

ALUMNI SEMESTER



NEWSLETTER 2026



Connecting Our Legacy: A Message from the Director

Dear Esteemed Alumni, Students, Staff and Friends of iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu,

It is with immense pride and a deep sense of purpose that I welcome you to this Semester Edition of the Walter Sisulu Alumni Newsletter. As the Director of the Alumni Relations Office, it is an honour to connect with you, our most valued ambassadors, and to celebrate the collective spirit that defines our university.

The theme of this edition, *“Celebrating Excellence, Connecting Alumni, Shaping the Future,”* is not just a collection of words but a reflection of our shared mission. As you will read in the following pages, this first half of 2026 has been a period of remarkable achievement. From our outstanding 4th-place ranking in the Times Higher Education Sustainability Impact Rankings to the launch of our new brand identity and the establishment of the Indigenous Health Systems Research Institute, our university is moving forward with incredible momentum.

Yet, **our true strength lies in you, our alumni.** The stories within this newsletter showcase the extraordinary impact you are making across every sector of society. From the constitutional courtroom to the operating theatre, from agricultural innovation to corporate leadership, you are living embodiments of the values of integrity, courage, and service that Tata Walter Sisulu instilled in us. Your success is the University’s success, and it is the ultimate testament to the transformative power of education.

I am particularly excited about the launch of our new Graduate and Alumni Tracking and Engagement (GATE) Portal. This initiative marks a new chapter in how we connect, network, and collaborate. It will not only allow us to stay better connected but will create powerful platforms for mentorship, support current students, and open up new opportunities for you to contribute to the growth and future of our institution.

Let us continue to build on this legacy of excellence together. I invite you to engage, to network, and to take pride in your alma mater, as we work together to shape the future of Walter Sisulu and the communities we serve.

Mr Sandiso Mbongo

Director

Alumni Relations Office

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New Brand Identity Launched

On 27 March 2026, at the Nelson Mandela Drive Campus in Mthatha, Walter Sisulu officially unveiled its new brand identity and repositioned itself as Walter Sisulu. The launch marked a significant milestone in the University's transformation journey and its commitment to becoming a leading African institution of higher learning.

The rebranding was not merely a change of logo, colours, or visual appearance. It was undertaken to reflect the University's progress over the past two decades since the 2005 merger of the former University of Transkei, Border Technikon, and Eastern Cape Technikon. The new identity signals a transition from a post-merger institution to a unified, forward-looking, technology-infused African university.

The rebrand aligns with the University's Vision 2030, emphasising

- Academic excellence and innovation.
- Digital transformation and Fourth Industrial Revolution readiness.
- Research growth and societal impact.
- Institutional renewal and sustainability.
- Global competitiveness rooted in African values and identity.

According to Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor Thandi Mgwebi, the new brand represents both the University's journey and its future ambitions. The rebranding reflects years of academic, governance, infrastructural, and institutional transformation, while honouring the legacy of struggle icon Walter Sisulu, whose values of integrity, humility, courage, service, and social justice continue to guide the institution.

The launch was strategically timed to coincide with two historic milestones.

- The 50th anniversary of the establishment of the former University of Transkei in 1976.
- The 21st anniversary of the formation of Walter Sisulu through the 2005 merger.

The University's leadership emphasised that the refreshed identity is intended to strengthen institutional pride, enhance brand recognition, promote a stronger connection with communities, alumni, and stakeholders, and position the University as a key contributor to Africa's intellectual, social, and economic development.



New Leadership Chapter

Prof. Thandi Mgwebi

The appointment of Professor Thandi Mgwebi as Vice-Chancellor and Principal marked a significant milestone in the history of Walter Sisulu. An accomplished academic and proud Walter Sisulu alumna, Prof. Mgwebi returned to her alma mater with a wealth of leadership experience in higher education, bringing a deep understanding of the institution's heritage, challenges, and aspirations.

Her appointment ushered in a new chapter focused on institutional renewal, academic excellence, sustainability, innovation, and the accelerated implementation of Walter Sisulu Vision 2030. As a former student who has risen through the ranks of academia, Prof. Mgwebi embodies the transformative power of higher education and serves as an inspiration to current students and graduates.

Since assuming office, she has emphasised the importance of strengthening governance, improving student success and graduate employability, advancing research and innovation, enhancing digital transformation, and fostering strategic partnerships that contribute to social and economic development. Her leadership vision places students at the centre of the university's mission while promoting a culture of accountability, inclusivity, and excellence.

Prof. Mgwebi's return to Walter Sisulu also represents a powerful alumni success story demonstrating how graduates can return to contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the institutions that shaped their careers. Her appointment reinforces the university's commitment to cultivating future leaders who can make a lasting impact both within the institution and across society.

Launch of Alumni Chapters

The process was facilitated by the registrar's division and the convocation leadership, with maximum participation from alumni from the various provinces. Their participation resulted in the election of executives to lead the provincial chapters. As the university, we have managed to elect the chapters and executives listed below.

Eastern Cape

chapter was launched on 11th April 2026.

The listed members lead the chapter:

1. Lubabalo Mcunekelwa (Convener)
2. Combi Charmaine
3. Mandla Ludidi

Western cape

The chapter was launched on 30 May 2026.

The chapter is led by the members listed below:

1. Ibonile Madlavu (Convener)
2. Chulumanco Ndlela
3. Sisipho Tandela.

Gauteng

1. Gcinumzi Qotywa (Convener)
2. Mncedi Qata
3. Philisiwe Dyonase

The launch of the Alumni Chapters marks a significant milestone in strengthening the relationship between the University and its graduates. By creating structured platforms for engagement, networking, mentorship, and collaboration, the Chapters will foster a vibrant and connected alumni community. This initiative reaffirms the institution's commitment to lifelong engagement with its alumni, ensuring that graduates remain valued partners, ambassadors, and contributors to the University's future success.



UNIVERSITY HIGHLIGHTS AND MILESTONES

Institutional Excellence and Global Recognition



Walter Sisulu is now **ranked 4th in South Africa** by the Times Higher Education Sustainability Impact Rating 2026.

Walter Sisulu now follows the University of Johannesburg and the University of Pretoria, as well as the University of Cape Town and Wits University, which jointly occupy the third position.

