



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



TRANSFORMATION OFFICE

TRANSFORMATION OFFICE

Annual Report 2025

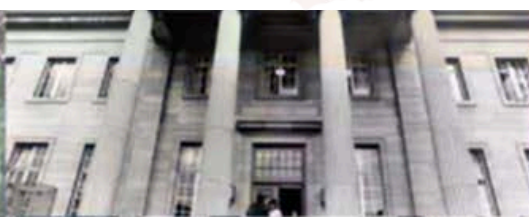
A YEAR OF CONSOLIDATION





Contents

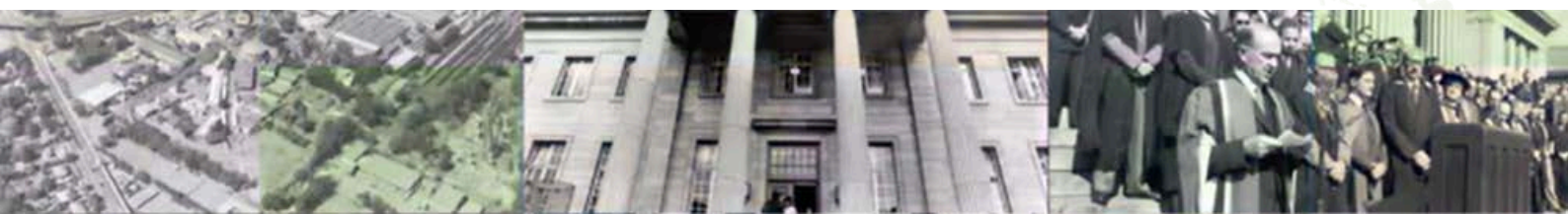
Executive Summary of the Transformation and Employment Equity Office (TEEO) Annual Report	4
About this report	10
Who we are	11
What guides our work	14
How we work	15
Our values	15
Our collaborators at Wits	15
Transformation Committees	16
Transformation Community of Practice (TCoP)	19
How We Are Structured	23
What we do	24
Diversifying the Academy (DTA) & Africa Diaspora Programmes	24
Institutional Cultures	56
Language Diversification, Multilingualism & Translanguaging	57
Social Justice & Ethics	63
Overview	63
2025 Objectives for the SJP	66
Bullying and Discrimination Awareness and Prevention	68
Diversity Seminars	69
Madoda Sabelani Series 2025	72
The Trans/Gender Diverse Support Group	74
Investigations & Mediations	81
Economic & Employment Equity Transformation	82
Academic Profile	83
Professional Administration Profile	84
Economic Transformation: B-BBEE	86
The Road Ahead	86





acronyms

- Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, (B-BBEE)
- Carnegie Diversifying the Academy, (CDTA)
- Disability Rights Unit, (DRU)
- Diversifying The Academy, (DTA)
- Early- to Mid-Career Academic Transitions (EMCAT)
- Employment Equity, (EE)
- Female Academic Leadership Fellowship, (FALF)
- Gender Equity Office, (GEO)
- Key performance areas (KPAs).
- Mid-Career Academic Transitions, (EMCAT)
- Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, Expression, and Sex Characteristics, (SOGIESC)
- Transformation and Employment Equity Office, (TEEO)
- Transformation Steering Committee, (TSC)
- Transformation Implementation Committee, (TIC)
- Vice-Chancellor's Employment Equity Funds, (VCEEF)





PROFESSOR GARTH STEVENS

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: People Development and Culture

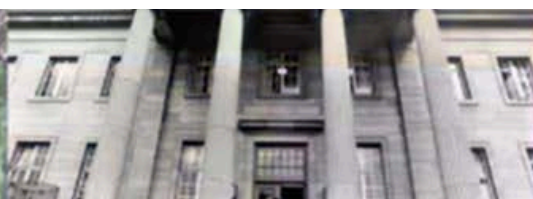
Greetings to all of you as members of the Wits Community!

2025 was once again a busy and productive year for the Transformation and Employment Equity Office (TEEO). After reviewing our transformation pillars in 2023 and 2024, we consolidated our strategy in 2025 through an expanded public engagement focus; ongoing institutional redress initiatives to diversify the academy; the promotion of equity and inclusion; anti-discrimination work; social justice advocacy; and compliance-related imperatives such as Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) and Employment Equity (EE) planning. In addition, we completed the largest institutional cultures survey in Wits' history and have shared these findings and recommendations with all of you. We have also integrated these recommendations into the planning, implementation, and roll-out of our 2033 institutional strategy. This will, without a doubt, involve contributing to institutional change processes and upholding the fundamental principles of academic freedom, maintaining institutional autonomy, and fulfilling our role as an anchor institution that models active citizenship through external engagement with multiple publics.

In more than 30 years since we transitioned to democracy, Wits has made significant strides to reflect the changing nature of our society, to be responsive to the vexing questions of our time, to act as a vibrant public institution, to reflect the composition of South African society, and to demonstrate our commitment to social transformation, justice, and the public good. These values commit us to being a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and people-centred university grounded in our city, regional, national, and international contexts. We are compelled to harness our intellectual capital to reduce inequality, strengthen democracy, improve governance, and cultivate the nascent ethical leadership within our communities. I extend my appreciation to the TEEO and to all of you who continue to hold these values at the core of our institution's vision and mission, making Wits one of the premier institutions in our country, our continent, and across the globe.

Enjoy the read!

Prof Garth Stevens
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: People Development and Culture





Executive Summary of the Transformation and Employment Equity Office (TEEO) Annual Report

Executive Summary: Transformation Office Annual Report 2025 The Transformation and Employment Equity Office (TEEO) at the University of the Witwatersrand serves staff, students, leadership, and external social justice partners as a hub for equity, inclusion, healing, peacebuilding, and cultural change. This 2025 Annual Report, the Office's second consolidated edition, defines the year as one of consolidation and strategic maturation. Building directly on the foundational 2024 report, it illustrates how transformation has evolved from policy and compliance toward embedded praxis, deeper institutional culture change, human-centred management, and a stronger public-engagement mandate, all aligned with Wits Strategy 2033 and the six Transformation Pillars adopted in 2024: Diversifying the Academy; Expansion of Knowledge Archives; Institutional Cultures; Institutional Naming, Visual and Spatial Redress; Language Diversification, Multilingualism and Translanguaging; and Public Engagement.

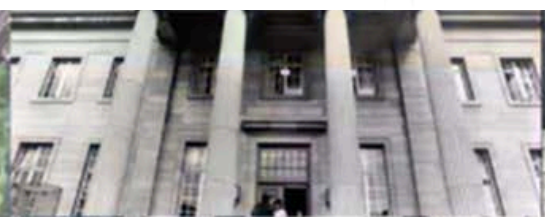
In 2025 transformation work moved from aspiration to lived institutional reality. Programmes matured, governance structures gained traction, context-specific initiatives proliferated across faculties and units, and the interconnections between the pillars became tangible. The report is candid: progress is real and accelerating, yet full institutionalisation remains a multi-year journey requiring sustained commitment.

Transformation Strategy and Governance

The six Transformation Pillars now constitute the organising framework for all equity and inclusion work at Wits. The trajectory has shifted from historical redress and compliance toward proactive advocacy, inclusive institutional cultures, language justice, Global South-centred knowledge production, and purposeful public engagement.

Governance balances central oversight with distributed agency. The Transformation Steering Committee (TSC) aligns strategies across social justice units (TEEO, Gender Equity Office, Disability Rights Unit) and reports to University Forum and Council.

The Transformation Implementation Committee (TIC) oversees Vice-Chancellor's Employment Equity Funds and monitors equity spending. Thirty-four Transformation Committees operate across faculties, schools, divisions, and support units; while their potential to drive change is undeniable, functionality remains uneven, with stronger resourcing and closer partnership with local management now urgent.



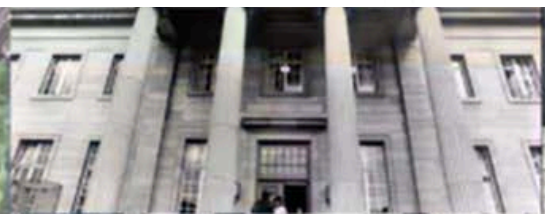


The Transformation Community of Practice (TCoP) emerged as the standout governance innovation of 2025. This cross-campus forum surfaced lived experiences and diagnosed systemic barriers, revealing institutional fragmentation, cultures of fear and retaliation, unsustainable emotional labour borne by marginalised staff, equity implementation gaps, and punitive performance-management practices. From these engagements arose seven strategic priorities: strengthening governance, building capability, improving coherence, resourcing committees, deepening data use, enhancing communication, and embedding accountability through human-centred management.

Diversifying the Academy and Related Programmes

We extend our profound gratitude to Carnegie Corporation of New York, a pivotal strategic partner whose sustained funding has been instrumental in incubating and scaling innovative approaches to diversifying the academy at Wits. Carnegie’s visionary support has underpinned the development of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Planning (MELP) framework, provided critical resources for testing and refining ideas with high potential for equity and inclusion impact, and enabled the University to move boldly from conceptualisation to measurable institutional change.

The flagship Carnegie Diversifying the Academy (CDTA) programme invested R11.49 million across 31 grants in 2025, bringing cumulative investment since inception of phase 3 to R33.80 million. Over 55% of total funding has supported Lecturer-level appointments, with substantial portions also directed to Postdoctoral Fellows and Senior Lecturers. Active grantees supervised Masters and PhD students during the year, confirming the programme’s role as the University’s primary academic pipeline instrument.





In 2026 CDTA will enter the final year of its third grant phase; the tremendous multi-phase support Carnegie has provided over nearly a decade has delivered extraordinary value, catalysing permanent appointments, research productivity, and a more representative academic community. This sustained partnership has also sparked the conceptualisation of a comprehensive DTA Tracer Study scheduled for 2026, which will track long-term career trajectories and institutional impact of CDTA-supported academics.

Career milestones included promotions and permanent appointments for, among others, Professor Kagiso Poe, Dr Khosi Radebe, Dr Matsidiso Sello, and Dr Chia-Yu Chen. The Early- to Mid-Career Academic Transitions (EMCAT) leadership programme supported 27 participants with mentoring, conflict management, portfolio retreats, and public-engagement training, creating what participants called “collegial spaces” that restore purpose and voice. Operational refinements of the programme further strengthened trust and efficiency.

Complementing CDTA, the Carnegie Africa Diaspora Programme continued to forge transformative connections with leading institutions in the Global North and across the continent. Through Distinguished Visiting Fellowships, joint supervision arrangements, high-impact co-authored publications (particularly in Astrophysics and Business Sciences), grant-writing capacity building, and public lectures, the programme has significantly enhanced Wits’ supervision capacity and international research networks. Ongoing collaborations seeded through this initiative promise enduring benefits for both academics and postgraduate students in the years ahead.

The strategic enablement provided by a partner of Carnegie Corporation’s calibre cannot be overstated: it has aligned external philanthropic investment directly with Wits’ institutional priorities, amplified scarce internal resources, and accelerated progress toward a more equitable and globally competitive academy.

Institutional Culture, Naming, and Language

The Wits 100 Cultures Study was completed and its findings socialised in August 2025. Covering seven domains (brand and reputation; people and culture; diversity, equity and inclusion; teaching and learning; research and innovation; place and partnerships; management and governance), the study will guide culture-change interventions over the next three to five years.

The Naming, Visual and Spatial Redress reference group began its work in 2025.

The Language Diversification, Multilingualism and Translanguaging programme, funded by a R2.5 million DHET grant, trained 164 academics in multilingual pedagogy, standardised multilingual letterheads and signage, and provided South African Sign Language interpreting at major events. Emphasis remained on isiZulu, Sesotho, and SASL. The priority now is to transition from grant-funded projects to sustainable institutional structures and staff-development pathways.



Social Justice, SOGIESC and Belonging

The Social Justice Programme delivered 46 formal workshops plus numerous informal engagements, with strongest demand from Health Sciences, Humanities, and Residence Life. Initiatives included the Madoda Sabelani healthy-masculinities series, Diversity Seminars for Occupational Therapy students, and the Trans/Gender Diverse Support Group (co-run with GEO and GALA). In partnership with the UNESCO Chair, the Office trained 90 teachers from feeder schools on anti-discrimination and bullying prevention, extending Wits' transformation expertise into communities and supporting SDG 4.

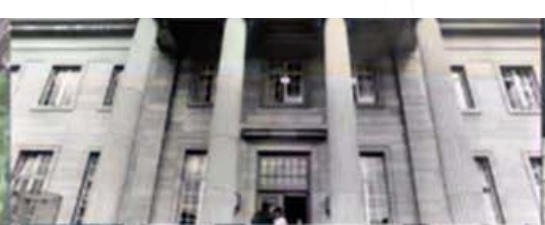
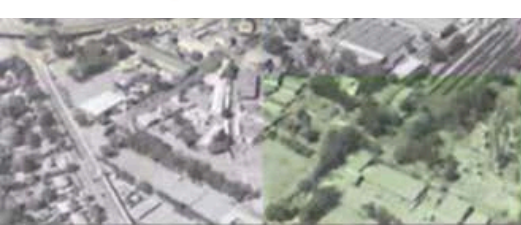
Mediation and Anti-Discrimination

Forty-three cases of bullying, discrimination, and conflict were formally reported. The Office is shifting toward alternative dispute resolution; the Social Justice Manager completed accredited mediation training in 2025, with plans to establish trained student and staff mediator cohorts.

Employment Equity and B-BBEE

Wits submitted a new five-year Employment Equity Plan aligned with the 2025–2030 Sectoral Numerical Targets. The student profile (75% African, 61% women) reflects a strong pipeline. Academic and professional staff diversity has improved at junior and middle levels; senior leadership and disability representation (currently 1.4%) require accelerated succession planning.

B-BBEE performance was strong in enterprise and supplier development (46.78% of spending to Black-owned suppliers), socio-economic development, and board representation. Skills development, senior gender equity, and disability inclusion remain focus areas.





Learning, Evolution and Knowledge Contribution

TEEO describes itself as an “office of praxis” operating in the “third space” between academic and professional domains and across multiple stakeholders. This positioning enables it to broker relationships, surface unspoken realities, and translate insight into practical change. MEL-P feedback loops, TCoP diagnoses, and the Wits 100 Cultures Study now directly shape programming. The Office is increasingly theorising its work through book chapters, journal articles, media features on EMCAT and CDTA, and peer-learning forums, positioning Wits as a thought leader among South African anchor universities.

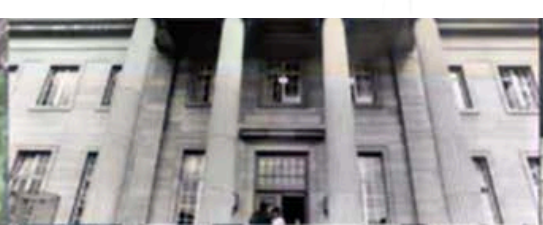
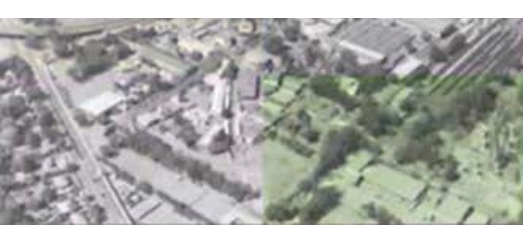
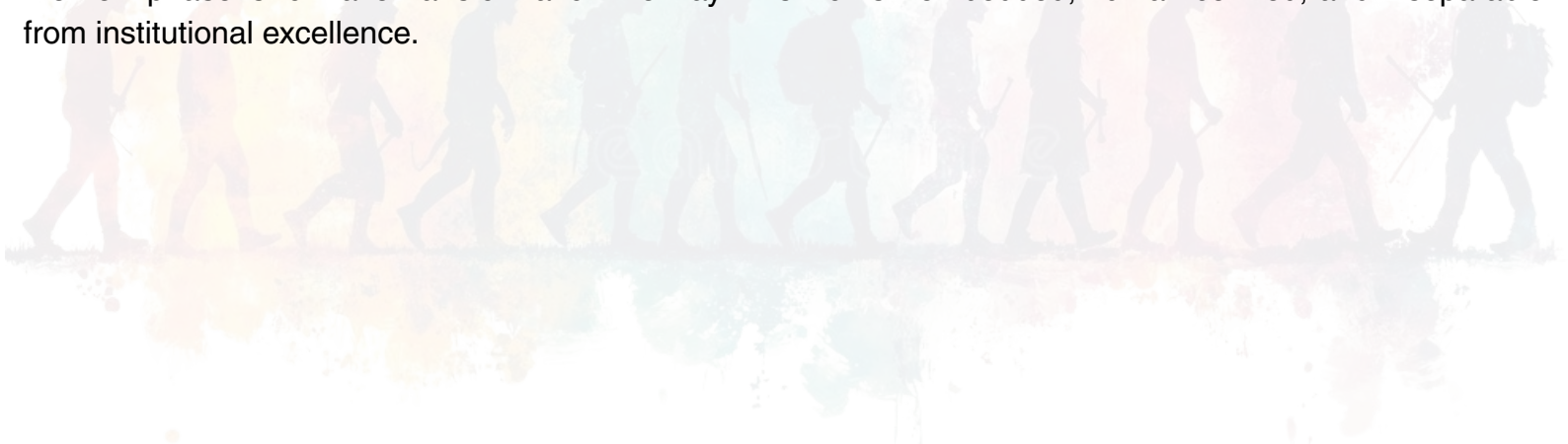
Forward Priorities

The report is frank about constraints: a small office facing high demand, uneven committee functionality, resistance, emotional labour, grant dependency, and policy–systems misalignment. Yet momentum is unmistakable.

Strategic future priorities are:

- Implement Wits 100 Cultures Study recommendations university-wide
- Embed multilingualism as permanent institutional infrastructure beyond DHET funding
- Scale CDTA and mentoring ecosystems with grant-writing and leadership pathways.
- Run a DTA tracer study.
- Launch Social Justice Champions network and “Bully-Free Zone” campaign; expand mediation capacity
- Deepen residence, clinical space, and feeder-school partnerships
- Accelerate senior-level and disability equity through structured succession planning and inclusive leadership development

These interconnected efforts are moving Wits toward the just, inclusive, African, and globally engaged university envisaged in Strategy 2033. The consolidation achieved in 2025 has created stronger foundations; the next phase is to make transformation the way Wits works—embedded, human-centred, and inseparable from institutional excellence.







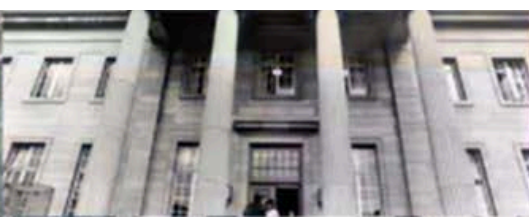
about this report

The 2025 Transformation and Employment Equity Annual Report (TEEO) report builds on our 2024 Transformation Annual Report. The 2025 Transformation report shows the consolidation and strategic maturation of transformation work at the University of the Witwatersrand. In our 2024 report, we share with you who we are, why we do the work we do, what work we do and how we are evolving and learning (for more information regarding this please click [here](#)).

In this report, we highlight our transformation initiatives of 2025. Our report is aligned with the University's transformation pillars and guided by the [2033 Strategic Plan of Wits University](#).

While we have distinct six transformation pillars, they are inter-connected and support the university's overall transformation efforts. Distinct from the 2024 Annual Report is a new section in which Transformation Committees across the university share the work they are doing in their specific contexts. The approach we have taken is to learn through doing and in this way to build our praxis. This approach has allowed us to work with needs and to work within the dynamic context of the different spaces within the university. The voices from the different contexts from Transformation Committees allow us to share how we are deepening our transformation journey across diverse spaces within the university. What colleagues share is an indication of the specific transformation initiatives required in their spaces, how these are developing and how connection is stimulated and the transformation community built.

As you navigate the report, we invite you to collaborate, partner and grow with us in discovering ways to enhance and contribute to creating a more inclusive and safe university environment.





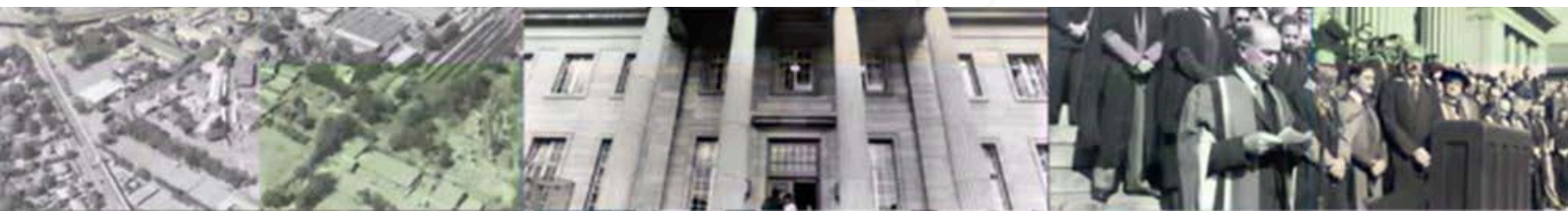
who we are

We remain committed transformation advocates, activists, scholars and professionals who are invested in doing care, peacebuilding and healing work. As we work on doing transformation, we engage and grow with our university community, fellow advocates for positive and inclusive change and our connection across our multiple stakeholders.

We believe our work has become even more important during this time given the changes in a global context where efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion are increasingly contested, including significant rollbacks in parts of the United States in recent years. We continue to advocate for the importance of building a society built on progressively shared values that build friendships and peace-loving, internationally connected nations.

