clinical training, service delivery, and research. He obtained his PhD in Health Professions Education at the University of the Free State (UFS). His current professional trajectory is focused on developing postgraduate health professionals and educators in 21st Century pedagogy. As a former module coordinator of Clinical Optometry II in 2024, he coordinated various student activities, such as the Phelopepa Health Train student rotations, Eastern Free State student training at the regional hospitals, interprofessional and community-based education at Trompsburg, optometry clinic coordination at the National District Hospital, and the student rotation to the Mangaung University Community Partnership Programme (MUCPP). Dr Naicker completed his tenure as chair of the Learning and Teaching Committee in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SoHRS) in 2024 and is currently a senior lecturer and research supervisor in the Division of Health Sciences Education.



Lecturer

Boitumelo Ramantsi

E: RamantsiBML@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Boitumelo Ramantsi is a qualified optometrist with more than 20 years of experience in the field. She holds a master's degree in Optometry from the University of the Free State (UFS) and has published an article in the *South African Journal of Childhood Education* based on her dissertation. Currently, Ramantsi is pursuing a PhD in Public Health, with a focus on public health initiatives related to vision and eye care.

A passionate advocate for paediatric vision, she is actively involved in educating future optometrists at the UFS. Her dedication to the education and development of aspiring professionals reflects her commitment to improving access to quality eye care for children. Through her work as an educator, researcher, and clinician, Ramantsi hopes to make significant contributions to the advancement of eye care and public health, particularly in the realm of paediatric vision.



Lecturer

Elene Kruger

E: KrugerE3@ufs.ac.za



Lecturer

Risna Heyns

E: HeynsC1@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Elene Kruger, an alumna of the Rand Afrikaans University (RAU), holds a Bachelor of Optometry (BOptom) and a Master of Philosophy in Optometry (MPhil Optom), with nearly 20 years of experience as an optometrist and ophthalmologist assistant. She is a lecturer at the University of the Free State (UFS), specialising in ocular pathology. She is actively involved in the on-campus pathology clinic and integrates service-learning into student training, bridging theory with practice. Her research focuses on communication skills in undergraduate Optometry students, and she is currently pursuing a PhD in this field. She also supervises undergraduate and postgraduate research, contributing to academic excellence and the development of future health-care professionals. Kruger is interested in organisational dynamics, exploring how structured thinking enhances efficiency, leadership, and professional growth in health care and academia.

Bio

Risna Heyns is a lecturer in the Department of Optometry, specialising in Pathology and Diagnostic Procedures. She teaches third- and fourth-year students in the undergraduate Optometry programme.

She graduated from the Rand Afrikaans University (now the University of Johannesburg) in 2004 and has since been practising full-time in private optometry practices. She also managed the St John Eye Clinic, an NGO providing eye care services to underprivileged patients.

Heyns began supervising and examining Optometry students in 2006, assisting in the general, contact lens, pathology, paediatric, and binocular vision clinics, as well as in outreach programmes. In 2022, she served as co-module leader for the fourth-year Contact Lenses module. Since 2023, she has been the module leader for the third-year Diagnostic Procedures and fourth-year Pathology modules.

She has also participated in cataract surgery outreach initiatives in Mozambique, volunteering for one week in 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2016. In 2015, she opened her own private optometry practice in Bloemfontein.





Lecturer

Siddeeqa Jhetam
E: JhetamS@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Siddeeqa Jhetam is an optometrist with experience in the private, public, and academic sectors. At the University of the Free State, she holds the role of a published lecturer, undergraduate and postgraduate research supervisor, and was an active member of the Health Sciences Research Ethics Committee.

Her areas of focus are low vision rehabilitation and dispensing optics. Her master's degree at the University of KwaZulu-Natal centred around oculocutaneous albinism and telescopes, and she has served as a peer reviewer of journal articles and examiner of related postgraduate projects. Her role as a supervising optometrist at the low vision patient clinic at Universitas Annex Hospital involves the management of persons with visual impairment, including albinism, and she is regularly consulted by the Free State Society for the Blind.



Lecturer

Belina Mokhua
E: JanMB@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Belina Mokhua holds a master's degree in Optometry and is currently pursuing a PhD in Public Health. Her research focuses on low vision within public health care, with a particular interest in developing effective communication strategies, improving the quality of life for visually impaired individuals, and strengthening health systems to better accommodate their needs. As an academic lecturer at the University of the Free State (UFS), Mokhua is committed to education and mentorship, actively supervising both undergraduate and postgraduate research students. She is passionate about inclusive health care, striving to bridge the gap between research and practice, and advocating for sustainable solutions that enhance the well-being and independence of visually impaired populations.





Lecturer

Woanda Tshindino
E: TshidinoW@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Woanda Tshindino is an experienced optometrist and lecturer at the University of the Free State, with a special interest in contact lenses. She earned a Bachelor of Optometry from the University of KwaZulu-Natal in 2011 and later completed a master's degree in Optometry at the UFS.

With more than 14 years of experience, Tshindino successfully manages two private practices, providing comprehensive eye care, including advanced contact lens fitting and management. As an academic, she is dedicated to training future optometrists, focusing on contact lens techniques and patient-centred care. Committed to continuous professional development, she ensures that students are well-equipped for the evolving demands of the profession.

Module name

Clinical Optometry II COPT 4800

Fourth-year students

Brief description

In this module, students undergo immersive clinical training designed to provide extensive practical training in specialised areas of optometric care. This module, encompassing clinics such as general, paediatric optometry, contact lens, ocular pathology, binocular vision, or low vision clinics, offers hands-on experience in diagnosing and managing a wide range of eye conditions. Students actively engage in patient care, applying their knowledge and skills to assess vision problems, prescribe appropriate treatments, and provide counselling to patients. Under the guidance of experienced academic and practising optometrists, students gain proficiency in conducting comprehensive eye examinations, interpreting diagnostic tests, and developing personalised treatment plans tailored to each patient's needs.

Furthermore, students participate in community outreach activities, extending eye care services to underserved populations and promoting eye health awareness. Additionally, they collaborate with other health-care professionals through interprofessional education initiatives, enhancing their ability to work in multidisciplinary health-care teams.



Service sector partners

- Universitas Hospital Annex
- MUCPP
- Xhariep Health District
- Mofumahadi Manapo Mopeli Regional Hospital
- Dihlabeng Regional Hospital

Community partners

- Xhariep District community
- Thabo Mofutsanyana District community
- Mangaung District community
- Other Free State communities

Outcomes for students

- Primary goal – To equip students with advanced proficiency in specialised areas of optometric care, such as paediatric optometry, contact lens fitting, ocular pathology diagnosis, binocular vision assessment, or low vision rehabilitation.
- Secondary goal – To foster students' ability to provide comprehensive patient-centred care and collaborate effectively with other health-care professionals through active involvement

in patient consultations, interprofessional education initiatives, and community outreach activities.

Service-learning component

Through designed structured clinical rotations in diverse optometry settings, including hospitals, clinics, the Phelophepa Health Train, and community health centres, students are involved in the assessment of patients from January to September. Students are provided with hands-on training in various optometric procedures such as refraction, slit-lamp examination, and ocular health assessment. There are opportunities for facilitated regular feedback sessions and mentorship opportunities with practising optometrists to support students' skill development and address areas for improvement. The students are assessed through summative and formative clinical evaluation.

Impact on community

Members of the community, including children and older persons, benefit from specialised eye care by Optometry students.



Lecturer

Innocentia Lavhengwa Takalani Sivhugwana
E: SivhugwanaLT@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Sivhugwana's field of practice is community service-learning (CSL), and she trains undergraduate and postgraduate physiotherapy students. Raised in Fondwe, Limpopo, her upbringing inspired empathy and a commitment to public health. After earning her physiotherapy degree from Wits in 2012, she worked for 10 years in rural, peri-urban, and urban communities. She believes more must be done to address social injustice, health literacy, and community empowerment. Joining academia allowed her to collaborate with students, service sectors, and partners to impact communities like Mangaung and Trompsburg. She recently completed her master's and aims to pursue a doctorate in CSL/public health, empowering students to become professionals who serve with compassion and purpose.

Module name

PTCP4800

Fourth-year students

Brief description

In their fourth year of study, Physiotherapy students provide services to Trompsburg in the Southern Free State. They participate in outreach activities to nearby schools, mobile clinics to farm areas, old age homes, lifestyle groups (such as Bophelo and the Luncheon Club), and home visits. Furthermore, fourth-year Physiotherapy students provide primary health-care services at MUCPP in the peri-urban areas of Mangaung. During a four-week rotation as members of the interdisciplinary team, students are equipped with the knowledge and practical experience to holistically treat patients with physical disabilities, respiratory conditions, injuries, or terminal illnesses during home visits or at a community health centre.

Community partners

- Patients/clients of the Mamello Community Health Centre, Trompsburg, in the Southern Free State.
- Patients/clients of the MUCPP Community Health Centre, Mangaung.