This places Walter Sisulu among the country's leading universities in sustainability impact. This outstanding achievement places Walter Sisulu University among South Africa's leading universities for sustainability impact. It reflects the institution's unwavering commitment to academic excellence, research, innovation, community engagement, and sustainable development.

This remarkable recognition is a testament to the dedication of the University's leadership, staff, students, researchers, alumni, and partners, whose collective efforts continue to advance the University's Vision 2030. It reinforces Walter Sisulu's growing reputation as a transformative institution that is not only shaping future leaders but also making a meaningful contribution to addressing local and global challenges through impactful teaching, research, and community engagement.

Walter Sisulu Students Receive Recognition at SAYDC 2026

Walter Sisulu students Thembekile Mdluli and Tshepiso Moshoeshoe, were recognised for their outstanding scholarly contributions at the Southern African Youth Development Council (SAYDC) 2026, each receiving the Best Overall Paper award in their respective thematic areas.

The event was held in Johannesburg from 26 to 29 June 2026, and brought together young leaders, researchers, and development stakeholders from across the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The theme of the conference focused on youth industrialisation, leadership, and regional integration for sustainable development.

Mdluli presented under Theme 3, while Moshoeshoe presented under Theme 4. Their award-winning presentations showcased the quality of research and academic excellence nurtured at Walter Sisulu.



These achievement reflects the calibre of student development and academic engagement fostered at Walter Sisulu, the institution, highlighting its commitment to producing graduates who contribute meaningfully to contemporary development discourse, particularly in areas linked to innovation, entrepreneurship, agriculture, leadership, and regional transformation.

The SAYDC 2026 programme featured high-level dialogue sessions, policy engagements, agricultural exhibition activities, discussions on entrepreneurship and innovation, and regional networking platforms.

The success of these Walter Sisulu students further demonstrates the importance of creating opportunities for students to present research, engage with sector leaders, and contribute to solutions that support sustainable development across Southern Africa.

Hosted in South Africa, SAYDC 2026 welcomed delegates from Zimbabwe, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Zambia, Ethiopia, Eswatini, Angola, Malawi, and other countries across the region.

Walter Sisulu Joins CMSA Admission Ceremony in KuGompo City



In a momentous celebration of academic excellence and professional achievement, Walter Sisulu proudly participated in the prestigious Colleges of Medicine South Africa Admission Ceremony held in KuGompo City. This distinguished annual event marks a significant milestone in the professional journey of medical specialists and subspecialists, recognising their unwavering commitment to healthcare excellence and the advancement of medical expertise in South Africa.

The ceremony brought together distinguished guests, medical professionals, academic leaders, and proud families to honour candidates who have successfully completed their specialist and subspecialist training. These individuals demonstrated the highest standards of clinical competence, ethical practice, and dedication to patient care.

Prof. Wezile Chitha's Visionary Address

In his welcoming address, the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Professor Wezile Chitha, delivered a compelling message that underscored the critical partnership between the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa,

universities, and provincial health departments. He emphasised that this collaborative ecosystem is essential in creating a robust training framework that supports the development of medical specialists and subspecialists who will form the backbone of advanced healthcare services, particularly within regional, tertiary, and central public hospitals.

Professor Chitha provided a sobering reflection on South Africa's persistent health disparities, noting that perinatal, neonatal, and under-five mortality rates continue to be shaped by racial and geographical inequalities. Against this concerning backdrop, he issued a powerful call for a serious national conversation on who is selected for specialist training, where they are trained, and crucially, where they are deployed after qualification.

"In this regard, it is our considered view, at least at Walter Sisulu, that both undergraduate and specialist medical training require us to recruit candidates who are sensitive to the realities of modern-day South Africa and are willing to be part of the solutions," emphasised Professor Chitha.

His address resonated with the core values that Walter Sisulu University has championed throughout its history: a commitment to producing graduates who are not only clinically excellent but also deeply attuned to the social determinants of health and the needs of historically underserved populations. Professor Chitha stressed the importance of training specialists who are committed to serving rural communities, recognising that “a modern-day specialist must not only be competent in their speciality but should also be aware and locate their speciality within the context of health needs of the community that we serve, the South African Community.”

His words reflected the University’s broader mission of developing healthcare professionals who understand that medical expertise must be contextualised within the lived realities of the communities they serve, particularly those in rural and under-resourced areas who have historically borne the burden of inadequate healthcare access.

Professor Zach Koto’s
Inspirational Address

The President of the CMSA,

Professor Zach Koto, officially opened the admission ceremony with a stirring address that celebrated the significance of hosting the event in KuGompo City. He encouraged attendees never to forget the name, noting that it represents far more than a geographical designation – it is a living testimony to the integrity, history, and spirit of the people of the Eastern Cape.

“It is therefore not merely appropriate, but profoundly timeless and symbolically powerful, that we hold this admission ceremony on the

“It is therefore not merely appropriate, but profoundly timeless and symbolically powerful, that we hold this admission ceremony on the land of our ancestors.”

land of our ancestors. We do not take this lightly; we are humbled by it,” Professor Koto remarked, grounding the ceremony in the rich heritage and ancestral legacy of the region.

Addressing the diplomates, fellows, and certificate recipients, Professor Koto delivered a poignant reminder that admission into the CMSA represents far more than the attainment of a professional credential. Rather, it signifies an induction into a covenant of service, excellence, ethical

responsibility, and lifelong learning. He reminded the new admittees that their achievement carried a profound responsibility beyond personal success, stating: “You carry today not only your own achievement, but the collective hope of the patients who will entrust their lives to your expertise.”

Professor Koto paid tribute to the dedication and sacrifices that had brought the candidates to this milestone, acknowledging the countless hours of study, the personal sacrifices, and the unwavering commitment that had shaped their journeys. He encouraged them to pause and reflect on the perseverance and determination that had defined their paths to this achievement.

Concluding his address, Professor Koto highlighted the vital role that CMSA-certified specialists will play in addressing current and future healthcare challenges. “As CMSA-certified specialists, you are uniquely positioned to meet this moment. We expect much from you because we know you are capable of much,” he affirmed, expressing confidence in the new specialists’ ability to contribute meaningfully to South Africa’s healthcare transformation.