Although we are a small office, we actively engage with networks of social justice and safe zone allies. We are committed to working collaboratively and creating safe, inclusive spaces for reflection, learning, and transformative transitions that deepen our practices and praxis.

We recognise our transformation work is cyclical in nature, which allows us to learn, unlearn, do and undo as we participate in reflexivity in our learning and doing.





Dr Bernadette Johnson
Director : TEOO

E: bernadette.johnson@wits.ac.za



Adv Neo Mahlako
Head of Case Management,
E: neo.mahlako1@wits.ac.za



Thembekile Madondo
Social Justice Manager

E: thembekile.madondo@wits.ac.za



Ciaran Heywood
Social Justice Coordinator
E: ciaran.heywood@wits.ac.za



Cecilia Smith
BBB-EE Analyst
E: cecilia.smith@wits.ac.za



Keitumetse Moagi
EE Specialist
E: keitumetse.moagi@wits.ac.za



Elton Ackers
Project Co-ordinator
E: elton.ackers@wits.ac.za



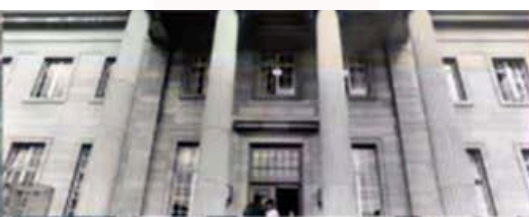
Lethu Kapueja
Equity Grants Manager
E: lethu.kapueja@wits.ac.za



Prof Antonia Wadley
Head of Academic Support and Coaching
E: Antonia.Wadley@wits.ac.za



Ntebo Mampane
CDTA Administrator
E: ntebo.mampane@wits.ac.za





What guides our work

We are guided by the Transformation Pillars adopted by the university in 2024. These pillars are:

Pillar 1: Diversifying the Wits Academy

Pillar 2: Expansion of Knowledge Archives

Pillar 3: Institutional Cultures

Pillar 4: Institutional Naming, Visual and Spatial Redress

Pillar 5: Language Diversification, Multilingualism and Translanguaging

Pillar 6: Public Engagement

Public Engagement or Community Engagement is a new transformation pillar and signals the University's interest in being inward orientated and outward public facing in thinking about transformation not only as related to the internal change within the university but also in relation to the University's role in society. Diversifying the academy; Institutional Cultures; and Language diversification, multilingualism and translanguaging are pillars strongly related to the internal transformation of Wits University community. It speaks to redress in relation to EE and B-BBEE, building a culture of inclusivity and demonstrating this inclusivity through language diversification, a long-standing matter tied up with the Apartheid architecture of our society.

Institutional Naming, Visual and Spatial Redress while particularly concerned about the significance of naming buildings and translating this into visual representations and redress; we are also concerned about the space and place we occupied within the city of Johannesburg and the Gauteng region as our immediate location. This pillar signals both our internal and external orientation and our commitment to contribute simultaneous to both to us on campus visual and spatial redress and our surroundings. Expansion of Knowledge Archives in a similar way extends the knowledge archives not only to Wits' internal archives but recognises the presence of archives in all spaces within our society and the importance of their preservation. (For more information on the details of each Transformation Pillar click [HERE](#)). Given the scope and scale of the work related to the Transformation Pillars, the focus during 2025 was on continuing and deepening ongoing work in for example Diversifying the Academy while initiating work in new areas such as the Public Engagement Pillar. The Expansion of Knowledge Archive is one of the pillars where work still needs to be initiated. While the Naming, Visual and Spatial Redress reference group has been constituted, the work in this reference group needs to be developed and will be reported in future.



How we work

Our values

Care

Respect

Collaboration

Our collaborators at Wits



RESEARCH OFFICE



Tshwane University of Technology

We empower people



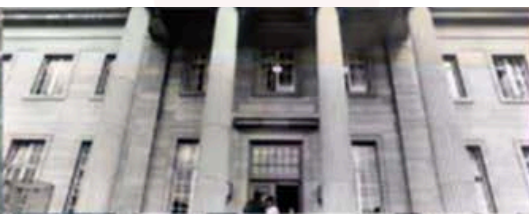
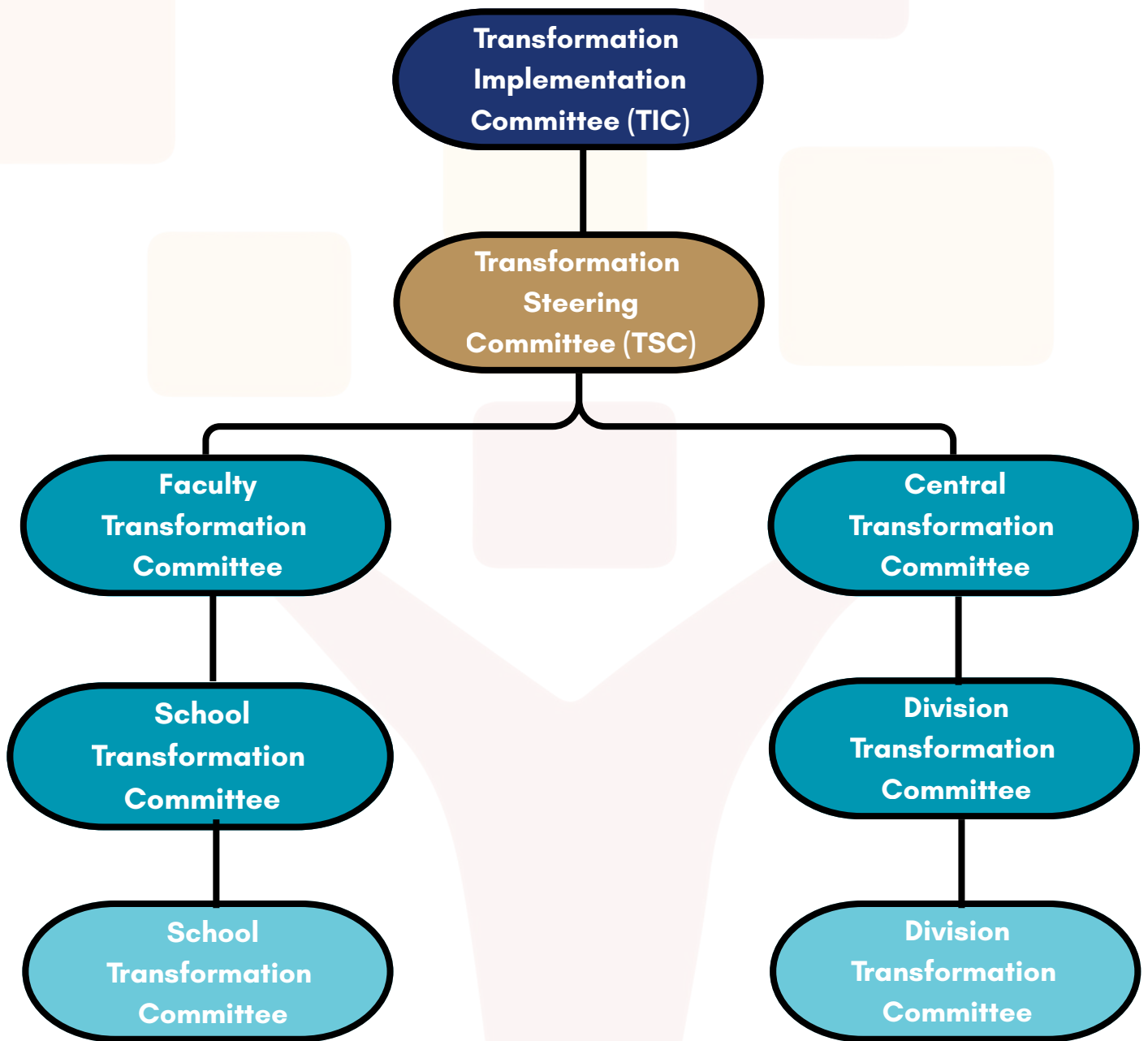
OFFICE OF STUDENT SUCCESS



Centre for Learning, Teaching and Development



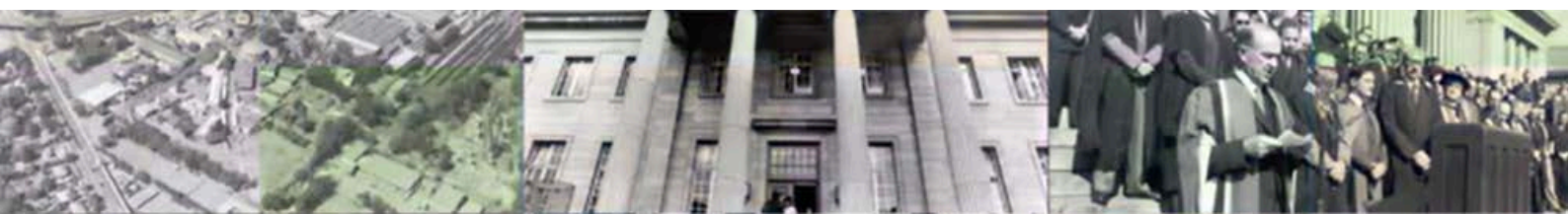
transformation committees



We have 34 Transformation Committees across the university, spanning Faculties, Schools, Departments and Divisions, and including academics, professional and support staff, as well as students. Transformation committees play a crucial role in advancing the Transformation agenda and promoting the Transformation Pillars within the University. (For more information refer to the Terms of Reference of Transformation Committees).

We have conducted numerous workshops with Transformation Committees from various areas, including the School of Public Health; the Faculty of Health Sciences, the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management; Wits Library; the Faculty of Science and School of Education. These workshops focus on Inducting the committees and raising awareness about key transformation policies, values and their role in driving transformation. There is a need to further strengthen these transformation committees, as they have the potential to promote the transformation agenda in a more nuanced and contextualised manner, working in partnership with management and other key stakeholders in their specific areas of the University. A strong relationship between transformation committees and their management is vital for fostering inclusivity, collaboration and a positive, and healthy university culture. The university's Transformation governance structures include the Transformation Implementation Committee (TIC) and the Transformation Steering Committee (TSC).

The TIC is responsible for overseeing the disbursement, monitoring and evaluation of equity funding, while the TSC focuses on ensuring the alignment of transformation strategies and operations across social justice partners, such as the Gender Equity Office,

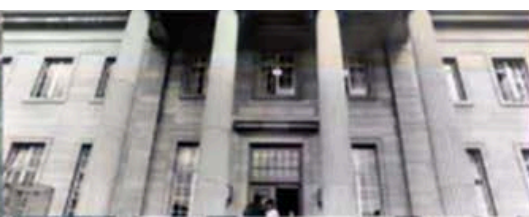




the Disability Rights Unit and the Transformation Office, in consultation with the university's various stakeholders represented within the structure. These structures submit reports to the University Forum (UF) and the University Council.

Strategic discussions that took place in the Transformation Steering Committee (TSC) during 2025 focused on five key areas. Firstly, enhancing the composition and representation on Transformation Committees to ensure that all University role players are able to engage on transformation related to their context. Secondly, the importance of induction of new transformation committee members in relation to their role and responsibilities.

Thirdly, the training of committee members which assist committee members to engage within their contexts for example on emotional intelligence and intercultural communication. Fourthly, discussions on the issues prevalent within the university such as bullying in the workplace, Fifthly, discussions related to the work in all social justice offices such as Transformation, Gender Equity and the Disability Rights Unit for transformation committees to remain updated on social justice support and interventions across the university.





transformation community of practice (TCoP)

The first TCoP meeting of the year took place on 09 June 2025. The focus of the discussion was Employment Equity at the University, with attention to factors that enable or constrain progress across different contexts in the University.

The meeting included updates on the work of the TEEO. The second TCoP meeting took place on 17 November 2025. The focus was on the changing nature of the University, the broader state of transformation in higher education, and reflections emerging from the 2025 Institutional Cultures Study. These discussions contributed to internal conversations on key transformation priorities and on how transformation committees could collaborate more effectively in areas relating to dignity, safety, and institutional culture. Participants included members of Transformation Committees, together recipients of Diversifying the Academy grant recipients. This was the first opportunity for DTA recipients to engage directly with Transformation Committees to reflect on their experiences and observations of transformation at the University.

Objectives of this event include:

- To provide a platform for academics to reflect on the current state and future trajectory of the University, fostering a shared understanding of its evolving role and challenges.
- To discuss the roles of the Transformation Committees, ensuring their role and reporting is effectively integrated into the 2025 institutional report and future reports.
- To generate and discuss emerging strategies for diversifying the academy, moving beyond current approaches to identify new ideas and needs that will shape future programs.

The workshop highlighted areas where equity implementation practices vary across the institution. Discussions pointed to the importance of strengthening consistency in the inclusion of transformation representatives in recruitment processes, improving transparency in promotion pathways, and enhancing mechanisms for monitoring equity commitments. External factors, including visa-related delays for international candidates, were also noted as contextual constraints on diversification efforts.

The TCoP workshop was a celebration of the transformation award recipients of 2025 Transformation Awards. The Individual Award was won by Mr Ronnet Diale for his personal agency in fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment through his role. The Individual Award was also won by Mrs J de Gouveia who was praised for her transformative impact in the Adult Education and Training Initiative for the insourced staff. The group award was won by the Faculty of Health Sciences Transformation and Wellness Committee. This was the first time a transformation award was won by a Transformation and Wellness Committee. It demonstrates the possibilities and power of collaboration.



It was also an acknowledgement of the work taking place in transformation committees across the institution. The workshop created space for constructive reflection on structural dynamics, lived experiences, and pathways toward more coherent and coordinated transformation practice. A number of areas were identified by the TCoP for further work:

Institutional fragmentation: With over 50 transformation-related structures across the University, levels of functionality and capacity vary. While some units operate robustly, others face challenges related to continuity and resourcing. These discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening system-enabled support, reducing reliance on individual effort, and ensuring that transformation work is sustainably embedded within institutional structures.

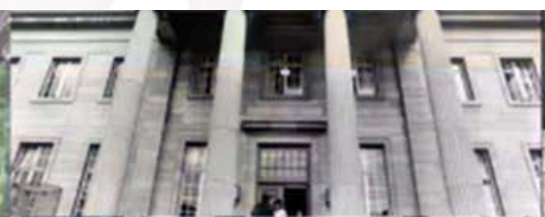
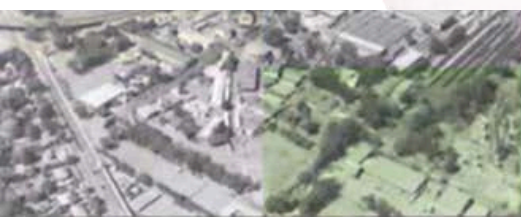
Trust and leadership dynamics: Participants reflected on the need to strengthen psychologically safe working environments. Discussions highlighted concerns related to management practices, the experience of performance management processes, and the importance of ensuring that staff can raise concerns through clear, trusted, and supportive channels.

Emotional workload: Participants noted that this largely unrecognised labour places increasing pressure on staff wellbeing, reinforcing the need for clearer role boundaries, training, and institutional support mechanisms.

Student reality disconnection: Participants reflected on the need for institutional systems, curricula, and support mechanisms to continue evolving in response to the changing composition and needs of the student body.

Exemplary practice exists: The Faculty of Health Sciences' literacy and numeracy programme for insourced workers demonstrates what transformation looks like when grounded in dignity, collaborative design, and sustained institutional commitment. This initiative serves as a benchmark for future work.

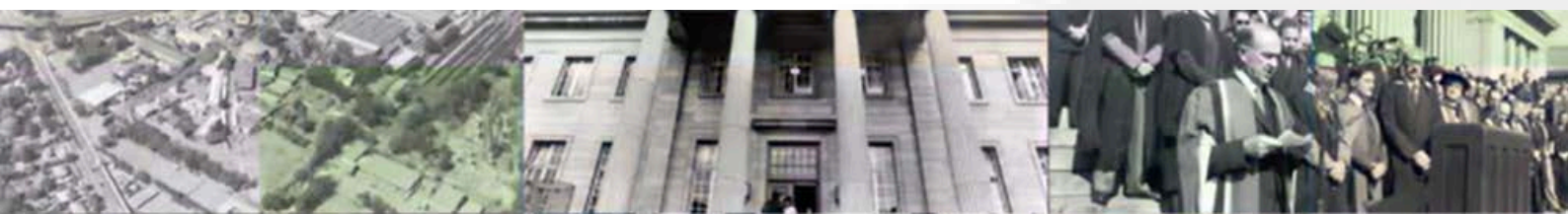
Prof. Thierry Luescher's keynote situated Wits' challenges within national patterns: transformation across South African universities remains "substantial but highly uneven," with persistent exclusionary cultures, underdeveloped community engagement, and performance management systems that often undermine equity imperatives. Wits is not alone, and the discussion reinforced the importance of coordinated and sustained action to advance transformation goals.





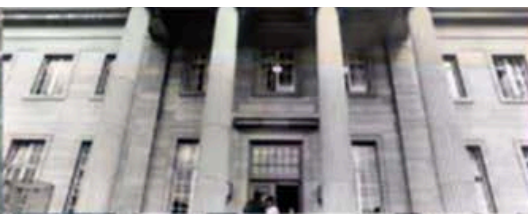
Strategic priorities were identified by the TCoP. These are:

1. Strengthen transformation governance and reporting - Enhance coordination across structures, clarify mandates, and support consistent representation.
2. Cultivate human-centred management culture - Develop reflective leadership practices, including feedback mechanisms such as 360-degree evaluations, and strengthen the integration of transformation competencies within leadership KPAs.
3. Expand transformation capability and support - Build on existing mentorship and coaching initiatives, strengthen access to trauma-informed training, and foster peer-support mechanisms.
4. Evolve performance management systems – Review and refine outcomes to ensure developmental intent, and explore the use of equity-responsive indicators.
5. Strengthen recruitment and retention pathways - Further align recruitment protocols with transformation objectives and enhance monitoring and reporting tools within HR processes.
6. Invest in student inclusion and belonging - Deepen practices that support cultural humility, expand flexible learning approaches, and strengthen mechanisms for incorporating diverse student voices.
7. Build institutional coherence - Integrate TCoP insights into annual reporting processes and continue to facilitate cross-faculty learning and knowledge-sharing.





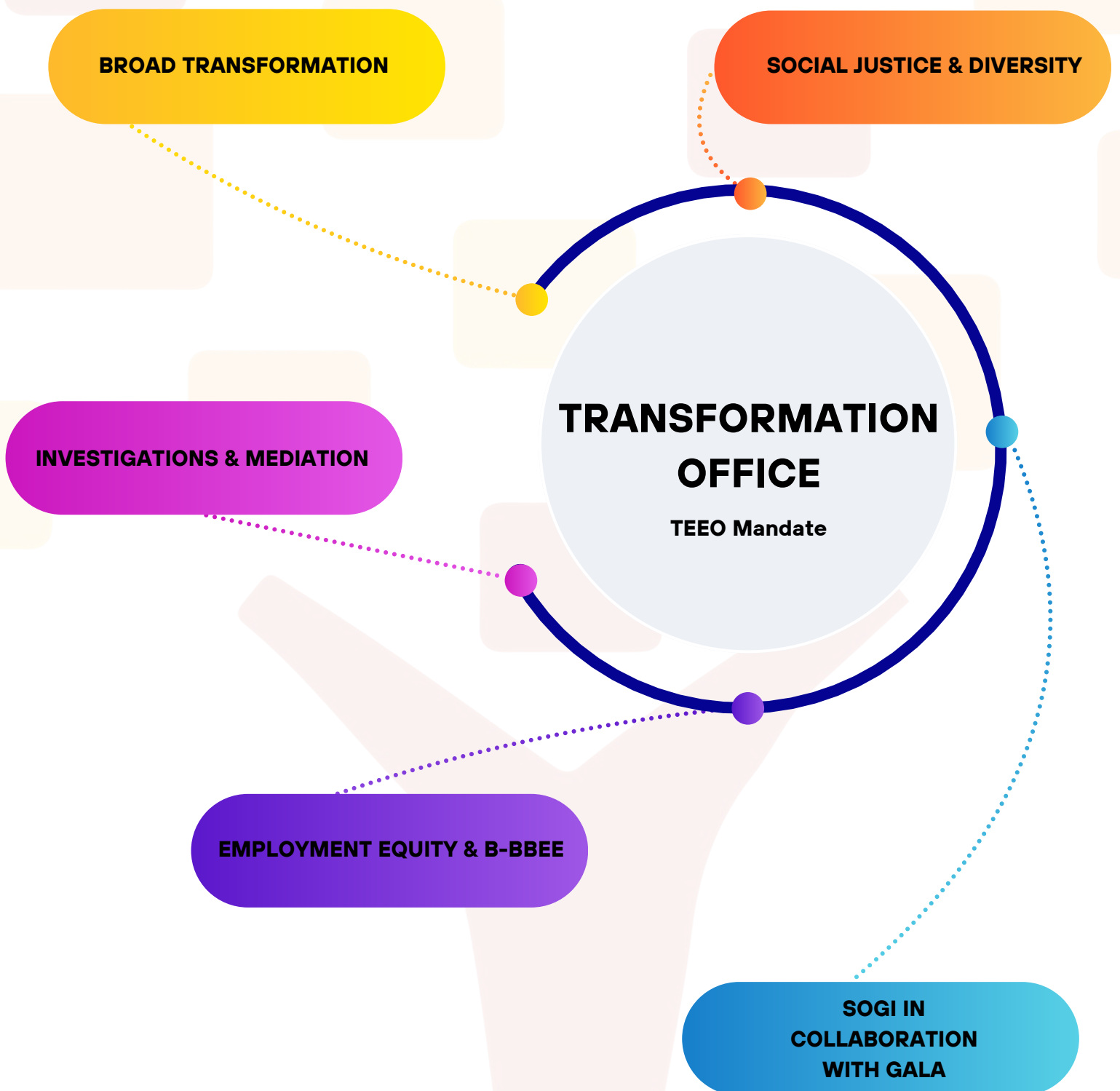
The discussions underscored the importance of continued alignment across systems, leadership practices, and institutional capabilities in order to deepen the impact of transformation initiatives. This report provides both diagnosis and pathway on strengthening governance architecture, supporting staff sustainably, and aligning institutional systems with transformation values. The event reaffirmed the importance of system-level coherence, accountability, and a shared understanding that transformation is a collective institutional responsibility embedded in core academic and administrative work.





how we are structured

The Transformation Office is currently structured around focus areas which are captured diagrammatically below.





what we do

While the work of the Transformation and Employment Equity Office (TEEO) is guided by the Transformation Pillars, programmes have been developed to support the implementation of the pillars. These programmes include: Diversifying The Academy (DTA) & Africa Diaspora, the Social Justice and Ethics Programme, Employment Equity Development and Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment.