Service sector partners

- Mamello Community Health Centre
- MUCPP Community Health Centre

Outcomes for students

At the end of the clinical block, students recognise the different roles and functions of physiotherapy in primary health care in South Africa, which include starting and managing physiotherapy services at primary level. Illustrate the key responsibilities of community service physiotherapists and recognise the value of social responsibility in the CSL context. Demonstrate professional behaviour during home visits; effective assessment of a patient and home environment; identifying patient and family/caregiver needs; implementation of ICF and holistic patient intervention strategies. Students also learn the value of interdisciplinary teamwork, as well as respect for each team member's role in the patient's holistic treatment/intervention. Finally, students recognise the value of reflection and apply the elements of reflection to critical thinking and decision making throughout the process of CSL.

Service-learning component

Four students are allocated to Trompsburg for one week of interprofessional education (IPE) and two weeks of CSL. Furthermore, the same students rotate to MUCPP for one week. Upon arrival in the clinical area, they conduct community situational analysis and profiling to identify available resources and health needs in the community and provide recommendations and interventions. The interventions may include home visits and mobile clinics for patients who cannot access health facilities, health promotion, education and disease prevention programmes in the community, health screenings in the community and schools, exercise classes (such as hemiplegia or osteoarthritis exercise classes) and old-age home visits (for individual treatment/exercise class/health education). Furthermore, patients at both community health centres receive individual physiotherapy treatment for a variety of conditions.

Impact on community

The identified community health needs are addressed to the best of the students and clinical supervisors' ability. Patients who are unable to follow up with physiotherapy at the Mamello or MUCPP clinics are seen at home, which also enables the student to effectively implement a holistic patient intervention in the patient's environment.

Furthermore, the family/caregiver is provided with training or education to care for the patients. Health promotion, education, and disease prevention programmes are offered to the community, which improve their health literacy and empower them to change behaviour and lifestyle towards better health. Health screening in the community and school improves the prognosis of many diseases when managed early. Exercise classes (such as hemiplegia, geriatrics, or osteoarthritis exercise classes) and individual physiotherapy treatment improve functional outcomes and the quality of life of individuals in the community.

Module name:

Physiotherapeutic Treatment PHCP3700

Third-year students

Brief description

The aim of the module is to provide students with the requisite knowledge, experience, and attitudes to be effective on all levels of primary health care through experiential and community-based learning. Primary health-care principles are applied when treating the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Community partners

- Residents of Boikhuco Old-Age Centre
- Residents of Fichardt Park Retirement Village
- Patients/clients of the MUCPP Community Health Centre, Mangaung

Service sector partners

- Boikhuco Old-Age Centre
- MUCPP Community Health Centre
- Fichardt Park Retirement Village

Outcomes for students

Students are equipped with the knowledge, clinical skills, and caring disposition to effectively treat patients/residents on all the levels of primary health care, namely promotive, preventative, curative, and rehabilitative. Students learn empathy for the elderly as well as people with physical disabilities. They also learn to practise physiotherapy with respect in a diversity of cultures. Students come to understand the

value of care workers in different health-care settings and gain insight into the daily challenges experienced by care workers.

Service-learning component

During their service-learning clinical block, students rotate between Boikhuco, the Fichardt Park Retirement Village, and MUCPP Community Health Centre, where they present information and exercise groups to residents or patients/clients. They also offer formal and informal training sessions to all home-based care

workers and treat individual patients at the old-age homes and MUCPP Community Health Centre.

Impact on community

Patients/residents receive promotive, preventative, curative, and rehabilitative care. Through group and individual activities, our students improve the functionality and quality of life of patients and residents. Homebased carers receive formal training to improve their skills and qualifications.





Lecturer

Dr Melanie Pienaar
E: PienaarMA@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Dr Melanie Pienaar is a senior lecturer in the School of Nursing at the University of the Free State. She has more than ten years of clinical experience in the critical care environment and teaches General Nursing Science to third-year Nursing students at the UFS. Her research interests focus on health communication and chronic diseases. She completed her PhD (Nursing) in 2020.

Module name

NUGP3724

Third-year students

Brief description of the module

The service-learning module for third-year Nursing students is about wound care. Students, in groups of six to eight, identify a patient with a chronic wound. They care for and follow up on a patient with a chronic wound in the community for six weeks.

Community partners

Community members served by the service sector.

Patients with chronic wounds at, among others:

- Smallholdings around Mangaung
- Private homes
- Old-age homes
- Universitas Hospital
- Wound-care clinics

Service sector partners

Managers of:

- Old-age homes
- Universitas Hospital
- Wound-care clinics
- Primary health clinics

Wound-care representatives

- Wound-care companies
- Wound-care specialists

Service-learning component

Students form groups of six. They assess the patient, treat the wound, and address factors influencing wound healing. They visit the patient

at least twice a week and take care of the whole patient, implementing nursing care according to the factors they have assessed. They treat patients holistically and teach them how to care for their own wound(s). At the conclusion of the project, students are expected to organise and participate in a wound care day to present their projects.

Learning outcomes for students

Through service-learning in this module, students are made aware of real-life and community problems through teaching and research. Student learning and development are promoted. They learn how to do research about wound care in a team, but also how to work independently. They also learn

how to identify and solve problems, collect and analyse information, and communicate effectively.

Impact on the community

The patients learn more about wound care and wound-care products. They are educated about aspects such as a hygienic environment, aseptic procedures, and a healthy lifestyle. The wounds of many patients show considerable improvement, and in some cases the wounds heal completely. Some of the patients have been struggling with wounds for more than 20 or 30 years. Students not only educate community members but also involve staff members at hospitals and old-age homes in their wound-care projects.





Lecturer

Anna-Marie Welman

E: WelmanA@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Annemarie Welman is a highly accomplished nursing professional with a diverse background in clinical practice, education, research, and community service. She holds a bachelor's degree and multiple diplomas, along with a master's degree in Nursing. Currently pursuing a PhD in Health Professions Education, Welman has held various roles at the University of the Free State, including lecturer and coordinator positions. She is actively involved in curriculum development, assessment, and research, particularly in areas such as simulation-based education and community health. Welman's dedication to nursing education and her contributions to the field through teaching, research, and community engagement highlight her commitment to advancing health care in South Africa.



Lecturer

Mandie Jacobs

E: JacobsAC@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Mandie Jacobs is a lecturer in the first-year undergraduate nursing programme, and her field of experience is Child Psychiatry, Paediatric Nursing, and Standardised Patient Simulated Learning. With a wealth of experience spanning various nursing roles, her dedication to education and community engagement shines through in her work.

Jacobs' extensive work experience includes roles such as lecturer, as well as various nursing positions in hospitals and clinics. She holds several degrees and diplomas, including a Master of Social Science in Nursing, a Bachelor of Advanced Nursing, and diplomas in Nursing Education, Nursing Administration, and Community Health Nursing, among others. She is also registered with the South African Nursing Council (SANC).

She has supervised students in their postgraduate studies and has contributed significantly to research in nursing and health care. Moreover, she is actively engaged in community outreach programmes and has been involved with the Phelophepa Health Care Train. She has received numerous awards for her contributions to nursing education and research, including recognition for her articles in accredited journals and presentations at international and local conferences.





Lecturer

Dr Robyn Smith

E: SmithRobyn@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Dr Robyn Smith is the postgraduate programme lead in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences at the University of the Free State. She also coordinates an interprofessional community-based project within the school, focused on early childhood development in preschool-aged children and their mothers/caregivers in Mangaung and Trompsburg, Free State. A physiotherapist by profession, she has a research interest in neurodevelopment and cardiovascular diseases in children, particularly congenital heart disease and hypertension. She also explores the impact of maternal health and well-being on early childhood development outcomes. In the area of teaching and learning, her focus includes communication in multilingual health-care settings, work-integrated learning, and academic support for postgraduate students, particularly their progression in the health and rehabilitation sciences.



Lecturer

Dr Ronelle Jansen

E: jansenro@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Dr Ronelle Jansen is a senior lecturer in the School of Nursing at the University of the Free State. She holds an MSocSc (Nursing), an MCur (Psychiatric Nursing Science), and a PhD (Nursing). With more than 12 years of clinical experience in various mental health settings, she taught Psychiatric Nursing to fourth-year Nursing students from 2007 to 2023. She also oversees the Nursing Ethics module for first-year Bachelor of Nursing and postgraduate students.

Her professional interests lie in mental health and psychiatric nursing, and she has contributed to international research projects, including the Erasmus+ and the European Union-funded Mega Project. Dr Jansen serves as the Engaged Scholarship Coordinator for the School of Nursing and is actively involved in community service-learning and interprofessional education.

Module name

General Nursing Theory NUGT1514

First-year students

Brief description of the module

The first-year General Nursing Theory module is purposed to develop students who can render holistic nursing care to individuals in various health care and community settings. This ability is built on an understanding of the unique environments in which their potential clients and patients live.

Service sector partners

Mangaung Municipality: six early childhood development centres

- Brandwag Pre-primary
- ABC Crèche
- Smurf Valley
- Karabelo Daycare
- Leratong Daycare
- Bloemfontein East

Kopanong Municipality: four early childhood development centres

- Hou Moed
- Lesang Bana
- Trompies Pre-primary
- Favoured Pre-primary
- PT Sanders Intermediate School

Outcomes for students

- Community being served:
- The managers, teachers/childminders, caregivers, and children of the partnership ECDs.

