

**FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES**

**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONS**

**2025 NEWSLETTER**

**»»»» SEMESTER 01**



## MESSAGE FROM THE ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT DR NEVASHNEE PERUMAL



### Greetings!

### What a start to 2025 it has been

As has become common practice over the past few years, the academic programme was challenged by the late release of funding from NSFAS to students. As you know, we implemented a slow start to lectures to enable all students to have as much of a chance as possible to catch up. Coupled with the funding issues, was the late release of the matric results. However, our new first-years showed up with such enthusiasm and thirst for the BSW. New students, we are so energised by your go-getter approach to university!

To our returning students, we know that the heat has begun to increase. We want to reassure you that we are always available to guide, support and listen empathically to enable your success. After all, your victories are our victories as are your challenges. I want to remind you, that you have all that it takes to stay on the path. And soon you will be taking your final pledge in fourth-year.

To our fourth-years, soon to be colleagues: you have a few more months of intensive work and then you walk across the stage and the world belongs in your hands. I have no doubt you will go out and create opportunities for yourselves that will catalyse social change in our communities.

This edition of our newsletter is packed with all the beautiful events we've celebrated so far. From the first-year orientation to the fourth-year pledge, graduation, Careers Fair and Open Day.

I wish to record our appreciation for the teams who have worked so hard on executing all our special events. A special word of thanks particularly to the Student Society for leading from the front.

On a sad note, we lost a second-year student, Mr Prince Gana, earlier this year. Our deepest sympathies go out to his friends, peers and family.

Another significant loss to our profession was the passing of Mrs Sheldine Septoe, who had served on our contract staff team for over seven years. We continue to keep her family in our thoughts and prayers.

We wish you all the best in the second semester - work smart, play productively, and good luck for your upcoming assessments.



## IN LOVING MEMORY

It is with deep sadness that we inform you of the passing of two members of our departmental community: **Prince Gana**, a second year student, and **Mrs Sheldine Septoe**, a valued contract staff member.

Prince Gana was a bright, dedicated student with a promising future ahead. His presence and contribution to our learning environment will be sorely missed by his peers and lecturers alike.

Mrs Sheldine Septoe served the department with commitment and warmth. Her professionalism, kindness, and support touched the lives of many, and her absence will be deeply felt by colleagues and students.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families, friends, and all who knew and loved Prince and Mrs Septoe. May their souls rest in peace, and may those mourning find comfort during this difficult time.



# GRATITUDE FROM DR GWAM FOLLOWING HOME FIRE



*Thank you*

## Dear SDP Staff and Students

I am deeply moved by the incredible support you've shown me during the challenging time following the loss of my home to a fire.

Your kindness, generosity, and thoughtfulness have truly uplifted my spirit. From collecting funds, bringing flowers, the beautifully decorated cake, thoughtful gifts, to the framed photo from

my doctoral graduation, each gesture touched me deeply. What a heartwarming surprise, a true display of Ubuntu in action.

A special thank you to my research group for presenting the gifts and to all my colleagues for your ongoing support. Your compassion and solidarity beautifully reflect the true essence of Social Work, caring for one another.

With heartfelt gratitude.

# NEW STAFF

## Welcome to Our New Staff!

We warmly welcome the newest members of our academic team. Your arrival brings fresh ideas and strengthens our commitment to academic excellence and compassionate leadership.



**Lungile Ngwenya** has joined the department as the Fourth-Year Coordinator. He is also responsible for lecturing modules at both third- and fourth-year levels.

**Busisiwe Madikizela-Theu** has joined the department as the First-Year Coordinator. In addition to her coordination role, she lectures first modules and contributes to the lecturing of Fourth-Year Research.



# ENGAGEMENT

## World Social Work Day 2025 – Career Showcasing Event: Strengthening Intergenerational Solidarity for Enduring Wellbeing



Our heartfelt thanks go to our dedicated practice partners, students, and colleagues whose enthusiastic participation made the event such a success.



### World Social Work Day 2025 – Career Showcasing Event.

On 18 March 2025, the Department of Social Work hosted an inspiring Career Showcasing Event as part of the World Social Work Day celebrations. The event was a vibrant gathering of students, staff, and key stakeholders from across the social work sector.

This showcase served not only to inform and inspire our students about the diverse career pathways in social work but also to strengthen our partnerships with the professional community. We look forward to ongoing collaboration as we continue building a more socially conscious and compassionate society together.



# Open Day 2025 – Inspiring the Next Generation



The Nelson Mandela University Gqeberha Open Day, held on 16–17 May 2025, welcomed hundreds of enthusiastic learners, parents, and community members to explore academic offerings and career opportunities.

Our department was proud to showcase its programmes, values, and student experiences to future social change agents. Visitors engaged with staff at our exhibition stall, learning more about the critical role of social workers in society and the dynamic, hands-on education our department provides.