Diversifying the Academy (DTA) & AFRICA DIASPORA PROGRAMMES

Funder: Carnegie Corporation of New York.

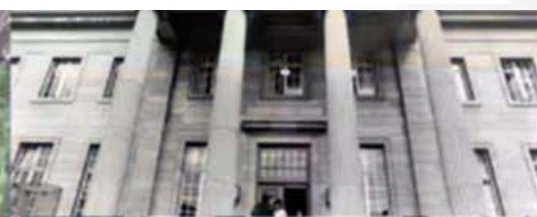
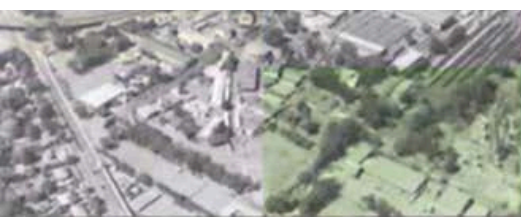
Partners: Wits Centre for Learning & Teaching Development (CLTD) and the Wits Research Office.

TEEO staff involved: Mr. Lethu Kapueja (Equity Grants Manager), Prof. Antonia Wadley (Head of Academic Support & Coaching), and Ms. Ntebo Mampane (CDTA Administrator).

Overview

DTA invested R11.49m across 31 grants in 2025, with Enabling Grants driving delivery by value and volume. New Appointment, Postdoctoral, and Doctoral awards completed the pipeline. Since inception, cumulative investment stands at R33.80m, concentrated at lecturer level where the effect on progression and equity is strongest.

Active grantees reported supervision of at least 60 Masters students and 16 PhD candidates. Master's supervision carries the main load and is the quickest lever to grow the near-term feeder pool. PhD supervision is present but concentrated in a smaller set of supervisors. Across reports and feedback, four practical needs recur: stronger grant-writing, collaboration and co-supervision, voice and visibility in institutional spaces, and supervision craft for large Master's cohorts.



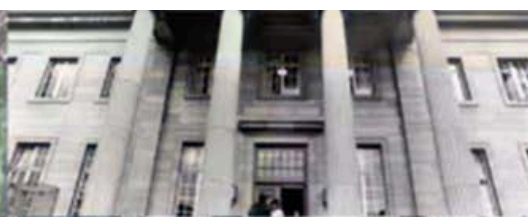
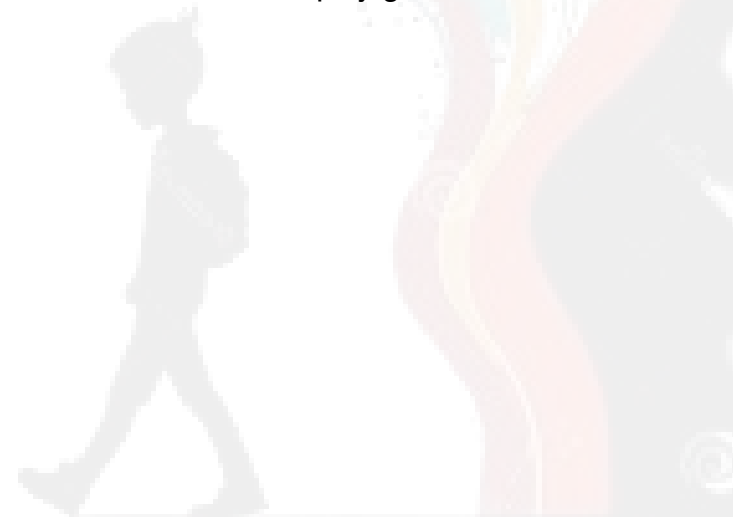


The portfolio aligns with the new Transformation Pillars and Wits 2033 priorities on people and culture, social impact, and a stronger Global South pipeline.

Delivery improvements this year include confidential Dean's letters routed directly to TEEQ, a unified support-letter template with dual sign-off, and a controlled extension window of up to four months for close-out spending on Doctoral and Enabling Grants. These changes strengthen review integrity, clarify endorsements, and give projects a predictable finish.

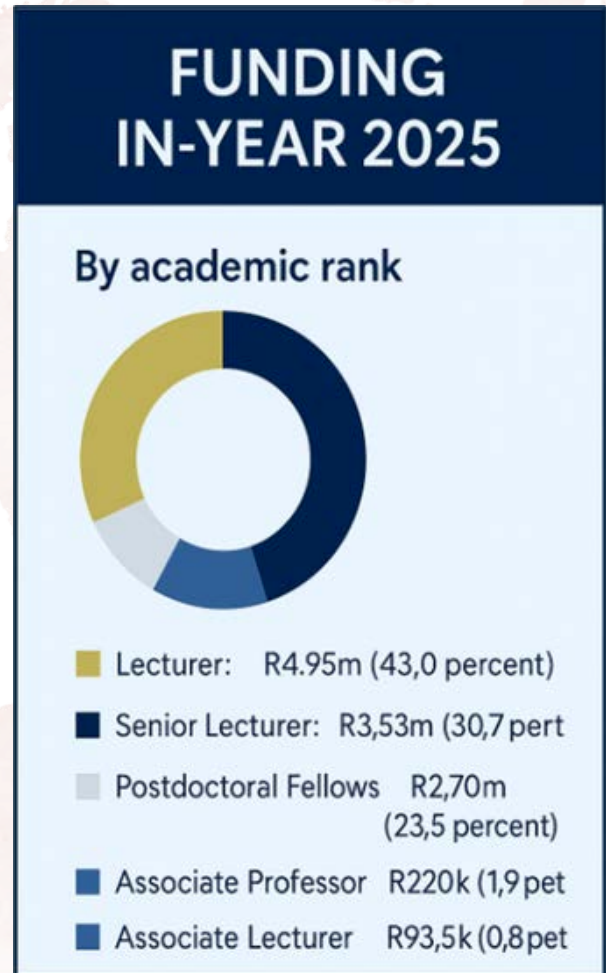
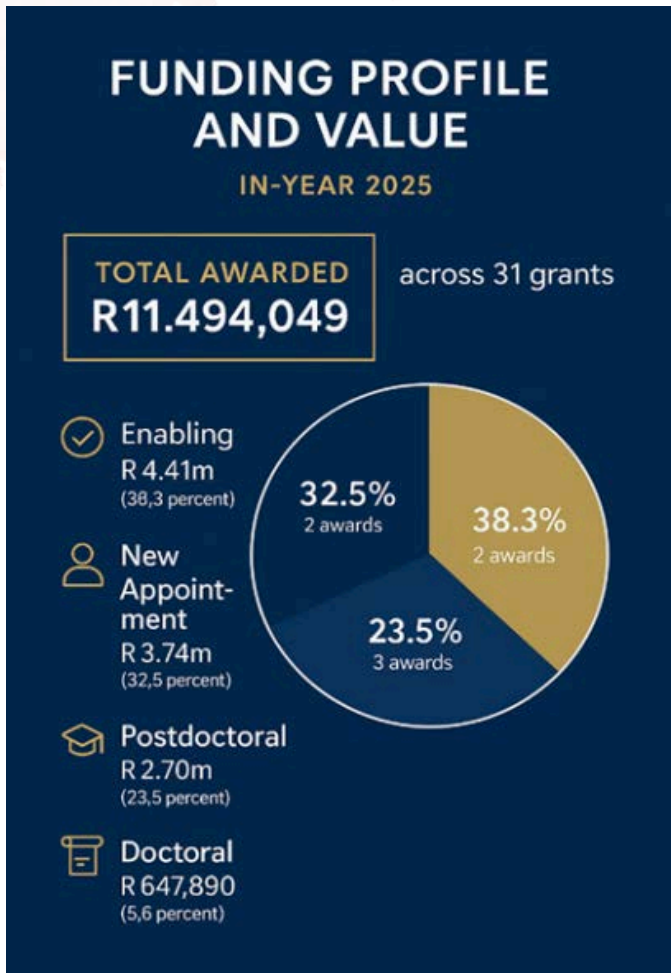
Programme support extended well beyond funding. Group mentoring and targeted workshops focused on intercultural communication, public engagement, conflict management, and identity as scholars. EMCAT Round 2 concluded in June, with strong participant feedback on leadership growth and belonging. Notable grantee milestones included promotions in CLM, a senior appointment at NICD, and a PhD completion leading to a research post at the University of Johannesburg. Adding a dedicated CDTA Administrator, Ntebo Mampane, stabilised events, grant administration, and grantee communications.

Our lessons are drawn from multiple sources of observation and data: progress reports, event feedback, cohort reflections, TIC inputs, and survey insights. The MEL-P Framework anchors this cycle. We monitor milestones and outputs, evaluate with rapid feedback pulses, learn through quarterly sense-making reports and observations, and plan by adjusting calendars, content, and support. This keeps CDTA evidence-led, people-centred, and tightly aligned to Wits' transformation and equity goals.

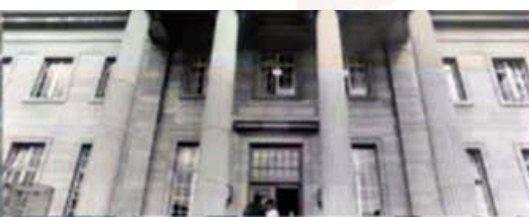




Funding profile and value



Together, the charts show that CDTA's 2025 funding mix aligns with where people sit in the pipeline. By grant type, most money goes to Enabling and New Appointment awards, and by rank the largest shares land with Lecturers and Senior Lecturers. The identical 23.5 percent for Postdoctoral funding in both graphics confirms a consistent investment at that stage. Very small shares reach Associate Professors and Associate Lecturers, which fits the programme's aim to concentrate resources where progression gains are highest. The Doctoral slice appears in the grant-type view but not in the rank view, since the latter tracks staff ranks rather than student status.





Cumulative portfolio to date

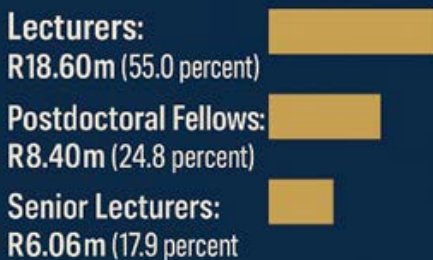
This cumulative view below shows that our long-run investments track the same priorities seen in the in-year charts. Of the R33.80m awarded to date, over half has gone to Lecturers (R18.60m, 55 percent), reflecting our focus on the rank with the greatest progression and equity gains. Postdoctoral Fellows account for a quarter (R8.40m, 24.8 percent), building the future hiring pool, and Senior Lecturers receive 17.9 percent (R6.06m) to support promotion trajectories. Smaller but purposeful funding reach Associate Professors, Associate Lecturers, and Associate Researchers to address specific gaps. In short, the cumulative portfolio confirms a consistent pipeline strategy from postdoc through lecturer and into senior ranks.

FUNDING PROFILE AND VALUE

CUMULATIVE PORTFOLIO TO DATE

TOTAL AWARDED:
R33.80m

BY RANK

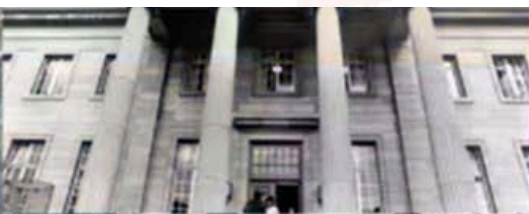


Smaller but strategic tranches are reaching Associate Professors, Associate Lecturers and Associate Researchers

What this mix enables:

Enabling Grants turn near-term potential into tangible outputs and real progression. They're the everyday engine that helps academics finish papers, lock in data, and present credible promotion files. The same support sharpens proposals for external funding and lifts departmental equity by moving strong candidates across the line.

New Appointment Grants do the steady work in that first, fragile two years. They give equity candidates the opportunity to join Wits, and room to set up a research rhythm, assemble small teams, and get teaching into balance. Postdoctoral Grants widen the future hiring pool.





They draw promising researchers into Wits labs and research entities, build collaborative projects, and position the university to deliver on Wits 2033's aim to be a continental home for postdocs.

Doctoral Grants secure the first rung of the ladder. They help candidates survive the costly early phase, complete on time, secured lecturer roles.

Together, these four instruments build a clean pathway from doctoral entry to independent scholar, while growing a diverse cadre of academics who can win grants, publish, and teach well.

Supervision and pipeline signal

Of the surveyed active grantees, these are the results for 2025:

SUPERVISION AND PIPELINE SIGNAL

Of the surveyed active grantees, these are the results for 2025



MASTER'S SUPERVISED

60 ACROSS
16 SUPERVISORS

Average load:
3,75 per supervisor



PhD SUPERVISED

16 ACROSS
15 SUPERVISORS

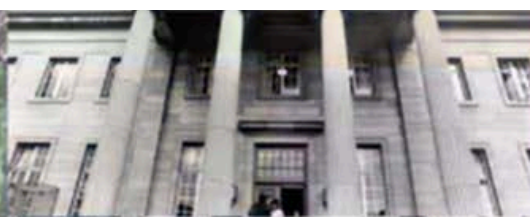
Average load:
1,07 per supervisor

What this means:

Masters supervision is the main load-bearer

Most grantees are carrying sizeable Masters cohorts. This is the quickest way to expand the pipeline because Masters students convert to PhD at higher rates when they feel supported, see visible research teams, and can plug into small grants for data and writing.

Treat Masters as your near-term feeder pool. Prioritise well-structured group supervision, short methods clinics, and writing sprints. The payoff is faster throughput, more co-authored outputs, and a larger pool of PhD-ready candidates within 12–18 months.





PhD supervision is present but concentrated

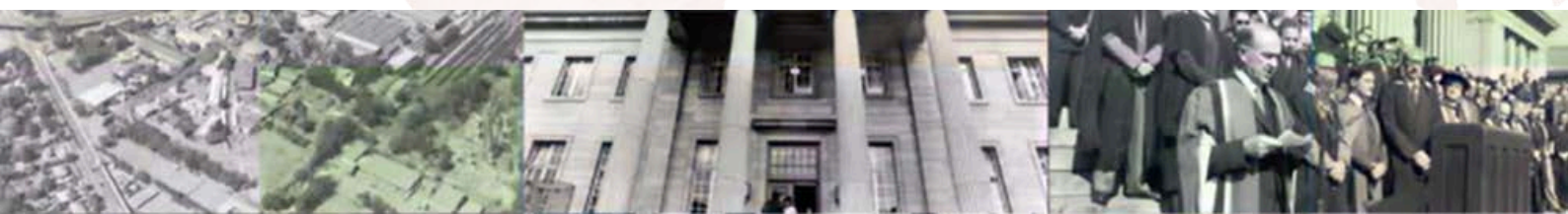
A smaller subset of supervisors holds the heavier PhD supervision loads. That creates risk if those few are overstretched or move institutions.

Newer grantees carry more Masters students per person

Recent reports show higher Masters counts per supervisor. However this may change with more grantee reports being received. However, it does point to a trend that fits disciplines with large coursework Masters intakes. It can be productive if managed well, since it seeds the PhD pipeline, but it is risky for an early career academic career if everyone hits proposal and ethics milestones at once.

Stated needs from grantees

In 2025, our grantees reflected on four theme that they require for support.





Grantee Needs & Strategic Impact (2025)

What Grantees Need

Four recurring themes across engagement data – practical, actionable, and measurable.



1. Grant-Writing & External Capture

Help with proposal framing, confidence, and submission logistics

Interest in writing clinics and mock review panels



2. Collaboration & Co-Supervision

Build cross-faculty projects

Share supervision where topics intersect or workloads are high



3. Voice, Influence & Visibility

Support in navigating committees, negotiations, and policy engagement

Strengthen academic identity across platforms



4. Supervision Craft

Tactical tools for progression, feedback cycles, ethics, data handling

Strategies for managing large Master's cohorts and reducing risk

1) Grant-writing and external capture

Grantees want help turning ideas into fundable proposals. The asks are practical: framing the problem, matching it to a call, building the right budget, and getting the submission mechanics right.

Confidence grows when people see examples, write in short sprints, and test arguments with a friendly but exacting audience. Programming regular grant writing retreats, and mock review panels that score against real criteria will assist in building their fundraising confidence.

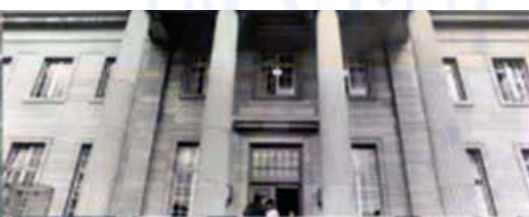
2) Collaboration and co-supervision

There is appetite to build projects that cut across Schools and to share supervision where topics overlap or workloads are unmanageable.

This spreads risk, moves scholarship across silos, and gives students a more rounded team. Practically this translates to offering a simple brokering function: a rolling matchmaking list of topics and methods, a quarterly pitch hour or and small seed funds tied to joint outputs or co-supervision agreements.

3) Voice, influence, and visibility

People want to speak with more impact in committees, negotiate for resources, and translate research into policy-ready messages. They also want a clearer academic identity online and in public forums. Grantees requested workshops on chairing meetings, grant contract negotiation, and developing policy briefs. Pair this with a profile overhaul aligns bios, Google Scholar, ORCID, and departmental pages.





4) Supervision craft

Supervisors are asking for tactics that move students through milestones on time, especially in large Masters cohorts. The needs cluster around feedback rhythms, ethics clearance, data handling, and managing risk when projects stall. The grantees requested lightweight toolkit, with milestone planners, feedback templates, an ethics checklist, and a 30-60-90 day escalation path. Back this with group writing sessions and methods clinics that absorb routine issues at scale.

TRANSFORMATION & EQUITY IMPACT

Impact on Transformation and Employment Equity

This graphic translates the funding profile into transformation results. First, “Diversifying the Academy” highlights why the portfolio clusters at lecturer and postdoc levels: these are the hiring and promotion points, so investment here stabilises early-career scholars and strengthens retention.

“Curriculum and Knowledge Archives” signals the downstream effect. As the scholar base diversifies, research agendas and course content shift, widening who produces and defines knowledge.

“Culture and Belonging” points to the everyday conditions that shape progression.

When we remove friction that disproportionately affects Black and women scholars, departments become healthier and promotion pathways open.

“Public Engagement and Visibility” links this internal change to the outside world. When diverse scholars lead research and city-facing work, Wits gains credibility and reach. In short, the graphic shows a chain: targeted funding supports people, people reshape knowledge and culture, and that renewed academic centre engages the public with greater authority.



Diversifying the Academy

Funding clusters at Lecturer and Postdoc levels – where hiring and advancement happen – helping to stabilise and retain early-career researchers.



Curriculum & Knowledge Archives

A more diverse scholar base reshapes research direction and curricular content, expanding who leads and defines knowledge.



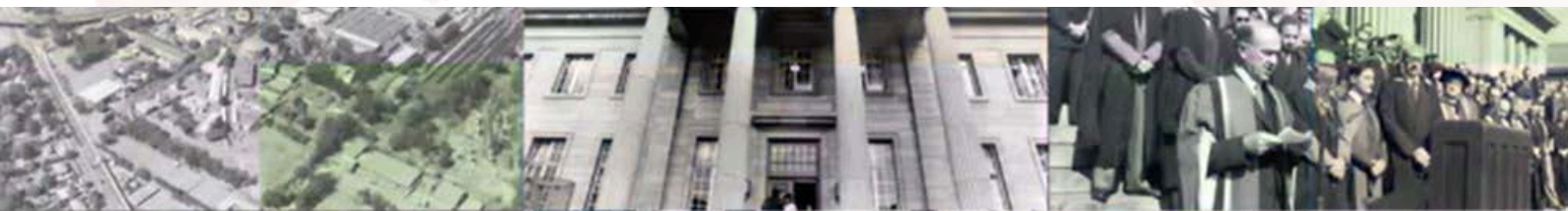
Culture & Belonging

Removing friction that disproportionately affects black and women scholars improves departmental climate and progression.



Public Engagement & Visibility

Diverse leadership in research and city-facing initiatives strengthens Wits' credibility and social reach.