Service-learning component

During their first academic year, student nurses are exposed to engaged teaching and learning, while participating in community engagement and interprofessional learning activities. Students are expected to gather research data through individual interviews held with the caregivers of children attending the identified early childhood development centres (ECDs). The integration





of theory and practice is promoted, since the students have the opportunity to practise measuring the weight, height, blood pressure, and waist circumference of adult persons. Learning from and about other professions is promoted, since the community visits are executed within an interprofessional group of nurses, occupational therapists, biokinetics, physiotherapy, and language practice students.

Learning outcomes for students

- Participate in contextualised, well-structured activities aimed at identifying and addressing the needs of the community.
- Reflect and report on the experiences to gain a deeper understanding of the linkage between theory and practice.
- Form and manage different partnerships.
- Demonstrate effective communication skills in daily contact activities with individuals, groups, and the community.

- Gather data through the communication assessment process, while collaborating on an interprofessional and community level.
- Demonstrate competency in collecting, managing, and analysing community survey data.
- Develop a health promotion intervention that will address the identified community needs.

Impact on the community

The students need to develop a health promotion intervention aimed at addressing an identified need in the specific ECD. This can be in the form of a pamphlet, digital story, radio talk, or poster. The production of creative products where health information is communicated to the children and community members can lead to an improvement in health, as well as increased awareness on issues that affect them.



Faculty of The Humanities



Lecturer

Dr Annebelle Smit
E: SmitA1@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Annebelle Smit began her drama and theatre arts journey at the University of the Free State (UFS), earning her BA in 2010, followed by honours and master's degrees with distinction. She later completed a PhD in Drama and Theatre Arts, focusing on Afrikaans drama ideologies.

A stage actor, designer, director, and full-time lecturer, Dr Smit is deeply passionate about theatre history, theatre for young audiences, and postgraduate supervision, making her a distinguished figure in her field. She is also dedicated to the puppet theatre project at Halaletsang Daycare Centre in Soutpan, where she collects toys and clothing for the children, strengthening community bonds. The school's gratitude reinforces the impact of these efforts, helping her students develop a deeper understanding of social issues, empathy, and inclusion.

Her engagement with diverse communities provides valuable practical experience, and nurtures a spirit of giving, making the theatre arts programme even more meaningful. Dr Smit has also shared her research on theatre for young audiences at international conferences, contributing to global discussions in the field.

Module name

Theatre for Young Audiences **DRAT2707**

Brief description of projects

1. *Puppet theatre*

As part of their second-year DRAT2707 module (Theatre for Young Audiences), the students created their own puppets to perform at Patrysies @ Fichardtkruin Pre-Primary School. With assistance from Dr Rosaline Sebolao, they also performed at Soutpan, collecting toys and clothes for the learners, which were distributed during the puppet shows.

The trip to Soutpan proved transformative for the Drama students, offering them a gateway into the world of puppet theatre. Immersed in this unique art form, they gained practical skills and profound insights. Throughout their time in Soutpan, the dedication to nurturing the students' growth was evident. Engaging with puppetry, they discovered its magic and complexity, thanks to the commitment of

their educators. These encounters provided invaluable insights and mentorship, offering students a deeper understanding of puppetry's artistry. Through workshops and discussions, they learned about bringing characters to life on stage.

Upon returning from Soutpan, students have a newfound passion for the dramatic arts. The experiences broadened their horizons, ignited their imagination, and equipped them with confidence for their academic and artistic journeys.

Additionally, clothing and toys were donated to the school. In addition, 30 blankets were donated to the Soutpan community with the help of Radio Rosestad.

2. Film Hub

The Visual Media Hub hosted a Short Film Crash Course for members of the public. Members of the South African Sign Language Short Learning programme made videos for hearing impaired people.

3. Theatre for young production: Mielie Moon Rocket

In September, the Bolakanang Youth Centre had the opportunity to attend a production of *The Mielie Moon Rocket* in the Rehearsal Room Theatre. Bolokanang, which translates to 'We care for each other', provides a home for 30 children ranging from birth to 19 years old. Located 35 km from Bloemfontein near Philip Sanders Resort, it is part of the ENGO family.

4. Seminar at Rosenhof High School on consent culture

A workshop was conducted for the staff at Rosenhoff High School, focused on body sovereignty, boundary practice, rape culture, and consent culture. The session emphasised the importance of advocating consent culture as a vital alternative to rape culture.

5. Drama workshops presented at the Reza de Wet Theatre Festival by De Beer Cloete and Oliver Bonga

Workshops were presented on Drama and Theatre as a field of study, the future of the arts in the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and movement and dance.

6. Patient simulations for the Department of Psychology

In March, final-year Drama honours and master's students participated in patient simulation examinations. Acting students portrayed patients exhibiting moderate to severe psychological disturbances, while Psychology students were tasked with diagnosing these conditions.

7. Medical moulage (make-up simulation) for Pelonomi Academic Hospital and the National Department of Health

Make-up students applied moulage to simulate emergency room injuries on patients, who were then diagnosed by final-year medical students.

8. All girls' festival

DeBeer Cloete and Barend Kriel, prominent figures on the local Bloemfontein theatre scene, specialise in consent culture and devised theatre. They were invited to lead a series of workshops for the All Girls' school festival, hosted by the nationally renowned Eunice High School in Bloemfontein. Each participating school was tasked with devising a short drama based on a topic of their choice. Cloete and Kriel guided the young theatre artists to expand the thematic scope of their devised work, focusing on identity, empowerment, and collaboration through creative and interactive activities. The participants, high school learners from various schools across South Africa, shared a passion for drama and performance. The workshops aimed to equip them with the skills, knowledge, and inspiration to further develop their work. At the end of the All Girls' Festival, the devised pieces were adjudicated, and prizes were awarded in categories such as best technical, ensemble, performance, and improvement. The weekend of theatrical exploration resulted in several original theatre pieces reflecting the experiences and perspectives of young women in 21st-Century South Africa.

9. The Last Firefly – special performance

The UFS Department of Drama and Theatre Arts staged *The Last Firefly*, a TYA play by renowned American playwright Naomi Iizuka. The play follows the journey of Boom, a young boy on a mythical quest to find his father, the god of thunder, and explores its relevance to the GBV crisis in South Africa. Directed by DeBeer Cloete and Barend Kriel, the production also served as a form of social outreach. Learners from Rosenhof High School, an industrial school, were invited



to watch the play for free, with transportation provided. Deeply moved by the characters' situations and inspired by Boom's actions, the learners enthusiastically engaged with the student actors after the show, viewing them as new role models. This theatrical experience highlighted the power of storytelling to ignite imagination and empower individuals of all ages and genders to effect change in their lives.

10. Gender-based violence campaign

The Department of Drama and Theatre Arts and the Faculty of Health Sciences created awareness about gender-based violence in February by distributing pamphlets with important contact numbers.

Community partners

- Community members served by the service sector.

Service sector partners

- Radio Rosestad
- Schools (crèches at Soutpan, Rutanang Primary School, Dr Visser Primary School, Rosenhof High School, and Bloemfontein Primary School)
- The Bloemfontein Library

Service-learning component

In the Department of Drama, we do not have a specific service-learning module, but our projects form part

of Theatre for Young Audiences and Puppet Theatre in the module Drama and Performance Studies 2 (DRAT2707). All the other projects are performed by staff and students in a personal capacity.

Outcomes for students

The students involved in these projects experienced significant personal and professional growth:

- They gained practical skills and insights into various aspects of drama, theatre, and related fields.
- They developed a deeper understanding of social issues and their role in addressing them through artistic expression.
- They had opportunities to apply their knowledge and creativity in real-world settings, making a positive impact on communities.
- They built confidence in their abilities and developed a sense of responsibility towards society.
- They formed meaningful connections with peers, mentors, and community members, fostering collaboration and mutual support.
- They were inspired to pursue further academic and artistic endeavours, motivated by their experiences and the impact they made.

Impact on the community

These community engagement efforts demonstrated the department's commitment to enriching the lives of individuals and fostering artistic expression within the community.





Lecturer

Dr Merlene Esau
E: esaumc@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Dr Merlene Esau is a lecturer in the Department of Social Work, focusing on Community Work as a primary method of Social Work. She also coordinates the community work projects of second-year Social Work students. These students engage with various communities, aiming to design and implement projects based on the challenges identified in the specific community. She believes that students should also involve community members in the process to ensure the sustainability of these projects.

Module name

Social Work Professional Practice SWPP2706
Second-year students

Brief description of module

This module focuses on applying theoretical work learned in different Social Work modules to practical real life and acquainting students with the dynamics they will encounter in dealing with communities and individuals. The aim is to enable students to apply the theory related to community work in a practical, real-life project.

Community partners

- Pregnant adolescents and young adults in the Mangaung area
- Young adults in the Heidedal community
- Community members served by the service sector

Service sector partners

- UFS Student Counselling and Development
- Roseview Primary School
- Bloemfontein Primary School
- ENGO Child and Youth Centre
- ROC Foundation, Heidedal

Outcomes for the students

Students should be able to apply their academic competence skills to solve problems and enhance their critical skills by becoming civically engaged in a community. Students should also demonstrate an understanding of person-in-environment: appreciating the environment that consists of the natural, geographic environment, and various social



systems that surround and impact individual and family functioning.

