WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT. WE ARE ALL THE SAME.

@WELCOME

New Head of the Disability Rights Unit: Dr Leila Abdool Gafoor

A warm welcome to Or Leila Abdool Gafoor Head: Wits Disability Rights Unit An official warm welcome to the Disability Rights Unit (DRU) to all of our students. As I start at

students receive. I also admire the integrity and commitment of the students that I have met thus far. In terms of getting to know me better, I am a Psychologist with vast experience in the Disability Rights area. I look forward to working with each and every one of you and with your support growing the world class WITS DRU to further heights. At Wits, there are currently over 1000 students who have disclosed a disability. The DRU is committed to making reasonable adjustments and addressing any individual support requirements to make sure that you're able to participate fully and enjoy a fulfilling university experience.

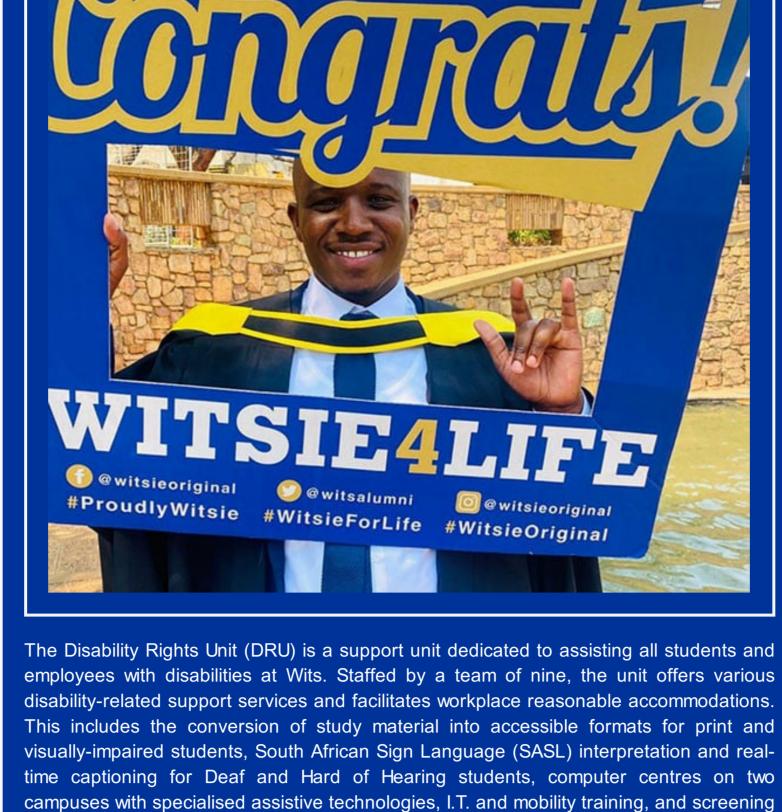
WITS as the new DRU Head I am so impressed with the facilities, staff and support that you as

I encourage the Wits community to be observant of mobility challenges for people with disabilities by taking a photo of accessibility issues on our campuses and bringing it to the attention of the DRU. This will help the DRU to notify the departments responsible for infrastructure and

maintenance. If you are an existing student with the DRU and have been granted extra time and concessions for tests and exams for the rest of your university career, then please remember to renew your extra time and concessions by registering with DRU for 2024 and contacting Mr Alfred Tlou at alfred.tlou@wits.ac.za.

For information regarding students with disabilities who wish to apply for extra tine and concessions, please see the following link: https://www.wits.ac.za/disability-rights-unit/extra-timeand-other-concessions/

Wishing you well with your studies for 2024, and if you need more info on the DRU please visit our website. **@THE DISABILITY RIGHTS UNIT**



and guidance on adaptations for specific learning disabilities. The unit is also available to those who wish to apply for extra time and accessible parking bays. Our main office is located in the Solomon Mahlangu House Building, First Floor, East Wing, Braamfontein East Campus. Contact: Dr Leila Abdool Gafoor at leila.abdoolgafoor@wits.ac.za. Our satellite office is located in the Administration Block, First Floor, School of Education Campus, Parktown. Contact: Ms Kobela Petja at kobela.petja@wits.ac.za. For more information on DRU and the various services offered, please visit our webpage: www.wits.ac.za/disability-rights-unit/