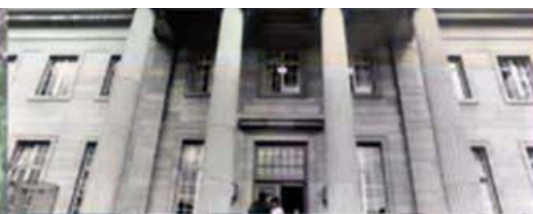


Promotions and career milestones (2025)

Advancing our grantees' careers is a core CDTA outcome. In 2025, some of our recipients reached important milestones:

- Assoc. Prof. Kagiso “TK” Poe moved from Senior Lecturer to Associate Professor in CLM. He credits the Alumni Diaspora and CDTA programmes, including an enabling grant, for accelerating his outputs and visibility.
- Dr Khosi Radebe was promoted to Senior Lecturer in CLM in July 2025, following confirmation in March 2024. She notes CDTA’s direct and indirect support in reaching this milestone.

- Dr Matsidiso Sello completed her PhD and transitioned to a research role at UJ’s Centre for Social Development in Africa, highlighting CDTA’s comprehensive financial and mentoring support.
- Dr Chia Yu Chen advanced to Senior Medical Scientist at NICD, citing CDTA’s contribution to technical upskilling and science-communication coaching.





EMCAT Round 2 Closed in June 2025

The second Enhancing Mid-Career Academic Transitions (EMCAT) programme came to a close in June. This programme, which launched in 2022, is a collaboration between the TEEQ, CLTD and the Research Office. The programme supports mid-career academics as they transition into Higher Education leadership, including leadership in academic citizenship, teaching and learning, and research. The last two rounds of EMCAT have been funded from the CDTA programme.

Post-programme feedback

Our grantees often provide feedback to the programme through formal evaluation processes as well as workshop reviews. Here are some notable comments:

“I was surprised by this course. It reminded me of why I started this whole academic journey to begin with. It has been easy to lose my sense of purpose over time, given all my responsibilities. This course reminded me that I had purpose.”

Anonymous feedback

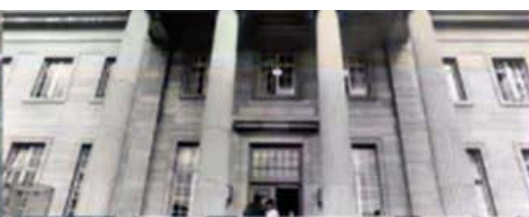
“I was encouraged honestly and felt that I belonged. This was beautiful collegial space. I am more empowered.

Anonymous feedback

“ The EMCAT programme shifted how I understand institutional power and leadership. Previously, I often felt on the receiving end of hierarchical decisions, but the programme gave me new language and tools to better understand systemic constraints, particularly how current leadership is also limited by broader structures. This allowed me to become more compassionate toward leadership while still holding space for critical engagement. I now feel more confident in navigating institutional conversations and contributing in ways that are constructive and collaborative.

Anonymous feedback

For the full report on the EMCAT programme, click [HERE](#)





Topical News & Events in 2025

• UCL–Wits Public Voices Fellowship Residency | 17–21 March 2025

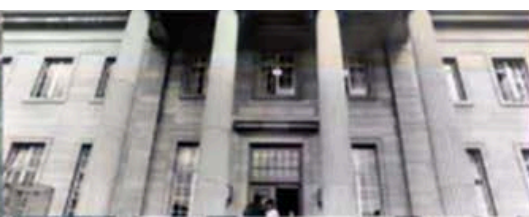
The Transformation and Employment Equity Office, which houses CDTA, co-led the Johannesburg residency that trained six early-career researchers in public engagement, research communication, and community collaboration. The design and facilitation emphasised inclusive, ethically grounded science communication, aligning with South Africa’s Science Engagement Strategy.

Participants gained practical tools from publics-mapping and media training to site visits that grounded research in community realities, strengthening their ability to translate scholarship for broader audiences. For Wits, the residency deepened international collaboration with UCL and showcased institutional strengths like the Origins Centre and the Wits Health HUBB.

A clear shift from “outreach” to co-creation. Fellows highlighted the regenerative effect of working with communities, and the programme surfaced the need for university frameworks that recognise public scholarship in promotion and reward.



Click [HERE](#) for full article





• Public Engagement as a Core Academic Mission | CDTA Mentorship Session, 8 September 2025

This was a CDTA group mentorship session that reframed public engagement as integral to scholarly identity and practice, building on prior work on intercultural communication and difficult relationships at work.

Fellows mapped their “publics,” identified engagement routes by discipline, and connected engagement to tangible career gains such as visibility, recognition, innovation, and real-world impact. For Wits, it reinforced an institutional message; excellent scholarship plus strong engagement anchors the University in society.

The facilitators pushed beyond rhetoric. Participants treated publics as co-creators, linked engagement to solving overlapping social and environmental crises, and explored alternative models to sustain research beyond shrinking donor funds.

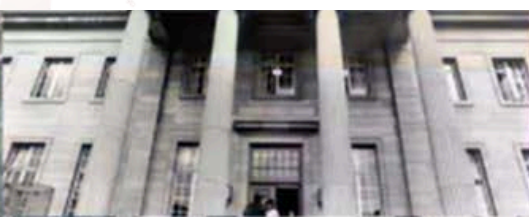
Please find the article [HERE](#)

• First African Cyber Law Conference (ACLC) | 4–5 Feb 2025

Dr Nomalanga Mashinini — CDTA grantee, project lead, and one of very few black women shaping this discipline in Africa.



Dr Mashinini used her CDTA grant to push a critical research agenda into the public square. She convened the first ACLC to address AI, image rights, data exploitation, and the legal architectures that will govern Africa’s digital future. The conference was not an add-on to her research. It was the engine that pulled scholarship, regulation, and practice into the same room.



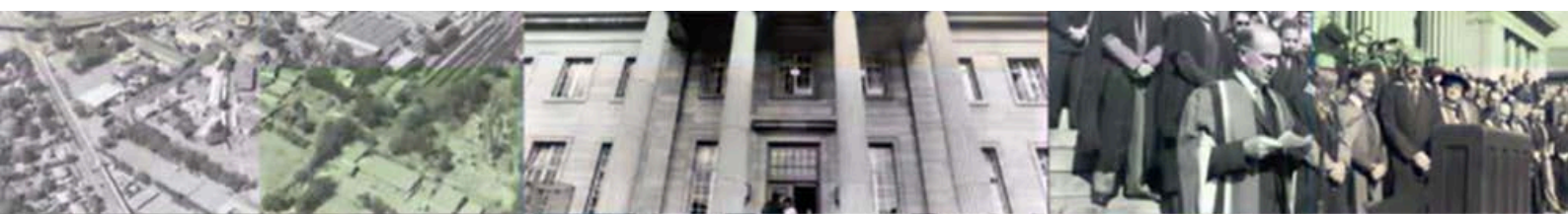


The grant underwrote core elements of her leadership and research delivery. It gave her the room to organise, publish, and network at scale, and it signalled institutional backing for a field where African voices are often downstream of global agendas.

Participants gained a multidisciplinary forum and majority-women keynotes. They left with contacts across law, policy, and tech and with concrete questions to take back to courts, classrooms, and labs. For Wits, the event positioned the university at the centre of an emerging field and strengthened ties across Africa, the UK, and India.

Big first-edition momentum. Eighty-five abstracts, more than sixty delegates, and a deliberate inclusivity that matched the subject matter. Most of all, a black woman scholar led the agenda and set a roadmap to grow ACLC into an annual fixture that advances African leadership in cyber law.

Please find the article [HERE](#)



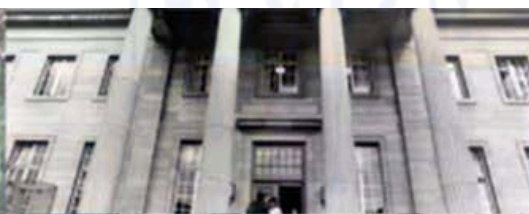


Programme Delivery Improvements Our CDTA Administrator

In 2025 we welcomed Ntebo Mampane to the team as CDTA Administrator. Her appointment closed a critical capacity gap and sharpened our day-to-day delivery across events, grants administration, and grantee communications. Ntebo anchors the full cycle of events planning and delivery. She supports colleagues across the office to scope agendas, manage logistics, coordinate suppliers, and capture post-event learnings so each gathering improves the next. This shared service approach has made our events more consistent, timely, and on-budget, while freeing programme leads to focus on content and stakeholder engagement.

Ntebo Mampane
CDTA Administrator

Clear, responsive grantee communications now run through a single channel. Ntebo issues call and induction notices, captures grant codes and procedural updates, and responds to routine queries, routing complex cases to the Programme Manager. The result is fewer missed messages, faster resolutions, and a better grantee experience.

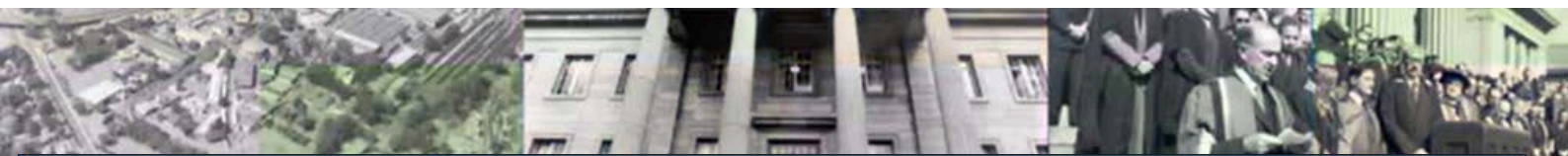
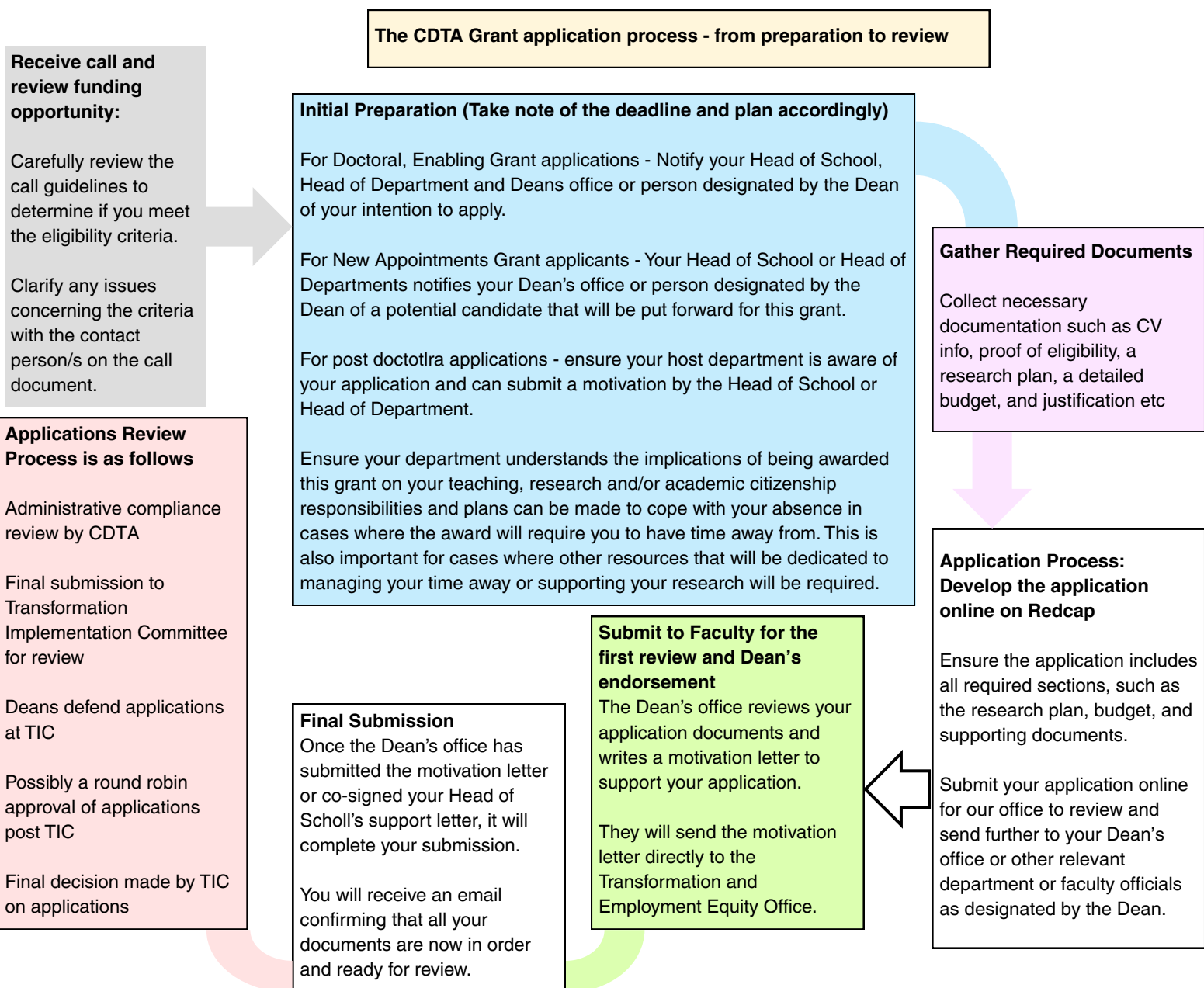




Developments and Innovations in Applications and Grant Usage

We've introduced three practical upgrades that make applications stronger, reviews more secure, and spending timelines more workable.

Our grant application process is depicted below:





To administer this process better, we have introduced the following in 2025:

- Confidential Dean’s letters of support

Deans can now submit their motivation letters directly to the Transformation and Employment Equity Office. This preserves confidentiality during faculty-level endorsement and streamlines the handoff into central review. Final submissions are completed once the Dean has sent the confidential letter or co-signed the Head of School’s support letter.

- Unified letter of support template with dual sign-off

A standard letter of support now includes a clear space for the Head of School’s endorsement and an explicit Dean’s endorsement. Where both leaders agree, the letter can be co-signed to present a single, aligned institutional view of the applicant’s case.

- Extension window for project spending

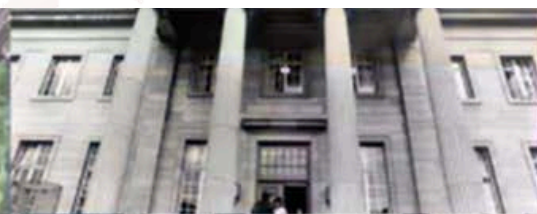
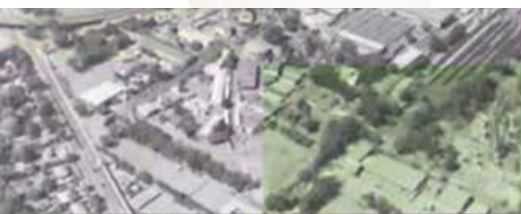
Doctoral and Enabling Grant holders may request up to four additional months to complete spending already in progress. The policy allows a two-month initial extension, with a possible further two months on request. Extensions remain discretionary, and any funds still unspent at the end of the extension return to the central budget.

These changes protect sensitive faculty assessments, reduce back-and-forth at submission, and create a predictable runway for close-out spending. They also align with the budgeting guidance that requires signed faculty endorsements and clear, line-item justifications for all costs, with any re-budgeting approved before implementation

For more details, please see the grant application booklet on this [LINK](#).

CDTA events and support

The ethos of the CDTA programme is provide support beyond giving a grant. Professional and personal development is thereby core to the programme.



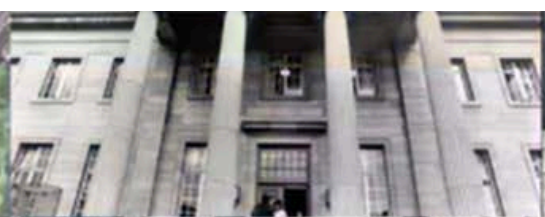


• Whole group mentoring sessions & workshops

Topics for group sessions are informed by issues our team hears in group sessions, inductions, coaching, and progress reports. This year we heard from multiple people that they were struggling with interpersonal relationships at work. Additionally, we were asked about what makes up academic citizenship, how to incorporate it, report it, and capture it for promotion.

These topics informed this year's sessions:

Date	Event	Duration	Attendees
28.01.26	Induction	2 hours	8
17- 21.03.25	Wits-UCL Public voices Fellowship	4 days	6
26.05.25	Induction	2 hours	19
24.03.35	Group mentoring & check in for PhD candidates (Online)	1 hour	6 (out of 14)
25.03.25	Group mentoring & check in for postdocs - Online	1 hour	5 (out of 5)
23.04.25	Mentoring for Leadership – Intercultural communication with Dr Phumzile Mmope	2 hours	21
28.05.25	EMCAT conversation event “Leadership conversations: Thinking and strategising together for Wits”	2.75 hours	31
29 & 30.05.25	Conflict Management skills for universities workshop: Skills for effective interpersonal engagement and conflict management in	2 days	20
23.06.25	Group mentoring & check in for PhD candidates - Online	1 hour	8 (out of 15)
24.06.25	Group mentoring & check in for postdocs - Online	1 hour	2 (out of 5)
June	Completion of 2nd EMCAT programme with CLTD	16 months	27
8.9.25	Mentoring for Leadership – Community Engagement ‘Who are your publics?’	2 hours	14
22.09.25	Group mentoring & check in for PhD candidates - Online	1 hour	7 (out of 10)
23.09.25	Group mentoring & check in for postdocs - Online	1 hour	2 (out of 4)
05.11.25	Induction	2 hours	13
07.11.25	Conversation between TCoPs and CDTA	1 day	58





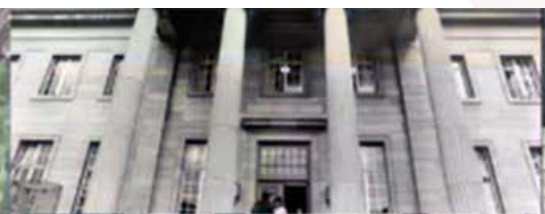
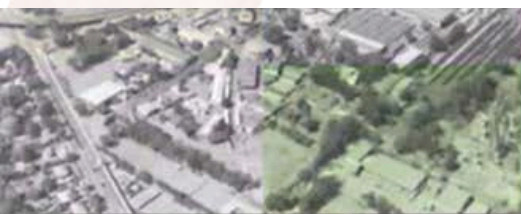
Induction sessions provide our first interaction with new recipients. We have learnt that this is a great moment to share both information about the programme, but also an embodied experience of the support, co-created learning, and conversations typical in the programme. We allocate a portion of the session to thinking in groups and then together about the transformation they wish to see within themselves and the institution over the period of their grant. Each conversation, including these induction conversations, provides opportunity to invite recipients to actively and vibrantly locate themselves in their desired change, as enhancing agency is one of the core philosophies from our Monitoring, Learning, Evaluating & Planning framework and values of the CDTA programme.

Mentoring for Leadership – Intercultural communication with Dr Phumzile Mmope

Dr Mmope is an intercultural communication specialist with a PhD from Stellenbosch on the topic. She is a coach, facilitator and speaker and had recently taken up a new position as Chief Director: People, Training & Development at the Provincial Training Institute of the Western Cape Government when she facilitated a mentoring session. Recipients were asked to bring their communication and interpersonal challenges, for us to talk about and work through. Our key learnings were about being clear, intentional and proactive with our communication as we relate to colleagues and develop teams.

Mentoring for Leadership - Public Engagement

This session was informed by engagements during the Wits-UCL Public Voices workshop earlier in the year that suggested that more mentorship on this academic mission was needed. This also fits with the Community Engagement Pillar. Dr Bernadette Johnson (Director of the TEEO) and Professor Mondli Hlatshwayo (an expert in Labour Studies and Worker Education from University of Johannesburg and long-time collaborator in activism and engaged research) facilitated the workshop, drawing from decades of experience and also their recent article *Johnson & Hlatshwayo (2025). Anchor Universities and Communities: The power of community engagement. South African Journal of Higher Education, Vol 39 (2).* The questions we worked with were: *who am I becoming as a scholar, and who am I serving through my scholarship?* Participants started mapping their publics, thinking creatively about new publics to engage, and were invited to see Public Engagement as an invitation to be entrepreneurial.





The session was covered in this Wits News article: [Public engagement as a core academic mission](#)

Public engagement will continue as mentoring series topic next year.

• **Group mentoring sessions for PhDs & Postdoctoral fellows**

PhD candidates and postdoctoral fellows have quarterly group mentoring sessions. These provide a space to share challenges particular to the path and to draw on the wisdom of the group to navigate these challenges logistically and personally in new ways. Topics have included: work-life balance, supervisor/collaborator relationships, and funding. Questions that were reflected upon and explored this year included:

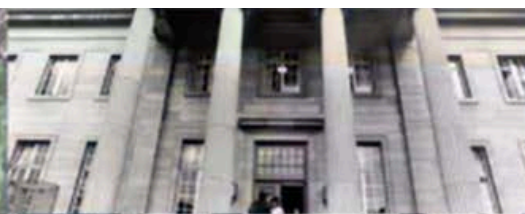
- What are your anchors during this period of your career?
- What are you saying yes to? What are you saying no to?
- Who are your publics? (A re-visit and deepening of the question from the Community Engagement group session).

2025 EMCAT activities

Activities this year included the academic portfolio writing retreat where participants had dedicated writing time and exercises to complete their portfolio for promotions, grant writing, awards or fellowships.

