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**Registered at Universities South Africa (USAf) as a Community of Practice NPO no.: 078-48**

Dear HEDSA Family and Friends

Supporting students with disabilities during this time of complexity remains one of our most arduous tasks. As we close this year and 2023 beckons, it is incumbent on HEDSA to collectively commit to addressing the challenges we face in the interest of sustaining the academic project, that institutions remain committed to sustaining an enabling environment where fully equitable participation and progression become a reality for all students with disabilities.

Attached with this newsletter are a few important documents:

- [HEDSA Standard Operating Procedure for Regional Collaborations](#)
- [HEDSA Guidelines on the Employment of South African Sign Language Interpreters \(SASLI\) at Tertiary Institutions](#)
- [HEDSA Guidelines on the establishment of a Disability Unit at a Tertiary Institution](#)
- [HEDSA Guidelines on the formulation of an institutional policy to enable access and support for students with disabilities.](#)
- Amendments to the 2021 [HEDSA constitution](#)

These documents have also available on the HEDSA website: <https://www.hedsa.org.za/resources>

## 1. HEDSA Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Regional Collaborations

To strengthen regional collaboration and cooperation in the field of Disability Services, HEDSA has published a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that includes terms of reference for HEDSA regional structures. The purpose of this document is to assist regions with planning regional meetings, activities and to outline the roles and responsibilities of HEDSA regional committee members.

The HEDSA Exco thanks Mrs Nosiphiwo Delubom (NMU) and Dr Leila Abdool Gafoor (UJ) for the dedicating the time and energy to compile this document. This document will be made available on the HEDSA website under [resources](#).

## 2. USAf TMF

Earlier this year we shared with colleagues, that HEDSA has been invited to the USAf Transformation Managers Forum to speak to matters of disability and inclusion. To recap, the TMF has 4 priority areas, one being disability. In this regard, the first action point is:

- Disability Policy formulation and integrated as a key deliverable in Institutional Transformation Plans. For this reason, they requested that HEDSA develops a policy template for institutions based on the Strategic Policy Framework on Disability for the PSET system (also taking note that institutions have their own policy templates, but that this should assist in what should be included in institutional Disability Policies).
- Digital transformation has also been highlighted in the light of our online environment experience over the past two years and here they also specifically asked HEDSA's input.

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- It was also requested that HEDSA looks into negotiating reduced prices from suppliers of software and specialized equipment.

Regarding the regional TMF structures, HEDSA was requested to provide our regional contacts with the TMF in order for them to be included in the TMF regional meetings. Kindly share these details with Mr. Sam Van Musschenbroek (HEDSA Secretary) via [hedsa001@gmail.com](mailto:hedsa001@gmail.com)/ [samvm@ufh.ac.za](mailto:samvm@ufh.ac.za).

ORHET (Online Resources for Higher Education Transformation) is a website in the making and did the TMF agree that there should be a link to HEDSA's website as well. Therefore, a kind reminder that if you have any resources that you would like to share for us to upload on the HEDSA website, kindly email Dr Maria Ramaahlo at [hedsa001@gmail.com](mailto:hedsa001@gmail.com).

### 3. HELM/HEDSA Engagement

HEDSA is part of the reference group to help develop the HELM National Capacitation Programme that seeks to capacitating student affairs practitioners to accelerate student success. HELM together with a number of higher education associations will develop the requisite leadership and management competencies that will enable us all to create engaged and student-centered institutions. It is to these ends that HELM consulted with Martie Miranda (Chairperson: HEDSA) and the leadership of other higher education associations to exchange ideas and co-create a capacity development solution that will be piloted early 2023 in support of personal, professional and institutional development.

### 4. HEDSA, SAUS and TVET Engagements

HEDSA recognizes the importance of the student voice, in this regard we welcome Lungisa Sibozza who is the South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training Student Association (SATVETSA) NEC member for the portfolio Student Wellness and Campus Safety from Mpumalanga Ehlanzeni TVET College and we would like to thank Luigia Nicholas who was the South African Student Union (SAUS) Sub-Committee Student with Disabilities Representative.

### 5. HEDSA Activities

#### ***DUT Workshop***

Another initiative by HEDSA was presenting at the DUT Disability workshop to academic and support staff. Present were Mrs. Nosiphiwo Delubom (presenting on different learning difficulties) and Martie (presenting on UDL as a proactive approach to include persons with disabilities).

