



UNIVERSITIES  
SOUTH AFRICA

3rd Higher Education Conference

**THE FUTURE**

OF THE UNIVERSITY

9-11 October 2024



*Message from the*  
**USAf Chief Executive Officer**

**Dr Phethiwe Matutu**

The theme for this year's conference is **"The Future of the University."** As the higher education sector, we are facing enormous challenges of sustainability in the face of slow economic growth and the impact of digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) on the world of work in general. A sluggish economy has resulted in high levels of unemployment and declining state subsidies. How universities respond to these, and global changes (including climate variability, adaptability and environmental sustainability) will determine not only the future of the university, but that of society and humanity.

By incorporating sustainability into research, teaching, and operations, universities can tackle climate change, inequality, and resource depletion while preparing graduates for the emerging green economy. This focus promotes social equity, fosters community engagement, and ensures long-term institutional viability. Sustainable practices also reduce environmental impact, drive innovation, and enhance global competitiveness. It is imperative that universities ensure their own sustainability in this context.

Regarding digitalisation, AI is making waves in the world; it is dramatically affecting the shape and offerings of the future university. Universities must remain at the forefront of the digital revolution and map their future paths while doing so. Slow adaptation to rapid digitalisation can only be to the sector's detriment.

Taking all of the above into consideration, the 3rd Higher Education Conference will explore a number of sub-themes. The sustainable development goals and how south African universities are contributing to achieving these; the future of transformation in the university; AI and teaching and learning in the future university; financial sustainability; and academic freedom in the future university, to mention but a few.

The conference is tailored for university leaders, researchers, policymakers, educators, and industry experts. Attendees can look forward to robust discussions, engaging plenaries, interactive parallel sessions, enriching workshops and exhibitions.

Your participation is essential as we navigate the future of universities in the digital era together as a sector.

I look forward to meaningful and fulfilling engagements.



**Dr Phethiwe Matutu**

Chief Executive Officer  
Universities South Africa





## **USAf STRATEGY GROUPS**

USAf endorses a comprehensive and equitable national higher education system that is responsive to the challenges facing South Africa. Through lobbying and advocacy, USAf promotes and facilitates an optimal environment conducive for universities to function effectively and efficiently. It promotes cohesive but diverse public universities in service of society, recognising the need for strong and effective universities. Much of this work is led and directed by the six (6) USAf Strategy Groups, each of which is chaired by a university Vice-Chancellor nominated by the USAf Board.

The strategy groups are:

- Funding
- Leadership and Management
- Research and Innovation
- Teaching and Learning
- Transformation
- World of Work

Please visit the USAf website for more information: [\*\*www.usaf.ac.za\*\*](http://www.usaf.ac.za)

## **SOCIAL EVENTS**

Two social events are being held. The welcome cocktail will take place on the 9th of October and the Gala Dinner on the 10th of October 2024. USAf hopes that social events will enrich the conference experience, and provide opportunities for networking, informal learning, and celebrating our community. We hope that you will have fruitful conversations over a meal and build your network of professional relationships, connect and share ideas.

***We do hope to see you there!***

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

USAf wishes to acknowledge the steadfast and dedicated support of each Strategy Group and its appointed Advisory Committee that provided strategic input into the conference programme, as well as all the presenters, programme and support staff for their valuable contributions.



## DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2024

08:30 - 09:00 **ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION**

VENUE: **FOYER**

Tea and coffee on arrival

### **WELCOME AND OFFICIAL CONFERENCE OPENING**

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

**CHAIR:** Dr Phethiwe Matutu (Chief Executive Officer, Universities South Africa)

09:00 - 09:15

#### **WELCOME AND OFFICIAL CONFERENCE OPENING**

Professor Francis Petersen (Chair of Universities South Africa (USAf) Board)

09:15 - 09:20

Dr Phethiwe Matutu Introduces the Minister

09:20 - 09:50

#### **OPENING KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Minister Nobuhle Nkabane, MP (Minister of Higher Education and Training)