The retreat was captured in the Wits News article:

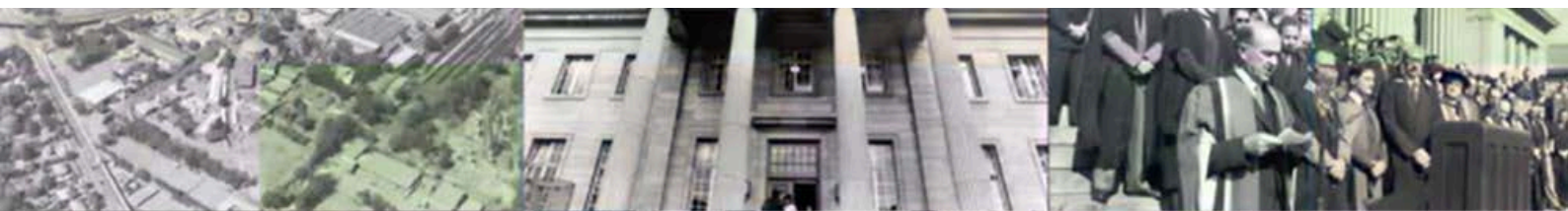
[‘I am the golden thread’](#)





CDTA recipients on the EMCAT programme at the portfolio retreat
(all pictures here are from the retreat)

Additionally, the programme culminated in the Conversation event hosted by recipients and leadership within Wits. The invitation (below) shows the format of the day, which centered around positively framed questions to support conversations exploring potential solutions between recipients and visitors.





EMCAT event

Leadership conversations: Thinking and strategising together for Wits

28 May 2025 8:45 – 11:30

Purpose: We have created this event as an opportunity for Wits' current and emerging leaders to think and strategise together. The conversations, facilitated by the EMCAT participants, are designed to generate awareness, dialogue and strategies around structural and cultural enabling factors and constraints that influence mid-career academics at Wits as they transition towards institutional and HE leadership.

Event structure

The mid-career academics on the 2nd round of EMCAT have worked as six mentoring cafés on matters of interest in their transition to leadership. Each group will simultaneously facilitate 15-minute round table conversations related to an academic topic they felt required further exploration.

There will be three rounds of 15-minute conversations to allow movement of guests between groups and cross-pollination of ideas. A plenary at the end will weave together insights, learnings, before one final 15-minute conversation to co-create ways forward.

Topics

Group 1: What does effective leadership look like in academic institutions for mid-career academics?

Group 2: How can we make workload models work better for our various needs (e.g. staff members of different strengths/focus areas, or HODs)?

Group 3: How can we reimagine the postgraduate student and supervisor journey?

Group 4: How do we optimise strategic creative thinking and communal nurturing in the academic environment?

Group 5: How can the research, teaching and administration (including citizenship/service) roles coexist harmoniously to enhance Wits institutional goals?

Group 6: How can nurturing habits towards staff and students be encouraged and acknowledged in the University eco-system?

Venue: Wits Club



Themes and discussions that emerged included the role of culture and human connectedness in creating positive working environments, the need for relational leaders who can build relationships across the university, and ways to encourage and measure excellence beyond typical measures of productivity.

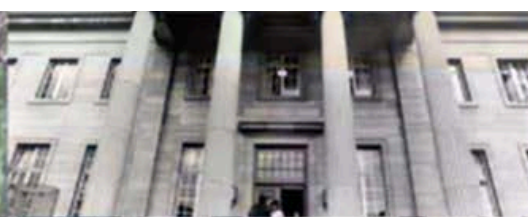
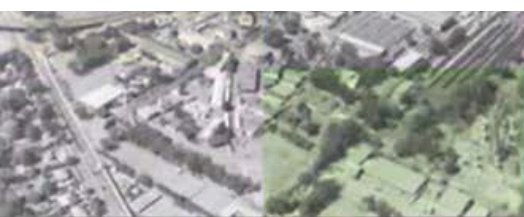
A [Wits News article](#) covered the event.



The article was also picked up by the Daily Higher Education News.

What we're learning in 2025

Being intentional about our learning in 2025 has assisted the growth of the programme and its people. In the graphics below we have captured some of these lessons:





WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

1. THE VALUE OF DIVERSE MINDS

Integrated Perspectives Pay Off



Bringing together strategic thinking, structured project management, and close attention to lived experience strengthens our decisions and support to grantees.

Outcome: We recognise patterns earlier, adjust more quickly, and provide support that is practical, context aware, and aligned with institutional priorities.

2. HOW WE LEARN (EVIDENCE AND FEEDBACK)



Sources: Recipient reports, induction and workshop feedback, EMCAT reflections, TIC discussions, and survey data

The MEL-P Framework underpins learning by tracking activities, making sense of patterns, and converting insights into improvements in design, delivery, and planning.



WHAT'S WORKING (SUCCESS STORIES)

1. Flexible Programming

Method: Shaping topics and events based on real-time questions and needs raised by grantees, rather than a fixed plan.

Impact: Improves relevance, keeps us on point, and maintains high engagement.

2. Cohort Learning

Method: Interdisciplinary and inter-Faculty peer groups (like EMCAT) build connections.

Impact: Accelerates learning, cuts through silos, makes it easier to try new ideas, and sustains motivation.

3. Sequencing Matters

Principle: Structuring sessions so each step logically builds on the last.

Example: Running "Who are your publics?" before "Communicating with your publics" leads to clearer engagement plans.



WHO WE'RE LEARNING WITH

Inclusivity: Enriching the Whole

INTEGRATING PROFESSIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF (PAS)



THE CHALLENGE

Inviting PAS mediators into relevant events (e.g. conflict-management workshop).

THE IMPACT

Improved Learning for everyone with fresh, grounded perspectives.

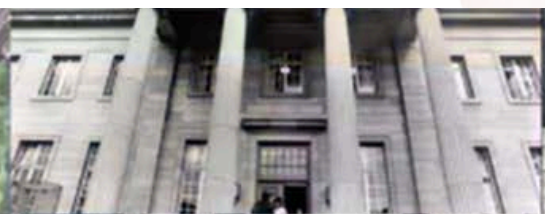
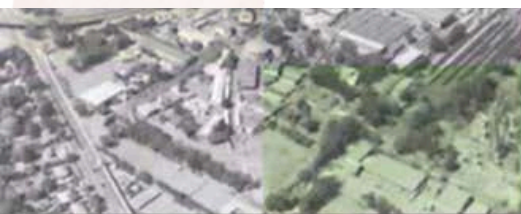


THE ACTION

Inviting PAS mediators into relevant events (e.g. conflict-management workshop).

THE IMPACT

Broke down barriers and fostered a more integrated community.





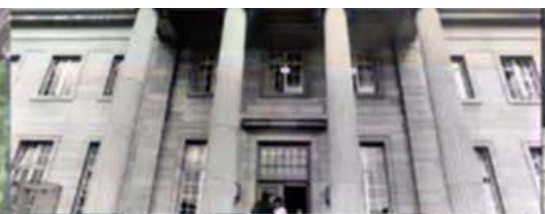
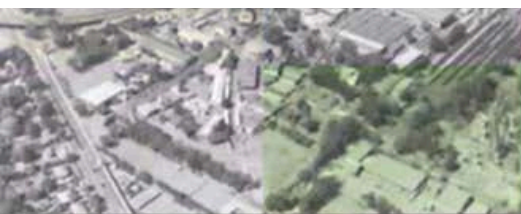
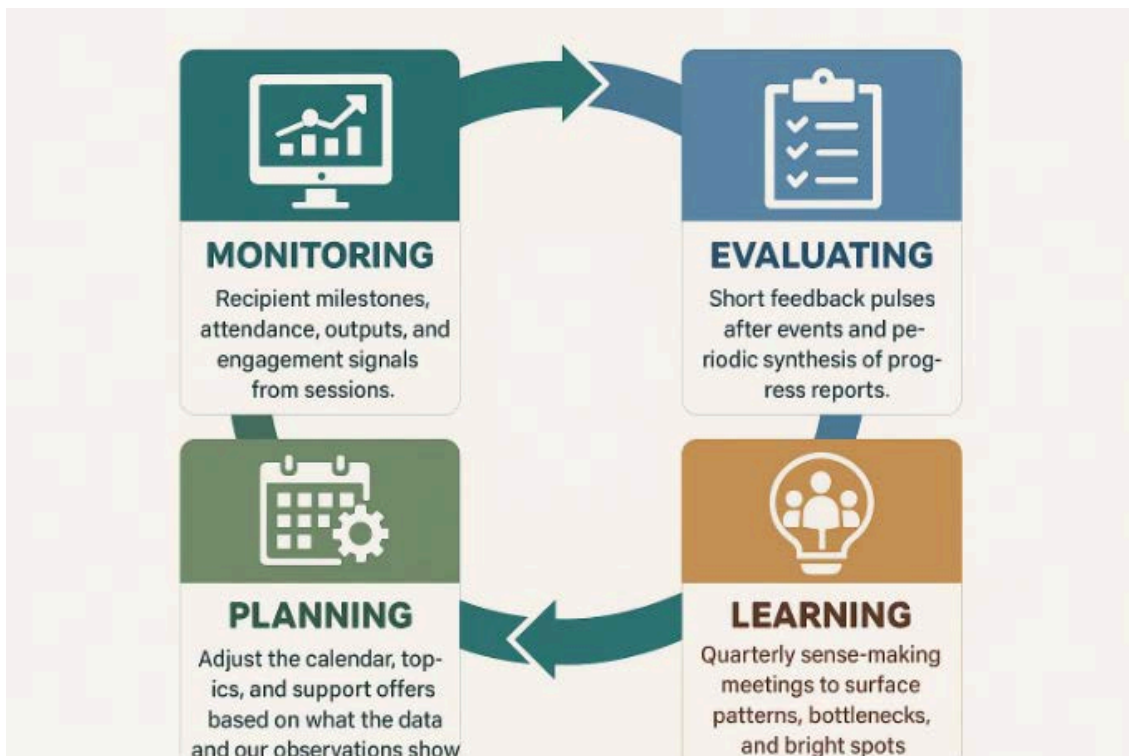
What this means for future programming:

Below are the learnings we will consider as we refine the programme further:

- Keep the flexible core, with clearer signposting of learning pathways so people can see how topics connect.
- Intentionally sequence events to build understanding and skills over time.
- Keep growing cohort-based learning, with peer mentoring that crosses Schools and Faculties.
- Make inclusive participation the default, especially for PAS staff who contribute to culture, systems, and student success.
- Use the MEL-P Framework to keep tightening the loop from data to decisions. We'll capture feedback more consistently, test small improvements quickly, and document shifts in belonging, capability, outputs, and collaboration.

MEL-P in practice

In the next reporting cycle, we commit to continue with implementing our reporting and learning framework:





Personal reflections on who we are becoming

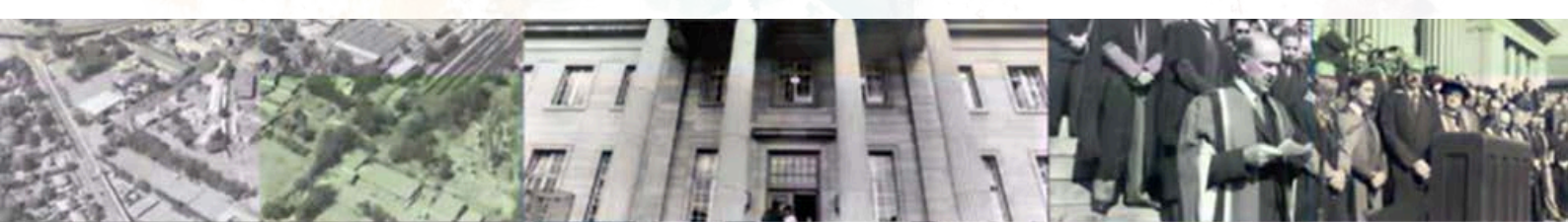
Our work requires constant reflection, rethinking and growing, and re-engaging in order to deliver the best quality for our program beneficiaries as well as our own professional development. This growth, or otherwise known as “becoming” is captured eloquently below by the CDTA Team:

Toni:



My seven-year tenure as a coach at Wits laid the foundation for a significant expansion of my professional practice. This shift began at the end of 2024 when I achieved accreditation as a mediator, an achievement I quickly put into practice by completing my first university mediations this year. The transition immediately illuminated the deep alliance between these two disciplines. Both coaching and mediation are fundamentally grounded in curiosity, deep listening, and the crucial capacity to discern the values and needs that lie beneath people’s stated positions.

These skills are absolutely essential for anyone navigating effective leadership. Drawing on this integrated expertise, I now see a clear path to contribute meaningfully to leadership development across Wits, in Higher Education, and in the broader society by sharing and embedding these practices that foster understanding, dialogue, and deep connection. I am becoming a practitioner of relational leadership.





Lethu:

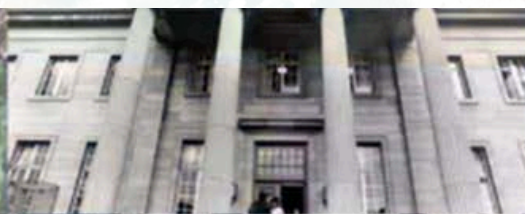
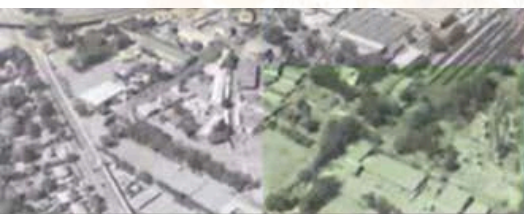


My time with the Carnegie Diversifying the Academy Programme at Wits University has marked a significant evolution in my professional approach, transforming my focus from operational excellence to strategic social innovation in higher education. The initial phase of the programme required absolute fidelity to its founding principles and high standards. This meant developing and implementing robust management systems, ensuring meticulous attention to detail, strict adherence to governance systems, and unwavering transparency in communication.

My priority was safeguarding the prestige that the Carnegie Programme brought to Wits, ensuring its administrative and financial structures were unimpeachable and ran like a perfectly calibrated machine.

However, the nature of the work, nurturing the next generation of African academics, demanded a pivot. While operational integrity remained crucial, the focus shifted sharply to the beneficiaries themselves. My mandate broadened to look beyond the programme's horizon, recognizing the imperative for our fellows to be competitive not just regionally, but in the global workforce and science marketplace.

Today, my role has solidified as a practical social innovator in higher education. I work alongside the team not just to administer the Programme, but to actively ideate and practically implement initiatives that solve complex problems dwelling in the gaps between policy and practice. This involves taking established guidelines and creatively tying together resources, technology, and mentorship to make the entire ecosystem work better, even within the inevitable constraints of funding and resources. This growth journey reflects a transition from being a custodian of the Programme's structure to being an architect of its long-term, global impact.



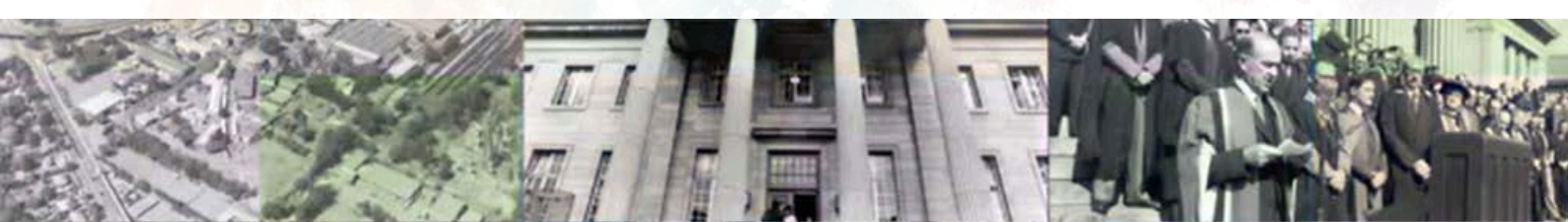


Ntebo:



My journey within the Carnegie Diversifying the Academy Programme has been defined by continuous growth and an active expansion of my responsibilities. While I began with foundational administrative duties, I have successfully evolved my position into a core support function that drives operational stability. Currently, I take ownership of critical workflows, from managing end-to-end event logistics to serving as the primary liaison for grantees.

I have moved beyond simple task execution to ensuring high-quality service delivery and operational efficiency for the CDTA team. Looking ahead, I am eager to leverage this deep operational understanding to contribute to broader programme strategy, take on more complex project management challenges, and further enhance the impact we have on our participants





Carnegie Africa Diaspora Project at Wits University: Outputs, outcomes, and impact Jan–Dec 2025

Overview

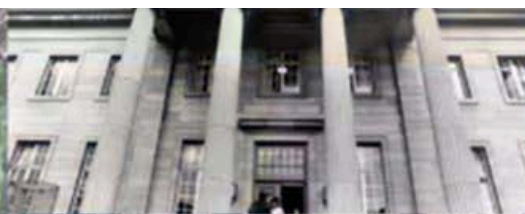
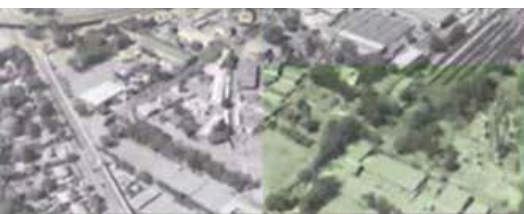
This report consolidates quantitative outputs and qualitative outcomes across all participating faculties and hosts of Distinguished Fellows of the Africa Diaspora Program. It draws on hosts reports, progress updates, and information from Wits University’s Research Output Collection System. The programme has advanced Wits’ research output and supervision capacity, built grant-writing skills, delivered teaching and seminars, and staged public lectures that broadened reach.

TOTAL BUDGET: R1 100 000.00

TOTAL REMAINING BUDGET: R314 510.00

Distinguished Professors

Name and Surname	Home Institution	Wits Host Department
Prof Athol Kemball	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	School of Physics
Prof Amon Simba	Nottingham Business School	Wits Business School
Prof Frackson Mumpa	University of Virginia	Wits School of Education
Prof Elias Mpofu	University of North Texas	School of Human and Community Development





Consolidated Progress Report

1) Publications co-authored with Wits faculty in high-impact peer-reviewed journals

Impressive targets were achieved for the Physics Department through Prof Athol Kemball, strong publication volume for Wits Business School (WBS) through Prof Amon Simba, with Wits affiliation on all listed 2025 papers. Additional outputs recorded for School of Human and Community Development (SHCD) and Wits School of Education (WSoE) fellows during their association periods.



Business School
(Simba)

6 Published Papers in 2025 listing Wits affiliation.

International Journal Scope:

- Technology in Society
- Strategic Change
- Review of Managerial Science
- Entrepreneurship & Regional Development
- Journal of Innovation & Knowledge


Future Outputs: 3 additional items were reported as "in press" at the time of reporting, demonstrating a rapid increase in Wits-affiliated international journal outputs.


SHCD (Mpfu)

Recorded Outputs (2022–2023):

- 4 Journal Papers
- 4 Book Chapters

Context: Productivity was evidenced during the period while the Visiting Scholar appointment continued until August 2024.


Physics
(Kemball)

7 Confirmed Co-publications with Wits collaborators

Key Examples:

- Joint outputs with Prof. Roger Deane and Senkhosi Simelane, focusing on SKA/MeerKAT science.
- Timeframe: Multiple first-author and collaborative publications recorded between 2023–2025
- Multiple first-author and collaborative publications recorded between 2023–2025


WSoE (Mumba)

Fellowship Outputs:

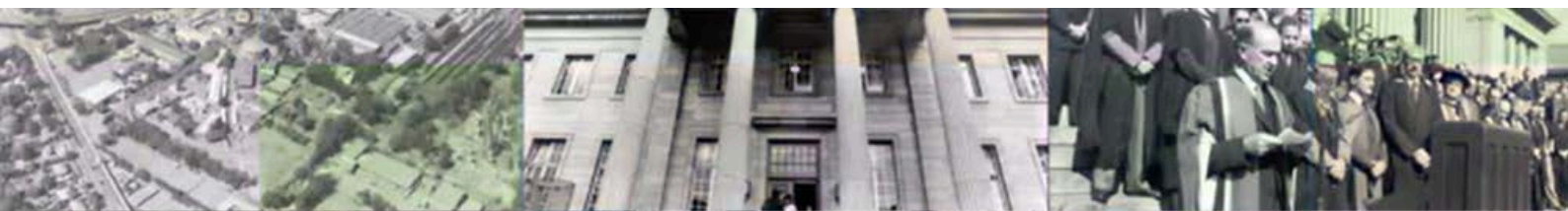
A demonstrably active portfolio with:

- 9 Journal Articles
- 1 Conference Paper

Focus:

Outputs were recorded across various science education journals.


Impact: The Kemball collaboration advanced Wits' astrophysics agenda linked to MeerKAT and SKA, strengthening continental radio astronomy leadership and graduate supervision networks.






2) Grant-proposal capacity building, with at least four new proposals co-developed


This metric was substantively achieved in aggregate, with countable proposals from Physics and WBS, and structured grant-writing programmes in WSoE that led to increased submissions.



Physics (Kemball with Wits Centre for Astrophysics)
Telescope Concept: Co-led a national concept for developing a new millimetre-wave telescope in South Africa.
MeerKAT+ Success: Co-proposer on a successful 2.500-hour MeerKAT+ observing proposal.
Significance: This proposal is tied to a major facility upgrade and represents a large-scale, highly competitive outcome that models high-end teaming and proposal craft for Wits researchers

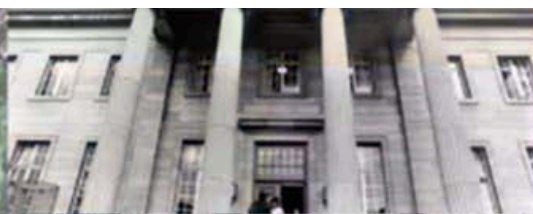


WBS (Simba with Prof Boris Urban)
Joint Grant Application: Submitted to the Innovation for African Universities Enterprise & Innovation Challenge.
Role: The team acted as an ecosystem partner in the application



WSoE (Mumba) - Wits School of Education
Grant-Writing Workshops: Repeated workshops were run, specifically aligned with NRF (National Research Foundation) calls
Menforing: Provided mentoring support for early career researchers and postgraduates to enhance their proposal success

Impact: Researchers gained practical proposal skills, exposure to facility-scale bids, and pathways to multi-institutional partnerships, improving Wits' positioning for future national and international calls.





