

Author biographies

Ninette Aucamp is a professional advisor at the University of the Free State, where she leads the training and development of professional and peer advisors. She serves on the ELETSA Executive Committee and has contributed to the national accreditation of nearly 500 advisors. She holds master's and Honours degrees in Industrial Psychology and a B. Psych from the University of the Free State and is registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as an industrial psychologist and independent counsellor.

Casey Botha is an academic coordinator in the Research Development and Postgraduate Support (RDPS) department at the University of the Western Cape. She is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of Psychology and a registered research psychologist with the HPCSA. In her current role, she supports postgraduate student success through research skills development, thesis coaching, academic support initiatives, and writing retreats.

Dr Shingairai Chigeza is a senior lecturer and research psychologist in the Department of Psychology at the University of Pretoria and is registered with the HPCSA. She holds a PhD in Psychology from North-West University. Her research focuses on relational wellbeing, relationships, and meaning across family, educational, community, and migration contexts, with a particular emphasis on intergenerational relations and interventions that promote connection and wellbeing.

Prof. Werner de Klerk is an associate professor of Psychology and registered research psychologist at North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus), South Africa. He holds a BA in Human Movement Sciences and Psychology, a BA Honours in Psychology, an MA in Research Psychology, and a PhD in Psychology from North-West University. His expertise includes qualitative research methodology, the research process, critical literature reviews, and school wellbeing. He has published widely and contributes actively to postgraduate training and academic leadership.

Prof. Aslam Fataar is a research and development professor in Higher Education Transformation at Stellenbosch University in South Africa and a leading Global South scholar. His work focuses on knowledge, pedagogy, and university transformation, with recent research on artificial intelligence and its implications for learning and academic judgement. He is a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), has held NRF B and C ratings, and is a former editor-in-chief of the *Southern African Review of Education*.

Dr Clifford Kendrick Hlatywayo (PhD) is a senior lecturer at the University of Namibia. Dr Hlatywayo is a seasoned academic with sound research and lecturing experience in South Africa and Namibia. Clifford enjoys helping young human scientists discover their purpose and grow to become true professionals who can uplift African society.

Prof. Ruth Geraldine Melonie Hoskins is a full professor in the Information Studies programme at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). She is currently the dean of Teaching and Learning in the College of Humanities and is the UKZN facilitator of the FYE Programme for all four Colleges at the institution. UKZN is currently the Siyaphumelela leader of the FYE

workstream. Her research interests include student support, success and the transition of FYE students at the undergraduate level.

Gugu Wendy Khanye serves as director for Student Success in the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of the Free State. She leads the work of coordinated High Impact Practices that contribute to student success. Her area of specialisation is in academic advising practice and professional development. She is actively involved in scholarship, partnership-building, and sector conversations advancing student success.

Dr Constance Khupe is an academic advisor and senior lecturer in the Faculty of Health Sciences' Office of Student Success. She has experience in high school teaching as well as pre-service and in-service teacher education and has worked extensively in Southern African rural communities. A first-generation university graduate, she holds a PhD in Science Education focused on indigenous knowledge systems. Her research interests include student success, academic advising scholarship, decolonial methodologies, and self-study research.

Dr Eloise Law-van Wyk is a counselling psychologist and registered neuropsychologist. She works with the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at the University of Pretoria, where she supports talented young people from across Africa. She is also in private practice, specialising in psychotherapy, neuropsychological assessment and medico-legal work. Over the past 15 years, she has worked with students in higher education in a variety of professional capacities. She completed her PhD on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' mental health, cognitive functioning and academic performance.

Dr Thierry M. Luescher is the Director: Postgraduate Studies and Researcher Development at the University of Cape Town. Before, he was Research Director: Higher Education and Strategic Lead: Equitable Education at the Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa. He is also adjunct professor of Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation at Nelson Mandela University, and a research fellow in Higher Education at the University of the Free State. Luescher has been awarded several South African and international research awards from NASPA (2023), ACPA (2021), and HSRC (2020, 2022 and 2024). He is an NRF-rated researcher and a founding member of the JSAA Editorial Executive. Luescher's recent books include *#FeesMustFall and its aftermath: Violence, wellbeing and the student movement in South Africa* (HSRC Press, 2022, with A. Wilson Fadji, K. Morwe and others) and *#FeesMustFall ten years on* (Mandela University Press, 2026, with A. Nyamnjoh and others).

Nonkululeko Mabaso is a lecturer in Sociology at the University of the Western Cape and a PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of the Witwatersrand. Her research focuses on the reconfiguration of economic power in post-apartheid South Africa, with particular attention to elite wealth formation, corporate influence, and racialised inequality. Her broader research interests include political economy, student movements, and critical race and whiteness studies.

Dr Sfiso Emmanuel Mabizela is a senior researcher at the University of Pretoria. His research interests include tutoring, student success, student learning experiences, academic

preparedness, selection tools, and institutional research. He holds a PhD in Psychology and has experience in quantitative and qualitative research, data analysis, academic writing, and postgraduate supervision. His work focuses on factors that influence students' academic performance and the use of evidence to strengthen educational support and institutional decision-making.