Impact on the community

The pregnancy crisis centre provides understanding to young pregnant mothers on how to take care

of themselves during their pregnancies in order to have healthy pregnancy journeys. It also assists young mothers understand that being a young mother does not mean you have failed, but instead it motivates them to reach their goals in order to be successful.



Lecturer

Dr Tania Coetzee

E: CoetzeeT@ufs.ac.za



Lecturer

Dr Ina Gouws

E: GouwsCM@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Dr Tania Coetzee obtained her PhD, titled *Forms of state, government systems and system stability in South Africa*, at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa, in 2001. She worked in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology and then joined the Department of Political Science. In 2006, she joined the Programme in Governance and Political Transformation and since 2008, she has been the Programme Director. Dr Coetzee has a passion for her undergraduate and postgraduate students. In addition to lecturing several postgraduate modules, she is extensively involved as supervisor of master's and doctoral students, of which 86 and 13 have been completed, respectively, as well as acting as external examiner for master's dissertations and PhD theses. Areas of specialisation include governance, constitutions, governance leadership, and democratic governance. She has presented 24 conference papers and published more than 20 articles.

Bio:

Born in Johannesburg and raised in Magaliesburg, Dr Ina Gouws completed her education at the North-West University, achieving a BA, BAHons, MA, and a PhD in Public Management and Governance. She commenced her academic journey as a lecturer at the North-West University's Vaal Campus in 2003. In 2016, she joined the University of the Free State as Senior Lecturer in the Programme for Governance and Political Transformation. Dr Gouws has been influential in revitalising the Governance programme, introducing new modules for both postgraduate and undergraduate levels. To ensure the quality of these curriculum enhancements, she applied for and was awarded a UFS SoTL Fellowship, underscoring her commitment to scholarly evaluation and publication. Furthermore, her research is branching out into digital ethics in higher education teaching, for which a project is underway.

Module name

Governance and Political Transformation **GOVE3724**

Third-year students

Brief description of the module

Students actively collaborate with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to advance and fortify the culture of good governance principles within these organisations. They play a pivotal role in evaluating and enhancing the governance practices of NGOs in Mangaung and surrounding communities. Each student is tasked with assessing two specific governance principles, such as participation, transformation, responsibility, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, or leadership, and engages directly with the NGOs to gather relevant information. Subsequently, students formulate action plans aimed at improving governance principles in alignment with the existing practices of the NGOs. During this process, students undergo three assessment activities, including theoretical tests, reflective exercises, and the development of action plans, culminating in the creation of informative videos.

Community partners

- Community members served by the service sector.

Service sector partners

- NGOs in Mangaung

Service-learning component

As the Programme in Governance and Political Transformation has a specific niche and focus, it is obvious that an opportunity will be provided for learners of the programme to take a service-learning module. The niche and focus of the programme are governance. The establishment of good governance with the accompanying value system is of crucial importance for South Africa. The imperative to develop knowledge discernment and skills within the framework of governance, as well as the basic reasons for the creation of a service-learning module are evident, and therefore there is a great need to empower decision makers within political management and also to assist NGOs in their governance practices.

Outcomes for students

The student must be able to

- integrate and understand knowledge about the different fields and disciplines of Political Science, Public Administration, and Communication;
- focus on the governance practices of the NGOs;
- critically apply the knowledge to the practical experience in the community;
- critically apply the theory of governance to practical situations in the community;
- compare and evaluate the practical knowledge gained through the different interactions with the NGOs;
- analyse the environment of the non-governmental organisation and contextualise the challenges and problems of the NGO;
- reflect on the complexity of NGO structures, functions, and challenges;
- identify and recommend possible suggestions to address the governance challenges of NGOs;
- create a plan of action on how to address the issues and improve governance practices for NGOs;
- link the relevant governance theory to the action plan; and
- realise that he/she can learn from the NGOs and that the principle of reciprocal learning is applicable.

Impact on community

The primary objective of this module is to familiarise students with the problems and challenges of governance in greater society. In the current landscape, the urgency to address governance crises, particularly in the effective implementation of policies to meet community needs through NGOs, is unmistakable. Learners are equipped to actively engage and contribute to the enhancement of good governance practices. By engaging in discussions with NGOs, students gain insights into the governance practices adopted by NGO leaders. Moreover, students actively engage in the operational aspects of NGOs and assist them in enhancing governance practices; they become part of the different projects and services that the NGOs are offering.



Lecturer

Pravani Naidoo

E: NaidooP@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Pravani Naidoo holds a PhD in Psychology from the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Her research focuses on positive psychology and qualitative research methodology. She has published articles in peer-reviewed journals and chapters in academic books and successfully supervised three PhD and 22 master's graduates to date. Dr Naidoo has demonstrated a strong commitment to engaged teaching and learning, and specifically, service-learning endeavours that are grounded within Positive Psychology in the Psychology Honours and Applied Master's programmes.

Module name

PSHC6804 Community and Social Psychology

Brief description of the module

Grounded in the Community and Social Psychology PSHC6804 module of the Psychology Honours programme, this initiative provides our Honours students with critical hands-on experience while delivering much-needed psychoeducational support to vulnerable communities.

Community partners

The community we focused on is the school staff, hostel workers and parents of learners at Lettie Fouché School, which serves children with intellectual disabilities. The risks to well-being include high levels of stress, difficulty coping with the demands of their jobs (staff) and parenting, and vulnerability to burnout. Accordingly, the trio of interventions that PSHC6804 student groups will plan aim to promote well-being among these groups using a blended approach to interventions.

Service sector partner

- Lettie Fouché School

Service-learning component

PSHC6804A aims to promote well-being at the Lettie Fouché School.

Outcomes for students

The UFS graduate attributes of community engagement, critical thinking, problem-solving, academic

competence, digital skills and competencies, ethical reasoning, and oral communication are primarily targeted through the service-learning initiative.

For 2024, the 15 Psychology Honours students engaged in planning, implementing, and evaluating psychoeducational interventions to promote well-being, in collaboration with community partners at Lettie Fouché School in Bloemfontein, through a blended approach to service-learning:

- Infographics for staff (one student group)
- Infographic intervention for parents (one student group)

- Face-to-face intervention for hostel workers (one student group)

Students engaged collaboratively in practical service-learning, applying their theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, while contributing meaningfully to promoting the well-being of these communities.

Impact on community

As evidenced by feedback from community members, the initiative equips the target groups and members of the public further, with easily accessible tools to support well-being promotion in often vulnerable groups.



Lecturer

Werner Stander

E: StanderWJ@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Werner Stander is an established choral conductor and music education specialist from South Africa with a classical choral background and a passion for rock music genres. He started conducting his high school choir in his Grade 11 school year and became the Director of the Cantu Maluti Youth Choir at the age of 18.

In August 2020, he was appointed Director of Music of the world-renowned Bloemfontein Children's Choir (BCC). The BCC toured Europe at the end of 2022 and had sold-out performances in Belgium and France. The choir particularly enjoyed their performance at Euro Disney. This choir also won the junior division of the Cape Town Eisteddfod in 2023 and received two gold medals. In September 2022, he was appointed as Choirmaster at the University of the Free State's (UFS) Institutional and Bloemfontein Campus Choirs, overseeing all three UFS campus choirs. In October 2023, the UFS Institutional Choir took part in the European Choir Games in Norrköping, Sweden, under his direction. The choir walked away as winners of both their categories and won gold. The choir was also awarded a gold medal from the Grand Prix of Nations at the European Choir Games.

Stander is a PhD candidate in music (choral studies) at the University of the Free State. He is studying under Dr Frelet de Villiers (UFS) and Dr Stuart Chapman Hill (Webster University, USA). Stander is also a lecturer in Music Education and Service-Learning (units) at the Odeion School of Music (UFS).

Module name

Service-Learning **MUSD3702**

Third-year students

Brief description of the module

This module introduced students to the concept of an 'informance' in music education. It consisted of several units. In the first unit, students explored the difference between performance and informance, delving into pedagogical advantages and social engagement aspects. The second unit focused on comparing informance to service-learning, with an emphasis on constructivist learning theories. Moving on, students studied Edwin Gordon's Music Learning Theory to understand the music learning



process. In another unit, students planned and submitted an informance session, including details such as date, venue, and a structured lesson plan. Finally, students presented their informance to the Onze Rust Primary community and submitted a final portfolio documenting their preparation, creative process, and a reflective essay on their performance.

Community partners

School learners and teachers being served by the service sector.

Service sector partner

- Onze Rust Primary School

Service-learning component

This module aims to develop oral training through music by providing music lessons to

children and improving their understanding of music.

Outcomes for the students

- To have an understanding of what informance is, how it is defined, and to have a better understanding of what is expected of the student.
- To teach and develop oral training through music within the context of service-learning.
- To formulate the comparison between informance and service-learning.

Impact on the community

The children had the opportunity to develop musically throughout the year, and the students also developed their skills in engaging with the learners, which changed their outlook on music as a whole.

A young woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing clear-framed glasses and a pink shirt, is smiling while reading a large open book. She is in a library, with bookshelves filled with books visible in the background. A red banner with white text is overlaid on the image.