3) Four semesters of courses taught; course development contributions

Fellows delivered admirable results on this metric through a mix of masterclasses, guest teaching, methods workshops, seminars, and curriculum work. Formal semester-coded courses are recorded in plans for WSoE and in practice at WBS through for-credit contexts.

WBS (Simba)

MBA masterclass in Entrepreneurial Leadership; guest lecturing on Research Methods; one MBA completion and two current supervisions; participation in Digital Business programme review that shapes longer-term curriculum quality.

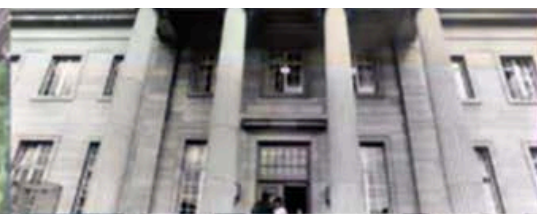
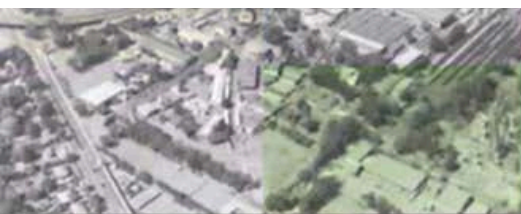
WSoE (Mumba)

Delivery of lectures and research seminars, PhD seminars, and quantitative methods workshops; structured plan to teach an advanced quantitative data analysis course; mentoring of ECRs and postgraduates

SHCD (Mpofu)

University-wide webinars and postgraduate seminars, including the Umthombo public lecture on NIH grantwriting and an in-person writing retreat for junior staff

Impact: The teaching blend raised methodological competence, embedded grant-craft into postgraduate training, and contributed to course and programme refreshes that will outlast the grant period.





4) Four Master's graduates during the grant

- WBS (Simba): One MBA completion recorded, with two further MBA supervisions in progress.
- WSoE (Mumba): One Masters completion is recorded.

5) Public lecture and additional dissemination

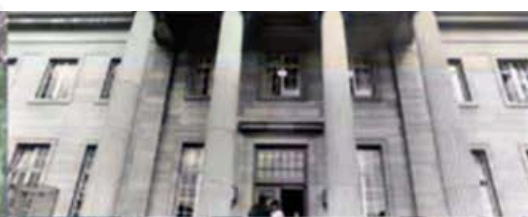
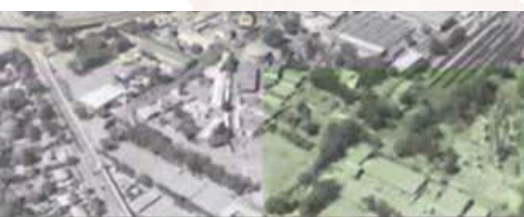
This target was achieved through formal public lectures and School-wide events.

- Physics (Kemball): Formal welcome event and public lecture hosted by the Wits Centre for Astrophysics on 23 November 2023.
- SHCD (Mpofu): Umthombo Public Lecture on NIH grant writing and multiple School seminars and webinars across 2021–2023.

Impact: These public events-built community around priority research areas, showcased international expertise, and attracted early-career scholars into mentorship and writing pipelines.

The Jan–Dec 2025 period for the Carnegie Africa Diaspora Project at Wits University reflects a highly productive engagement that has successfully met its primary strategic objectives.

Through the collaborative efforts of Distinguished Fellows and host faculties, the University has achieved tangible growth in high-impact research outputs, most notably in Astrophysics and Business, while significantly strengthening institutional grant-writing capacity.

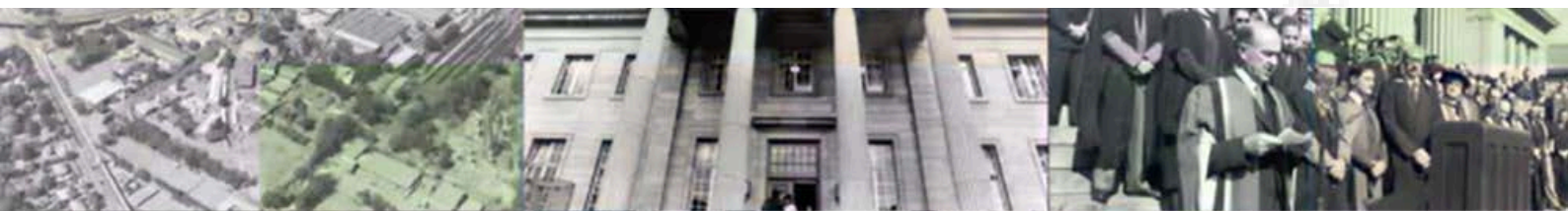




Institutional Cultures

Wits 100 Cultures Study: Past Reflections and Future Directions for 2033 was an Institutional Cultures study concluded in 2025. For more information regarding Institutional Cultures Study click [HERE](#). The first seminar on Institutional Cultures took place during August 2025. The aim of the first seminar was to socialise the Wits community into the findings of the study. This is a first study of its kind at Wits and will be able to inform the work we do over the next three to five years on building inclusive institutional cultures. The study has identified key areas around which recommendations for further work has been clustered. This includes:

- Brand and Reputation
- People and Culture
- Diversity Equity and Inclusion
- Teaching and Learning
- Research and Innovation
- Place and Partnerships
- Management, Leadership and Governance





Language Diversification, Multilingualism & Translanguaging

Wits University continues to advance its commitment to language justice and inclusive institutional culture through the strengthening of Pillar 5: Language Diversification, Multilingualism and Translanguaging.

This pillar positions multilingualism as a transformative resource that enhances teaching, learning, research, administration, and social cohesion. Grounded in the principles of equity and inclusion, the work seeks to redress the historical dominance of English in higher education while expanding the use of African languages and South African Sign Language (SASL) across the institution.

Strategic Framework and Funding

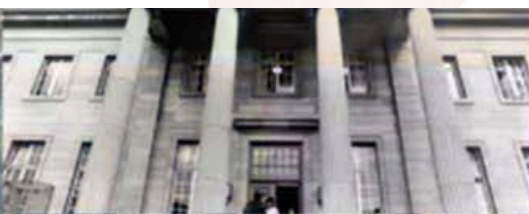
The Language Policy Project is supported by a R2.5 million DHET grant (2024–2026) to advance isiZulu, Sesotho, and SASL across faculties. The initiative is implemented by the Hub for Multilingual Education and Literacies (HUMEL) and focuses on five key areas:

- Multilingual Pedagogy
- Recognition and Certification
- SASL Inclusion
- Multilingual Signage
- Public Engagement and Advocacy

Key Achievements in 2025

The following are key achievements:

- Six Public Engagement advocacy events were held to contribute to the awareness-building work related to language diversification, multilingualism, and translanguaging transformation pillar at Wits.

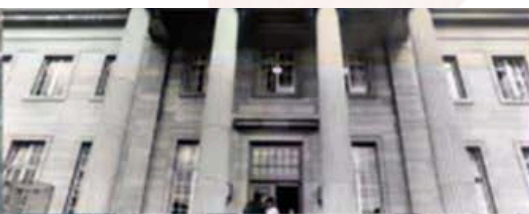




- 159 scholars participated in workshops on language diversification, multilingualism, and translanguaging in relation to curriculum development across the university. For their participation, they received recognition and certification.
- As part of demonstrating the university's commitment to language diversification and multilingualism, multilingual departmental letterheads standardized in isiZulu and Sesotho.
- The project contributed to South African Sign Language (SASL) Interpreting at university events.
- Multilingual Signage was implemented at two major campus entrances as part of enhancing multilingual messages across the university campuses.
- Language Acquisition Workshops were delivered across the university for academics.
- Multilingual Pedagogy Trainings were conducted, engaging 164 academics from across the university.



DHET Site visit 20 Feb 2025





Innovative Programmes

Under the language pillar, a number of innovative programmes were also delivered. These include the following:

- **Conversational Competence Courses:** Short courses for staff and students to build everyday communication in isiZulu and Sesotho.
- **Translanguaging Pedagogy:** Faculty-based workshops supporting lecturers integrating multiple languages into teaching and assessment.
- **Certification Pathways:** Recognition in isiZulu, Sesotho, and SASL to incentivize uptake and acknowledge competence.
- **Multilingual Communications:** Expanded signage and visual representation of languages across campus.

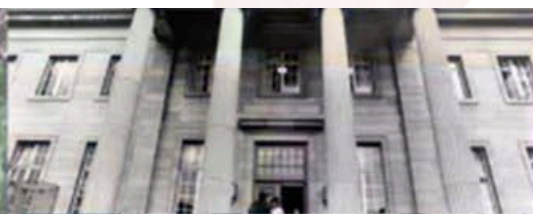
What we are working on

To sustain momentum and deepen impact, the following priorities have been identified:

- Strengthening the implementation of the Language Pillar by:
- Expand course-level multilingual pedagogy with enhanced lecturer support and student feedback.
- Extend multilingual signage and SASL support across additional university spaces.

Expanding the implementation of the language pillar beyond the DHET project.

The 2025 implementation cycle showed that multilingualism at Wits has begun to gain real traction. The DHET-funding came at a time when the university had already started broader institutional conversation about the implementation of language justice, cultural inclusion, and how the University communicates.

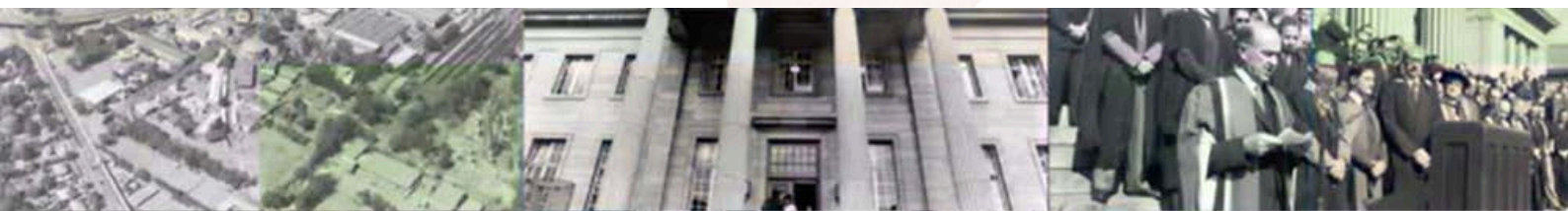




As the University looks ahead, it is increasingly clear that the momentum created through the DHET project cannot be sustained by grant funding alone. The next phase requires a gradual shift from isolated initiatives to a more coordinated and supported institutional approach. To guide this transition, a Concept Note is being prepared for the Language Policy Reference Group. Its purpose is to outline practical steps that strengthen what is already working, while ensuring that multilingualism continues to grow responsibly and at a pace the institution can support.

The focus will be on building meaningful internal structures that allow faculties to participate more actively, improving governance so that implementation is more consistent, and expanding staff development opportunities in African languages and SASL where there is demand. Enhancing the visibility of multilingual communication across campuses will remain important, and the University will explore ways to make this more systematic without creating undue pressure on existing resources.

A key learning from the past year is that progress depends on a broader network of people, not only a small group of specialists. Strengthening internal capacity, through faculty champions, administrative support, and clearer roles, will help ensure continuity without overextending the institution.





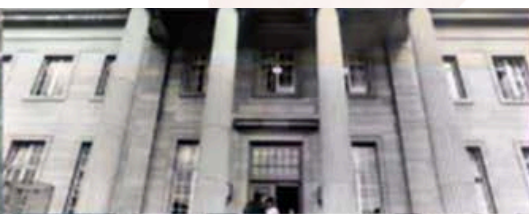
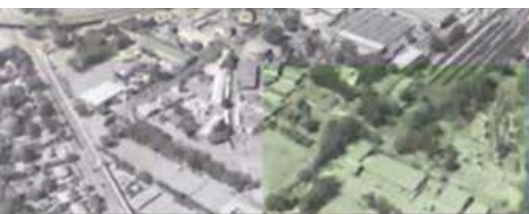
Public Engagement

The public engagement pillar has been strengthened by the university's adoption of a Community Engagement Framework. For more information click [HERE](#).

The research office who has led the development of the Community Engagement Framework, has started a process of recording all community engagement research at the university. For more information click [HERE](#).

As has been discussed above as part of the Diversifying the Academy Programme, the Transformation Office has started a programme on public engagement with scholars as part of exploring their identity and skill set of academics. Another area in which the Transformation Office has demonstrated its commitment to Public Engagement is by extending its work to the benefit of schools. The focus of this initiative started with Wits Feeder Schools.

Working with Feeder Schools: Extending Social Justice to Communities





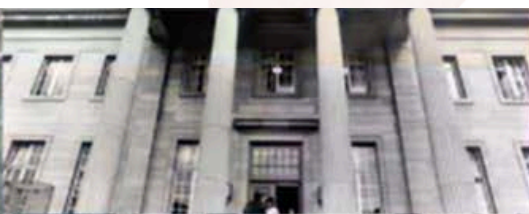
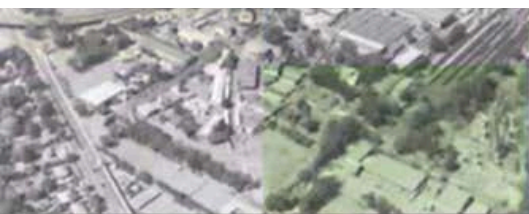
On 17 October 2025, TEOO in partnership with the UNESCO Chair on Teacher Education for Diversity and Development; Professor Ruksana Osman who is always the Senior DVC at Wits, Student Recruitment Office as part of the Registrar's Division and the Gender Equity Office, delivered a workshop on Social Justice and Anti-discrimination in Schools. Ninety teachers from a range of schools attended. Some of the schools represented included:

Waterstone College, Alexandra Secondary, Greenside High School, Reddam House Befordview, King's College, Athlone Girls High School, UJ Academy, Parktown Boys High School, St Davids Marist Inanda, St Dunstons College, SAHETI, Oprah Winfrey Leadership Academy, National School of Arts, Fumana Secondary School and Kibler Park Secondary.

The aims of the events were to:

- Share the accumulated knowledge and experience from the TEOO and the Gender Equity Office's social justice awareness-raising, case management investigations, and mediation work on diversity matters such as bullying and gender-based violence.
- Contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 4, "Quality Education," aligning with the UNESCO Chair's focus on inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting transition from schooling to university.

The event enabled the TEOO and its collaborators to disseminate its learnings on diversity, culture, and inclusion to in-service teachers and principals; facilitate discussions and collaborations among educators from different schools and institutions to address common challenges and provide actionable strategies and frameworks for educators to implement within their schools to promote inclusivity and equity.





Social Justice & Ethics

Overview

In 2025, the Social Justice Programme (SJP) at the University of the Witwatersrand experienced a year of consolidation and growth. With the appointment of Thembekile Madondo as Manager: Diversity, Ethics & Social Justice, and the completion of the Wits100 Culture Survey, the team deepened its reflection, strengthened its systems, and expanded its practice throughout the university. The complementary strengths of Ciaran Heywood (institutional memory) and the new manager (fresh perspective) delivered both continuity and innovation.

Operating under the Transformation & Employment Equity Office (TEEO) and in alignment with the university's Strategy 2033 and the Six Transformation Pillars (2024), SJP advanced an institutional culture focused on empowerment, safe and restorative practices, multilingual inclusion, and translating policy commitments into everyday experience.

At a glance:

Facilitated 58+ workshops and engagements across university spaces

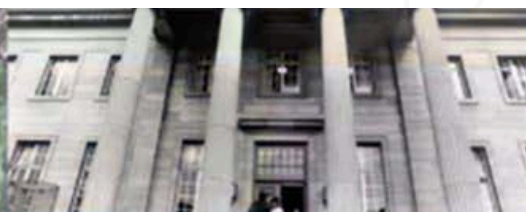
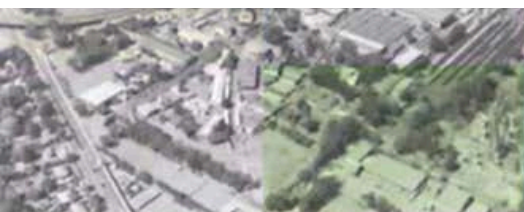
Strengthened the handling of discrimination and bullying cases

Implementation of the DHET-funded Language Policy

Supported Gender Inclusivity Efforts through Trans-Support Group

Facilitated Positive-masculinity dialogues (Madoda Sabelani)

Fostered partnerships & coordinated joint initiatives with internal & External Partners





The programme delivered more than 59 workshops transformation consultations across faculties, residences, and support units, strengthening a culture of respect, ubuntu and inclusion through dialogues on diversity, cultural intelligence, bullying prevention, healthy masculinities and inclusive leadership. Case-handling systems were improved through confidential consultations, advisory support, enhanced record-keeping and an interim online reporting platform, with a full case-management system scheduled for launch in October 2025. Community-focused offerings expanded with a new Diversity Seminar Series, Madoda Sabelani positive masculinity dialogues, and a Trans/Gender Diverse Support Group.

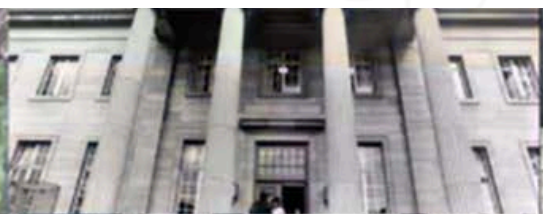
Implementation of the DHET-funded Language Policy advanced significantly through multilingual signage, updated templates, translanguaging workshops, conversational language courses, SASL interpreting support and the introduction of certification pathways. The programme contributed to sector-wide learning through DHET Social Inclusion Workshops and transformation forums, while leadership capacity was strengthened through mediation accreditation and HERSSA leadership training. Partnerships deepened across the university, with collaborative initiatives involving GEO, WCCO, GALA Queer Archives, CCDU, the Office of Student Success and the Disability Rights Unit.



Gateway to Success Panel discussion - Feb 2025



SRC Womens day initiative Aug 2025

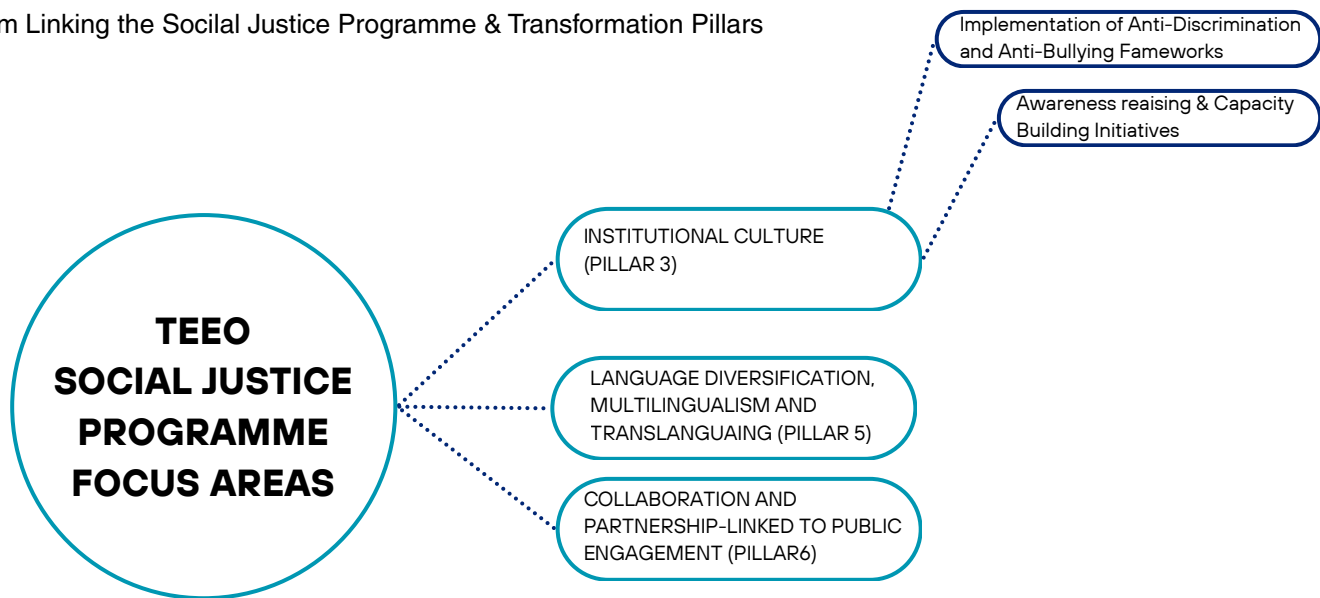




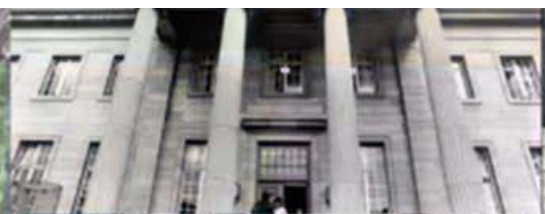
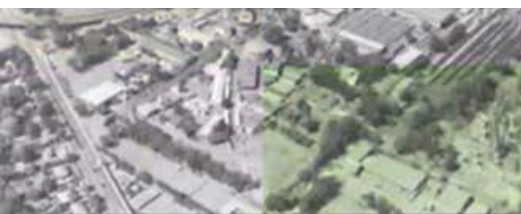
About the Social Justice Programme

The Social Justice Programme (SJP) is designed to strengthen the university’s commitment to a respectful, inclusive, and accountable community. By setting clear objectives that prioritise the prevention and fair handling of bullying and discrimination, promote diversity and belonging, and expand access through multilingual engagement, the programme lays a firm foundation for meaningful culture change. These objectives are intended to translate into tangible impact: a campus climate where policies are understood and applied consistently, where trust and psychological safety deepen, and where staff and students experience a stronger sense of connection to the institution. Through sustained visibility, practical resources, and a commitment to shared values, the programme aims to shape an environment where every member of the university community feels supported and recognised.