Dr Zininzi Poppy Zangqa: A Beacon of Hope and Commitment

Among the distinguished graduates celebrating this remarkable achievement was Dr Zininzi Poppy Zangqa, a proud iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu graduate who was **admitted as a Fellow of Psychiatry at the CMSA Admission Ceremony**. Surrounded by her proud family, Dr Zangqa's journey represents the transformative power of education and the profound impact that Walter Sisulu graduates continue to make in addressing critical healthcare needs.

Reflecting on this significant milestone, Dr Zangqa expressed that her admission as a Fellow of Psychiatry represented a meaningful opportunity to give back to her community and advocate for mental health, particularly within the black community. Her words resonated with the University's commitment to producing graduates who understand the importance of social responsiveness and culturally competent care.

Dr Zangqa **emphasised the urgent need to break the stigma surrounding mental illness**. This challenge remains particularly acute in many African communities where mental health issues are often misunderstood, underdiagnosed, or met with silence. She believes that her lived experiences, combined with her comprehensive medical training, enable her to understand mental illness beyond textbooks and provide compassionate, context-driven care that acknowledges the complex interplay between culture, community, and mental well-being.

Her achievement as a Fellow of Psychiatry is particularly significant given the critical shortage of mental health specialists in South Africa, especially in rural and underserved areas. By pursuing advanced training in psychiatry, **Dr Zangqa has positioned herself to address one of the most pressing healthcare challenges facing the nation**: providing accessible, quality mental healthcare to populations that have historically been neglected or underserved.



Her story exemplifies the calibre of healthcare professionals that iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu continues to produce individuals who combine clinical excellence with cultural sensitivity, social awareness, and an unwavering commitment to serving communities. As one of the University's distinguished alumni, Dr Zangqa embodies the values, vision, and enduring legacy of Walter Sisulu, inspiring current students and future generations of healthcare professionals to pursue excellence and make a lasting difference.

Walter Sisulu's participation in the CMSA Admission Ceremony and the recognition of graduates such as Dr Zangqa underscore the institution's unwavering commitment to advancing medical education, research, and healthcare delivery. This achievement aligns with the University's broader vision of producing graduates who make meaningful contributions to their communities, industries, and professions, while addressing the pressing health challenges facing South Africa and the African continent.

The ceremony also highlighted the growing collaboration between Walter Sisulu and the Colleges of Medicine of South Africa, reflecting the University's strategic focus on strengthening partnerships to enhance specialist training, promote research excellence, and improve healthcare outcomes for all South Africans. Through initiatives such as the recently launched Rural Clinical School and the Indigenous Health Systems Research Institute, Walter Sisulu continues to position itself as a leader in innovative, socially responsive healthcare education that bridges the gap between academic excellence and community impact.

The success of Dr Zangqa and her fellow graduates stands as a powerful testament to the University's enduring legacy of producing exceptional healthcare professionals who are equipped not only with clinical expertise but also with the compassion, cultural competence, and commitment to social justice that are essential for transforming healthcare in South Africa. Their achievements reinforce Walter Sisulu's growing reputation as a transformative institution that is shaping the future of healthcare through excellence, innovation, and service.

As the University continues to advance its Vision 2030, the accomplishments of its medical graduates serve as a beacon of hope and a source of inspiration for the entire Walter Sisulu community. They demonstrate that through dedicated education, research, and community engagement, the University is fulfilling its mission of developing leaders who will drive positive change and build a healthier, more equitable future for all South Africans.

ALUMNI SUCCESS STORIES



Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi SC

Advocate Tembeka Ngcukaitobi SC is widely regarded as **one of South Africa's most accomplished constitutional lawyers**, legal scholars, and public intellectuals. Renowned for his expertise in constitutional law, public law, land reform, and human rights, he has established himself as a leading figure in the South African legal profession through his distinguished advocacy, scholarly contributions, and public service.

He graduated with a BProc degree and an LLB degree in 1999. During his student years, he demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and served as President of the Student Representative Council in 1997. He subsequently advanced his academic qualifications by obtaining a Master of Laws degree from Rhodes University and a further **LLM degree from the London School of Economics and Political Science.**

Ngcukaitobi commenced his legal career at the Legal Aid Clinic in Mthatha and later worked at the Legal Resources Centre in Grahamstown. He subsequently served as a law clerk to former Chief Justice Arthur Chaskalson at the Constitutional Court of South Africa. Thereafter, he practiced as an attorney at Bowman Gilfillan (now Bowman Gilfillan Inc.) before joining the Johannesburg Bar as an advocate in 2010. Through his outstanding legal expertise and advocacy, **he was elevated to Senior Counsel status in 2020**, a distinction reserved for advocates of exceptional professional standing.