Faculty of Law



Lecturer

Christopher Rawson
E: RawsonCM@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Christopher Rawson holds an LLB degree from the UFS and is currently the acting Director of the UFS Law Clinic. Rawson has a strong focus on engaged scholarship through strategic litigation, community partnerships, and legal education initiatives. Through collaboration and strategic partnerships with stakeholders in the legal profession, the UFS Law Clinic has enhanced access to justice, provided training, support, and legal assistance to underserved communities, trained socially conscious Law students, and participated in impact litigation to address systemic injustice and reinforce the role of law in social transformation. Rawson is particularly passionate about human rights litigation and integrating legal practice with community-based research and education, ensuring that the clinic's work has a tangible positive impact on society.

Module name

Practical Legal Skills LPLS 3713

Third-year students

Brief description of module

This module aims to familiarise students with the legal principles that apply to professional conduct, file management, and costs. LPLS 3713 aims to equip students with the skills to understand and practise professional conduct, conduct client consultations, manage a client file, draft formal court documents, and prepare a bill of costs.

Community partners

Community members served by the service sector.

Service sector partners

- South African Police Service
- Legal practitioners
- ROC Foundation
- Batho Ba Lerato Foundation (Botshabelo)
- POWA Tshireletso against women abuse (Thaba Nchu)
- Hennenman Victim Empowerment (Hennenman)

Service-learning component

Upon completion of this module, students will demonstrate proficient client consultation and interviewing skills across various legal matters, including criminal, civil, contractual, and divorce cases, as well as wills. They will understand and apply professional rules of conduct when taking instructions and representing clients, compiling checklists for consultations, and drafting legal documents. Moreover, students will differentiate between different legal costs and responsibilities, explain the importance of client file notes, and apply principles of good client care. They will reflect on legal professional liability and advise clients on litigation prospects and alternative dispute resolution procedures. Additionally, students will draft formal correspondence, affidavits, pleadings, and particulars of claim, while critically discussing professional rules in court proceedings. They will collaborate effectively in simulated court proceedings, comply with court procedure and etiquette, and reflect on the role of legal practitioners in shaping and promoting social justice goals. Finally, students will reflect on their workplace exposure experience and demonstrate their learning.

Outcomes for students

- To prepare the students for life after graduation by providing them with practical legal skills and applying the rules of professional conduct in taking instructions and representing clients.

Impact on community

This benefits the student communities by providing them with experience, and the communities affected by the criminal offenses through free legal services/representation.

Module name

Clinical Legal Education **LCLE4810/4820**

Third-year students

Brief description of module

This module focuses on the practice of law and bringing actualisation and/or simulation to the teaching of law. It is presented in the Department of Public Law.

Community partners

- Thaba Nchu and Botshabelo community members

Service sector partners

- Legal practitioners
- South African Police Service

Service-learning component

Students should be able to reflect on access to justice within the framework of the South African constitution, ensuring legal accessibility for all members of society. They will develop an understanding of the role of LLB graduates and legal practitioners in promoting social justice objectives, including fairness, legitimacy, efficacy, and equity. Furthermore, students will learn to address the moral dimensions of legal issues and apply solutions within the historical context of South African law. They will differentiate between traditional dispute resolution complexities and a transformative global perspective on handling legal disputes with social conscientiousness. Additionally, students will demonstrate analytical skills, sound judgment, and basic research techniques in a legal environment, communicating effectively and ethically in both individual and team settings. They will apply risk management skills, maintain concurrent client matters, and handle telephone calls professionally. Moreover, students will gain practical skills in drafting legal documents, consulting with clients, and navigating court procedures and etiquette.

Outcomes for students

Students learn how to effectively approach moral dimensions of legal problems that identify the core of the legal issue. It enables students to resolve legal problems within the context of the non-legal factors that bear on the client- and community-centred solutions to a specific legal problem by applying and integrating multiple sources.

Impact on community

Teaches students how to apply ethical principles when engaging with legal work and applying legal sources in research and drafting. Students apply these skills by assisting community members with legal documents.



Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences



Lecturer

Prof Gerhard Bosman
E: bosmang@ufs.ac.za



Lecturer

Hein Raubenheimer
E: RaubenheimerH@ufs.ac.za

Bio

A researcher and engaged scholar in earth architecture, Gerhard Bosman is based in the Earth Unit (EU) within the Department of Architecture in the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the University of the Free State (UFS). The EU has been collaborating with the UNESCO Chair in Earthen Architecture, Construction Cultures, and Sustainable Development since 2003.

His background in developmental community training, combined with UFS students' work-integrated learning, has shaped a new approach to service-learning in architecture. Since 2021, his teaching and learning scholarship has focused on rural hands-on service-learning workshops, where students work alongside Basotho *litema* [pronounced: di-te-ma] earth wall decoration artists in the Eastern Free State of South Africa. Through this engagement, he explores the intersection of students' lived worlds, traditional craftsmanship, sustainable architecture, and community development.

Bio

Hein Raubenheimer has been a full-time lecturer at the UFS since 2010. Since his appointment, he has lectured on design and construction modules to all year groups (first- to fifth-year). He remains involved in architectural practice to ensure that his teaching is professionally relevant. Through the Department of Architecture's Earth Unit, he initiated, designed, and built House Mohatlane (2015–2022) in Phase 9, Bloemfontein, exposing Architecture students to low-cost hybrid earth-constructed buildings. Raubenheimer remains part of the Earth Unit's service-learning initiatives, reaching rural communities with annual second-year Construction module tours.





Lecturer

David van der Merwe

E: VanDerMerweDPG@ufs.ac.za

Bio

David van der Merwe is a professional architect, lecturer, and PhD candidate at the University of the Free State (UFS). His academic and professional work focuses on the intersection of architectural practice and research. He contributes to both teaching and scholarly discourse in the built environment.

Module name

CONS 2600

Brief description

Since 2024, service-learning has explored a different method of using lived experience, the traditional vernacular linking of spaces, care, and engagement to celebrate culture and place as architecture. The celebration of identity and culture is connected to architectural places. This celebration depends on participatory action research and design thinking, which holds a built form that transcends into significant architecture to reflect site and context, culture, and place-making. Smaller student groups travel on tours for this service-learning component and visit and participate for two days in one of four rural sites in the Eastern Free State. The assignment consists of different parts that include organising tasks, collecting raw materials, and preparing wall surfaces. Rural earth-building artists and artisans are asked to teach the art of traditional Basotho *litema* wall decoration skills to second-year students. The service-learning activities are combined with a continuous research project concerned with the current perception around the disappearing art of *litema*, depending on vernacular earth-constructed dwellings in the central parts of South Africa.

Community partners

The service-learning supports and celebrates the role of women in rural areas as a conservation effort of local traditional art using experimental research on architectural place-making (phenomenology). The built environment's domestic spaces include significant culturally found earth-constructed dwellings in rural parts of central South Africa. Sites visited on a two-year cycle are Duikerfontein near Paul Roux, Clear Water Farm near Warden, Sekgotlong Farm near Slabberts, and the Basotho Cultural Village near Qwaqwa.

Service sector partners

- Department of Sports, Arts, and Culture at the Basotho Cultural Village
- Golden Gate Highlands National Park of the South African National Parks (SANParks)

Service-learning component

This service-learning component aims to

- use participatory action research and design thinking activities to link the students' lived experiences with other lived experiences;
- engage students with service-learning activities to develop a sense of progression from the private to the public domains as environmental levels between thresholds; and
- provide students with an investigative lens of care and engagement to identify culturally significant architecture.

Outcomes for students

Students learn from the diversity in which identity, culture, and language present a multitude of reactions for solving problems, transforming the typical classroom. Students' engagement in a real-life situation outside the classroom provides an informal environment to build relationships of care.

The following broad outcomes are integrated:

- The students use and trust their lived experience of space.

- The students experience another kind of spatial experience of domestic spaces through SL than previously known.
- The students are exposed to an act of care and engagement to appreciate diversity, identity, and culture embedded in vernacular placemaking as a significant component of architecture.

Impact on community

This decolonised service-learning approach supports three aspects of UNESCO's Art Lab for Human Rights and Dialogue. Firstly, it is concerned with art-based practices. Secondly, it provides a platform for underrepresented voices. Thirdly, it facilitates conversation among experienced trainers, practitioners, and researchers about being 'artists'.

The service-learning activities are a visual dialogue between the rural *litema* earth-wall decoration artists and artisans of earth-constructed dwellings. This effort promotes indigenous building practices in South Africa to address the loss of local heritage. The artists and artisans are grateful for the annual support that students can provide to reapply *litema* decorations to the earth-plaster walls of the rural dwellings or, in the case of the Basotho Cultural Village, to repair and maintain their museum buildings.



Lecturer

Doretha Jacobs
E: jacobsd@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Doretha Jacobs' academic foundation was laid at Jim Fouché High School in Bloemfontein. Furthering her education, she attained a Higher Diploma in Clothing and Textiles from Technicon OFS. With more than two decades of dedicated service, Jacobs has played a crucial role at the UFS, particularly in professional services. Her journey began in 1997, and over the years she has not only served as a senior officer but also contributed as a part-time lecturer in the Department of Clothing and Textiles from 1999 to 2011. Before joining the university, she held a position as instructor at the Free State Residential Care Centre from 1995 to 1997, focusing on textiles. Her career path has been marked by a commitment to education and professional development. Demonstrating leadership beyond the university setting, Jacobs actively participates in community projects. She leads the Ruforum project, exemplifying her commitment to community development. Additionally, her role as a moderator at Thaba Nchu College underlines her leadership in an educational context.