Diagram Linking the Social Justice Programme & Transformation Pillars



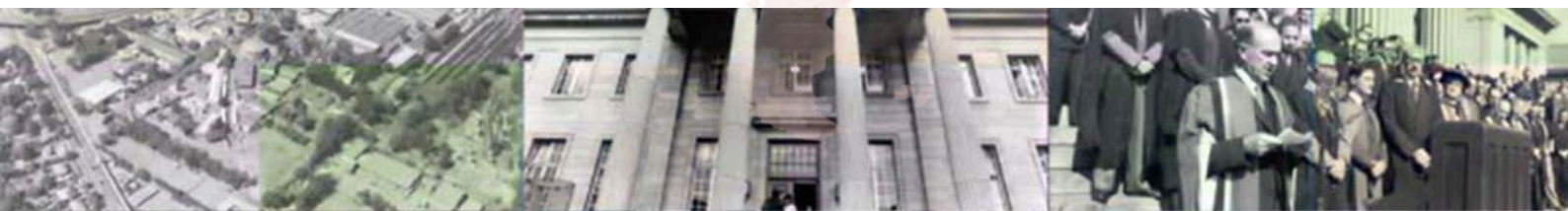
Housed within the Transformation & Employment Equity Office (TEEO), the SJP is grounded in Wits Strategy 2033 and the University’s Transformation Pillars. Our work focuses on three interconnected pillars: Institutional Culture (Pillar 3), emphasising anti-discrimination and anti-bullying; Language Diversification, Multilingualism and Translanguaging (Pillar 5).





2025 Objectives for the SJP

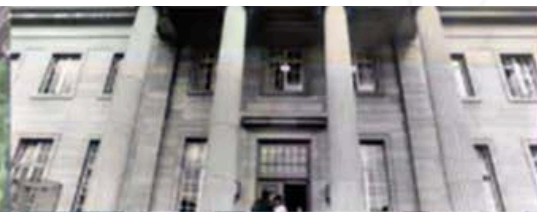
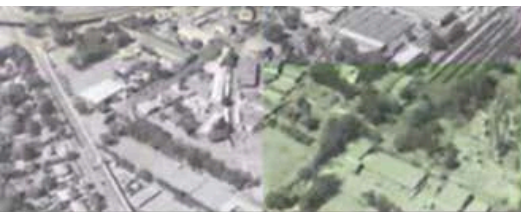
- Strengthen the university's capacity to prevent, identify, and respond to bullying and discrimination through robust policies and consistent processes.
- Promote diversity, inclusion, and belonging as core institutional values that guide behaviour, decision-making, and everyday interactions.
- Enhance awareness and accessibility of the programme through multilingual resources, training, and engagement initiatives.
- Equip staff and students with the knowledge and tools needed to navigate diverse environments with respect, accountability, and care.





In 2025, the TEEO through the SJP facilitated 45 recorded workshops across faculties, departments, and external partners. Workshops for example took place in the Faculty of Health Sciences, Humanities, and Residence Life recorded the highest number of engagements, reflecting particularly strong participation and interest from these faculties/ units. Notably, the high engagement in Health Sciences and Humanities corresponds with the higher number of bullying and discrimination cases reported in these faculties during 2025. This trend may reflect increased awareness and willingness to report, but it may also point to underlying systemic issues that require sustained attention.

The workshops reflect a strategic and responsive approach to advancing social justice within the university community. Thematically, the sessions addressed a broad spectrum of issues including bullying and discrimination, diversity and cultural intelligence, institutional culture and belonging, mental wellness and masculinities. These themes were not only relevant to lived experiences of students and staff, but also aligned with the university's transformation pillars.





Targeted sessions such as “Madoda Sabelani” (masculinities), “Empowered to Lead” (student leadership), and “Workplace Bullying” (staff well-being) demonstrate a nuanced effort to address specific social dynamics and institutional challenges. The inclusion of mental-health and transformation labs further signals a commitment to fostering inclusive, reflective, and values-driven spaces.

In the next section, we provide in-depth coverage of three core themes: Bullying & Discrimination; Diversity; Madoda Sabelani; and support for gender-diverse students.

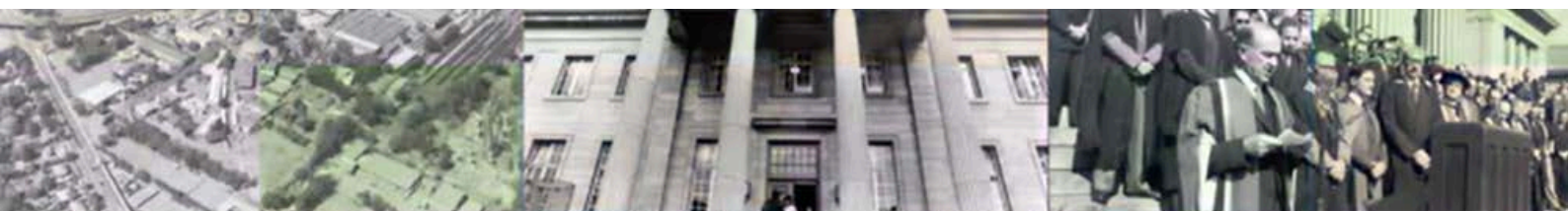
1.1 Bullying and Discrimination Awareness and Prevention

In alignment with Wits’ commitment to building an inclusive institutional culture, the Transformation Office implemented a series of awareness initiatives to promote understanding of the Prevention and Eradication of Bullying Policy and the Anti-Discrimination Policy and Procedures. These initiatives advance the University’s transformation priorities and support a respectful, collegial, and accountable working and learning environment.



The SJ Team facilitated 28 induction and introductory sessions for staff and students across faculties, schools, and divisions. These sessions formed part of the broader Social Justice Programme’s education and prevention work and highlighted:

- The University’s zero-tolerance stance on bullying, discrimination, and abuse of power;
- The roles and responsibilities of all community members in upholding ethical and professional conduct;





- The available reporting and support mechanisms through the Social Justice and Ethics Office; and,
- Guidance on distinguishing robust engagement from conduct that infringes on dignity or creates a hostile environment.

Additionally, 6 sessions were specifically designed to address bullying and discrimination in depth. These focused engagements used case examples, scenario-based dialogue, and reflection activities to unpack concepts such as microaggressions, cyberbullying, unconscious bias, and power dynamics in academic and workplace settings.

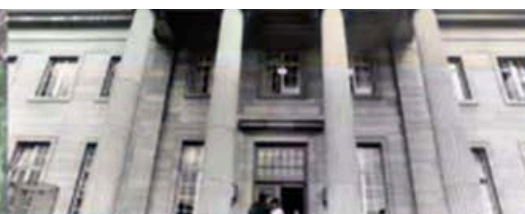
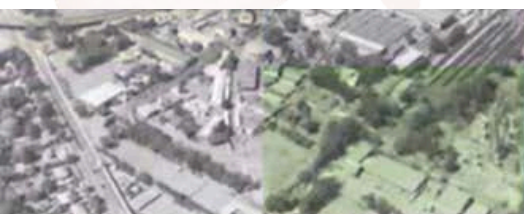
Through these awareness activities, the TEEO strengthened the visibility and understanding of institutional policies, enhanced early prevention capacities, and empowered staff and students to recognise, report, and challenge harmful behaviours. The initiatives directly contribute to cultivating a safe, equitable, and compassionate University culture in which everyone can thrive.

1.2 Diversity Seminars

Theme: Inclusive Engagement and Identity Awareness

The Diversity Seminars are a flagship initiative of the Transformation Office, designed to foster inclusive engagement and identity awareness within the university community.

The team partnered with the Occupational Therapy (OT) Department from the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) to deliver these seminars with a dual focus: supporting first-year students in their transition to university life through a diversity lens, and preparing fourth-year OT students for their clinical placements by equipping them with the tools to navigate diverse environments with empathy and cultural intelligence.

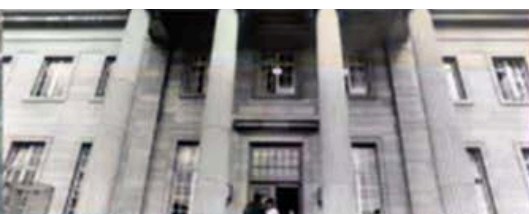
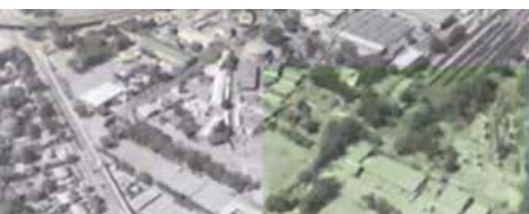




Occupational Therapy 1st Year Students Diversity Seminar March 2025



Physio Therapy 1st Year Diversity Seminar Feb 2025





Objectives

- Promote inclusive engagement and respectful collaboration across diverse identities.
- Address intersectionality in relation to race, gender, religion, language, education, and socio-economic status.
- Equip participants with tools for navigating difference with empathy and intelligence.
- Create a space for open dialogue without fear of judgment or punitive outcomes.

Seminar Structure

- Each seminar was structured around four key modules:
 - Transformation in Context – Understanding the historical and institutional backdrop of transformation.
 - Power, Positionality & Privilege – Exploring how social identities shape access, voice, and influence.
 - Communication in Diversity – Developing skills for inclusive, respectful, and effective communication.
 - Cross-Cultural Intelligence – Building awareness of cultural norms, values, and practices across communities.

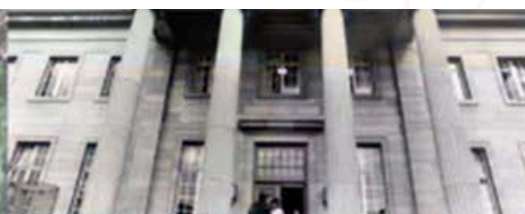
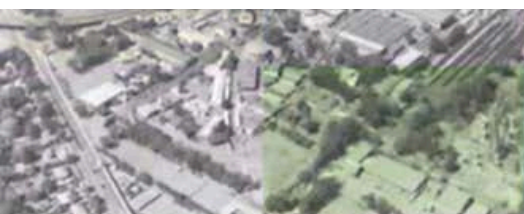
The sessions were interactive, using:

- Group discussions; Scenario-based learning; Reflective exercises; Peer-led facilitation

Impact and Reflections

Participants reported increased self-awareness and empathy, a deeper understanding of how identity shapes experience, and greater confidence in engaging across difference. Many expressed a renewed sense of belonging and a shared responsibility for transformation. The seminars were praised for their depth, accessibility, and relevance to both academic and social life on campus.

The Diversity Seminars 2025 were a vital step in cultivating a university culture grounded in Ubuntu, equity, and collective care. They continue to serve as a model for inclusive engagement and are integral to the broader transformation agenda at Wits.





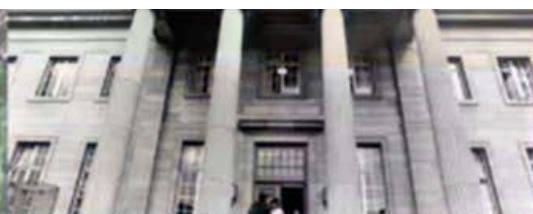
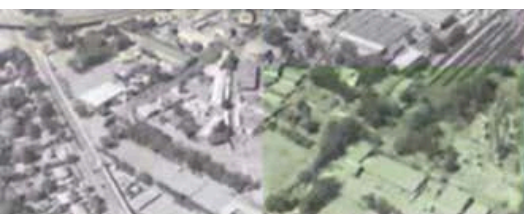
1.3 Madoda Sabelani Series 2025: *Healthy Masculinities and Inclusive Identities*

The Madoda Sabelani Series is a transformative engagement initiative hosted by Wits University, aimed at foregrounding and building healthy cultures of masculinities in university spaces. The name Madoda Sabelani translates to “Men, Let’s Respond,” signalling a call to action for the University community to reflect, engage, and evolve around what it means to be a man in the 21st century context. The 2025 series built on previous years’ successes, deepening its focus on mental health, social justice, and inclusive identity formation. The objectives of the project are as follows:

- Create safe spaces for vulnerability, healing, and dialogue.
- Address mental health issues such as depression, suicide, and emotional repression among men.
- Challenge toxic masculinity and promote healthy, respectful expressions of manhood.
- Foster community through shared narratives and peer-led support.
- Integrate gender justice into broader transformation efforts.



Madoda Sabelani May 2025





Key Themes from 2024–2025

Emerging from participant reflections and case studies:

- Masculinity as a social construct shaped by family, media, and cultural norms.
- Social pressures such as “indoda must be a Hilux/Bakkie” (provider, protector, emotionless).
- Men as survivors and harmers, which is exploring trauma, accountability, and healing.
- Mental health and wellness, including therapy, self-care, and emotional literacy.
- Alternative masculinities stories of men who defy traditional norms.
- Boyhood, brotherhood, and manhood developmental stages and their emotional impact.
- Education’s role in shaping gender norms and promoting transformation.
- Community contexts rural, urban, and cosmopolitan masculinities.
- Reclaiming dignity and pride in masculinity through non-violent, empathetic expressions.

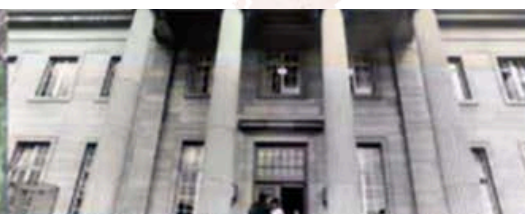
Engagement Format

- Case Studies focused on family dynamics and socialisation.
- Breakaway Groups for peer-led reflection and storytelling.
- Interactive Activities such as boxing, soccer, and games to attract participation and reframe masculinity through fun and movement.
- Role-play and empathy exercises to foster cross-cultural understanding.
- Discussion of emergent research, including a study led by Prof. Malose Langa on the impact of the Madoda Sabelani program.

Venues and Dates

Held across four campuses in May 2025: (Pictures to be included)

- 06 May – East Campus, Main Dining Hall
- 08 May – West Campus, KNK Dining Hall
- 13 May – West Campus, Convocation Dining Hall
- 15 May – Education Campus, Reith Hall





Impact and Reflections

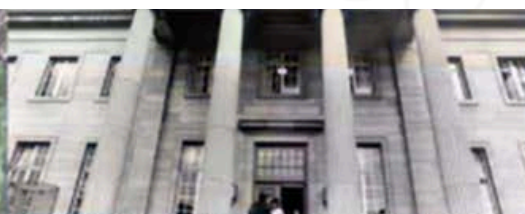
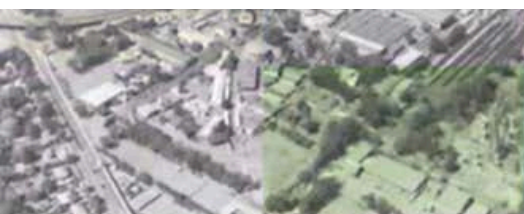
Participants in the Madoda Sabelani Series reported experiencing greater emotional openness and self-awareness, alongside a deepened sense of solidarity and shared responsibility. The engagements fostered increased understanding of how masculinity intersects with mental health and social justice, highlighting the importance of inclusive spaces that encourage vulnerability and challenge harmful norms. Widely praised for its inclusive facilitation and dynamic format, the series was recognised not only as a mental health intervention but also as a powerful mechanism for cultural transformation within the university community.

Plans for future iterations include:

- Expanding the series to include Bafazi Sabelani—a parallel engagement exploring womanhood in the 21st century university.
- Deepening collaboration with researchers and student leaders.
- Scaling the model to other institutions and communities.

1.4 The Trans/Gender Diverse Support Group

The commitment to coordinating the Trans/Gender diverse support group is part of the university supporting members of the LGBTIAQ+ community. People continuously affirm how valuable the space is for them and eagerly show up to sessions. The Social Support Group is a welcoming and affirming space, which facilitates social support for Trans/Gender diverse individuals within and beyond the Wits University community. Part of what attracts people to attend this space is due to the historic commitment that the TEEO has had towards advocating for the LGBTIAQ+ community and the work that has been done to affirm this commitment. The social support group is hosted every second Thursday from 3:00 to 5:00 PM, and is open to students, staff, and members of the public. This initiative is run in partnership with the Gender Equity Office (GEO) and GALA Queer Archive. Going forward, we will strengthen our collaborations with the GEO and GALA in this area.





Purpose and Approach

- Provide a safe, inclusive environment for sharing experiences and building community.
- Encourage peer support, emotional expression, and solidarity.
- Offer a platform for identity-affirming dialogue and mutual care.
- Promote mental health and well-being through connection and visibility.

Impact

The group has helped its attendees build community, reduce isolation, foster a sense of belonging, and contributed to a more inclusive campus culture. It continues to serve as a vital space for healing, empowerment, and advocacy for gender-diverse individuals.

Additional Engagements and Team Capacity Building

• USAf Forums & Gauteng Bilaterals

Quarterly Universities South Africa (USAf) transformation forums sustained sector alignment, while Gauteng-based bilaterals moved from information sharing to joint problem-solving; notably, Wits and Tshwane University of Technology hosted two peer-to-peer sessions focused on practical implementation.

• National Social Inclusion Workshop (March 2025)

We contributed to a sector workshop aligning universities to national frameworks on social inclusion, disability and GBV, with additional sessions on sexual harassment, bullying and the GRPBMEA Policy Framework, informing our local implementation plans and benchmarks.





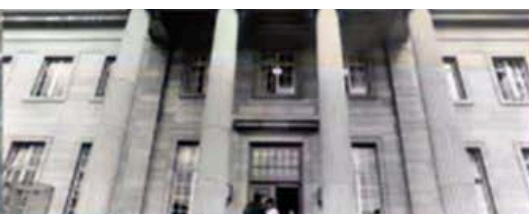
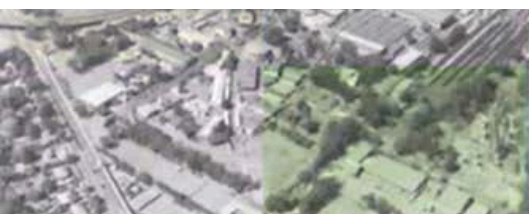
• **Internal Capacity Improvement: Accredited Mediation**

To strengthen early-resolution pathways, the Social Justice Manager completed accredited Mediator Skills training, increasing in-house ADR capability and reducing reliance on external facilitation for appropriate matters.

• **Everyday Culture: Low-Cost, High-Impact Initiatives**

Team-led gestures, Women’s Day recognitions (including a CRO-hosted lunch), Spring Day and birthday acknowledgements, inclusive prayer groups, and Heritage Day celebrations showcasing cultural regalia and shared foods signalled dignity, appreciation and belonging in daily work life.

The combined effect of public engagement, partnerships, accredited skills growth and intentional culture signals positioned Wits as a collaborative, outward-looking institution that learns with the sector while serving its community more effectively; in short, transformation is lived through relationships, practice and accountability on campus and beyond





What are we looking forward to as Social Justice and Ethics

The Social Justice Programme serves as an in-between space that complements existing university processes—both a hub for social innovation and a source of practical support. By ethically handling bullying and discrimination cases and offering alternative dispute resolution, we continue to work towards reduced harm and foster a more collegial work culture. By advancing inclusion and language access, we aim strengthened belonging across diverse cultures and races. Most importantly, we make Wits’ transformation pillars tangible in everyday experience.

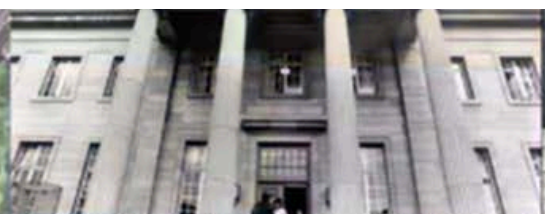
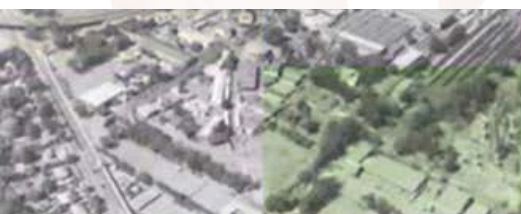
Wits’ transformation is strongest when policy, leadership and daily practice move together. The SJP connects these layers: we clarify routes to help that are clear and fair, equip managers and teams with practical tools, normalise multilingual inclusion, and translate evidence into improvement.

Our commitments for the next cycle are clear:

- Campus-wide Transformative Workshops and Dialogues
- Transformation Lab Series (Belonging, *What is Transformation?* and Faculty Transformation Committees Roles)
- Healing and Gender Dialogues Expansion (Madoda Sabelani & Babafazi Sabelani)
- Launch of Social Justice Champions Programme
- Anti-Bullying Visibility and “Bully-Free Zone” Campaign
- Train-the-Trainer and Facilitator Capacity Building
- Strengthening Collaborative Social Justice Team and Partnerships

Who We Are Becoming as a Programme

Our work is grounded in the belief that transformation is not an event but a daily practice, built through conversations that matter, accountability that is real, and a culture that honours dignity. This has meant holding space for difficult truths, and supporting colleagues and students through moments of vulnerability, conflict, and healing.