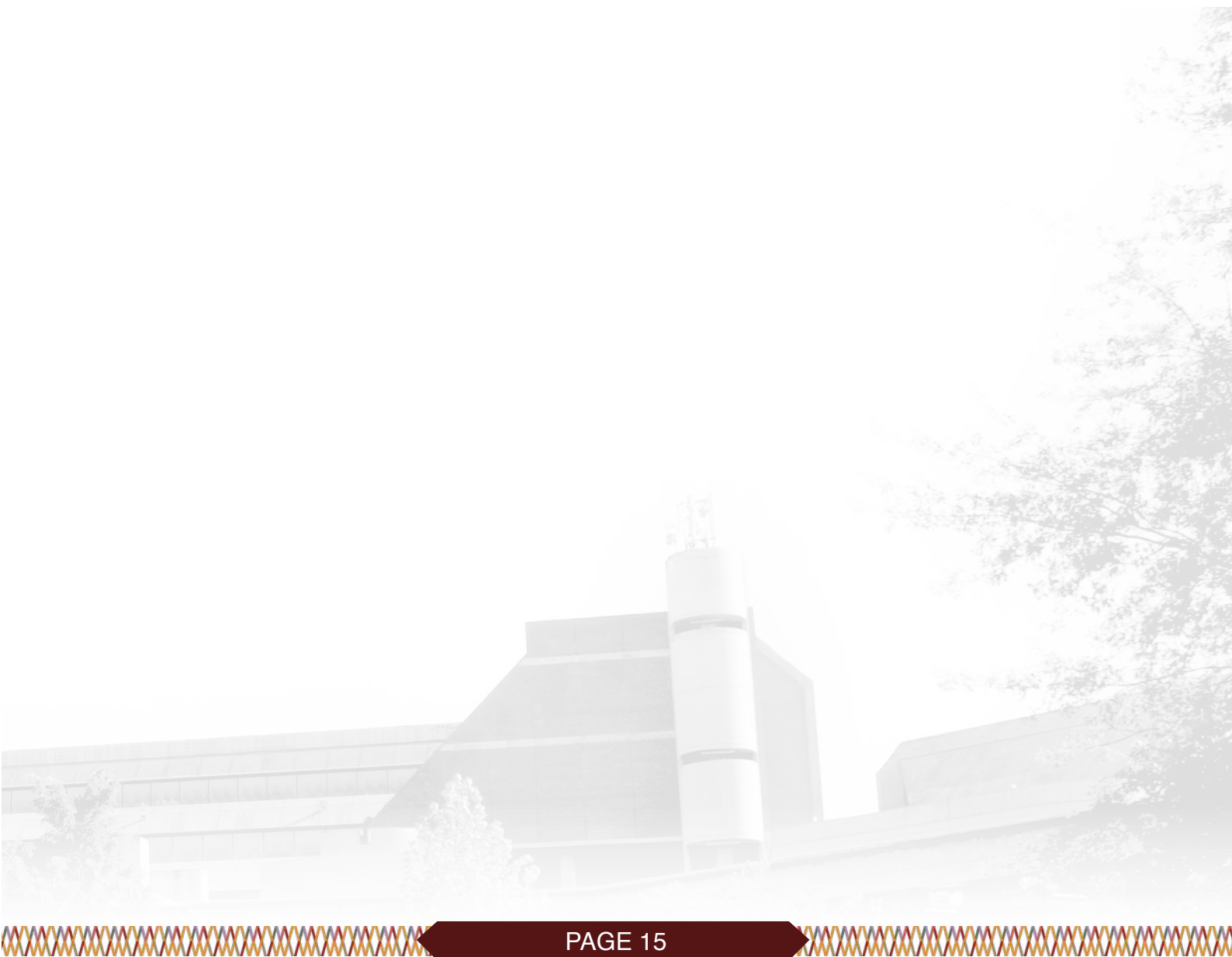
Throughout his career, Advocate Ngcukaitobi has held numerous prestigious leadership and governance positions, including:

- Member of the Judicial Service Commission, the constitutional body responsible for judicial appointments and oversight.
- Part-time Member of the Competition Tribunal, contributing to competition law adjudication and regulatory oversight.
- **Chairperson of the Council of Walter Sisulu**, where he serves in this prestigious leadership position. In this capacity, Advocate Ngcukaitobi provides strategic oversight and governance, contributing significantly to institutional transformation, policy direction, and the advancement of the University's vision and mission.

His dual role as a university governance leader and judicial appointee reflects his unwavering commitment to public service, leadership excellence,



- Honorary Professor of Law at Walter Sisulu, appointed in recognition of his distinguished scholarly and professional contributions.
- Acting Judge of the Labour Court, Land Claims Court, and High Court of South Africa.
- Member of South Africa's legal team before the International Court of Justice in the South Africa v Israel proceedings.
- **Acting Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa for the period June to November 2026.**





Walter Sisulu CONVOCATION PRESIDENT MAKES HISTORY

Dr Lunga Mantashe, President of the Walter Sisulu Convocation, has made history following his election as the **Inaugural President of the newly established Association of University Convocations**. This national structure brings together convocation and alumni leadership across South African universities to strengthen alumni participation in higher education governance, institutional transformation, and national development.

His election marks a significant milestone not only for Walter Sisulu but also for the broader higher education sector, as it establishes a unified platform for convocation leaders to influence policy dialogue, graduate development, and university-community engagement at a national level.

Dr Mantashe continues to elevate the profile of Walter Sisulu through his leadership, commitment, and active representation of the university in national spaces. His recent appointment was formalized during a national gathering held on 06–07 March 2026 at Sol Plaatje University in Kimberley, where convocation leaders from various institutions convened to establish the association and set its strategic direction.

Through this role, he is expected to champion alumni-driven initiatives that support graduate employability, mentorship, innovation, and stronger linkages between universities and society. His leadership is seen as a driving force in positioning convocation structures as key stakeholders in the transformation and strengthening of South Africa's higher education system.

Walter Sisulu extends its pride and congratulations to Dr Mantashe for this historic achievement, which continues to reflect the university's commitment to producing leaders who shaped national discourse and advanced the public good.



In 2025, Ramncwana represented ELIDZ at major national and international investment and infrastructure forums, promoting the Eastern Cape as a destination for industrial investment. She has become one of the prominent voices advocating for the role of Special Economic Zones in driving inclusive economic growth.

Recognition as a Woman in Leadership

Her appointment as COO has been widely celebrated as a milestone for women in leadership within South Africa's industrial development sector. She continues to inspire young professionals, particularly women, through her leadership journey, commitment to public service, and advocacy for inclusive economic transformation. In August 2025, she was recognised at a women's leadership platform for her influence in promoting sustainable development and empowering women across Africa.

Career Highlights

Proud Walter Sisulu alumna.

Appointed Chief Operations Officer of the East London Industrial Development Zone (ELIDZ) in 2025.

More than 22 years of service at ELIDZ.

Holds a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and a master's degree in media studies from Nelson Mandela University.

Leads strategic portfolios that support investment, industrialisation, innovation, and infrastructure development.

Champion of youth development, women's empowerment, entrepreneurship, and regional economic growth.

Recognised as an influential female leader contributing to the advancement of South Africa's industrial and economic development agenda.

These achievements position Ayanda Ramncwana as one of Walter Sisulu distinguished alumni whose leadership is making a significant contribution to economic development, industrialisation, and public sector transformation in South Africa.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND AGRICULTURAL INNOVATION





Mr Ncedo Ntsabo

Walter Sisulu continues to produce innovative entrepreneurs who contribute meaningfully to South Africa's economic development and rural transformation. One notable student-alumnus, Mr Ncedo Ntsabo, gained national recognition after winning the Studentpreneur of the Year Award at the EDHE Intervarsity Finals for his agribusiness venture, *Qombe Maize*.

Through *Qombe Maize*, Ntsabo has demonstrated how youth-led agricultural enterprises can play a critical role in addressing key socio-economic challenges such as food insecurity, youth unemployment, and underutilisation of rural land. His venture is built on strengthening local agricultural value chains, supporting smallholder production systems, and improving access to affordable, locally produced food products.