09:50 - 10:00

**Body Break**

### **PLENARY SESSION 1:**

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Rushiella Nolundi Songca (Deputy Chair, USAf Board, Vice-Chancellor & Principal, Walter Sisulu University)

10:00 - 12:30

#### **CONTESTED FUTURES**

10:00 - 10:05

##### **SESSION INTRODUCTION**

10:05 - 10:35

##### **Three Decades of Democracy: Reflecting on Higher Education Achievements & Challenges**

**SPEAKER:** Professor Adam Habib (Director: School of African and Oriental Studies, University of London)

10:35 - 10:50

**Discussion**

10:50 - 11:05

**TEA**

### **PLENARY SESSION 2:**

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Rushiella Nolundi Songca (Deputy Chair, USAf Board, Vice-Chancellor & Principal, Walter Sisulu University)

11:05 - 11:10

#### **SESSION INTRODUCTION**

##### **UNESCO Chairs Presentations**

11:10 - 12:00

**SPEAKER 1:** Professor Ruksana Osman (University of the Witwatersrand, UNESCO Chair in Teaching and Learning)

**SPEAKER 2:** Professor Tel'Amiel (UNESCO Chair in Open Education and Technologies for the Common Good, University of Brasilia)

12:00 - 12:10

**Discussion**

### **PLENARY SESSION 3:**

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Rushiella Nolundi Songca (Deputy Chair, USAf Board, Vice-Chancellor & Principal, Walter Sisulu University)

12:10 - 12:50

#### **TECHNOLOGY AND HUMAN INTERFACE IN THE FUTURE UNIVERSITY**

12:10 - 12:40

**SPEAKER:** Professor Ulrich Paquet (The Director of the African Institute of Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) South Africa)

12:40 - 12:50

**Discussion**

12:50 - 13:10

**PHOTO SESSION** - Front steps of CSIR

13:10 - 14:00

**LUNCH**

VENUE: **THE DECK**





**14:00 - 15:30 STRATEGY GROUPS - PARALLEL SESSIONS 1A-C**

**TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE FUTURE UNIVERSITY**

VENUE: **RUBY**

**1A. TEACHING AND LEARNING STRATEGY GROUP (TLSG)**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Andrew Crouch (Chair of the TLSG, Vice-Chancellor & Principal, Sol Plaatje University)

**14:00 – 14:05 SESSION INTRODUCTION**

**14:05 - 14:25 SPEAKER 1:** Dr Mandy Hlengwa (Senior Lecturer: Education and Coordinator: New Generation of Academics Programme, Rhodes University)

**14:25 - 14:45 SPEAKER 2:** Dr Helen Beetham (Researcher & Educationist Consultant, United Kingdom) *(online)*

**14:40 - 15:05 SPEAKER 3:** Dr Albert Luswata (Lecturer Ethics, Uganda Martyrs University)

**15:00 - 15:30 Discussion**

**THE FUTURE OF TRANSFORMATION IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION:  
LOOKING BACK, GOING FORWARD**

VENUE: **EMERALD**

**1B. TRANSFORMATION STRATEGY GROUP (TSG)**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Pamela Dube (Chair of the TSG, Vice-Chancellor & Principal Central University of Technology)

**14:00 - 14:05 SESSION INTRODUCTION**

**14:05 - 14:30 SPEAKER 1:** Professor Lis Lange (Special Advisor to Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Teaching, Stellenbosch University) *(online)*

**14:30 - 15:00 SPEAKER 2:** Professor Nomalanga Mkhize (Associate Professor: Sociology and Anthropology, Nelson Mandela University)

**15:00 – 15:30 Discussion**

**FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

**1C. FUNDING STRATEGY GROUP (FSG)**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Ms Nolwazi Mamorare (Chief Financial Officer: University of Johannesburg)