Module name

Community Development **CNCD3732**

Third-year students

Brief description of projects

This module equips students with the relevant knowledge and skills needed for effective participation in socio-economic development. The focus is on community development and guides students in planning and executing projects through practical experience and observation.

Community projects at Lettie Fouché

Lettie Fouché School in the Free State teaches skills to children with disabilities for future employment. Students are split into groups of three, rotating every two weeks to share knowledge and teach school learners different skills such as embroidery, papermaking, gardening, and more.

1. Embroidery

The final-year students discovered that embroidering on canvas is simpler than traditional methods. Lettie Fouché learners painted simple designs on canvas and then outlined internet images on them. They were

taught to embroider using these outlines, which was successful. The head schoolteacher plans to continue teaching this skill, as it is easy to learn and could provide income for the learners after school.

2. *Papermaking*

Papermaking proved to be a valuable skill for creating unique cards and invitations. University students share knowledge with Lettie Fouché learners on how to make paper pulp from recycled materials and use it to craft new sheets of paper. They also shared knowledge on how to dry flowers to enhance the paper's appearance. In the following week, they were taught to make paper beads for jewellery. Although most learners found these skills easy to grasp, some with severe sensory disabilities required assistance with the process.

3. *Making bags from onion bags*

University students aimed to promote sustainability by sharing knowledge with Lettie Fouché learners on how to make bags from recycled onion bags and scrap material. However, learners encountered challenges in measuring, cutting, and assembling the bags. Despite difficulties, students assisted learners in completing the task.

4. *Garden development*

Students educated Lettie Fouché learners on the importance of consuming fresh fruits and vegetables daily. They learned how to plant and care for vegetables, potentially enabling them to sell produce at farmers markets. Learners enthusiastically engaged in the process, demonstrating a clear understanding and commitment to the activity.

5. *Leatherwork*

Students introduced Lettie Fouché learners to leatherwork, teaching them to craft simple wallets and keychains. The success of the project indicates future incorporation of leatherwork into the curriculum.

6. *Hydroponics*

Lettie Fouché learners received instruction on hydroponics, a method of growing plants in water, instead of growing them in soil. Learners struggled to understand the theory behind hydroponics, particularly testing the pH of the water. For next year, students proposed

exploring an alternative to growing vegetables that is not so dependent on knowledge of the theory to make it successful.

Community Projects at the Free State Residential Care Centre (Vrystaat Nasorgsentrum)

The Free State Residential Care Centre (Vrystaat Nasorgsentrum) assists physically and mentally disabled individuals over the age of 18 to find purpose in the skills they have accumulated over the years to earn an income for themselves, while being in a safe environment and surrounded by individuals with similar disabilities.

Students assist the staff in explaining certain skills to the individuals of the centre, for example, woodwork, needlework, baking, helping in the kitchen, growing plants, and making soap and candles. They also helped to find a market for the things made daily by the disabled, to continue selling their products and supporting the centre.

1. *Woodwork*

Students who assisted with woodwork found it rewarding to work alongside individuals and caregivers at the centre. They learned valuable skills during practical engagement in the community and helped create a market for the centre's woodwork products, ensuring continued support.

2. *Needlework*

Students with prior experience in clothing construction assist community members residing at the centre with needlework. They improve existing products and introduce new ideas, such as making handbag straps from scrap materials. The success of these initiatives has prompted plans for future production.

3. *Bakery*

Despite students' baking expertise, they face resistance from individuals and caregivers in implementing new ideas at the bakery. This challenge teaches students to adapt in difficult situations, highlighting the importance of understanding real-life working conditions.

4. *Kitchen work*

Students assisting in the kitchen find it to be a straightforward task. They support community members with meal preparation, serving, and kitchen hygiene, offering suggestions for improvement where needed.



5. *Growing Plants*

Students find success in selling plants from the centre's nursery, due to correct pricing and the caretakers' openness to new ideas. Continued sales of the plants will ensure the centre's sustainability.

6. *Soaps and Candles*

Students share knowledge with community members about soap and/or candle making. This is something the students have not done before, which makes it difficult for them to assist the individuals. The caregivers of community members are not open to new ideas. This creates a challenge for the students to sell the candles and the soaps effectively. Difficulties arise with pricing and marketing the products, affecting

sales opportunities. These challenges equip students with problem solving skills.

Community partners

- Learners at Lettie Fouché School
- Residents at the Free State Residential Care Centre, Bloemfontein

Service sector partners

- Lettie Fouché School, Bloemfontein
- Free State Residential Care Centre, Bloemfontein

Service-learning component

- Demonstrate the acquisition of unique skills through community engagement, contributing to personal and professional development.

- 
- Enhance communication and teamwork skills through collaboration with individuals with disabilities in the community.
 - Understand the importance of social responsibility and community service in shaping the future of local communities.
 - Apply learnt skills to empower individuals with disabilities, enabling them to generate income and alleviate food insecurity.
 - Engage in social interaction and community bonding activities, fostering empathy and understanding.

Outcomes for students

By the end of this module, students will

- understand what community development is and how it works;

- know about leadership, teaching adults, training groups, and facilitating;
- learn how conflict affects relationships and organisations, and how communication can help;
- be able to plan, carry out, and review a community project; and
- evaluate how well the project went and suggest changes for next time.

Impact on the community

Students can truthfully say that they played an important role in the future of their community, as they shared knowledge and skills with individuals with disabilities to enhance their skills, ensure an income for themselves, and enhance food security for some of these individuals.



Lecturer

Dr Kgosi Mocwagae

E: mocwagaeks@gmail.com

Bio

Dr Kgosi Mocwagae, Senior Lecturer and Academic Head of the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, holds a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning. Dr Mocwagae is a professionally registered urban and regional planner. He has nine years of lecturing experience, having taught honours and master's students, as well as supervising master's and PhD candidates.

Module name

Applied Regional Planning Project **URRP7906**

Master's programme

Brief description of the module

This module aims to equip students with skills for the creative identification, assessment, and formulation of regional planning problems. Students learn how to collaborate effectively in multidisciplinary environments, being equipped with leadership and management skills, and taking initiative while performing professional functions critical to project success.

Community partners

The students engage with the community and explore regional planning problems in the Free State. They are given an assignment to plan a Sustainable District Development Model for the Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality.

Service sector partner

- Thabo Mofutsanyana District Municipality

Service-learning component

- Students prepare a spatial development framework
- Students conduct a regional development research project in a team

Outcomes for the students

Upon completion of this module, students will be able to

- develop a comprehensive framework for a regional planning project;

- demonstrate creativity and innovation in identifying, assessing, and formulating regional planning problems;
- evaluate the impact, risks, and advantages of development proposals, analyse and assess alternative solutions;
- collaborate effectively as team members in multidisciplinary environments, exhibiting leadership, management skills, and initiative that are crucial for project success; and
- apply appropriate techniques to plan and execute a regional planning project, with the ability to effectively articulate the execution process.

Impact on the community

Through the preparation of spatial development frameworks and regional development research projects, students contribute directly to community planning and development.

These assignments provide

- contextual insights that inform local decision-making;
- collaborative engagement with stakeholders, fostering inclusive development;
- practical solutions tailored to regional challenges;
- capacity building through shared knowledge and skills; and
- the integration of academic work with real-world application, enhancing both student learning and community resilience.

Module name

Urban and Regional Basic Practice Module **URBP6805**

Master's Programme

Brief description of the module

This module aims to introduce students to the everyday practical tasks of urban and regional planners – from the analysis of a planning assignment and site to the design and implementation of a planning task.

Service sector partners

- Experienced urban and regional planners (for the students to get practical experience of the work they do daily)

Service-learning component

Students engage with the community and execute basic tasks expected of an urban and regional planner, such as a site analysis; the engagement of auxiliary disciplines and specialist reports; the preparation and assessment of planning-related (change of land use) applications; and the design of layout plans.

Outcomes for the students

Upon completion of this module, students will demonstrate proficiency in basic technical aspects and auxiliary disciplines essential to urban planning, understand space and its significance in urban development, analyse the dynamic interaction between individuals and their spatial surroundings, apply principles of transportation planning, evaluate urban design and architectural principles, understand land use management principles, engage in the planning process, conduct fieldwork, develop infrastructure development plans, and navigate the process of change in land use applications.

Impact on the community

The students get insight into the practical side of urban and regional planning and gain hands-on experience. There is no direct impact on the community, because the students do not work directly with communities, but work with practitioners in the municipality. Through service-learning, students apply core planning tasks, such as site analysis, interdisciplinary collaboration, land use application assessments, and layout design, directly within community contexts.

These activities

- provide evidence-based input for local development initiatives;
- enhance community participation in planning processes;
- support informed decision-making through specialist reports and assessments; and
- contribute to sustainable spatial planning and improved land use outcomes.

This engagement fosters mutual learning and empowers communities through practical, locally relevant planning support.