We extend our sincere thanks to all who visited our stand. Your curiosity, thoughtful questions, and passion for making a difference were truly inspiring. We look forward to welcoming many of you into the Social Work family in the near future!



# LEARNING & TEACHING

## BSW First-Year Orientation 2025 – Welcoming the Next Generation of Social Workers

The Department proudly welcomed the 2025 Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) first-year cohort with a dynamic and engaging orientation programme. Designed to ease the transition into university life, the orientation introduced students to the academic, ethical, and professional foundations of social work.

The orientation programme offered more than just introductions—it was a meaningful journey into the heart of social work. First-year students were warmly received and guided through an overview of the BSW programme, timetable, the university's support structures, and the values that shape the profession.

### Key highlights of the orientation included:

- **Emthonjeni Student Wellness** delivered a powerful talk on mental health and the importance of self-care in the helping professions, reminding students that “you can't pour from an empty cup.”
- The **Transformation Office** inspired reflection on social justice, inclusivity, support groups, GBV awareness and consent.

- The **Faculty Librarian** provided an insightful introduction to the University's research resources, digital platforms, and academic support tools essential for academic success.
- An **Academic Administration Consultant** walked students through the academic calendar, registration processes, and vital administrative processes.

The highlight of the programme was the “Amazing Race”-style campus challenge, which combined fun, teamwork, and learning. Students navigated various stations across campus, solving clues and completing tasks that introduced them to essential university resources, department staff, and the core values of the social work profession.

The energy, enthusiasm, and curiosity shown by the new cohort was truly uplifting. We are excited to walk alongside them as they embark on their journey to become ethical, reflective, and socially responsive professionals.

# GALLERY



## Fourth Year Pledge Ceremony – Honouring the Call to Serve



One of the most meaningful moments in the Social Work academic calendar is the annual Fourth-Year Pledge Ceremony, where final-year students publicly commit themselves to the values, ethics, and responsibilities of the social work profession.

This year's ceremony was a powerful and moving occasion. Surrounded by peers, academic staff, and invited guests, our fourth-year students stood together in unity and purpose as they recited the Social Work Pledge—a solemn declaration of integrity, empathy, accountability, and service to humanity.



The pledge is more than just words—it is a rite of passage that marks the transition from student to emerging professional. It reflects a deep personal and collective commitment to social justice, ethical practice, and lifelong learning.



The atmosphere was further enriched by a moving poem delivered by Tshifhiwa Gabara, one of our passionate first-year students. Her piece, titled "Who You Are as a Social Worker," beautifully captured the essence of the profession—emphasising compassion, resilience, and purpose. Her words resonated deeply with both staff and students, adding emotional depth and inspiration to this important milestone.

We congratulate our final-year students for embracing this responsibility with such grace and courage. You carry forward the values of this department and the hopes of the communities you will serve.

# GALLERY



# THE HUMANISING PEDAGOGY DIALOGUE

## HUMANISING PEDAGOGY

The department recently hosted a meaningful and engaging Humanising Pedagogy Conversation and Dialogue with first- to third-year students, drawing an impressive attendance of over 50 students. The session, organised by departmental staff, created a valuable space for open discussion, reflection, and collaborative learning.

The primary aim of the event was to assess students' understanding of humanising pedagogy, while also allowing staff to share their own interpretations of the concept. The central theme of the conversation was unpacking the difference between a humanising approach and humanising pedagogy, and working toward a shared understanding of how these can be applied both inside and outside the classroom.

The dialogue fostered honest exchanges and strengthened the sense of community within the department.

Students were encouraged to provide feedback through anonymous cards, which revealed a strong appreciation for the initiative. Many expressed a desire for more events of this nature, where they could engage with staff in a more relaxed and respectful environment.

An important concern that emerged from the feedback was the challenge of language, which students noted sometimes creates barriers in communication and participation. In response, staff have committed to engaging further on how to address language inclusivity and explore practical ways to continue these vital conversations.

This event marked a positive step forward in reinforcing a culture of mutual respect, empathy, and understanding—and it reaffirmed the department's commitment to student-centred, transformative learning grounded in humanising principles.

# MENTORING EXPERIENCE

My first semester as a peer mentor has been a journey of ups and downs, but ultimately, a deeply meaningful experience. I expected to provide academic help and campus guidance, but quickly discovered that mentorship is about so much more—support, connection, and presence.

Balancing mentoring with my own coursework was a major challenge, especially during busy academic periods. I learned that being a good mentor doesn't mean having all the answers, but rather knowing when to listen and guide others to the right resources.

Working alongside a co-mentor was initially uncertain due to our different styles, but we complemented each other well and shared the responsibilities effectively. A highlight for me was seeing a quiet mentee grow in confidence over time—proof that simply being there for someone can make a big impact.

This semester taught me valuable lessons in patience, setting boundaries, and the power of simply showing up. I'm proud of the growth I've experienced and excited to carry these insights forward.