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Well done Durban University of Technology for hosting a successful and well attended workshop on invisible disabilities for support and academic staff. HEDSA was represented through our member institutions NMU, Wits (virtually) and UFS. In the photo attached from the left is Gugu Sacolo (DUT Disability Unit Coordinator, Nosiphiwo Delubom (HEDSA EXCO member: NMU) and Martie Miranda (HEDSA Chair: UFS).

### ***Draft Framework and Guidelines to Accommodate Students with Disabilities in TVET Colleges***

HEDSA wishes to express appreciation for the development of the Draft Framework and Guidelines for Disabilities in the TVET sector. This is an important document to guide the provision of services to support students with disabilities and to enable institutions to open learning opportunities for this vulnerable group. HEDSA submitted detailed comments and input to Ms Selina Makgopela DHET (TVET branch).

### ***HEDSA/DHET Workshop on the disability codes/framework***

A workshop was held with the DHET on the classification of disabilities. Below is a summary of key outcomes of the workshop:

- The coding classification framework should attempt to be inclusive all categories, noting that temporary disabilities and chronic illnesses should be added. Furthermore, it was important that the framework should be reviewed to include sub-coding within the classification framework.
- The Policy Framework implementation should assist institutions and ensure full budget use.
- Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation is requested through reporting to TMF / DHET.
- The need to have a disability focused reporting channel exists.
- Mandated by Policy Framework to standardise classification of disabilities.
- Look into DHET communication to DUs in that the same communication sent to top structures should be sent to DU's to have point of reference.

## **6. HEDSA Roadshow**

Exco conducted its first roadshow with the Western Cape Region at the Boland TVET College. The region was assisted with electing an interim regional committee as a step towards more active leadership and participation for the region.

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In the photo attached is the interim Chairperson and Secretary for the HEDSA Western Cape Region. On the left is Romenia Baxter, Boland College (Chairperson) and on the right is Zeena Spannenberg, University of the Western Cape (Secretary).

Other activities and outcomes from the workshop included the following:

- Mrs Delublom shared key findings on from her PhD as it pertains to TVETs and the inclusion of students with disabilities at these institutions.
- Training for HODs by Exco members, if required
- Student advocacy training for regions available – done by Nevil Balakrishna
- Matters pertaining to NSFAS
- Best practices of training and learning post-COVID

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In the photo attached is a group photo of HEDSA Exco and HEDSA members of the Western Cape Region.

## 7. Disability Equality Training (DET)

Mr Nevil Balakrishna (HEDSA Vice-Chairperson) together with colleagues from UKZN, have developed a Disability Equality Training (DET) workshop that is specific to the South African context, as approach to the empowerment of students and staff with disabilities. The Social Model of disability on which the DET approach is based advocates strongly for persons with disabilities as the oppressed minority being empowered with skills to lead the rehabilitation of the so-called able-bodied that has the power to minimize the barriers that hinder access to opportunities in the society. Should your institution or region require a DET workshop or a training to become a DET facilitator please send your request to Nevil Balakrishna [Balakrishna@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:Balakrishna@ukzn.ac.za) or [hedsa001@gmail.com](mailto:hedsa001@gmail.com).

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In the photo attached below is Mr Balakrishna detailing the contents of the DET Workshop to HEDSA Western Cape Region members. From the left is Nevil Balakrishna, UKZN, Luigia Nicholas, Stellenbosch University Edwina Ghall, University of Cape Town, Judith de Jager, False Bay College.

## **8. HEDSA FAMILY NEWS**

### ***Central University of Technology (CUT)***

We would like to congratulate the Central University of Technology on the official opening of their CUT Disability Unit Facilities. CUT is committed to promoting diversity on their campuses among students to create equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. The university offers a conducive environment to support and enhance learning for students with special needs.

The Disability Unit boasts an upgraded and fully equipped centre. The unit also serves as a central resource and a starting point for coordinated support for students with disabilities to create an inclusive environment, which encourages students to be independent and cope with their daily activities on campus.

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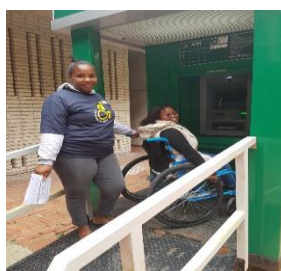
The centre is highly supported by the [Supplement Instruction \(SI\)](#), an academic assistance programme that aims to enhance academic support and interventions towards student performance and retention; barriers that might prevent them from fulfilling their potential, improving building access as well as arranging for conversions during exams. Through the undying support provided by the centre, several disabled students have since graduated successfully.