Lecturer

Dr Rouxan Fouché
E: Foucherc@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Dr Rouxan Colin Fouché is a seasoned lecturer with a strong background in computer science and informatics. He holds a PhD in Computer Information Systems from the University of the Free State (UFS), where his research addressed the South African digital divide through service-learning. He also earned his MSc and BCom Honours from UFS, consistently excelling in research. Active in academia since 2004, he was appointed permanently in 2015 to teach second-year students. His teaching spans first-year to honours modules, and he supervises postgraduate students. His research includes blockchain, HCI, and action research. He coordinates the ITSL project to boost community computer literacy and has received the Vice-Chancellor's Award for Community Engagement and Service-Learning.

Module name

Information Technology Service-Learning **CSIS2642**

Second-year students

Brief description of the module

The primary objective of the CSIS2642 module is to impart knowledge of service-learning principles and strategies to students in the discipline of Information Technology. In this module, students engage with the community, offering Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel training to individuals lacking computer skills. This equips the community with the necessary proficiency to pursue job opportunities requiring computer literacy.

Community partners

- Mangaung and Botshabelo community

Service sector partners

- loveLife
- Red Cross organisation, Bloemfontein

Service-learning component

Upon completion of this module, students will acquire relevant IT skills for community engagement, develop a deep understanding of service-learning theory, gain experience working with individuals of diverse computer literacy levels, and expand their



own IT knowledge by assisting those with fewer resources.

Outcomes for the students

Students will

- gain practical experience in providing computer literacy training to community members, addressing the digital divide in Mangaung and surrounding areas;
- understand the importance of community involvement in addressing digital literacy issues and develop teaching and communication skills through the implementation of service-learning strategies;
- contribute to the empowerment of individuals by equipping them with Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel skills, enhancing their employability;
- witness the transformative impact of their training on community members, as demonstrated by increased employment opportunities and improved livelihoods, and recognise the significance of sharing acquired skills with others, fostering a culture of knowledge sharing and community upliftment; and
- appreciate the potential for personal and professional growth through engagement in service-learning initiatives and embrace the opportunity to make a meaningful difference in the lives of others while honing their own skills and capabilities.

Impact on the community

The community members become computer literate. They can now apply for positions that require them to be computer literate and are more confident in their computer skills.



Lecturer

Thomas Stewart
E: StewartT@ufs.ac.za

Bio:

Thomas Stewart is a senior lecturer in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning at the UFS, with more than 25 years of practical and academic experience in human settlements. Currently, he is researching the application of innovative technology in the upgrading of informal settlements.

Module name

Human Settlement for Planners URHS6813

Honours students

Brief description of module

Urban planners need a diversity of skills. This module aims to equip students with a wide spread of skills and experiences related to the theory, policies, and implementation of human settlement solutions.

Community partners

Councillors, municipal officials, and residents of various towns, selected by students.

Service sector partners

Municipalities

Service-learning component

Students gain experience in the development of a human settlement strategy for towns, chosen by the respective students in collaboration with the lecturer.

Outcomes for the students

- Exposure to secondary research
- Gaining GIS training and application
- Analysing municipal policy documents and plans
- Experiencing practical problem solving
- Presentation and communication skills

Impact on the community

Community gains new insights into the human settlement problems and dynamics of their towns

and receives possible new creative solutions to the identified problems.

Module name

Research Project for Human Settlement **URRR6800**

Brief description of the module

Introduce students to human settlement planning and allow them to get first-hand experience. Students choose a town to present a strategy.

Community partners

- Municipal officials and councillors

Service sector partners

- Municipality
- Private consultants
- Engineers
- Estate agents

Service-learning component

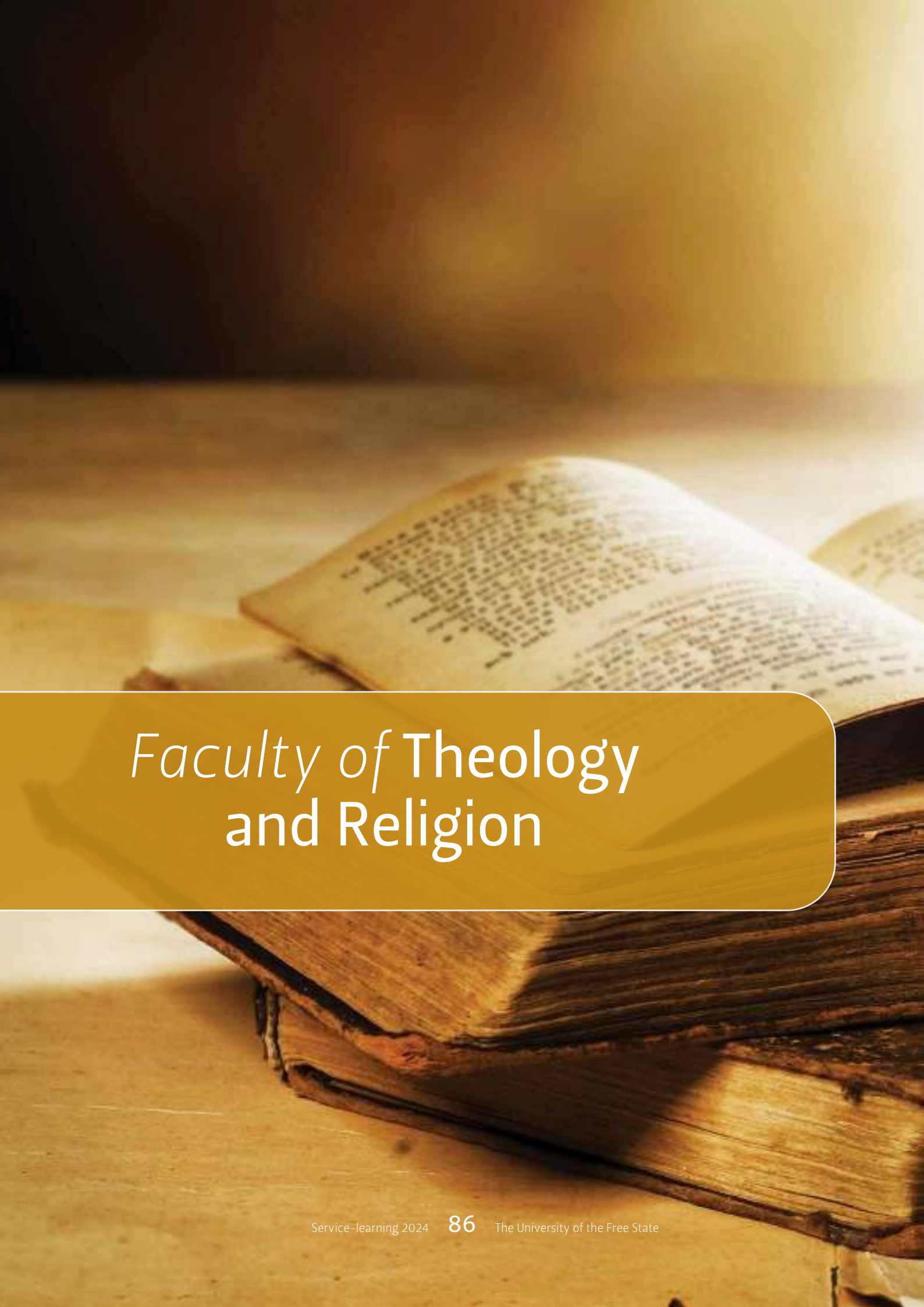
Students engage with the community and develop a human settlement strategy for a town of the student's choice, selected in collaboration with the lecturer.

Outcomes for the students

- Research experience
- GIS training and skills
- Interpretation of policies, plans, and strategies
- Critical analysis of human settlement challenges and opportunities
- Report-writing skills are developed
- Presentation and communication skills.

Impact on the community

The community receives a base document that may be of use to the municipality, thereby gaining new insights, critical comments, and strategic options regarding the revitalisation of the respective towns as human settlements.



Faculty of Theology and Religion



Lecturer

Prof Joseph Pali
E: PaliKJ@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Prof Joseph Pali is a senior lecturer in the Department of Practical and Missional Theology at the University of the Free State (UFS). He teaches modules in Leadership and Congregational Studies, with a research focus on leadership and faith communities in the African context.

Currently, he is engaged in congregational vitality research, which explores Christian leadership and congregational ministry in various settings across South Africa and the broader Southern African Development Community (SADC) region.

In addition to his academic role, Prof Pali serves as a part-time minister and is an active member of the local ministers' fraternal in Mangaung, Bloemfontein. Within his church, he not only preaches, but also chairs the commissions on Evangelism, Diaconal Services, and the Curatorium. As vice-chair of the local ministers' fraternal, he is responsible for organising and coordinating workshops aimed at empowering ministers and lay leaders in township congregations.

Module name

Grounding of Mission and Mission in Practice
TMS2614

Second-year students

Brief description of the module

This module has two mandates, namely preaching the gospel and responsible involvement in society. Often one aspect of the two mandates is emphasised at the expense of the other. To address this challenge, the essence of mission is studied and applied from a biblical perspective in this module.

Community partners

- Community members served by Towers of Hope

Service sector partner

- Towers of Hope

Service-learning component

The Missional Theology module delves into various aspects of mission and evangelism, offering students a comprehensive understanding of theological and practical dimensions. Students engage in

discussions on missional challenges, explore the relationship between missions and Africa, and delve into the historical context of evangelism and social responsibility. They examine theological perspectives on diakonia and evangelism, reflecting on the role of the church in sharing the gospel and serving communities. Through case studies and practical exercises, students explore different models and approaches to evangelism, including media evangelism, personal evangelism, and church planting. They also consider the role of marginalised communities in mission and reflect on the theological implications of diakonia in today's ecumenical movement. Overall, the module equips students with the knowledge, skills, and values to engage meaningfully in mission and evangelism in various contexts.