@Parktown Education

Campus

Pictured (Right): Ms Kobela Petja and Ms Khetha Mbatha

@SRC DISABILITY REPRESENTATIVE

Experience"

@DRU TEAM

Disability Rights I

@ Braamfontein Campus

East

Pictured (Left): Back: Mx Tish Geddes, Mr Duncan Yates, Mrs Nomsa Mathebula, Dr Leila Abdool Gafoor, Mrs Subhashini Ellan, Mr Andrew Sam Front: Mr Alfred Tlou

MASTERING YOUR WITS

Ensuring Inclusive Orientation: A Reflection on "Mastering Your University



disabilities, I aimed to foster a deeper understanding among incoming students and university stakeholders alike. Through dialogue and education, we can dismantle barriers and cultivate an environment that champions diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. One of the key takeaways from the panel discussion was the realization that awareness and understanding of disability-related issues are integral to fostering an inclusive campus culture. Incoming first-year students must be equipped not only with academic knowledge but also with the empathy and awareness necessary to be active citizens in advocating for inclusion and accessibility in their everyday lives.

As we begin the 2024 academic year, it is imperative that we recognize the power of collective action in creating positive change. By amplifying the voices of marginalized communities, including individuals with disabilities, we can forge a

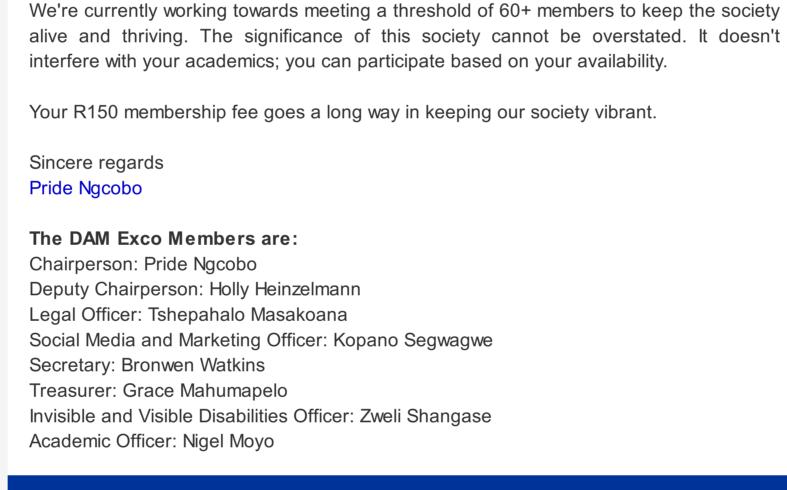
university experience that is truly inclusive and empowering for all.

and needs of individuals with disabilities, being part of this conversation was both gratifying and necessary. At the heart of my contribution to the panel was the recognition that disability representation isn't just about having a seat at the table; it's about having a voice that resonates and influences decisions. By sharing insights into the issues surrounding accessibility that are faced by students with

campus environment. Moving forward, let us continue to strive for equity and accessibility, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive and succeed. Kind regards, ljeoma Lesedi Matsepe

In conclusion, my experience participating in "Mastering Your University Experience" reaffirmed the importance of representation and advocacy in shaping an inclusive

We're all different, were all the same. People change spaces. Wolfe an DieteRENT. Velre all die SAME The Disability Awareness Movement (DAM), is a student society committed to creating an environment where disability is



@SOCIAL MEDIA

src.disability@students.wits.ac.za

@DISABILITY AWARENESS MOVEMENT

In considering universal access principles, one platform that is frequently forgotten is

and promote internal content consistently through the use of trigger warnings, access notes for videos that have subtitles, image descriptions, audio transcripts and linking to original screen reader accessible

If you're curious about how to create and share accessible content or want to show

your support, please follow us:

Facebook – www.facebook.com/dru Instagram – www.instagram.com/dru

not a barrier but a facet of diversity to be celebrated. It amplifies voices of persons with disabilities at Wits and promotes awareness and inclusion. We advocate and navigate challenges, foster empathy, and build lasting connections that empower

As students your involvement in our society is crucial, and I want to emphasize just how valuable your participation is. For just R150, you're not only supporting the society but also contributing to a collective

every student to thrive.

effort to make a difference.

social media. Since 2011, Wits Disability Rights Unit has been reaching students, staff and prospective students through Meta platforms, including Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. The aim is to offer popular content in accessible formats

content.



