



iYunivesithi

Walter Sisulu

In pursuit of excellence

FACULTY OF EDUCATION



APRIL 2026 BULLETIN

Monthly Newsletter

Vol. 1, Issue 4

SHAPING FUTURES THROUGH INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

APRIL NEWSLETTER

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Strengthening Internationalisation Through COIL Workshop

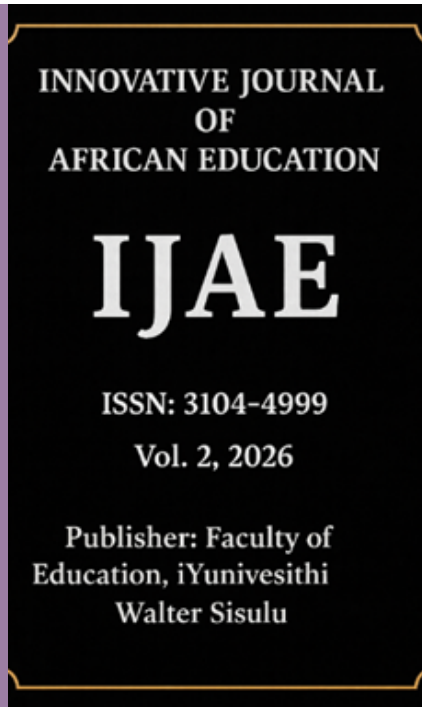
Two capacity-building workshops on Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) were held in Komani on 7 April 2026 and in Mthatha on 8 April 2026 to promote internationalisation and innovative teaching and learning practices. Facilitated by Prof C Ndebele, Mr M Payi, and Dr Konstantinos Petridis from Hellenic Mediterranean University, the workshops introduced academics to the concept of COIL and its role in enhancing global collaboration through virtual engagement.

The sessions highlighted how COIL enables students and academics from different countries to collaborate on academic projects, while reducing financial and mobility barriers associated with international travel. Participants explored strategies for developing international partnerships, integrating virtual exchange

into curricula, and using digital tools to facilitate cross-border learning. The workshops also emphasised the development of students' digital communication, teamwork, intercultural competence, and virtual presentation skills, while broadening their exposure to diverse cultural and global perspectives



Second Volume of Innovative Journal of African Education Published



On 8 April 2026, the second volume of the Innovative Journal of African Education was officially published, marking another significant contribution to advancing innovative and contextually grounded educational scholarship across the African continent. The volume continues the journal's commitment to promoting interdisciplinary research that responds to contemporary educational challenges while strengthening the connection between research, policy, and practice in African education.

The publication features four scholarly articles that collectively engage with critical themes of competence-based assessment, experiential learning, sustainability-oriented pedagogies, and African literary analysis. The articles reflect a growing emphasis on educational

transformation, community engagement, and culturally responsive teaching and learning approaches within diverse African contexts. The publication of this second volume reaffirms the journal's growing role as a platform for African scholarship that foregrounds innovation, inclusivity, and sustainable educational development across the continent.

Empowering Student Success Through Academic Advising

During April 2026, eight Academic Advising (AA) sessions were conducted across the Komani and Mthatha campuses, reaching a total of 3,445 students. The sessions focused on student development topics such as time management, study skills, CV writing, and professional identity and self-branding. Students from various departments and year levels participated in the programme.

The activities began on 8 April 2026 with a Time Management Skills session for 339 FTENS students in Mthatha. Additional sessions followed for ACET and HCAE students on time management and CV writing skills, while IPTE fourth-year students also received training on CV writing. The highest attendance was recorded on 17 April 2026 in Mthatha, where sessions on professional identity and self-branding attracted 2,001 PGCE students and 1,012 ACET students. Similar sessions were later conducted in Komani for PGCE and third-year students. Overall, the programme provided academic and professional support aimed at enhancing student preparedness and development across the faculty.

EXECUTIVE DEAN LAUNCHES FACULTY MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME



The Faculty of Education is pleased to report the successful launch of a mentorship programme initiated by the Executive Dean, Prof BD Bantwini. The programme is designed to support professional growth and leadership development among academic staff, with 35 faculty members currently benefiting from Prof Bantwini's extensive experience and guidance.