Outcomes for the students

The students learn to understand and explain the foundation of mission from the Bible. They gain an understanding of the aims, goals, and implications

of the notion of mission. Students develop the ability to apply practical mission strategies and evangelism to the broader community and to initiate actions and interventions for community development. In addition, students gain an understanding of scholastic views on evangelism, diakonia, and mission. This module exposes students to the real-life dynamics and experiences of homeless people and critically engage with the lived experiences and socio-economic contexts of individuals engaged in street-based sex work near the church itself.

Impact on the community

- Community members gain knowledge regarding the evangelism component of the module, while enabling students to gain confidence when preaching the Word of God.
- Homeless community members are empowered by hearing students preach the gospel and are provided with the decision to turn their lives around and give their lives to Christ.





Lecturer

Prof Juanita Meyer
E: MeyerJ1@ufs.ac.za

Bio

Prof Juanita Meyer serves as an associate professor within the Department of Practical and Missional Theology, where she holds the position of Head of Department. She oversees the department's programmes in pastoral theology and praxis at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Her research explores the concept of masculinity, delving into its formation, influenced by factors such as father absence and other psychosocial-economic and spiritual challenges. She investigates how this constructed masculinity shapes men's relationships with women, the development of a specific spirituality/religiosity, and view of God.

Secondarily, her research is dedicated to crafting a pastoral theological research model tailored to the South African context. This model aims to facilitate responsible, compassionate, and hospitable research while fostering a pastoral care approach that empowers care seekers to embrace a religion of resilience and reconciliation when confronting life's challenges and traumas. Prof Meyer integrates this research focus into all learning and teaching programmes, striving to expose students to opportunities for engagement with communities of care, thus nurturing a spirit of offering hope to the hopeless. Prof Meyer envisions the establishment of a pastoral therapy degree programme geared towards the professional training of pastoral workers and therapists at the University of the Free State (UFS).

Module name

TPAS3722, TPAS 4822 and TPPC7900

Third-, fourth-, and fifth-year students

Brief description of the modules

All modules introduce pastoral theological-related concepts and theories of care. On a **third-year level**, the focus is on reciprocating spiritualities and how spiritual reciprocity influences relationships between believers in the quest to flourish in life. It guides the student on how to nurture reciprocating spiritualities within his/her community of faith and within the family structure during each life development stage and during moments of crisis and trauma. Service-learning takes place in the context of the Martie du Plessis School, by journeying narratively with children who have a variety of physical or learning

disabilities, experiencing reciprocating spiritualities in real-life.

On a **fourth-year level**, the focus shifts specifically to trauma and crisis and how pastoral theological concepts inform the manner in which we look at trauma and crisis – how theological concepts support the survivor of trauma and crisis to overcome and ‘resurrect’ from their cross. Here, service-learning focuses on children residing in child and youth care homes under the care of ENGO, and on journeying with an individual child through his/her trauma or crisis.

On the **fifth year/ master’s level**, pastoral theological theories and concepts are applied to specific moments that warrant pastoral care, be it on an individual level, in a family, in a faith community, or where the marginalised and the oppressed are suffering. Service-learning focuses on the context of substance abuse.

Service sector partners

- Martie du Plessis School, Bloemfontein
- Engo Child and Youth Care homes, Bloemfontein
- Aurora Rehabilitation Centre, Bloemfontein

Community being served

- Children with learning and/or physical disabilities.
- Children who are abandoned or taken away from their families due to unhealthy or unsafe living conditions and who reside in several child and youth care homes in Bloemfontein.
- People challenged by a substance abuse disorder.

Service-learning component: TPAS3722

Students engage with Grade 5 learners from the Martie du Plessis School for learning and physically disabled learners. Using the ‘My Life in a Suitcase’ narrative/project allows students to creatively and narratively journey with a school learner in creating a satisfying life narrative that empowers and motivates the school learner to achieve his/her goals.

Learning outcomes for students: TPAS 3722

- Apply the foundational skills needed to provide basic care and counselling.

- Apply different methods to provide holistic and supportive care.
- Develop and apply a pastoral care model that is spiritually centred, holistic, and/or adapted for short-term pastoral counselling in the event of a crisis.
- Apply theoretical knowledge in the development of a *model of care* that can address the challenges experienced within families with children challenged with learning disabilities.

Impact on the community: TPAS3722

For the community:

- Community members gain knowledge and understanding of how healing and wholeness can be attained through the development of the ‘My Life in a Suitcase’ narrative/ project.
- Community members are guided to take control of their lives and future narratives, thereby being freed as victims of their learning disabilities and gaining knowledge to change into survivors.

For the service sector:

- Gain knowledge and understanding on how pastoral insights can assist in developing a future narrative that can empower community members to take control of their lives.
- Students guide the school and its teachers with the knowledge, supportive structure, and motivation that school learners require to continue their academic studies.

Service-learning component: TPAS4822

Students engage with teenage children residing in child and youth care homes to journey with them through their life narratives and co-create a future narrative that will sustain their dreams and empower the teenage children. Students are expected to diarise each conversation and take clinical notes, which are used to complete the assignment. They should be able to transcribe, reflect on, and report back on their pastoral journey with each child.

Learning outcomes for students: TPAS4822

- Apply the foundational skills needed to provide basic care and counselling.
- Apply different methods in providing holistic and supportive care.

- Develop and apply a *pastoral care model* that is spiritually centred, holistic, and/or adapted for short-term pastoral counselling in the event of a crisis.

Impact on the community: TPAS4822

For the community:

- Community members gain knowledge and understanding of how healing and wholeness can be attained through pastoral and spiritual practices, while being supported to take control of their lives and future narratives.
- Community members are guided on a journey to be freed as victims of their circumstances of loss, moving towards becoming survivors.
- Students support community members with knowledge and the opportunity to successfully process various losses and move into a healing relationship with God and others.

For the service sector:

- Students share sound knowledge and understanding of how pastoral insights can assist the service sector in processing and accepting various losses and what spiritual practices can be employed to nurture their relationship with God and significant others.
- Students assist social workers and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to support children facing losses on multiple levels, and to alleviate the burden of pastoral care provided.

Service-learning component: TPPC7900

Students are responsible for at least one counselling session with a patient, leading one Bible study session with a group of patients, conducting one sermon during youth participation, and being part of a panel of health-care providers who determine the progress of each patient. Students undergo a two-day training programme in substance use

and abuse disorder and how to effectively care for patients. They receive a certificate of completion from SANCA.

Learning outcomes for students: TPPC7900

- Discuss the narrative themes of loss, violence, and coping as symbolised by human suffering and its consequences as it specifically applies to substance abuse – through community engagement for application of the learning content.
- Discuss the various ways in which spiritual brokenness can be healed and reflect on the manner in which spiritual wholeness can be cultivated from the view of Christian salvation as it applies to substance abuse.
- Apply the necessary pastoral therapeutic skills to guide a person to healing and wholeness.

Impact on the community: TPPC7900

For the community:

- Community members gain knowledge and understanding of how healing and wholeness can be attained through the Christian view of salvation and various spiritual practices.
- Community members gain support through the process of caring, healing, and wholeness, by allowing the students to guide and journey with them.
- Community members gain knowledge and skills from students during the execution of projects.

For the service sector:

- Students share knowledge and understanding of the Christian view of salvation and related Christian practices to assist a person with substance abuse achieve wholeness and healing.
- Students assist the service sector in its duty to attend to the pastoral needs of clients and patients.

Conclusion: Advancing social impact

The evidence and narratives in this report underscore the transformative power of CESL at the University of the Free State. By embedding CESL into the curriculum, we have created spaces where knowledge is mobilized for societal good—where students, academics, and communities co-create solutions to pressing social, economic, and health challenges.

This impact is tangible: improved health literacy, enhanced economic resilience, strengthened governance practices, and the preservation of cultural heritage. It is also deeply human, empowering individuals and communities with skills, confidence, and hope for a better future.

CESL integrates academic rigour with real-world engagement, creating reciprocal partnerships between students, academics, and communities. By embedding CESL into the curriculum, students develop critical graduate attributes such as problem-solving, empathy, and professional competence, while applying disciplinary knowledge to address Sustainable Development Goals. Investing in CESL means investing in systemic change, producing socially responsible graduates and empowered communities equipped with skills, confidence, and hope for a better future.

As higher education faces global polycrises, service-learning offers a pathway to resilience and relevance. It transforms classrooms into collaborative laboratories for change, ensuring that our academic project serves a clear public purpose. Moving forward, we remain committed to scaling these efforts, deepening partnerships, and measuring impact, not only in outputs but in lives changed and communities strengthened.

Engaged scholarship through service-learning is not an optional add-on; it is the heartbeat of a university that seeks to make knowledge matter.



Service-Learning
at the
University of the Free State
2024

Directorate Community Engagement

PO Box 339
Bloemfontein, 9300
South Africa
www.ufs.ac.za