

UNIT FOR OPEN DISTANCE LEARNING

The BUZZ @ UODL

Quarterly Newsletter



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*Expand your horizons.
Accelerate your career.
Create better
opportunities, all from
the comfort of your
home or anywhere you
choose. UODL offers
you all of this and
more.!!*



Message from the Acting Director

Dr Joany Fransman

Investing in People ...

We nurture our employees and know that by caring for them that "You" will be well taken care of as well. As leaders, we set the example. We treat our staff with dignity and respect and in turn they reciprocate this in their daily activities.

The following elements are what I envision to be important not only to make a positive difference to our employees and stakeholders but to also leave our students with a fulfilling educational journey and lasting legacy.

1

We encourage a level of mutual respect and that in turn filters out in all that we do.

2

We recognise our staff, are transparent in our dealings and this motivates our people to always do their best.

3

We strive to serve with our resources on hand and it is our undying spirit that shines through.

4

We work daily to create a conducive environment and a "Can Do" culture.

5

We learn from our mistakes and turn them into opportunities for growth.

6

Integrity, Passion and commitment is our promise to You. We pride ourselves on our value system..



Knowing that people are our greatest assets, we dedicate this issue to you. We celebrate Life, our people, the SRC, all our stakeholders, our students, our challenges and our journey. Visit our website frequently - it will make for an interesting read!

A campaign has been launched in June 2021 which is aimed at attracting first year students as well as students that have completed their undergraduate qualifications to further their studies at the UODL.

Having been a student myself, I understand the various challenges that you may be faced with, the leading being concerned about making the right decisions when it comes to your studies which directly impacts your career path. The COVID-19 pandemic has not made this dilemma any easier as many students were forced to postpone their study plans.

At UODL, we work hard to maintain our competitive advantage, strive to retain our students and we challenge ourselves in attaining service excellence for our current and prospective graduates. We have placed our students needs at the forefront of all that we do. UODL has numerous initiatives to keep our students engaged and satisfied. Testimonials from our students that have embarked on their postgraduate journey with UODL have been encouraging and heart-warming. We see so many students from previously disadvantaged backgrounds claiming their place in the world and fulfilling their purpose.

The UODL at the North-West University is a worthwhile option to consider as you can continue studying from the comfort of your home and since lecture sessions are available online, you are assured of uninterrupted teaching and learning. If you are currently completing your undergraduate qualification or exploring different postgraduate qualifications, the UODL offers Postgraduate Diplomas in Education, Management and Law. These are well structured programmes, designed with the 'distance mode of delivery' in mind and that students applying for these qualifications may be holding down full-time careers as well.

I would therefore like to assure prospective postgraduate students that are tenacious about furthering their studies, to consider one of the UODL's postgraduate qualifications for not only an enriching experience, but a cost-effective one as well.

A noted trend is that when our undergraduates continue to complete their postgraduate studies through distance education, they not only gain advanced knowledge and capabilities which is highly favoured but also increase their chances of securing employment and improving their earning potential.

Our team at the UODL live by our brand value which is being committed and geared to focus on improving overall service and support to all stakeholders and to inspire the nation through our students, instilling visions of hope and a deep set of values, to pave the way for a better future for all.

I look forward to welcoming you as a UODL student at the North-West University.

Dr Joany Fransman
Acting Director
Unit for Open Distance Learning

Introducing UODL

Divisions



University Preparatory (UnivPrep) Office

Staff

Ms Kedron Peter
Ms Denese Vermaak
Ms Marlene Nice

Programmes Offered

- UnivPrep BCom
- UnivPrep BTh (Theology)
- UnivPrep BA Public Governance (with Policing Practice)

Why apply for the UnivPrep Programme?

UnivPrep is a one-year preparatory programme which provides participants, who do not meet the minimum requirements for admission to degree study, with an opportunity to demonstrate that they can successfully complete the programme and that they can be admitted to formal degree study based on their UnivPrep results.



Ms Kedron Peter



Ms Denese Vermaak

Learner Support Centres (LSCs)

The Unit for Open Distance Learning (UODL) assists various faculties and schools at the NWU to facilitate programmes at LSC's through SA and Namibia. This LSC's (68) has been established in rural and urban areas to accommodate all students who enrolled for Distance education programmes at UODL.

The LSC office is also responsible for all centre managers appointed at each centre. Some of the responsibilities of LSC office are:

- Distribution of study material from study centres
- Organising and running interactive whiteboard session at LSC's
- Collection of assignments from LSC's.