The inaugural meeting of the programme was held on 13 April 2026, marking an important step in fostering a culture of continuous learning and collaboration within the faculty. Discussions during the session focused on academic leadership, research development, career progression, and strategies for enhancing teaching and learning. Participants also engaged on topics such as navigating institutional systems, strengthening research output, and

building impactful academic profiles. This mentorship initiative is significant in advancing staff capacity, promoting knowledge sharing, and cultivating future leaders within the faculty. By creating a structured platform for engagement and support, the programme contributes to strengthening academic excellence, improving staff retention, and enhancing the overall quality of teaching and research within the Faculty of Education.

CPTD CLASS REPRESENTATIVES INDUCTION

All 2026 postgraduate class representatives under the Continuing Professional Teacher Development (CPTD) programme were inducted on 14 April 2026. The session aimed to equip class representatives with the knowledge and tools required to effectively fulfil their roles within the department.

During the induction, class representatives were guided on their roles and responsibilities, including representing student interests, facilitating communication between students and academic staff, and supporting a conducive learning environment. The session also clarified the appropriate lines of communication to ensure efficient and professional engagement across all levels of the faculty.

This induction is an important step in strengthening student leadership and promoting effective communication, contributing to a more responsive and supportive academic environment.

ENSURING SAFE AND COMPLIANT WIL PLACEMENTS

The faculty undertook an essential pre-placement activity of vetting 4050 first and second-year student teachers for Work Integrated Learning (WIL) placements in schools and community colleges. This crucial process, conducted in Komani on April 14-15 and in Mthatha on April 16, 17, 18, and 20, is mandated by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South African Council for Educators, which stipulates criminal record screening for all students prior to placement. This rigorous screening underscores the university's unwavering commitment to ensuring safe and compliant educational environments for all stakeholders.

The criminal record vetting process is paramount for the integrity and success of WIL, providing assurance to students, host schools, community colleges, the university, and ultimately, the learners. By ensuring that all prospective student teachers are thoroughly screened, the university upholds its commitment to child protection and maintains the credibility of its teacher education programs. The identified service provider, capable of screening a minimum of 300 students daily across both Komani and Mthatha, was selected for its proven capacity and efficiency, reflecting the faculty's prioritisation of quality and safety over mere cost efficiency in this vital undertaking.

The continued prioritisation of quality and efficiency in the vetting service is recommended to ensure ongoing adherence to the MOU with the South African Council for Educators and to maintain the high standards required for WIL placements. The success of these complex operations is a testament to the collaborative spirit and tireless efforts of Dr. O. Madalambana, the WIL Office, SRC, EDUSOCC, and SACE Ambassadors.



FVZS INSTITUTE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION TRAINING

The Faculty of Education and the Student Governance and Leadership Development (SGLD) unit offered 20 students the opportunity to participate in the Leadership in Education Training programme. The team comprised 10 EDUSOCC leaders and 10 SACE Ambassadors from the faculty who travelled to Stellenbosch University in Cape Town. The primary purpose of this initiative was to provide comprehensive leadership training, expose students to diverse institutional cultures beyond iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu (iWS), and facilitate stakeholder engagement.

Key objectives included participating in a face-to-face leadership training session focused on education, fostering collaborative meetings with the Stellenbosch University Faculty of Education Student Leaders for knowledge exchange, and attending the 14th Annual Honorary Lecture celebrating the Frederick Van Zyl Slabbert Institute's 15th Anniversary.

The engagement broadened students' perspectives on out-of-class experiences, studying successful funding models, observing institutional stewardship, and comparing pedagogical methods, all contributing to a richer understanding of higher education environments.

The engagement significantly impacted Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) by facilitating a crucial knowledge exchange between iWS and Stellenbosch Faculty of Education students, which was particularly timely as WSU students prepare for their WIL experiences. By immersing students in a different institutional culture and exposing them to varied instructional methods, the program aimed to keep their perspectives fresh and adaptable for future professional settings. Beyond direct WIL preparation, the initiative fostered student development by amplifying student voices, encouraging assertive leadership, and improving student governance through observation of the Stellenbosch model. These broader developmental outcomes equip students with enhanced leadership skills and a professional approach, indirectly strengthening their readiness and effectiveness during WIL placements. Currently the participants are partaking in online Leadership in Education Short Courses in Global Citizenship, Leadership in Education and Facilitative Leadership ending in May.