Our Social Justice team represents a diverse and active community. We are growing to include representation from different key communities in the university. The development of our Social Justice Champions program represents a commitment to include students in our office, sharing skills and rooting our activations in that which is relevant to the youth at the university. Here are reflections from the core Social Justice Team:

SJ practitioners' personal reflections



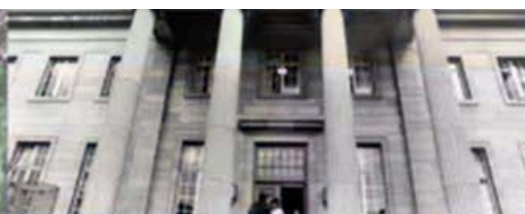
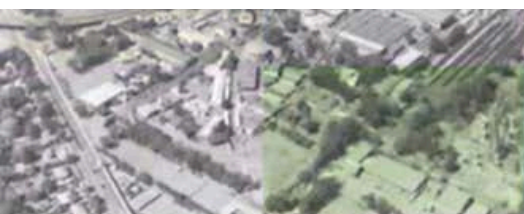
Thembekile Madondo

Joining the Transformation Office in February 2025, as a Diversity, Ethics, and Social Justice Manager marked a defining turning point in my professional path. Stepping into a complex environment mid-flow required swift adaptation: learning the terrain, absorbing the institution's layered histories, and orienting myself to the emotional, cultural, and operational weight of the work. One of my earliest commitments was to bring clarity and order to bullying and discrimination cases.

Strengthening documentation, refining systems, and aligning processes helped ensure that every report was handled with care, fairness, and consistency.

Those first months stretched me, but they also steadied me, revealing the kind of practitioner I was growing into.

As the first point of contact for colleagues and students reporting bullying or discrimination, I quickly discovered that this work extends far beyond statistics. People arrive carrying fear, disappointment, uncertainty, and often deep hurt. Listening with empathy, holding their stories with dignity, and responding with steadiness has become one of the most profound responsibilities of my role. These encounters have shown me that bullying is never just an isolated act; it reflects the culture that shaped it. Every case teaches something about what we nurture, what we allow, and what we overlook as an institution.

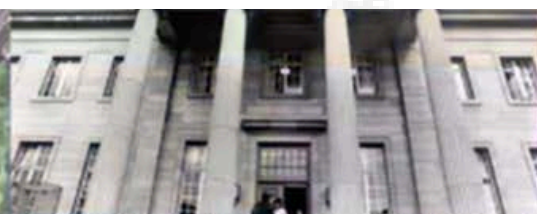
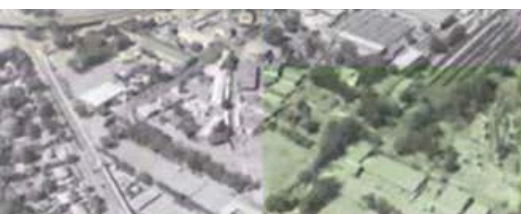
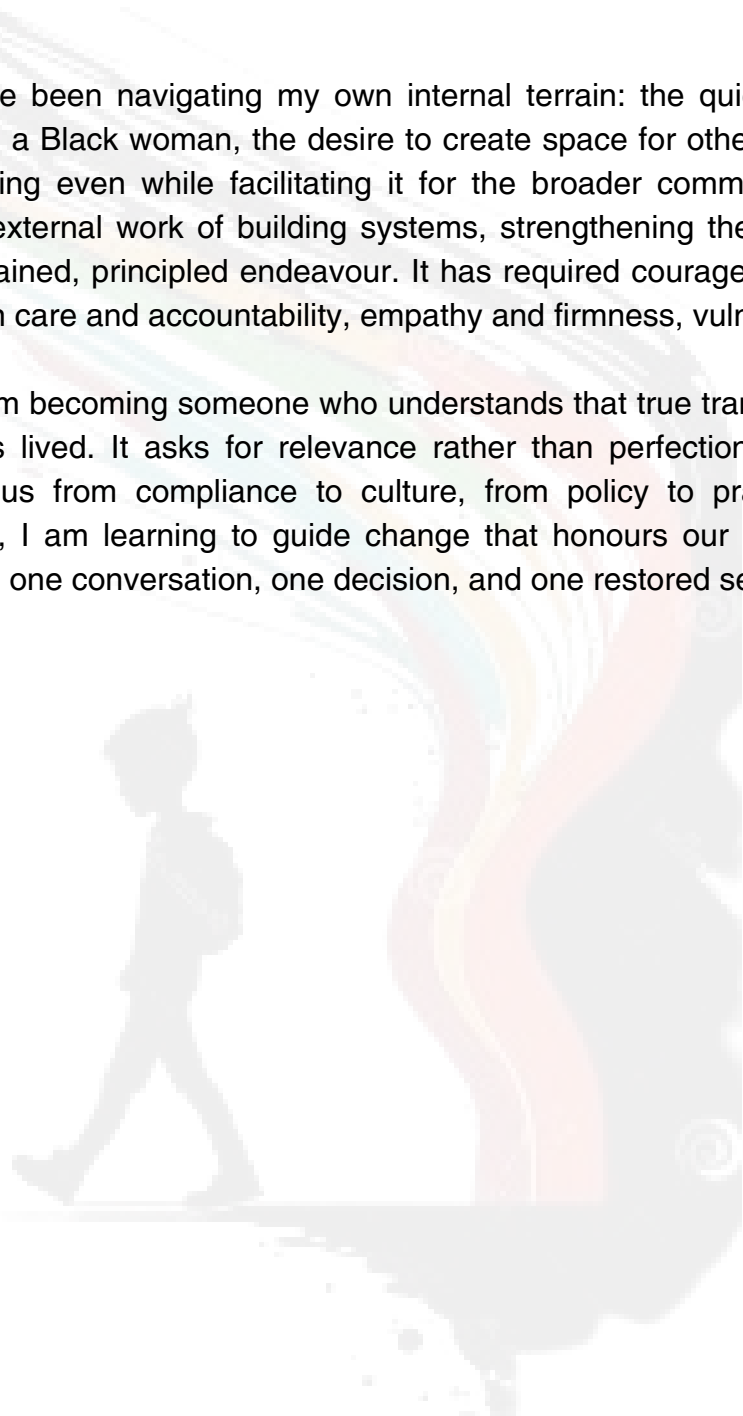




Standing at this frontline has sharpened my understanding of transformation. I see more clearly how personal agency flourishes when people feel genuinely supported, yet also how their progress depends on the institution's readiness to create safe and enabling conditions. Real transformation emerges in this balance; where individual courage meets organisational responsibility. My work is situated precisely in that intersection.

At the same time, I have been navigating my own internal terrain: the quiet self-doubt that comes with entering a new sector as a Black woman, the desire to create space for others without diminishing myself, and the hope of belonging even while facilitating it for the broader community. This inner journey has unfolded alongside the external work of building systems, strengthening the programme, and positioning transformation as a sustained, principled endeavour. It has required courage, humility, and the willingness to hold tension—between care and accountability, empathy and firmness, vulnerability and leadership.

Through this journey, I am becoming someone who understands that true transformation is not linear, neat, or fully controllable. It is lived. It asks for relevance rather than perfection, for consistency rather than performance. It moves us from compliance to culture, from policy to practice, from rhetoric to lived experience. In this work, I am learning to guide change that honours our history while shaping a more belonging-centred future; one conversation, one decision, and one restored sense of dignity at a time.





Ciaran Heywood



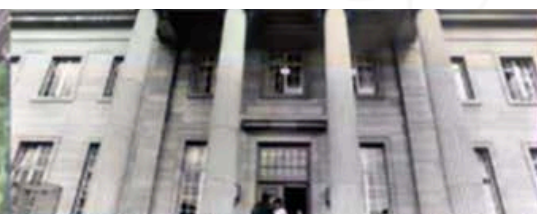
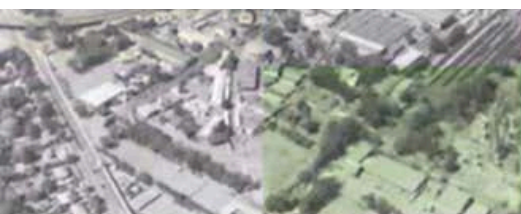
Personally, holding this position has been an immense privilege. Being part of the conversations and creating space to discuss real challenges and simultaneously build healthy institutional cultures has been incredibly meaningful. An integral part of the way we do this work is to create spaces for dialogue wherein we too learn from that which people share. It is an honor to do this work. Part of doing this work also means acknowledging the challenges people face and carry.

As we navigate an era of poly-crisis, many are carrying tremendous weights of existing in an unjust system and world. It is integral that we use these positionalities to create meaningful and deep-rooted change that translates into the lived experience of members of the university community and beyond. In this, I appreciate that our office is an office of praxis, wherein we learn and grow through the work that we do and we continuously evolve.

Through projects like the trans support group and the diversity seminars we create spaces wherein we reflect, engage and create action towards positive change. This is rooted in the understanding of Transformation as an ever changing horizon that we continually walk towards. We grow and adapt with the work itself and share it beyond the university. An example from my experience is the Madoda Sabelani series. The program has continuously grown and adapted over the past three, responding to what the students raise and grapple with. It is dynamic and honors the experience and awareness that students have already, affording them human dignity and allowing them to nurture each others growth. The impact goes beyond the events themselves.

From the Wits Madoda Sabelani series, I was able to create a similar discussion with high school students. These students also reflected on how valuable it was to have these discussions which were uncommon in their own contexts. As an office of praxis this shows a commitment to public engagement and articulates a contribution to social justice in a broader societal context. As we continue to grow and develop our world.

This is who we are becoming: a Social Justice Programme that is steady, responsive, hopeful, and deeply aligned with Wits' long-term vision of a just, inclusive, and humane institution. The work continues, and so do we.





Investigations & Mediations

The investigations and mediations office deals with all requests for mediation and investigations that are referred through by the social justice committee through the Prevention and Eradication of Bullying Policy within the University, Anti-Discrimination Policy and Procedures, Integrity Hotline, and other ad hoc requests for investigation. The office is further responsible for facilitating the mediation that parties have consented, by ensuring that the relevant mediator is appointed and providing spaces and facilities for mediation. Accredited mediators are appointed by the TEEO. Forty-three disputes were reported. These range from formal complaints, informal complaints, requests for advice, group complaints, and mediation.

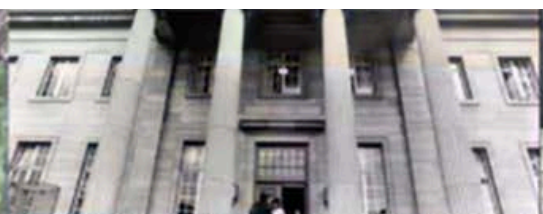
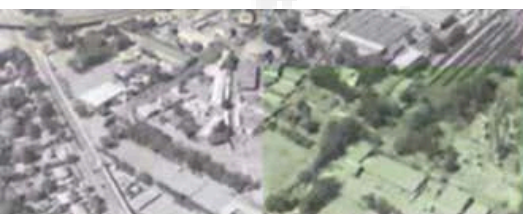
Three cases were referred for investigation. The investigation in two of these cases found a basis for bullying. These cases were referred to the Employee Relations office to institute disciplinary hearings. All these cases involved Professional and Administrative staff.

In relation to the anti-discrimination policy and procedure, three cases were investigated involving a student and member of staff. The case was referred to the legal office for the consideration of the investigation report and to initiate processes on their end.

Four cases, which came to the TEEO via the Integrity Hotline, were referred for investigation.

Cases that are referred to the TEEO are managed through two policies, namely, the [Anti-Discrimination Policy and Procedure](#) and the [Prevention and Eradication of Bullying](#) within the University. The Anti-Discrimination Policy and Procedure dictates that when our office is in possession of all the relevant information, the investigation may proceed.

Feedback to the question *what did you take away from the session, from a team mediation process* had the following interesting responses: “Talking things through helps”; Always listen to the other person and seeing their perspective”; “Team work also involves supporting each other's weaknesses”; Curiosity eliminates judgement”; and “I saw how we all actually want the same thing.”





Economic & Employment Equity Transformation

While recognising EE's importance, the University notes that its implementation must be balanced against broader economic challenges, social impact, quality standards and other institutional priorities.

Employment Equity (EE) ensures that the University's workforce reflects the demographics of South Africa while advancing institutional excellence.

2025 has been a milestone in the higher education sector with the introduction of the new Employment Equity Regulations and Sectoral Numerical Targets, gazetted on 15 April 2025 and effective from 1 September 2025. These regulations require all designated employers to adopt a five-year Employment Equity Plan (1 September 2025 – 31 August 2030), aligned to sector-specific targets for race, gender, and disability.

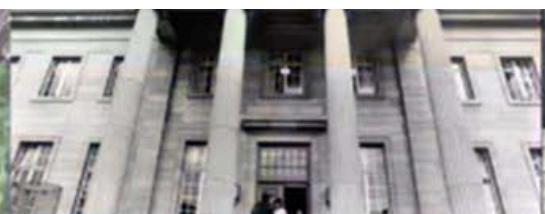
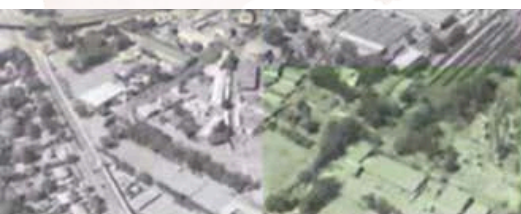
Importantly, Wits understands that transformation cannot be limited to staff demographics. The student profile plays a crucial role in shaping the academic pipeline, succession planning, and ultimately the future workforce. The EE agenda, therefore, aligns closely with student access, success, and throughput.

2025 Student Profile

The student profile indicates positive developments in Employment Equity planning. Black students comprise 75% of the South African student body, reflecting national demographics. Women constitute 61% of South African students overall.

The University of the Witwatersrand enrolled a total of 43 675 students, with 41% registered in postgraduate programmes and 59% at undergraduate level. South African students made up the majority of enrolments, accounting for 37% of postgraduate and 58% of undergraduate registrations, reflecting the University's strong national footprint and commitment to access.

International students represented a smaller but important component of the student body, contributing 4% of postgraduate and 2% of undergraduate enrolments. This balanced profile supports Wits' strategic focus on academic excellence, transformation, and global engagement, while maintaining priority access for South African students.





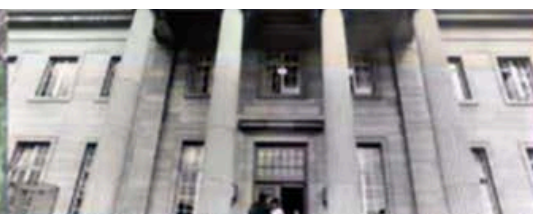
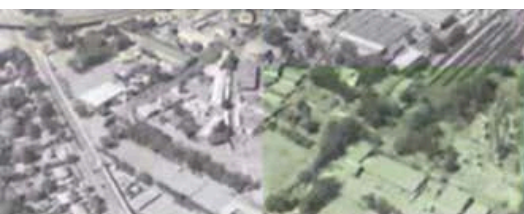
International students constitute 6% of enrolments, which represents the University’s commitment to redress and internationalisation.

This strong progression in student representation creates the potential to improve Black and women’s representation in the academic pipeline through, for example mentorship, internships and succession planning.

1. Wits Staff Profile (as at 01 September 2025)

1.1 Academic Profile

Grade	AM	CM	IM	WM	AF	CF	IF	WF	FM	FF	Total
Grade 4	3	1	3	6	0	1	2	2	8	4	30
Grade 5	10	4	8	58	6	1	2	48	56	15	208
Grade 6	12	2	8	51	16	6	18	44	66	31	254
Grade 7	34	9	14	62	57	20	27	84	81	42	430
Grade 8	102	15	26	70	144	19	65	116	69	47	673
Grade 9	15	0	5	9	38	5	13	19	10	9	123
Total	176	31	64	256	261	52	127	313	290	148	1718





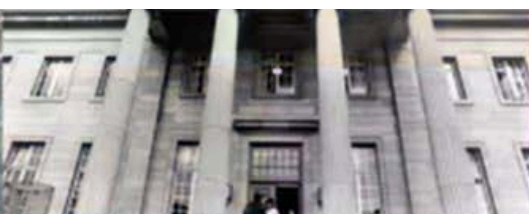
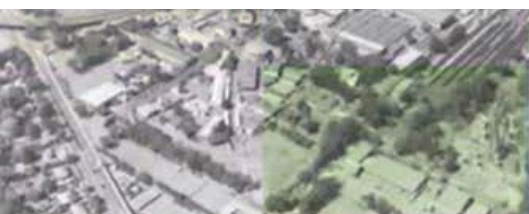
Wits staff profile in relation to academics show progression in the following ways:

The Academic demographic profile across Grade 4 to Grade 9 reflects a workforce with notable diversity strengths, particularly in the middle to junior level categories where representation of Black and female academics are steadily increasing.

Grade 7 to Grade 9 show strong progress toward workforce diversification, with Grade 8 demonstrating one of the most balanced profiles across demographic categories.

1.2 Professional Administration Profile

Grade	AM	CM	IM	WM	AF	CF	IF	WF	FM	FF	Total
Grade 1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Grade 2	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	4
Grade 3	1	1	0	1	2	1	0	1	0	0	7
Grade 4	3	1	1	2	0	0	1	3	2	0	13
Grade 5	10	0	1	3	4	3	6	8	2	1	38
Grade 6	24	2	3	6	30	4	8	9	4	3	93
Grade 7	44	5	20	11	51	18	20	20	4	7	200
Grade 8	101	8	12	15	131	31	32	29	9	5	373
Grade 9 -10	211	20	8	15	335	55	52	45	7	12	760
Grade 11-12	154	7	5	2	298	35	12	13	4	7	537
Grade 13-14	561	2	2	2	264	2	3	1	5	0	842
Grade 15-17	413	3	0	0	687	1	1	1	10	7	1123
Total	1523	50	52	58	1802	150	136	131	47	42	3991





Wits staff profile in relation to professional staff show progression the following ways:

The Professional Administration profile indicates a strong and progressively diversifying profile across Grade 1 to Grade 17, with notable growth in Black representation and female participation particularly within the middle to junior level categories (Grade 6 to Grade 12).

The demographic distribution demonstrates a broad mix of gender and race across most levels, indicating that inclusive recruitment practices, internal mobility, and well-structured development pathways are contributing to an increasingly representative administrative cohort.

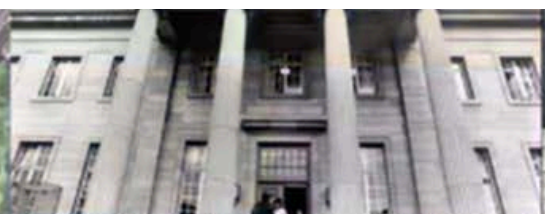
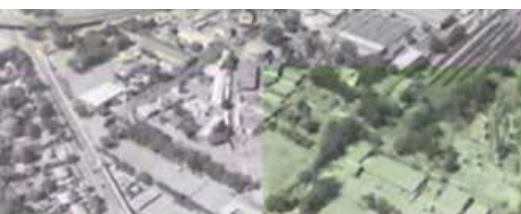
Building on this foundation, the University is well positioned to further enhance representation at senior administrative levels through strengthened succession planning, targeted leadership development, reinforcing a positive and sustainable trajectory towards greater diversity, inclusion, and institutional transformation.

Our Focus and the Road Ahead

The University remains committed to strengthening its transformation trajectory by advancing several priority areas that will shape our focus going forward. Key efforts include enhancing the representation of Women and Black employees within senior and executive leadership levels to align with national sector targets, while also deepening institutional support for disability inclusion as we work to move beyond the current 1.4% representation toward the 3% threshold.

Work needs to be done on the development of a structured succession planning framework for academic and professional staff to ensure a sustainable and diverse leadership pipeline across the institution.

In addition, dedicated strategies are being advanced to retain scarce and critical skills, particularly in disciplines such as Engineering and Health Sciences, to support continuity, reduce turnover, and enable long-term transformation impact. These focus areas collectively reflect the University's commitment to meaningful, measurable, and sustained equity outcomes.





Economic Transformation: B-BBEE

The University has achieved economic transformation through strong procurement and development initiatives. It exceeded targets for inclusive procurement, with 46.78% of spend directed to Black-owned suppliers and 24.79% to Black women-owned suppliers, fostering greater participation of historically disadvantaged businesses.

Enterprise and Supplier Development contributions were exceptional, reaching 64.52% for supplier development and 21.98% for enterprise development, far surpassing minimum requirements and have contributed to growth, sustainability and job creation. Governance transformation is evident with 57.69% Black representation on the (board) Council, while socio-economic contributions accounted for 4.43%, supporting individual upliftment.

These achievements reflect meaningful progress in empowering Black businesses and promoting diversity, though further improvements in skills development, gender equity, and disability inclusion are needed for holistic transformation. The University remains committed to contributing to Economic Transformation through, for example, B-BBEE.

The Road Ahead

Our Transformation work offers the opportunity for us to work across the university's structures, multiple stakeholders, and different categories of staff, such as the Professional Administrative and Academic staff. This open space we think of as the "in-between" space. Here we can discuss cross-cutting issues, create a community of practice, test ideas for change, and explore solutions to concerns.

We are excited to keep strengthening our work in 2026. We intend to deepen our work by creating more spaces for engagement; learning about transformation from doing transformation; and strengthening our collaborations and partnerships. Our strategic intent remains, contributing to *Wits for Good* and a caring, peaceful and inclusive society.