LSC Mission Statement

"To provide distance students with opportunities to increase and enhance their academic skills and abilities through interactive whiteboard learning practices".

LSC Vision

"To be an efficient and effective Learning Support Centres which will provide positive learning environment to all students."



Mr Zanele Jack



Mrs Virgy Tekane



Mrs Jeanine van der Merwe

The Quality Assurance Office



Mr Ben Schutte

Ben Schutte's experience in distance learning started in 2008 as an admin assistant through OLG and was permanently appointed by the NWU in 2009.

Whilst working in the assignment and examination office, he assisted at registrations (back in 2011), doing credit requests, re-registration requests as well as assisting the call centre.

Through his experience in working with all the different divisions he developed a passion to assist students and became more aware of how to spot problem areas and put control checks in place to help our students.

He is committed to support staff members and students to the best of his ability!

Currently as the Acting Manager of Quality Assurance, Mr Schutte is involved in liaising with SRC, Namibia and sending out SMSs to our UODL students.

The other activities of the QA team include:

- Learner Support Centre visits – Quality checks
- Surveys – Evaluation of sit-down examinations / Study material
- Prospective self-evaluation
- Upcoming internal audits
- Risk register update
- Covid-19 compliance of B11 / B11a /B6
- Road shows
- Collaborations with the Exam office, E-learning and LSC to plan sit down exams
- OHS

The Quality Office also includes Mr Kenny Joseph.



Mr Kenny Joseph

The UODL supports the University's vision, namely, to be a leading university in Africa driven by the pursuit of knowledge and innovation, and thus adheres to the quality policy of the NWU. This policy was formulated to guide the development and implementation of an institutional quality management system in pursuit of further quality improvement and the promotion of a culture of continuous improvement. Quality is assured through self-driven internal and external evaluation processes.

Support departments, which the Quality Control office is part of, constitute an integral part of the core business of the North-West University, and plays an important role in achieving best practice in all areas. In order to deliver these services/products, it is essential for a support department to continually evaluate its performance and to improve accordingly. Quality is a golden string that flow through each division and also give's a sense of responsibility for each staff member to bring quality service delivery to the table.

The QA team welcomes any ideas or suggestions on email or an appointment at their offices that will help improve our quality control at UODL. The team believes, "Great things are done by a series of small things brought together" – Vincent Van Gogh.

Interview with Mrs Jill Andrews



The Higher Education Act prescribes that public higher education institutions must establish, a Student Representative Council (SRC) with the sole purpose of representing students' needs within the highest structures of the decision-making bodies of the university. Northwest University UODL currently has one student representative on the leadership fraternity of Student Representative Council. The responsibility of this roles lies with Mrs Jill Andrews.

Tell us about Jill?

I am a 38-year-old mother, wife, full time legal secretary and distance learning student at NWU completing my 2nd year this semester.

What attracted you to study at NWU/UODL and what are you studying at the UODL/NWU?

The fact that I was able to still work fulltime and pursue a degree via the internet primarily was the attraction. BA in Public Governance

Why were you interested in joining the SRC?

Well funny thing happened one day at the beginning of lockdown, which got me very frustrated about an administration glitch in the UODL marking system. I verbalised my frustration amongst a group of students on WhatsApp and decided to fix the situation for everyone by liaising with the correct person. Needless to say, it was all resolved pretty timeously. It all just became a given after that moment, and two of my study partners nominated me and I accepted thereafter. Like they say the rest is history!

What role do you play in the SRC?

I am the SRC Distance officer for the 2020/2021 academic year. I am technically the one very vocal voice on SRC that echoes what affects UODL.

How can you assist our UODL students?

My objective in this leadership role was to work on opening the lines of communication between UODL and distance students. I feel confident that things are improving slowly but surely. I am a distance learning student myself and I understand the challenges experienced. I have assisted students with registration issues and administration problems which arose this semester. If I can help, I will try.

Words that best describe you and what are you passionate about?

Dedicated, persistent, Assertive. I am passionate about helping or facilitating change in UODL. I enjoy a challenge and I am driven to be successful in whatever task is given to me. I am committed to achieving my goals and in the process helping others achieve what is important to them as well.

Your message to our current and prospective students

Reading is the best investment in your studies. Read, read, read..... do not procrastinate on completing tasks, work steadily and diligently, this way you will produce quality work instead of rushed work. Tertiary level studies should not be underestimated, especially distance learning. It is hard work from the onset and needs consistency. Use the opportunity to study hard and reap the benefits with good results.