MoU Signing with the Vusizwe Sika Menziwa Development Foundation



Vusizwe Sika Menziwa Development Foundation Trust has signed the Memorandum of Understanding with Walter Sisulu. This is an important step toward strengthening development initiatives in rural communities.

Delivering a message on behalf of the foundation, Director and Chairperson Chief Jongisilo Pokwana ka Menziwa emphasised that the partnership will enable the foundation to expand programmes that go beyond the traditional scope of leadership and focus on initiatives that directly improve the lives of community members.

Chief Pokwana highlighted that the collaboration opens opportunities to address critical community needs through programmes such as school governing body training, youth empowerment initiatives, cultural preservation projects, and research-informed interventions on social challenges. He explained that many rural schools struggle because governing bodies are often elected without adequate knowledge of their responsibilities, making training and capacity-building essential to strengthening the education system and ensuring schools function effectively. The MoU provides a structured platform for collaboration, enabling both institutions to move ideas from concept to implementation and to extend programmes beyond a single village to benefit broader communities. FED remains confident that the collaboration will play a positive role in advancing educational development, strengthening community empowerment, and supporting the university’s broader commitment to responsive scholarship and rural transformation.

Executive Dean's Engagement with Departments on 2026 Key Priorities

Faculty Executive Management consultation meetings with departments were held at the Komani on 20 April 2026 and at Mthatha on 21 April 2026. The purpose of these meetings was to strengthen engagement between Faculty Executive Management and departments, as well as to provide a platform for consultation on strategic priorities for the 2026 academic year.

The meetings also aimed to communicate and discuss the proposed faculty key priorities, revised Work-Integrated Learning – School-Based Experience (WIL-SBE) guidelines, and planned WIL/SBE activities to ensure alignment and effective implementation across departments. Staff members were given the opportunity to discuss, ask questions, and provide comments on the proposed priorities and revised guidelines.

Faculty Academic Contributes to National Entrepreneurship Summit



On 20 April, the National Education Summit 2026 convened, bringing together policymakers, academics, and industry stakeholders to discuss entrepreneurship as a solution to South Africa's unemployment crisis. Prof Teis from the Mathematics, Science and Technology Education (MSTE) participated as a panellist alongside Higher Education and Training Minister Buti Manamela, Dr Sikhumbuzo Maisela, and Dr Mukovhe Masutha.

Minister Manamela emphasised the need for education to produce job creators rather than job seekers, highlighting government support for entrepreneurship programmes across all 59 public TVET colleges and increased funding for youth enterprises in the digital and green economy sectors. He stressed the importance of practical exposure, market access, and mentorship in building entrepreneurial confidence.

Panel discussions focused on the need for entrepreneurship education to begin early, be practically oriented, and align with industry needs. Prof Teis emphasised the importance of embedding entrepreneurship across all disciplines, particularly in technical and engineering education. He argued that graduates require not only technical expertise but also the ability to commercialise innovation and create sustainable enterprises.

The summit identified key challenges including limited funding and market access, weak alignment between theory and practice, delayed exposure to entrepreneurship education, and structural economic barriers. The overall consensus was that entrepreneurship education must become a central pillar of educational reform to support inclusive economic growth and youth employment.

CENTRE FOR AFRICAN LANGUAGE TEACHING ONLINE WEBINAR

A Centre for African Language Teaching (CALT) online webinar was conducted by the IPTE Department on 22 April 2026. During the webinar, Ms Mpondwana presented on Lungafundiswa njani ulwimi kwisigaba esisiseko (Unit 1), while Mr Lele presented on UNcwadi lwabantwana (Unit 5). The session attracted 92 students and staff members.

Attendees gained valuable insights from the discussions. Students expressed appreciation for the initiative and recommended that they be invited more frequently to participate in similar webinars. One of the notable outcomes of the event was the invitation extended to all attendees to participate in the CALT Conference, scheduled to take place in October 2026.

ENHANCING QUALITY ASSURANCE

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Subject Files

The faculty continues with preparations for the national reviews. In collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit, the Faculty hosted workshops focused on the checking and submission of subject files. These workshops were held from 22-24 April 2026 and again on 30 April 2026, with the aim of ensuring compliance and readiness for the review process.