**14:00 – 14:05 SESSION INTRODUCTION**

**14:05 – 14:35 SPEAKER 1:** Professor Stan du Plessis (Economics Professor: Stellenbosch University)

**14:35 – 15:05 SPEAKER 2:** Dr Kirston Greenop (Head, Corporate Citizenship, Standard Bank South Africa)

**15:05 – 15:30 Discussion**

**15:30 - 16:00 TEA**

**PLENARY SESSION 4:**

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Bismark Tyobeka (Chair of the FSG, Vice-Chancellor & Principal, North-West University)

**16:00 - 17:00 HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING AND FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY INTO THE FUTURE,  
INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES**

**16:00 – 16:05 SESSION INTRODUCTION**

**SPEAKERS:**

**16:05 - 16:25** Dr Dajana Dzanovic (Head of Global Research and Innovation Policy, UUKi) *(Online)*  
and

Dr Harry Anderson (Deputy Director, Policy & Global Engagement, UUKi) *(Online)*

**16:25 - 16:45** Dr Thamsanqa Zikode (Head of Portfolio: Regularity Audit representing the Auditor General)

**16:45 – 17:00 Discussion**

**18:00 - 19:30 USAf CHAIRPERSON'S COCKTAIL RECEPTION & NETWORKING EVENT**

VENUE: **THE DECK**

- Welcome and remarks (Prof Francis Petersen, Chair of the USAf Board)
- Music



## DAY 2: THURSDAY 10 OCTOBER 2024

### PLENARY SESSION 5:

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Sizwe Mabizela (Chair of the USAf Admissions Committee and Vice-Chancellor and Principal of Rhodes University)

#### 09:00 – 11:00 THE UNIVERSITY, ITS FUTURE AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM - A GLOBAL CONVERSATION

##### 09:00 - 09:10 SESSION INTRODUCTION

09:10 - 09:40 **SPEAKER 1:** Dr Naledi Pandor (Politician and former Minister of International Relations and Cooperation)

09:40 - 10:10 **SPEAKER 2:** Ms Anne-Marie Scott (Independent Scholar and Higher Education Strategist, Scotland) *(online)*

10:10 - 10:30 **SPEAKER 3:** Professor Tshilidzi Marwala (Rector of the United Nations University, Japan) *(pre-recorded video)*

10:30 - 11:00 **Discussion**

11:00 - 11:30 **TEA**

#### 11:30 - 13:00 STRATEGY GROUPS - PARALLEL SESSIONS 2A - C

##### ENTREPRENEURIAL WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF UNIVERSITIES

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

#### 2A. WORLD OF WORK STRATEGY GROUP (WSG) SESSION

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Thandwa Mthembu (Chair of WSG and Vice-Chancellor & Principal: Durban University of Technology)

##### 11:30 – 11:35 SESSION INTRODUCTION

11:30 - 12:05 Entrepreneurial work-integrated learning and the responsibility of universities in nurturing student entrepreneurs

**SPEAKER:** Dr Olebogeng Selebi (Deputy Director, Centre for the Future of Work (CFoW) at the University of Pretoria)

12:05 - 12:35 The Entrepreneurial University and formalising relationships with 6 external partners

**SPEAKER:** Dr McEdward Murimbika (University of the Witwatersrand Business School)

12:35 - 13:00 Graduate needs and the needs of Employers: How can universities shape the/for the future.

**SPEAKER:** Mr Ronen Aires (CEO of Student Village)

**Discussion**

##### RESEARCH AND INNOVATION STRATEGY IN RELATION TO DECLINING RESOURCES

VENUE: **RUBY**

#### 2B. RESEARCH AND INNOVATION STRATEGY GROUP (RISG) SESSION

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Sibusiso Moyo (Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies, Stellenbosch University)

##### 11:30 – 11:35 SESSION INTRODUCTION

11:35 - 11:55 **SPEAKER 1:** Professor Lynn Morris (Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation, University of the Witwatersrand)

11:55 – 12:15 **SPEAKER 2:** Dr Carol Nonkwelo (Senior Director: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Education, University of Pretoria)

12:15 – 12:35 **SPEAKER 3:** Dr Vathiswa Papu-Zamxaka (Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation & Engagement, Tshwane University of Technology)