Where does Jill see herself in the next couple of years?

In the next couple of years, I see myself with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Governance, followed by a Post Graduate Diploma in Public management. I see myself comfortably working to better myself and the future of my children. One thing which this studying journey has made me realise 21 years after I matriculated, is that you are never too old to learn and pursue your dreams. I see myself making the most of what I am currently working very hard for.

"A bridge to the future"

Living Proof that anything can be achieved with hard work and dedication



Kamogelo Mmatli is a 24-year-old graduate whose life changing academic journey begun in 2016 when he enrolled for the UnivPrep BA programme in Public Governance (with Policing Practices).

Kamogelo comes from a small town in the Northwest province called Coligny where the prospects for success are very limited, and more especially for a person without a degree qualification. Kamogelo's mother passed away when he was only 6 years old.

He has been living in a single parent household headed by his grandmother since then. Kamogelo's grandmother has been raising both him and his brother from the time their mother died, along with his cousin and her children.

The Mmatli family has been primarily dependent on government social grants to sustain them. Mr. Mmatli realized at very young age that unless he diligently applied himself to becoming an academic success his life would become an unfortunate reflection of what the effects of poverty and a lack of education does to poor communities like his own. In his attempt to escape a life of drugs, alcoholism and gangsterism that generally plagues underprivileged communities, Kamogelo did his very best to achieve the requirements for admission to bachelor's degree study because he knew that education was his only way out of a life of poverty and its sufferings. Unfortunately, Kamogelo fell short on achieving those requirements. He describes the moment he saw his final Matric results as one filled with fear, panic and an inexplicable sadness that his potential would be unrealized. Then a call from a friend changed the course of Kamogelo's life forever. His friend's parents discovered UnivPrep in their search for a solution for their own son who, like Kamogelo, also did not meet the requirements to study a formal degree. Kamogelo's friend gave him an extra UnivPrep application that restored hope to Kamogelo and his family.

By successfully completing the UnivPrep programme in 2016, Kamogelo was able to gain access to a BA degree in Development and Management, which he completed in 2020. This opened a door he never thought possible, the door to post graduate studies. Kamogelo is currently studying a Post Graduate Diploma in Business Management at NWU Business School. He is one step away from a master's degree in Business Administration. Through his own journey and understanding how critical support is for achieving success, as well as his passion for learning and development, Kamogelo sought after an opportunity to become a key contributor to other NWU learners' academic journey. Kamogelo currently serves as an academic peer mentor in NWU's Student Academic Development and Support department. Mr. Mmatli is one of many UnivPrep success stories that demonstrates the heart, and purpose of UnivPrep- to provide hope and access to higher learning that can create opportunities for a better life. The access opportunities that UnivPrep affords are not only a pathway to a better future for people who come from poor communities, but also one that helps to establish a more educated South Africa. UnivPrep is the first stamp on the passport to a better future. Civil rights activist, Malcolm X said that: "education is our passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to the people who prepare for it today." According to Kamogelo, these words have guided and continue to inspire him every day, and UnivPrep is where his journey to a brighter future begun.

Mr. Mmatli also said the words of Zig Ziglar's shape his perspective every day; "your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude". Be reminded that as a UODL team, when we process applications, registrations and perform our duties as NWU personnel, we are really helping to facilitate the hopes and dreams of people through education. Let us be inspired by Kamogelo and develop positive attitudes that can help to guarantee the success of NWU, and the life changing effects that departments like UnivPrep have on the future of South Africa.

Interviewed by K. Peter (UnivPrep)



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF OUR COLLEAGUES



Yolande Keykaan
Applications & Registrations

What is your motto or personal mantra?

Life is what you make of it, whether good or bad, both require the same 24 hours. With God on my side, anything is possible!

Your impression of distance learning?

Distance learning education plays an important role in making higher education accessible to all. Available education does not mean much if it is not accessible. With people either working or simply residing far from university towns, as is the case with most of our students, distance learning makes education almost as accessible as contact learning. Of course, as a distance student myself, I have seen a few benefits such as being able to study while working.

How do you and your team add value to UODL?

The goal is to provide valuable administrative support to the students who study at UODL. My team plays a pivotal role in the initial process where teaching and learning begins. We are the first level of contact with students, and we walk a journey with them until they graduate. Therefore, we believe in being an efficient team with the ability to register and support qualifying students as far we possibly can, for them to have access to education through the UODL.