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WIL-SBE SMGs

The Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education hosted a two-day WIL SBE Student Module Guide (SMG) Development Workshop in Mthatha from 23 to 24 April 2026. The purpose of the workshop was to support the development and refinement of Student Module Guides for Work Integrated Learning and School-Based Experience modules, while ensuring alignment with institutional policies and national standards.

The sessions were facilitated by Dr Z Baleni and concluded with discussions on the way forward, reaffirming the department's commitment to improving the quality and standardisation of WIL-SBE module documentation.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE WORKSHOP

An Emotional Intelligence workshop was organised by the Staff Social and Welfare Committee, led by the Faculty and Departmental Chairperson, Dr J. Tebekana, in collaboration with Human Resources. The guest presenter from LYRA was arranged through HR. The online workshop was held virtually on 23 April 2026.

A total of 33 participants attended, comprising 12 students (9 from Consumer Science and 3 from Economic Management Sciences) and 21 staff members from BME. Students gained practical exposure to product development, marketing, and event management, which contributed to strengthening their entrepreneurial competencies. The event aimed at increasing student interest in entrepreneurial initiatives and applied business activities. The strong commitment and enthusiasm of both staff and students contributed significantly to the overall success of the workshop and participant satisfaction.



FED Ambassadors Entrepreneurship Day

Entrepreneurship Day activities were successfully hosted at the Mthatha Campus on 10 April 2026 and at the Komani Campus on 24 April 2026. The initiative, led by the Faculty of Education Student Entrepreneurship Ambassadors, provided student entrepreneurs with an opportunity to showcase and sell various legal products and services on campus. The programme aimed to promote entrepreneurship, develop students' business and management skills, and encourage self-employment as an alternative career pathway amid rising graduate unemployment. Students participated individually and in groups, with support from some departments. The activities also raised awareness about the role of Entrepreneurship Student Ambassadors and fostered a culture of innovation, creativity, and self-reliance within the Faculty and the broader institution.

BME Entrepreneurship Day

The Faculty of Education hosted an Entrepreneurship Day activity for Level 4 Entrepreneurship student teachers at the Whittlesea Site on 24 April 2026. The event provided students with practical exposure to entrepreneurship by allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge through trading activities and business idea presentations. Students sold products such as coffee, tea, and scones, while also showcasing innovative ventures including PracStyle Clothing, an online fashion business, and Fund Smart, a financial literacy initiative supporting first-year bursary-funded students. The activity was further enriched by interaction with a visiting Quality Assurance Team, which gave students an opportunity to formally pitch their business ideas, thereby enhancing their confidence, communication, and presentation skills. Overall, the initiative highlighted the importance of experiential learning and demonstrated the creativity and entrepreneurial potential of the student teachers.



The faculty conducted two Supervisors' Workshops on the Postgraduate Studies Framework in April 2026, held in Mthatha on 24 April and Komani on 28 April. Both workshops were designed to orient academic supervisors on key sections of the postgraduate framework and clarify roles and responsibilities in research supervision.

These workshops demonstrated the faculty's commitment to providing equitable professional development opportunities for supervisors across its campuses. The faculty ensured that all academic staff received consistent guidance on the full postgraduate lifecycle, from initial supervision and assessment through to examination, archiving, and intellectual property considerations. The workshop aimed to strengthen research supervision capacity and uphold quality standards in postgraduate education.

In Conclusion

As the Faculty of Education concludes another productive month, this edition of the bulletin reflects a collective commitment to academic excellence, innovation, leadership development, and community engagement. The activities and initiatives undertaken throughout April 2026 demonstrate the faculty's continued dedication to strengthening teaching and learning, advancing research and scholarship, supporting student and staff development, and building meaningful partnerships locally and internationally.

From international collaborative learning initiatives and mentorship programmes to entrepreneurship development, postgraduate supervision, and Work-Integrated Learning preparations, the faculty continues to position itself as a responsive and transformative institution. These achievements are a testament to the hard work, professionalism, and collaborative spirit of staff, students, stakeholders, and partners who contribute to the growth and success of the faculty.

The Faculty of Education remains committed to creating inclusive, innovative, and impactful educational opportunities that contribute to the advancement of society and the transformation of higher education. As preparations continue for the months ahead, the faculty looks forward to sustaining this momentum and building on the progress highlighted in this issue.