Philokuhle Collin (Bonza) Majozi is an educational technology specialist with a combined 14 years' experience in basic and higher education. His current work at the Department of Student Affairs, where he serves as a senior systems analyst and custodian for Information Governance, focuses on process re/design and optimisation and automation. His research explores how technology and data advance business goals and the critical role of end users in decisions. He is a digital transformation champion, passionate about efficiency and tangible student outcomes.

Andries Masenge is a senior research consultant in the Department of Statistics at the University of Pretoria. He holds an MSc in Statistics and provides specialist support in research design and statistical analysis to postgraduate students and academic staff. He authored a research methodology textbook and has co-authored more than 60 peer-reviewed scholarly publications.

Dr John Mashayamombe is Manager: Strategic Research Programmes, Research Support Programmes and sessional lecturer at the Nelson Mandela University's Business School. He has conducted and participated in large-scale research projects across the mining sector, organised labour, higher education, and the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA). His academic interests include understanding space and how people make and remake and conceptualise space in different settings and time. He was awarded his doctorate at the University of Pretoria in 2019.

Dr Kgadi Carrie Mathabathe is a purpose-driven higher education leader passionate about advancing student success through transformative policy, inclusive support systems, and research-based strategy. As director of Student Affairs at the University of Pretoria, she leads multi-stakeholder initiatives that bridge academic advising, student wellbeing, and institutional transformation. An NRF Y2-rated researcher, her work spans the strategic development of wrap-around support, institutional governance reform, peer-assisted learning models, and global collaborations focused on reimagining student agency and access in the Global South.

Tebello Mduduma is a registered counselling psychologist and lecturer in the Department of Psychology at the University of the Free State, South Africa, and a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Health Sciences at North-West University, South Africa. She holds a master's degree in counselling psychology from the University of Fort Hare, South Africa. Her research focuses on wellbeing and resilience in higher education.

Dr Mpho Mmadi is a trained sociologist and published author in national and international journals, including book chapters. Mpho's published works focus mainly on the South African labour movement, workers' daily commute struggles, working conditions and have

recently pivoted towards student support. Dr Mmadi has worked in student support since 2014 as an academic success coach for the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Pretoria, South Africa.

Prof. Teboho Moja is clinical professor emerita of Higher Education at New York University, USA. She is also a visiting research fellow at the Centre for the Advancement of Scholarship, University of Pretoria, South Africa, and an extraordinary professor at the Institute of Post School Studies, University of the Western Cape, South Africa. Prof. Moja is a recipient of the Lifetime Achiever Award of the National Research Foundation of South Africa. She is JSAA's editor-in-chief.

Dr Mthokozisi Mpofu (PhD) is an academic at Rhodes University pursuing a career and growth in industrial and organisational psychology, human resources management and associated fields' facilitation of learning and research. Dr Mthoe has more than 10 years' research experience and has been involved in various research projects, has attended and presented in proceedings of various workshops, international and local conferences with some of the papers presented in these proceedings published, some under review for publication and others unpublished.

Dalitso Mzungu is a counselling intern for the Government of Malawi and holds a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in Clinical Psychology. His research at the University of Namibia focused on international student adaptation within multicultural academic contexts. His professional practice centres on psychosocial counselling, with particular emphasis on indigenous interpretations of psychological disorders, and mental health advocacy aimed at the systematic desensitisation of societal misconceptions surrounding mental health.

Dr Sandla Nomvete is senior lecturer in Sociology at North-West University (NWU), Mahikeng Campus where he teaches 'Introduction to Sociology: Social Institutions, Sociology of Development, Environment and Social Problems,' as well as social policy. His research interests lie in labour movements, sociology of work, migration, student movements and qualitative research. He also serves as departmental postgraduate coordinator and is a member of the Faculty Academic Integrity Committee at the NWU. Dr Nomvete obtained his DPhil at the University of Pretoria and previously worked at Nelson Mandela University as institutional researcher for 4 years.

Baphumelele Nxala is a senior technical assistant for first year pure mathematics modules at the University of Pretoria. She is one of four instructors that review and update the Online Preparatory Maths course, an early-intervention, online tool for new and returning first year students in maths-intensive programmes. Baphumelele holds a National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from Nelson Mandela University, and a master's degree in mathematics from the University of Fort Hare, with a focus on Fuzzy Group Theory. Due to her involvement with the creation and running of the Preparatory Maths course for the past six years, she plans to pursue a doctoral degree in Mathematics Education, focusing

on researching and finding long-term, functional, and efficient interventions to bridge the gap between high school and university mathematics.

Prof. Eunice Nyamupangedengu (Prof. Nyamupa) is an associate professor in Science Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. A science teacher, educator, researcher, and mentor, she teaches biology and science education across undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Her research focuses on S-STEP and pedagogical content knowledge, advancing inclusive, decolonised, contextually relevant education aligned with SDG4. An award-winning scholar and supervisor, she leads research capacity-building and mentors students and early-career academics through authentic conversations and collaboration.