12:35 – 13:00 **Discussion**

##### TOWARDS AN INNOVATIVE INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY, APPROPRIATE RESOURCE AND DYNAMIC PEOPLE PLANNING FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND SUCCESSFUL FUTURE IN THE UNIVERSITY

VENUE: **EMERALD**

#### 2C. LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT STRATEGY GROUP (LMSG) SESSION

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Loyiso Nongxa (Professor Emeritus: Wits and Chair: Strategy and Steering Committee, National Graduate Academy for Mathematical and Statistical Sciences NGA(MaSS))

##### 11:30 – 11:35 SESSION INTRODUCTION

11:35 - 12:15 **KEYNOTE SPEAKER:** Dr Maria Toshkova (Director: Global Partnerships, University Design Institute, University of Arizona, USA) *(online)*

12:15 – 12:30 **RESPONDENT 1:** Professor Mala Singh (ED People and Culture, North-West University)

12:30 – 12:45 **RESPONDENT 2:** Dr Linda Meyer (Managing Director, Rosebank College, SA)

12:45 – 13:00 **Discussion**

13:00 - 14:00 **LUNCH**



**14:00 - 15:30 PARALLEL SESSIONS 3A-C**

**3A. PARALLEL SESSION:** **VENUE: EMERALD**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Vivienne Lawack (Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic, of the University of the Western Cape)

**14:00 - 15:30 AI AND TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE FUTURE UNIVERSITY SESSION CHAIR**

**14:00 - 14:05 SESSION INTRODUCTION**

**14:05 - 14:25 SPEAKER 1:** Professor Simon Gifford (CEO of Mashauri Ltd) *(online)*

**14:25 - 14:50 SPEAKER 2:** Professor Heather Nel (Senior Director: Institutional Strategy, Nelson Mandela University)

**14:50 - 15:15 SPEAKER 3:** Dr Sianne Alves (Director: Office of Inclusivity and Change, University of Cape Town)

**15:15 - 15:30 Discussion**

**3B. PARALLEL SESSION:** **VENUE: RUBY**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Colin Thakur (Director of the NEMISA KZN e-Skills CoLab at the Durban University of Technology)

**14:00 - 15:30 ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**14:00 - 14:05 SESSION INTRODUCTION**

**14:05 - 14:25 PANELIST 1:** Mr Vuyani Jarana (CEO: Ilitha Telecommunications)

**14:25 - 14:45 PANELIST 2:** Professor Kerrin Myres (Emeritus Professor and Chair of the Entrepreneurship in Africa Research Group, GIBS, University of Pretoria)

**14:45 - 15:05 PANELIST 3:** Ms Elona Ndlovu (Chartered Coach: Centre for Entrepreneurship, Tshwane University of Technology)

**15:05 - 15:30 Discussion**

**3C. PARALLEL SESSION:** **VENUE: DIAMOND**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Rachael Jesika Singh (Director: Research, University of the Western Cape)

**14:00 - 15:30 THE UNIVERSITY AS AN IMPACTFUL SOCIETAL RESOURCE**

**14:00 - 14:05 SESSION INTRODUCTION**

**14:05 - 14:40 Mapping South African Universities contributions to achieving the sustainable development goals**

**SPEAKER:** Professor Corli Witthuhn (Professor, University of the Free State)

**RESEARCH TEAM:**

- Ms Mariska Vermeulen (Department of Sustainable Food Systems and Development, University of the Free State)
- Professor Ademola Jegede (Law Professor and Interim Director: Ismael Mahomed Centre for People and Human Rights, University of Venda)
- Professor Johan van Niekerk (Head of Department of Sustainable Food Systems and Development, University of the Free State)

**14:40 - 14:55 Discussion**

**14:55 - 15:15 Funding University Research for Impact: Funding opportunities**

**SPEAKER:**

- Dr Mbulelo Ncango (Senior Manager, Next Generation and Emerging Researchers, National Research Foundation)
- Ms Tugela Matubatuba (Director: Strategic Partnerships, Department of Science and Innovation)