NVDA is a screen reader that allows blind

The DRU utilises assistive technology to help students with disabilities learn more effectively, and ranges in sophistication from "low" technologies such as a graphic organizer worksheet, to "high" technologies including cutting-edge hardware, software and smartphone apps. Below you will find some recommendations for useful technologies

011.

Otter is an Al-powered assistant which

Read&Write is a text-to-speech, literacy and writing support software which

integrates reading, writing, studying, and

research support tools with common

applications. Enhances accessibility by

offering features like reading out loud, built-in dictionaries, summary highlighters,

All Witsies have access to a full license of

this software. Download and install the

trial version for your device and then log in with a Microsoft account using your

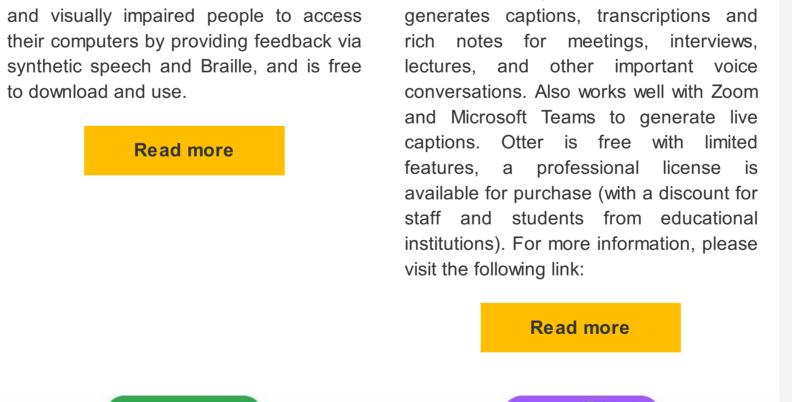
Wits credentials, Username: Wits email

address and Password: Wits ICT

Read more

and turning text to audio.

password.



conversations going on in the world around you. Live Caption can be enabled directly from Google Chrome and generates the captions/subtitles when viewing media such as online lectures. To enable Live Captions, please refer to the following Similarly, there is the Live Transcribe app for Android users which provides captions/subtitles on your smartphone or

Google Live Caption and Live Transcribe

are a new speech-to-text accessibility

service built by Google for the deaf and

hard of hearing, which performs real-time

transcription of speech to text on your screen, so you can participate in

Holly Heinzelmann Tell us about yourself. Where are you from? What did you study? I'm from Central Johannesburg and I've lived here all my life. I studied a BSc in

reassured by their support throughout my studies.

Read more

@DRU GRADUATE:

biology at school.

smart device.



Biological Sciences majoring in Genetics & Developmental Biology and Ecology & Conservation because I always enjoyed

begin to explain how it changed my life knowing that there is a whole team of people always ready and willing to tackle challenges you might face alongside you. Don't be afraid to make your needs known - you deserve accommodations if and when you need them. 2. Remember that you deserve to take up as much space as you need, and exist in all

How did you find studying at Wits and being a student registered with the DRU?

Being a Wits student registered with the DRU gave me a sense of independence I've never known before. I was extremely worried about the transition to university post High School because of my issues with mobility & accessibility. However, the DRU made certain that I was able to access any opportunities I wanted to on campus. I felt constantly

What advice would you give current students with disabilities studying at Wits?

1. Make use of the support you are offered by the DRU and register with them. I cannot

aims at promoting awareness and inclusion regarding disabilities on campus. It's your chance to be part of something impactful and also a great way to learn about and meet others. This goes for other activities and societies too. What is *your* favourite quote?

3. Join the Wits Disability Awareness Movement! This is a student run society which

spaces at Wits (and in general) just as much as the next person. You are a valuable

'God helps those who helps themselves.' Agency is important in general, but particularly as a disabled person.

Wits. For Good. IYUNIVESITHI YASEWITWATERSRAND | YUNIVESITHI YA WITWATERSRAND

member of the Wits community.



wits100.wits.ac.za