The initiative reflects a strong commitment to rural economic development, particularly by empowering communities to participate more actively in sustainable agricultural production. By focusing on maize as a staple crop, the enterprise contributes not only to household food security but also to local market supply stability, creating opportunities for small-scale farmers and emerging producers to integrate

into broader economic systems.

Beyond production, *Qombe Maize* is also positioned as a platform for skills development and youth participation in agribusiness, encouraging young people to view agriculture as a viable and profitable career path. This aligns closely with national priorities around agrarian reform, food systems resilience, and inclusive economic growth.

Mr Ntsabo's recognition at the EDHE Intervarsity Finals highlights the growing visibility of student entrepreneurship within South African higher education institutions. His achievement reflects the effectiveness of university innovation ecosystems in supporting student-led enterprises through mentorship, incubation support, and exposure to national platforms.

His success stands as a powerful example of how Walter Sisulu nurtures graduates who are not only employable but are also job creators, innovators, and community development leaders. Through ventures like *Qombe Maize*, Walter Sisulu continues to strengthen its role in advancing entrepreneurship as a driver of transformation and sustainable development in South Africa.

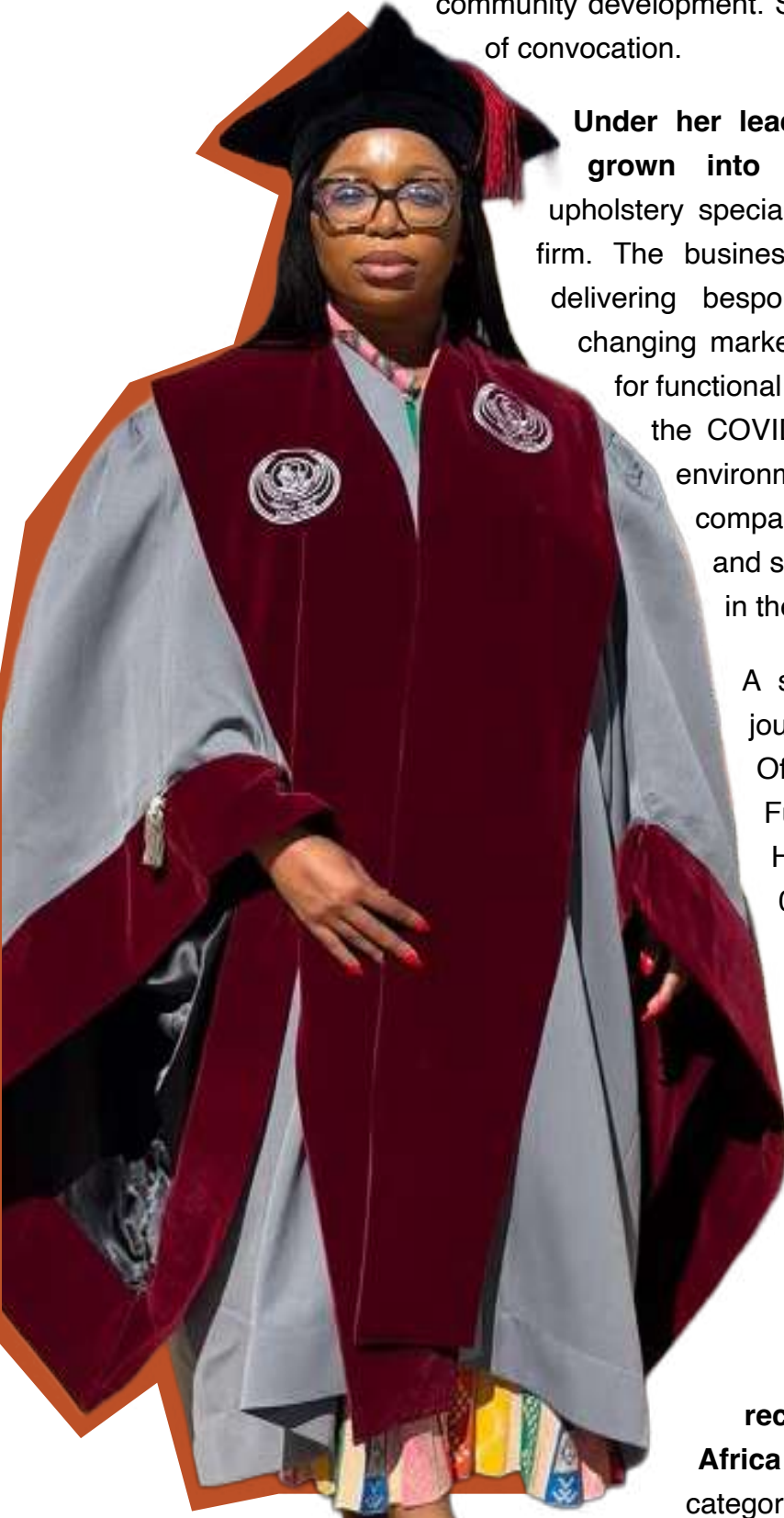
"His success stands as a powerful example of how Walter Sisulu nurtures graduates who are not only employable but are also job creators, innovators, and community development leaders."

Is a distinguished entrepreneur, business leader, and alumna of Walter Sisulu, where she obtained a qualification in Public Relations Management. She is the founder and Managing Director of Epitomely PRM and Epitomely Interior Doctors, businesses that have established her as one of the Eastern Cape's most promising young entrepreneurs. Through her ventures, she has demonstrated innovation, resilience, and a commitment to youth empowerment, job creation, and community development. She is also currently leading on the structure of convocation.

Under her leadership, Epitomely Interior Doctors has grown into a successful furniture manufacturer, upholstery specialist, interior design company, and removals firm. The business has developed a strong reputation for delivering bespoke interior solutions and responding to changing market demands, particularly the increased need for functional and stylish work-from-home spaces following the COVID-19 pandemic. By transforming residential environments into modern professional settings, the company has created employment opportunities and skills development pathways for young people in the province.

A significant milestone in her entrepreneurial journey was achieved when the Eastern Cape Office of the Premier, through the Isiqalo Youth Fund, awarded Epitomely Interior Doctors a HINO truck valued at approximately R800 000. The investment aimed to strengthen the company's operational and logistical capacity, enabling it to expand its services across the province and further contribute to local economic development. The support reflects the government's recognition of Mgolozeli's business success and its confidence in youth-led enterprises as drivers of economic growth.