Starford Osabutey is a PhD candidate in the Department of Geography and Regional Planning at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. He is a recipient of the prestigious Global Leader Award from George Washington University, USA, for demonstrating global leadership. He is an interdisciplinary scholar with a research focus on urban infrastructural (housing and market) functionalities, illegal mining, and water security. He has published on high-rise (storey-building) markets and their effects on traders in Ghana.

Dr Joy Petersen is the First-Year Student Experience Coordinator in the Centre for Student Life and Learning (CSLL) at Stellenbosch University, where she leads the institutional peer mentoring programme and develops initiatives that support student transition, belonging and success. Her research interests include mentoring, student transition, residential education, first-generation student success, student belonging, community-based learning, and the educational role of student communities in higher education. Dr Petersen holds a Bachelor of Commerce (BCom) degree from the University of the Western Cape (UWC), an Honours degree and a master's degree in Curriculum Studies from the University of Cape Town (UCT), and a PhD in Education from Stellenbosch University. Her doctoral research explored the educational role of residential communities in fostering students' epistemic development, agency and belonging during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keitumetse Poen is a senior academic advisor at the University of the Free State, based in the Centre for Teaching and Learning. She holds academic qualifications in Psychology and Higher Education Studies, which inform her holistic and student-centred approach to academic advising and support. Her professional interests include intentional student engagement and advancing equitable access to academic support. She is particularly committed to designing and implementing sustainable, proactive, and evidence-based academic support initiatives that promote student success.

Prof. Johan Potgieter is a registered clinical psychologist and professor of Psychology at North-West University (Potchefstroom Campus), South Africa. He holds a BSc in Psychology and Physiology, an MSc in Clinical Psychology, and a PhD in Psychology. His teaching and research focus on strengths-based perspectives and successful adaptation in challenging contexts. He specialises in nature-assisted and adventure-based experiential interventions and serves as coordinator of the PhD (Psychology) programme.

Dr Sharmila Rama is a senior lecturer in Sociology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Since 2021, she has served as interim head of Academic Monitoring and Support in the College of Humanities, overseeing student success initiatives, including the first-year experience, wellness mentorship, and the Writing Place. Her work advances equity-centred and socially just student support in higher education. Her publications span youth studies, gender studies, sociology of education, and higher education.

Prof. Dr Birgit Schreiber, PhD, has served in senior leadership positions in sub-Saharan Africa and Europe higher education with focus, among others, on leadership, student success, DEI and gender. Birgit's PhD is in psychology, and she has worked with a range of national and trans-national bodies, notably USAf South Africa, SARUA, DAAD and ERASMUS, teaches, does research and supervision, programme design and policy development, she is appointed as extraordinary professor at her Alma Mater, UWC, in Cape Town. Birgit has over 90 publications, including books and monograph, on various themes around social justice, student affairs, student engagement and higher education leadership, gender and SDGs. She was the founding editor and is the editorial executive of the *Journal for Student Affairs in Africa* (JSAA), she is on the board of the *Journal of College Student Development* (JCSJ) and a column editor for the *Journal of College and Character* (JCC). She serves as the president for the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS), after being the Africa Chair and Vice President. She has received numerous awards, most recently the Noam Chomsky Award for international research and the NASPA and ACPA Award for international practice. She is a member of the Africa Centre at the Albert Ludwig University Freiburg, Germany, research associate at Pretoria University, and she is Germany Country Director for the STAR Scholars Network and sits on various boards (SANRC, University of Johannesburg; CASHEF, University of Pretoria).

Dr Janine S. Senekal is a researcher, supervisor, lecturer and academic coordinator at the University of the Western Cape in the Research Development and Postgraduate Support Department. Her research focus is postgraduate education and training, including doctoral graduate attributes, postgraduate student experience, postgraduate retention and throughput, and employability. This compliments her work at UWC, supporting postgraduate students in their research journeys, through trainings, thesis coaching and writing retreats.

Prof. François Strydom, senior director at the Centre for Teaching and Learning at the University of the Free State, promotes quality and equity in higher education. He leads the South African Surveys of Student Engagement and manages grants from various donors, focusing on research and evidence-based change in higher education to enhance student success and employability.

Prof. Maretha Visser is a counselling and community psychologist in the Department of Psychology, University of Pretoria. She has been training students for many years. Her research focuses on developing, implementing, and evaluating large-scale community interventions to promote the mental health and wellbeing of diverse groups.

Dr Angelina Wilson Fadji is a senior lecturer in Psychology at De Montfort University, UK, specialising in psychological wellbeing and positive mental health within African contexts. She holds a PhD in Psychology from Stellenbosch University and completed postdoctoral research at North-West University. Her work explores how individuals, particularly young people in deprived settings, cultivate resilience and thrive, contributing significantly to culturally grounded theories of wellbeing.