-Nonhle Shabangu



My mentoring journey has been both enriching and enjoyable. I've had the privilege of working with highly engaged mentees, which has motivated me to be well-prepared and responsive. One challenge was managing language diversity within the group, but by embracing Mandela University's value of diversity, I took time to learn the basics of different languages to better support communication.

The most memorable moments have been the light-hearted ones—laughing, sharing academic pressures, and forming genuine connections. A major takeaway from this experience has been the value of effective facilitation and teamwork. Collaborating with a co-facilitator allowed us to share responsibilities and create a more engaging environment.

Ultimately, mentoring has been more than just guiding others—it's about building relationships, embracing growth, and learning together.

-George Mdakane



Entering 2025, I was eager to slow down, stay present, and support those around me—especially my mentees. I set out to be the “perfect” mentor, ready with advice, academic guidance, and motivational energy. However, reality quickly humbled me. My mentees were quiet and reserved, and our first session felt overwhelmingly silent.

At first, I questioned my mentoring skills, but I soon realised that their silence wasn’t a lack of engagement—it was their way of processing the experience as introverts. This shifted my perspective entirely. I learned to embrace their personalities, let go of my expectations, and allow them to open up at their own pace.

This journey has taught me that effective mentorship is rooted in empathy, patience, and adaptability. Sometimes, the most powerful moments happen in silence.

-Khanyisile Ntimane



# GRADUATIONS

## April 2025 Graduation – A Celebration of Achievement and Resilience



The April 2025 Graduation Ceremony was a momentous occasion for the department, as we celebrated the accomplishments of our graduating students. It was a day filled with pride, reflection, and joy as families, friends, and faculty gathered to honour the dedication and determination that brought each graduate to this milestone.

The ceremony served as a powerful reminder of the impact that education can have—not just on individual lives, but on the broader society. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to all our graduates. As you move forward, may you carry with you the values of empathy, justice, and service that define this noble profession.



**Congratulations, Class of 2024!**

# NOTICES

## Short Learning Programme – Personal Wellness for the Helping Professions

**NELSON MANDELA**  
UNIVERSITY

JOIN US FOR  
**Personal Wellness for  
The Helping Professions**

**Short Learning Programme**  
The Personal Wellness for the Helping professions SLP is aimed at professionals in the helping, education and social service professions. The programme is designed to develop a holistic understanding of wellness, discipline-specific factors impacting on wellbeing, organizational factors, exposure to trauma as people navigate adverse events, and strategies to enhance wellness profiles and built resilience

**R2000/PARTICIPANT**

**25 - 26 September 2025**

**South Campus  
Sports Clubhouse**

**ZIPHOZONKE MOYIKWA  
041 504 2353**

**Learning Platform**  
This is a 10-hour onsite course delivered over two days, with five hours of learning each day.

The cost of the SLP is R2000 and we will also apply for CPD points for the SLP.

**Apply online at [slp.mandela.ac.za](https://slp.mandela.ac.za)**

Faculty of Health Sciences | Change the World | [health.mandela.ac.za](https://health.mandela.ac.za)

Nelson Mandela University is offering a Short Learning Programme (SLP) titled "Personal Wellness for the Helping Professions", aimed at professionals in the helping, education, and social service sectors.

<b>Date</b>	: 25 – 26 September 2025
<b>Venue</b>	: South Campus Sports Clubhouse
<b>Contact</b>	: Ziphozonke Moyikwa   041 504 2353
<b>Email</b>	: <a href="mailto:ziphozonke.moyikwa@mandela.ac.za">ziphozonke.moyikwa@mandela.ac.za</a>
<b>Apply Online</b>	: <a href="https://slp.mandela.ac.za">slp.mandela.ac.za</a>
<b>Cost</b>	: R2000 per participant
<b>CPD Points</b>	: Application will be made for CPD accreditation

This 10-hour onsite course (5 hours per day over two days) focuses on:

- Holistic wellness in professional settings
- Organisational and trauma-related stressors
- Strategies to build resilience and enhance wellness profiles
- Discipline-specific challenges in helping professions

This is an excellent opportunity for professional development and self-care.

**Spaces are limited – apply early!**

## SACSSP Manual Registration – Important for All Students



All students who are not yet registered with council from 2nd to 4th year, are reminded to complete their manual registration with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) to be eligible for field placement.

### **To complete your registration, you must submit the following documents:**

- Completed SACSSP manual registration form (download at [www.sacssp.co.za](http://www.sacssp.co.za))
- Certified copy of your South African ID or valid passport
- Certified copy of your matric certificate
- Proof of payment of the registration fee (R262)
- Certified copy of your original academic record

**Submission email: [newapplications@sacssp.co.za](mailto:newapplications@sacssp.co.za)**

Please ensure your complete application is submitted on time. No field placement will be permitted without SACSSP registration.