Mgolozeli's achievements have earned her widespread recognition. She is the **recipient of the prestigious Forty Under 40 Africa Award** in the Architecture, Design and Décor category. She has received nominations for several



prominent awards, including the **Standard Bank Top Women Awards, Santam Women of the Future Awards, and the Eastern Cape Youth Awards**. She was also selected as a delegate to the Arab Youth International Model United Nations in Dubai, further highlighting her leadership potential and growing influence on the continent.

Beyond her business accomplishments, Mgozoli remains actively involved in alumni and community initiatives, serving as an inspiration to aspiring entrepreneurs and young graduates. Her journey reflects the transformative impact of education, innovation, and perseverance, making her a proud ambassador of Walter Sisulu and a role model for the next generation of business leaders.

Key Achievements

Walter Sisulu graduate in Public Relations Management.

Founder and Managing Director of Epitomely PRM and Epitomal Interior Doctors.

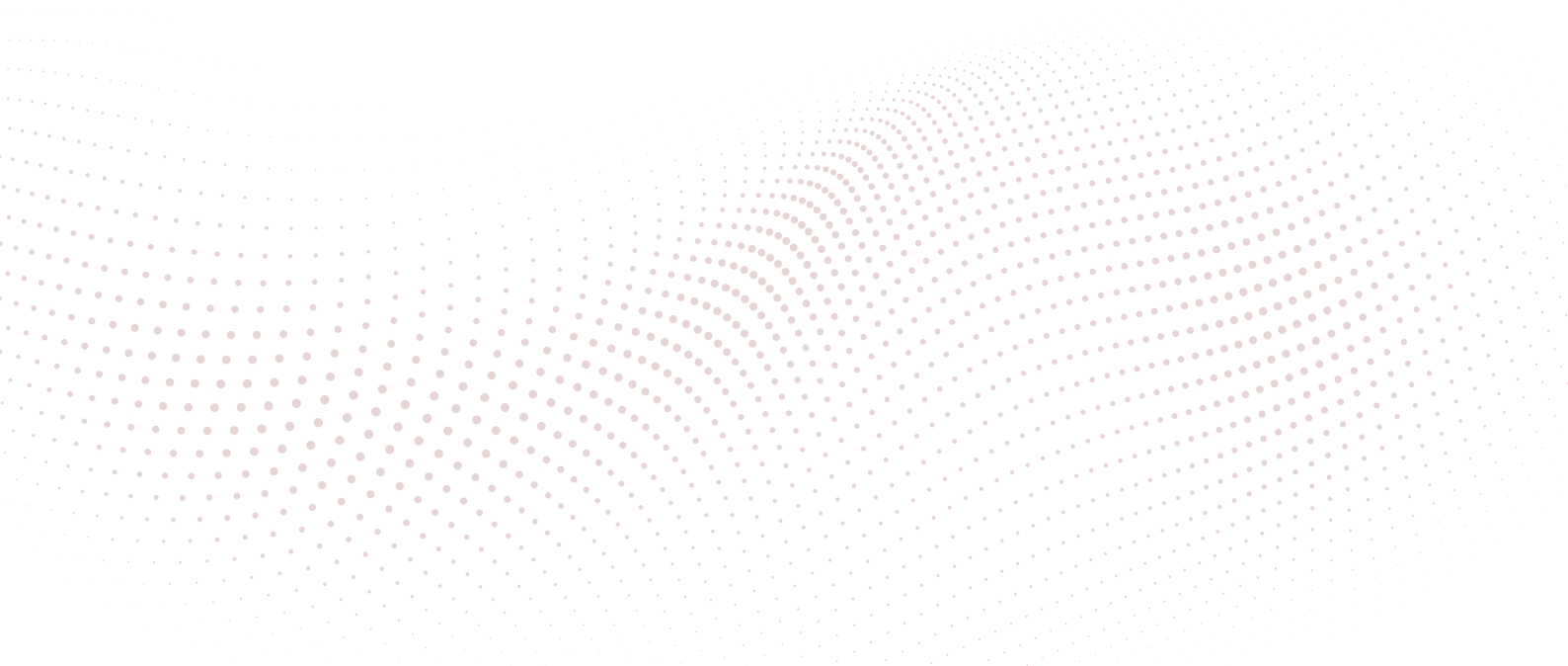
Winner of the Forty Under 40 Africa Award (Architecture, Design and Décor category).

Delegate to the Arab Youth International Model United Nations in Dubai.

Recognised for creating employment and skills-development opportunities for young people.

Advocate for youth entrepreneurship, economic empowerment, and community development.

Member of the Walter Sisulu Management Sciences Advisory Board



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE



DOUBLE CUM LAUDE



Walter Sisulu continues to pride itself on producing, through innovation, **Dr Sineziwe Nompukane, a graduate from a rural Eastern Cape community, who achieved the distinction of becoming a two-time Cum Laude graduate,** demonstrating the transformative power of education and perseverance. Her story serves as an inspiration to current and future students.

The success stories of Walter Sisulu alumni reflect a growing legacy of excellence, leadership, and service across diverse sectors of society. From governance and public administration to entrepreneurship, academia, and professional practice, Walter Sisulu graduates continue to make meaningful contributions that advance social and economic development. These achievements affirm the University's commitment to producing transformative, socially responsible leaders who drive change and uphold the values of integrity, innovation, and public service.

STUDENT SUCCESS STORY

Gcobani Sanda, originally from Mqanduli in the Eastern Cape, is a remarkable example of perseverance and the transformative power of education. **Coming from a family of eight siblings and being the third youngest, he proudly holds the distinction of being the first-generation graduate.**

His academic journey began with a Diploma in Human Resource Management. Driven by a commitment to personal growth and professional development, he subsequently enrolled for an Advanced Diploma in Human Resource Management. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, he redirected his academic path and pursued an Advanced Diploma in Public Management. Rather than allowing this change to discourage him, he embraced the opportunity to broaden his knowledge and skills.

His determination to achieve his goals led him to further



his studies by enrolling for a Bachelor of Honours in Administration, demonstrating his continued commitment to academic excellence, he has already enrolled for a Master of Public Administration degree.

