



# THENSA

Technological Higher Education Network South Africa

## MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

### NOVEMBER: KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON

Over the last two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us just how quickly our lives can change within the space of a few days. Last Wednesday, THENSA held a virtual meeting for our International Tourism, Research and Training Cluster, where participants from our member institutions, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT) in Ireland, as well as the Department of Tourism and Irish Embassy in South Africa, discussed some of the challenges facing our tourism sector with the intention of protecting and growing this crucial industry. However, not too long after this meeting, the discovery of the Omicron variant by South Africa's top epidemiologists sent the world into a panic, as many countries in the Global North banned travel to and from South Africa and other southern African nations.

The impact of these travel bans on our economy cannot be overstated. After months of negotiating for the removal of South Africa from various red lists in high-income countries, the emergence of this new variant and the immediate bans thereafter dealt a severe blow to the morale of South Africans. It was hoped that the influx of tourists this December, particularly from the United Kingdom, would revitalise this sector by providing jobs to those feeling the effects of disrupted international travel during the pandemic. The recent talks between Prime Minister Boris Johnson and President Cyril Ramaphosa suggest that South Africa could be taken off the UK's red list soon, and the events of late highlight the importance of initiatives such as the International Tourism, Research and Training Cluster.

We would like to take the opportunity to thank the Vice-President of International Engagement and Head of the Galway International School Ms Cáit Noone, Professor Urmilla Bob of the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the Irish Embassy, as well as the Department of Tourism for their outstanding contributions to THENSA's efforts to contribute to the reinvigoration of the tourism sector. A special thanks also to the CEO Dr Anshu Padayachee, the Office Manager Christelle Venter and Project Assistant Nadira Kercival for organising this online event following the postponement of THENSA's field trip to Ireland. We are committed to going ahead with our scheduled site visits and research endeavours in Ireland and South Africa in the new year.

In conclusion, we will not allow any setbacks to deter us from the critical and timely work that we do. After all, our economy and the lives of numerous South Africans depend on it.

## UPDATES FROM THENSA

- **HERESA Project:** The second session for the HERESA Café, held on November 16th, lived up to the success of the first as Dr Helen McGuirk of Munster Technological University (MTU) led a presentation on “Communities of Practice (CoP) for Educators and Researchers”. This topic was particularly relevant to HERESA members who have already been sectioned off into CoP for areas concerning Work Integrated Learning (WIL), Entrepreneurship of Teaching And Learning, Competence-Based Learning and Curriculum Development for the fourth industrial revolution (4IR).
- **THENSA Podcast (new!):** We are delighted to announce that THENSA will be launching a podcast in early January where we will have an opportunity to host in-depth discussions about our various projects, as well as interviews with some of the movers and shakers within our immediate network and strategic partnerships. Updates on the podcast will be found on our [website](#).
- **THENSA International Conference 2022:** We would like to remind interested parties that our International Hybrid Conference will take place from 16 to 18th March 2022. We will provide additional details closer to the time of this event.

## UPDATES FROM MEMBER INSTITUTIONS

- A warm congratulations to Professor Oluwatosin Ademola Ijabadeniyi who was [appointed](#) as a full professor in the Department of Biotechnology and Food Science at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) on November 18th. We wish Professor Ijabadeniyi all the best in his new role, and we trust that we look forward to seeing more of his contributions to the field of Food Science, Health and Technology.
- Sibanzinzi Dlathu, a Walter Sisulu University (WSU) Fine Art graduate, [won](#) a prize of R10 000 for this year’s Sasol New Signatures Art competition held on November 11th at the Pretoria Art Museum. Dlathu was placed in the top seven out of 123 entries for his clay installation “A Story of Resiliency”, which focused on the fortitude and strength of impoverished South Africans during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) Research Fellow Dr Moses Basitere [received](#) the 2020 National Research Foundation (NRF) Award as an emerging researcher in the field of Science and Engineering at the 2021 NRF Awards. Dr Basitere, who was appointed as a Senior Lecturer at the University of Cape Town (UCT), stated that he was “happy to have placed the work that is happening at [the university spotlighted] at national level” at the hybrid event held in Pretoria amongst virtual and a small group of in-person guests.
- Mangosuthu University of Technology (MUT) [held](#) their inaugural International Week (I-Week) from November 22 to 26th with participants from Europe, Canada and the United States of America and other parts of Africa. As part of MUT’s 2025 strategy, I-Week focused on furthering efforts at internationalisation at the university, while fostering strategic partnerships with institutions on the continent and in the Global North.
- As part of their Gender Based-violence and Femicide (GBV&F) Empowerment Programme which launched earlier this year, the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) [has partnered](#) with the SAPS National Office to station a Liaison Officer to investigate allegations of gender-based and femicide cases both on and off all TUT campuses. In addition, a Victim Empowerment Centre, spearheaded by MEC Faith Mazibuko, will be launched at the South campus this December. The centre will offer student wellness, counselling and related support services to victims and survivors of GBV.