**15:15 - 15:30 Open Call for Impact Case Studies (Professor Chris Brink, Emeritus Vice-Chancellor Newcastle University) *(Pre-recorded)***

**15:30 - 16:00 AFTERNOON TEA**

**PLENARY SESSION 6:** **VENUE: DIAMOND**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Dr Thelma Louw (Head: Sustainability, Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate of the University of South Africa, UNISA)

**16:00 - 17:00 CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND THE FUTURE OF THE UNIVERSITY**

**16:00 - 16:25 SPEAKER 1:** Professor Kirsty Carden (Director: Future Water Institute, University of Cape Town) *(online)*

**16:25 - 16:45 SPEAKER 2:** Bibi Bouwman (Director: Community Engagement, North-West University)

**16:45 - 17:00 Discussion**

**17:45 - 20:15 USAf CEO's GALA DINNER** **VENUE: AMBER**

Curated Art Exhibition – Tshwane University of Technology (Open from 17:00 in Amber)  
 Live Music  
 Delegates to be seated by 18:00



## DAY 3: FRIDAY 11 OCTOBER 2021

### PLENARY SESSION 7:

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Dr Britta Zawa (Director, Institutional Audits, Council on Higher Education)

#### 9:00 - 10:30 **CHE SESSION: INSIGHTS INTO THE FUTURE: LEARNING AND TEACHING SCENARIOS IN 2036**

**WELCOME AND SESSION INTRODUCTION:** Dr Britta Zawada

**SPEAKER 1:** Reconceptualizing learning and teaching post-pandemic: Dr Whitfield Green (CEO: CHE)

**SPEAKER 2:** Trends shaping the next 12 years: André Roux (Professor of Future Studies at the Stellenbosch University Business School)

**SPEAKER 3:** Learning and teaching scenarios in 2036: Doris Viljoen (Director: Institute for Futures Research, Stellenbosch University)

**Discussion**

10:30 - 11:00 **TEA**

### PLENARY SESSION 8:

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Dr Oliver Seale (CEO: University Leadership Development and Advisory Services)

#### 11:00 - 12:30 **HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT (HELM) SESSION**

11:00 – 11:30 **KEYNOTE:** Professor Ihron Rensburg (Leadership coach and mentor, and Programme Associate: USAf's Higher Education Leadership and Management (HELM) programme) *(online)*

11:30 – 11:45 **RESPONDENT 1:** Professor Garth Stevens (Deputy Vice-Chancellor: People Development and Culture, University of the Witwatersrand)

11:45 – 12:00 **RESPONDENT 2:** Dr Janet Usher (Programme Co-ordinator MBA, Boston City Campus)

12:00 – 12:30 **Discussion**

### PLENARY SESSION 9:

VENUE: **DIAMOND**

**SESSION CHAIR:** Professor Nokuthula Sibiba (Vice-Chancellor, Mangosuthu University of Technology)

#### 12:30 - 13:30 **REPORTING SESSION FROM CHAIRS OF STRATEGY GROUPS**

12:30 - 12:40 Chair TLSG (Professor Andrew Crouch, Vice-Chancellor & Principal, Sol Plaatje University )

12:40 - 12:50 Chair TSG (Professor Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor & Principal, Central University of Technology)

12:50 - 13:00 Chair FSG (Professor Bismark Tyobeka, Vice-Chancellor & Principal, North-West University)

13:00 - 13:10 Chair WSG (Professor Thandwa Mthembu, Vice-Chancellor & Principal, Durban University of Technology)

13:10 - 13:20 Chair RISG (Professor Jesika Singh on behalf of Professor Mayekiso)

13:20 -13:30 Chair LMSG (Dr Seale on behalf of Professor Nana Poku)

### CONFERENCE CLOSING AND VOTE OF THANKS

Professor Rushiella Nolundi Songca

13:40 - 14:30 **LUNCH**

14:30 **DEPARTURE**