19 May 2022 marked the 11th [Global Accessibility Awareness Day \(GAAD\)](#). On this day, CUT raised not only awareness but also launched a Disability Unit.



Martie Miranda gave a presentation on HEDSA's contribution and support provided to CUT in establishing the Disability Unit. Included in the photo are Martie Miranda, Mr Manyarela Mohau (CUT Disability Unit Head), Mrs Mamiki Qhabate (MEC for Social Development) and Prof Ngowi (Acting Vice-Chancellor of CUT).

### ***Nelson Mandela University (NMU) Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS)*** UADS Promotes Accessibility On University Campuses Through Wheelchair Campaign : 'IN OUR SHOES'



In March 2022, UADS launched a campaign to raise awareness on wheelchair use and accessibility on campus. The three-day initiative took place on North, Second Avenue and South campuses. The campaign, appropriately named 'IN OUR SHOES', aimed to enlighten the university community, students and staff alike, on disability needs and gave them an opportunity to experience the challenges related to the use of a wheelchair on campus and the accessibility for people with disabilities within the Nelson Mandela University Campuses.

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The participants spent at least 40 continuous minutes in a wheelchair. With the help of an assistant, they were required to carry out designated tasks within a prescribed area on each of the campuses. The tasks varied and involved using the lifts, going to the library and accessing books, getting on and off the transport vehicle, withdrawing money at the ATM, buying food at the cafeteria and using the bathroom facilities.

An important part of the exercise was the report back on the challenges that they experienced on route. UADS correlated these findings and they formed part of a follow up analysis by the university and its infrastructure department. The campaign was enthusiastically tackled by the participants and their volunteer, assistant pushers.

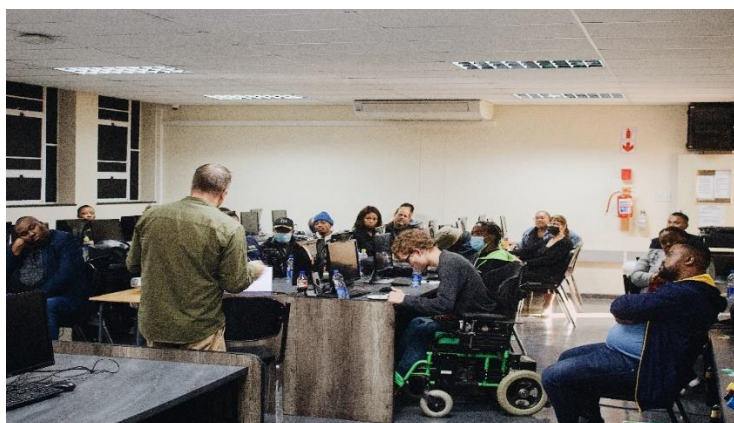
A comprehensive feedback was received by all. A representative from the office of the Vice Chancellor also participated and shared her experience and the difficulties she encountered during her 40 minutes. Many thanks to her for her participation and comprehensive feedback.

UADS were also pleased to have a participant from the Students Representative Council who gave insight into her 40-minute experience. The 'IN OUR SHOES' campaign was a successful and worthwhile initiative that should provide a positive input for Nelson Mandela's disabled community in the future.

More 'IN OUR SHOES' photographs can be found on Universal Accessibility and Disability Services (UADS) social media pages at: <https://www.facebook.com/NMUUADS> and <https://www.instagram.com/nmuuads/>

### **UADS Workshop**

In June 2022, UADS also hosted a workshop. In partnership with Sensory Solutions which is a South African company with considerable experience in the field of accommodating persons who are visually impaired – i.e. who are either blind or partially sighted. This workshop is as a result of UADS recently purchasing a number of assistive devices that enhances the teaching and learning experience of those with visual impairments.



According to the HOD of UADS, Nosiphiwo Delubom, "the purchase of these devices is a strategic trajectory to enhance access and the success of students with visual impairments. "The workshop included 21 attendees from UADS, ICT services as well as Library Information Services. The purpose of the workshop was to capacitate staff to adequately assist students with visual impairments to utilize the devices.