According to Sanda, **one of his greatest motivations is the desire to transform his family's circumstances and create a new legacy for future generations.** As the first graduate in his family, he aims to change the narrative of his lineage by breaking educational barriers and inspiring those who come after him. His long-term aspiration is to become the first person in his family to obtain a doctoral qualification.

He also attributes his academic persistence to the influence of educated mentors, colleagues, and role models who have consistently encouraged him and demonstrated that success through education is attainable regardless of one's background. Their support and testimonies about the positive impact of education on their lives and families have strengthened his resolve to continue pursuing his dreams.

Reflecting on his journey, **Sanda expresses deep gratitude for how far he has come and remains inspired by the possibilities that lie ahead.** He acknowledges the unwavering support of his family, who have given him a reason to persevere, and extends his appreciation to his alma mater for empowering him through education and helping to improve his circumstances. His story stands as a testament to resilience, ambition, and the life-changing impact of higher education.



ALUMNI MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Healthcare

Walter Sisulu has produced distinguished healthcare professionals who continue to shape medical practice, research, and healthcare delivery in South Africa and beyond.

Dr Ncumisa Jilata

Dr Ncumisa Jilata is widely recognised as **one of South Africa's pioneering female neurosurgeons and a trailblazer for women in medicine**. Originating from the Eastern Cape, she pursued a career in medicine with determination and distinction, eventually specialising in neurosurgery, one of the most demanding and highly specialised fields in healthcare. Her journey to becoming a neurosurgeon marked a significant milestone in South Africa's medical landscape, particularly at a time when very few women, and even fewer Black women, were represented in the discipline.

Among her notable achievements, **Dr Jilata became one of the first Black female neurosurgeons in South Africa**, breaking barriers in a field traditionally dominated by men. She has successfully performed numerous complex neurosurgical procedures involving the brain and spinal cord, contributing significantly to patient care and neurological health services in the country. Beyond her clinical work, she has played an important role in mentoring young medical students and aspiring surgeons, encouraging greater participation of women in surgical and STEM-related professions. Her professional accomplishments have earned her recognition as a role model and advocate for excellence, perseverance, and transformation within the South African healthcare sector. Through her leadership, expertise, and commitment to service, Dr Jilata continues to inspire future generations of healthcare professionals while advancing the quality and accessibility of specialised medical care.

Walter Sisulu Health Sciences alumni continue to serve in public hospitals, private practice, research institutions, and international healthcare systems, particularly addressing rural healthcare challenges in the Eastern Cape.



Business and Finance

Walter Sisulu alumni have made historic contributions to the financial sector and corporate leadership.

Dr Nonkululeko Gobodo

Walter Sisulu proudly celebrates alumna **Dr Nonkululeko Gobodo, who made history as South Africa's first Black female Chartered Accountant (CA(SA))**. Dr Gobodo is currently the Chancellor of Walter Sisulu. A trailblazer in the accounting and auditing profession, she co-founded the first Black woman-owned auditing firm in the country and later helped build one of South Africa's leading black-owned auditing and advisory firms. Through her leadership, commitment to transformation, and advocacy for ethical governance and women's empowerment, Dr Gobodo has left an indelible mark on South Africa's business landscape and continues to inspire future generations of professionals and entrepreneurs. Dr Gobodo stands as a shining example of the excellence and impact of its alumni. Her journey from a university student to a nationally respected business leader demonstrates the transformative power of education and serves as an inspiration to aspiring accountants, entrepreneurs, and professionals across the country.





Dr Terence Nombembe

Terence Nombembe is one of South Africa's most respected accounting and governance professionals, renowned for his contributions to public financial management, accountability, and ethical leadership. A graduate of Walter Sisulu predecessor institution, he built an illustrious career in auditing and public administration, becoming a prominent figure in South Africa's financial governance landscape. His professional journey reflects the vital role that skilled financial experts play in strengthening democratic institutions and promoting responsible stewardship of public resources. Dr Nombembe has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Council of the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits University)

Among his most notable achievements, Nombembe **became South Africa's first Black Chartered Accountant to serve as Auditor-General of South Africa**, a position he held from 2006 to 2013. During his tenure, he championed transparency, accountability, and sound financial governance across national, provincial, and local government institutions. He introduced more rigorous audit processes and consistently highlighted the importance of clean audits and effective financial management in the public sector. Under his leadership, the Office of the Auditor-General enhanced its reputation as an independent and credible institution committed to safeguarding public resources.

Following his term as Auditor-General, Nombembe continued to contribute to national development through leadership roles in both the public and private sectors. He has served several corporate and public entity boards, providing strategic guidance on governance, risk management, ethics, and financial oversight. His contributions have earned him widespread recognition as a champion of integrity, accountability, and professional excellence.

Nombembe's success reflects the broader impact of Walter Sisulu graduates, many of whom have become entrepreneurs, chartered accountants, auditors, financial analysts, executives, and business leaders. Through their work in government, state-owned enterprises, financial institutions, and private corporations, these alumni continue to drive economic growth, create employment

opportunities, strengthen governance systems, and contribute significantly to South Africa's socio-economic development. Their achievements demonstrate the university's enduring legacy of producing graduates who lead with competence, integrity, and a commitment to public service.



Law and Justice

Chief Justice Maya

Chief Justice Mandisa Maya is the current Chief Justice of South Africa and **the first woman in the country's history to hold this highest judicial office**. She officially assumed office on 1 September 2024 after being appointed by President Cyril Ramaphosa. Prior to this, she served as Deputy Chief Justice (2022–2024) and President of the Supreme Court of Appeal (2017–2022).

Educational Background

B. Proc – University of Transkei (Walter Sisulu)

LLB – University of Natal

LLM – Duke University

Career Highlights

Her legal career began as a prosecutor and State Law Adviser in Transkei.

Admitted as an advocate in 1994.

Appointed as a judge of the High Court in 2000.

Elevated to the Supreme Court of Appeal in 2006.

Became the first woman Deputy President of the Supreme Court of Appeal in 2015.

Became the first woman President of the Supreme Court of Appeal in 2017.

Appointed Deputy Chief Justice of South Africa in 2022.

Appointed South Africa's first female Chief Justice in 2024.

Major Achievements

First Black woman appointed to the Supreme Court of Appeal.

First woman Deputy President of the Supreme Court of Appeal.

First woman President of the Supreme Court of Appeal.

First woman Chief Justice of South Africa.

Delivered more than 200 reported judgments during her judicial career.