Three words to describe yourself

Among others: Patient, Considerate, Dependable.



Jessica van der Merwe
Contact Centre

What is your motto or personal mantra?

Do not fight change!

The only constant in life is change and I believe the way we approach a difficult situation reveals a lot about our characters.

Your impression of distance learning/education?

Distance learning has always been regarded as the ideal way of learning in many developed countries. University degrees should never be limited to the physical presence of a student with their lecturer.

I believe that distance learning is the future and a great way of creating opportunities to those who previously would not have been able to advance themselves on an educational level.

How do you and your team add value to UODL?

The most valuable part of my work is assisting students on social media whilst working closely to my colleague at the call centre.

Our work is highly rewarded as we receive constant positive feedback. By providing effortless services to students, it makes us realise how happy we can make someone else without any physical contact, it is so futuristic and has made Covid19 and our National Lockdown even more bearable, I love everything about it!

Three words to describe yourself

Authentic, creative and positive.



Anthony Malgas
Contact Centre

What is your motto or personal mantra?

‘The greatest day in your life and mine is when we take total responsibility for our attitudes. That is the day we truly grow up’.
John C. Maxwell

Your impression of distance learning/education?

I think the Unit for Open Distance Learning serves as an educational bridge to offer many applicants an opportunity to grow from where they are to where they desire to be. Internally though I believe there remains many areas where we could improve on and grow as a team.

How do you and your team add value to OUDL?

I have the honour to work with a phenomenal team that gels well as a unit and that embraces and respects individual differences. We serve as the communication or information center of the Unit.

Three words to describe yourself

Humility, passionate and I believe integrity best describes me.



Virgy Tekane
Learner Support Centres

What is your motto or personal mantra?

It will get done - in a working environment no matter what the workload, I always look at things in a positive way and tell myself that “this too will get done.”

Your impression of distance learning/education?

I am very impressed with our processes and procedures at UODL, especially after we started the Business Process Mapping workshops. Our Colleagues strives very hard to ensure that we deliver the best service to our students.

How do you and your team add value to OUDL?

Our team supports the 68 Learning Support Centre (LSC) to service our students across the country.

Three words to describe yourself

Hardworking, Honest and Reliable



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Over time, the unit has accumulated these questions that seem to be reoccurring from all our streams of communication and therefore this list with useful Q and A will be useful.





UODL EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION AWARDS

The Directors Office at UODL initiated its first employee recognition awards. It was a fair, transparent and accurate online nomination system. UODL staff nominated their colleagues whom they felt were deserving of the award. The voting system for nominations closed on the 24/05/2021 at 5.30pm. The votes have been tallied and results verified.

There was a clear winner for each of the three categories as per the votes received. Congratulations to our winners!

Service Excellence:

Dumisane Makhoba

Team player:

Ben Schutte

Innovation Award:

Zanobia Kanjee

[Click Here to view the Criteria used for Nominations](#)



Project & Tender Management



ROADSHOW DIARY 1: MPUMALANGA & KZN

A presentation was done for all attendees during the sessions. Bursary contracts (terms and conditions) and expiry dates, relevant contacts are given for specific problems/queries, the 360 app is presented and how to utilise it, the curriculum for Grade R is presented, registration process is discussed, overview of assessments and an open forum for Q&A. Query forms are brought back to the office and each form gets the attention it deserves.

TEAM 1 Mpumalanga

Day 1 Sunday 7th March 2021 around 13h00 at the UODL parking. Prayer and left for Mpumalanga Province.

Day 2 Monday 8th March 2021-1st venue. Mapulaneng College of Education in Bushbackridge- Bohlabela District. Attendance 103, 11 officials attended.

TEAM 1 Mpumalanga

Day 3 Tuesday 9th March 2021- the 2nd venue. District offices in Ehlanzeni-196 students/practitioners and 10 officials attended.

Day 4 Wednesday 10th March 2021- the venue Ermelo Primary school which is an NWU study center in Ermelo-. Attendance 156 and 5 Officials.

Day 5 Thursday 11th March 2021- last venue, Teacher center in Kwamhlanga-Headed back to Potch-249 km away. Arrived around 17h00.

TEAM 2 KZN

Day 1, Monday 8th March 2021-1st venue Empangeni- Attendants by students was 103- promotional items were handed out after presentation.