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Some of the technological advances include the Topaz screen magnifier, the Lunar 8 portable reader magnifier and the Transformer HD assistive reading device which has a zoom camera. The TOPAZ XL HD is designed to bring the low vision user the utmost in efficiency when working with printed documents and a computer. The Transformer HD/OCR is a high performance portable electronic magnifier (CCTV) used for reading printed documents and viewing distance information such as the white board in a classroom. It features a full HD camera and optional full-page text-to-speech (OCR). The compact and lightweight design is perfect for use everywhere. Luna 8 is the perfect companion for magnifying things you want to see.

### ***Boland College***

#### **Boland College SRC elected a President with a visual disability**

A place in history books was claimed when the Boland College students selected the first-ever Student Representative president, Elvis Mitchell, an N5 Marketing student with a visual disability. Elvis is not the only an SRC member with a disability, as a fellow N5 Marketing student, Kegan Currie, was also elected to represent students with disabilities on the SRC. By this, the students demonstrated their commitment to living the Boland College vision of a fully inclusive institution.

On Wednesday, 16 February 2022 the Student Representative Executive Committee elections took place via MS teams. The election process was fair, transparent and democratic with no incidents. The Vice-Principal, Mrs. Wendy Adams delivered a message of support to Student Leaders and confirmed the institutional acknowledgment of the SRC as a governance structure.

It was uncharted waters for the college, council and DHET as the SRC president attends college, provincial and national events. So often we speak of "Inclusivity" but when it comes to the actual inclusion and accessibility, we realised that we still have so much to learn. Boland College is therefore grateful for this learning opportunity to ensure that our institution is open and welcoming for all.



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On the picture from left to right: (SRC Jackets) President : Elvis Mitchell from Worcester campus (Hein Wagner Academy), Secretary : Renecia Bruitjies from Stellenbosch campus, Vice President : KEahwin Smith from Paarl campus



On the picture from left to right: (Green T-shirts) Kegan Currie and Elvis Mitchell.

### **University of the Witwatersrand (Wits) Disability Rights Unit (DRU)**

The Wits DRU has shared with us their enable newsletter. We have highlighted below two important news features. For more on the Wits DRU herewith a link to their newsletter [Enable](#) .

In considering universal access principles, one platform that is frequently forgotten is social media. Since 2011, Wits Disability Rights Unit has been reaching students, staff and prospective students through Meta platforms including Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. The aim is to offer popular content in accessible formats, and promote internal content consistently through the use of trigger warnings, access notes for videos that have subtitles, image descriptions, audio transcripts and linking to original screen reader accessible content. If you're curious about how to create and share accessible content, or want to show your support, please follow the Wits DRU: Facebook – [www.facebook.com/dru](http://www.facebook.com/dru) Instagram – [www.instagram.com/dru](http://www.instagram.com/dru)

### **Wits Disability Awareness Movement, DAM**

The Wits Disability Awareness Movement, DAM for short, has been around since 2012. It is once again picking up steam after two years of a pandemic. DAM is a movement started for and by students with disabilities on campus in the hopes of educating the Wits community at large about disabilities in an attempt to create a more inclusive environment. We do this through various events held online and on campus relating to disabilities and their cultures throughout the year. The goal for DAM in 2022 is to have its impact on students with disabilities recognised and its importance noted by all members of the Wits community. In an effort to grow their membership and spread their message, DAM had students play a game with us during O-week. They were tasked with completing a puzzle blindfolded, to give them some food for thought on what it might be like to complete daily tasks with a visual

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disability. Contact: [wits.dam@gmail.com](mailto:wits.dam@gmail.com); Follow us on social media to learn more about disabilities! Facebook: [/Wits-Disability-Awareness-Movement](https://www.facebook.com/WitsDisabilityAwarenessMovement/). Twitter: [@WitsDam](https://twitter.com/WitsDam) Instagram: [@WitsDam](https://www.instagram.com/WitsDam). Check out the short [video](#) on DAM and disability awareness.

## 9. WORKSHOPS/COLLOQUIUMS/CONFERENCES

For detailed conference/workshop info visit:

<https://www.hedsa.org.za/training-coursesworkshopscolloquiums>

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In conclusion we wish you all a safe and productive time as we look forward to the end of the year. Please continue to send news from your institutions, or raise issues you feel HEDSA need to address, debate, advocate for.

Martie Miranda

Chairperson

Higher and Further Education Disability Service Association

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