Day 2, Tuesday 9th March 2021-Venue was Dundee-38 students attended- same official same activities different venue Dundee high school.

TEAM 2 KZN

Day 3, Wednesday 10th March 2021- Durban teacher Centre-had Two session due to Covid-19 protocol first session we had 75 student second session we had 37 students in Hall. Total 253

Day 4, Thursday 11th March 2021- Rest and return home to Potch



Road Map : Eastern Cape Province

PROJECT & TENDER MANAGEMENT DIVISION

TEAM 1: DAY ONE TO DAY SIX

Day 1, Monday 17th May 2021-On route to destination.-
Arrived in Kokstad at 7pm.

Day 2, Tuesday 18th May 2021- Department of Education in Mount Frere-
practitioners attendance 67, 2 officials attended.

Day 3, Wednesday 19th May 2021-the 2nd venue. Lusikisiki Old College of
Education.- 48 students/practitioners and 2 officials.

Day 4, Thursday 20th May 2021- venue The Trinset- had 2 sessions, 1st session
started @ 9:30 2nd @ 13:00 . Attendance 44 and 31 and 3 Officials.

Day 5 Friday 21st May 2021- the next venue which was Butterworth Old College of
Education.

Day 6 Saturday 22nd May 2021-Drove back to Potch- Mthatha to Potch 845.2 Km

TEAM 2: DAY ONE TO DAY FIVE

Team left for the other side of Eastern Cape Province Gqeberha (PE), Bisho and
Queenstown.

Day 1, Monday 17th May 2021- left Potchefstroom campus to Eastern Cape - arrived
in Port Elizabeth by 8pm.

Day 2, Tuesday 18th May 2021- drove to Cillie primary school PE .- welcomed by an
official from Department of Education, Attendants by 52 students.

Day 3 Wednesday 19th May 2021- Grahams town, Bisho Primary School- two session
due to Covid-19 protocol first session we had 31 at 09:00 students, second session
we had 22 at 13:00 student in Hall-Total was 53

Day 4 Thursday 20th May 2021- Queenstown Galy Thembani Hall Session started at
10am . Number of student attended was 24, same official same activities.

Day 5 Friday 21st May 2021- Return home to Potch from Queenstown -Arrived at
17:00



ADE BURSARY PROJECT



SCHOOL LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT

The NWU-UODL entered into a Service Level Agreement with Sishen Iron Ore Company - Community Development Trust (SIOC-cdt) to enroll School Management Teams (SMTs) members for Advanced Diploma (SLM) qualification.

This Advanced Diploma (SLM) qualification helps to empower School Management Teams to develop the skills, knowledge, and values needed to lead and manage schools, as complex learning organisations, effectively and to contribute to improving the implementation of quality teaching and learning in schools.

UODL Projects & Tender Management Office was tasked to oversee the recruitment and registration processes for this Bursary Project.

Due to the optimistic attitude of the UODL Project team, deadlines for capturing and registrations of this Bursary project was completed. The total budget for the project is R5.2m.

The induction sessions were held in Kathu on the 28 - 30 April 2021 where registered students received laptops to help with their studies.

The Project was launched by Prof. Lloyd Conley, Executive Dean of Faculty of Education.





Message from the Editor

We have had an overwhelmingly positive response to our first newsletter. Your suggestions/queries and feedback have added much value to this edition.

No matter where your journey has led you thus far, do not look back. Keep moving forward as there are many surprises and opportunities waiting for you in the road not yet travelled.

Let your decision to study through UODL be one that yields great success and rewards. Work hard in silence and let your victories be your noise.

Success and progression is naturally something that many yearn for and it is in the lessons learnt from a young age that guides us to the realisation that anything is possible when we study, keep giving off our best and proactively attain knowledge. Our teams at UODL are geared up to take on this journey with you.

We wish to thank you for your ongoing support and assure you that we will bridge the communication gap with all our stakeholders with the aim of growing into the preferred and leading distance education institution, providing quality education, support and services to "You".

Let us at UODL, help you to secure your better future!

Yaseen "Yaya" Rassulmia
Special Projects
(Directorate)

We value your input!

We would like to hear your comments, thoughts and suggestions for our publication. Kindly [click here](#) to submit your contributions. We look forward to hearing from you!

“

*We all have a purpose
in life.*

*Sometimes helping
others unleash/reach
their full potential is
sufficient.*

YRM

”