Recognised nationally and internationally for advancing judicial transformation, gender equality, and the rule of law.

Served as President of the South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges and later as its Vice-President.

Chief Justice Mandisa Maya is one of South Africa's most distinguished jurists and a trailblazer in the legal profession. A graduate of the former University of Transkei, now iYunivesithi Walter Sisulu, she has built an illustrious judicial career spanning more than two decades. Maya has consistently broken barriers, becoming the **first woman to serve as Deputy President and President of the Supreme Court of Appeal**, and later the first woman to be appointed Chief Justice of South Africa. Widely respected for her judicial excellence, integrity, and commitment to constitutional values, she has played a pivotal role in strengthening the independence of the judiciary and advancing transformation within South Africa's legal system. Her appointment as Chief Justice in September 2024 marked a historic milestone for the country and serves as an inspiration to aspiring legal professionals, particularly young women pursuing careers in law.



Ms Nomgcobo Jiba

A distinguished Walter Sisulu Law alumna, has held several senior leadership positions within South Africa's National Prosecuting Authority, including serving as Acting National Director of Public Prosecutions and Deputy National Director of Public Prosecutions. Her career exemplifies the calibre of legal professionals produced by the University and their contribution to the administration of justice. More broadly, Walter Sisulu Law graduates continue to serve with distinction across the legal fraternity as advocates, attorneys, prosecutors, magistrates, judges, legal advisors, and judicial officers. Through their expertise and commitment to public service, they contribute significantly to strengthening the justice system, promoting constitutional democracy, advancing access to justice, and upholding the rule of law both nationally and within their respective communities.

Mr Zincedile Monde Tiya

Mr Zincedile Monde Tiya was born and raised in Mthatha, Eastern Cape. Tiya **overcame challenging socio-economic circumstances through education, sport, and leadership**. He frequently speaks about empowering rural youth and encouraging young people to participate in leadership and decision-making processes. He is a distinguished Walter Sisulu alumnus whose career reflects a remarkable commitment to legal excellence, leadership, and community development. As an accomplished attorney, former President of the Walter Sisulu Convocation, and respected leader within South Africa's legal fraternity, Tiya has consistently demonstrated the transformative impact of education, service, and perseverance.

A graduate of Walter Sisulu, Tiya first completed a Bachelor of Arts degree before pursuing a Bachelor of Laws. His passion for justice and social transformation led him to the legal profession, where **he was admitted as an Attorney of the High Court of South Africa in 2014**. He later established his own legal practice, building a reputation for professionalism, integrity, and advocacy for access to justice.

Throughout his career, Tiya has held several influential leadership positions within the legal sector. **He served as Chairperson of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADEL)** in the former Transkei region and contributed to numerous professional bodies and committees focusing on legal education, family law, criminal law, and legal aid. His involvement in these structures has helped strengthen the legal profession and support the development of future legal practitioners.

Beyond his professional achievements, Tiya has remained deeply connected to his alma mater. As former president of the Walter Sisulu Convocation, he played a significant role in promoting alumni engagement, strengthening university governance, and advocating for academic excellence. His leadership has inspired graduates to remain active contributors to the institution's growth and development.

One of his most notable recognitions came **in 2018 when he was named among the Top 100 Most Influential Young South Africans in the field of Law and Governance**. This national recognition acknowledged his contribution to the legal profession, youth leadership, and social development.



Before establishing himself as a legal professional, Tiya also excelled in sport, particularly boxing. He achieved success at provincial and national levels, earning several championship titles and demonstrating the discipline and determination that would later define his professional journey.

Today, Zincedile Monde Tiya stands as an exemplary ambassador of Walter Sisulu. His journey from student leader to respected legal practitioner and alumni leader serves as an inspiration to current students and graduates alike. Through his dedication to justice, leadership, and community service, he continues to make a meaningful contribution to South African society while proudly representing the values and legacy of Walter Sisulu.



Mr Xola Nqola

Mr Xola Nqola is a member of Parliament and a Walter Sisulu graduate who has emerged as one of the prominent leaders in South Africa's justice and constitutional governance landscape. He holds an LLB degree from Walter Sisulu and has served in the National Assembly since 2019. **In July 2024, he was elected Chairperson of Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development**, where he oversees parliamentary scrutiny of the country's justice sector, constitutional matters, and legal reform processes.

Key Achievements

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development (2024–Present)
Leads Parliament's oversight of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and related entities, playing a critical role in strengthening accountability, constitutional democracy, and the rule of law.

Co-Chairperson of the Joint Constitutional Review Committee (2023–2024) – Helped guide Parliament's annual review of constitutional matters and public submissions concerning constitutional reform and governance.

Member of Parliament since 2019 has contributed extensively to justice, constitutional, and

governance oversight through various parliamentary committees and inquiries.

Leadership in the ANC Youth League: Served as Interim Convenor of the ANC Youth League National Youth Task Team in 2023, helping to facilitate preparations for the organisation's long-awaited national elective conference.

Advocate for Justice System Reform has been vocal on improving court infrastructure, reducing case backlogs, enhancing prosecutorial effectiveness, and strengthening public confidence in the justice system.

National Oversight and Accountability Champion has participated in significant parliamentary processes involving constitutional oversight, public accountability, and governance of matters affecting key state institutions.

Mr Xola Nqola is a distinguished Walter Sisulu alumnus, legal practitioner, and Member of Parliament who currently serves as Chairperson of Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Justice and Constitutional Development. Since entering Parliament in 2019, he has played an influential role in advancing constitutional governance, justice-sector oversight, and democratic accountability. His leadership as Co-Chairperson of the Joint Constitutional Review Committee and later as Chairperson of the Justice Committee has positioned him among the country's emerging voices in legal and constitutional affairs. Through his commitment to public service, legislative oversight, and justice-sector reform, Nqola continues to demonstrate the impact of Walter Sisulu graduates in shaping South Africa's democratic institutions and governance landscape.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SOCIAL IMPACT

Indigenous Health Systems Research Institute

Walter Sisulu has launched **one of the country's first institutes to collaborate with traditional healers for Afrocentric medical research and teaching and learning solutions.**

The Indigenous Health Systems Research Institute will be housed within the university's Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences.

The university hopes to unlock Afrocentric healing innovations through collaboration between traditional healers, researchers, clinicians and scholars. In a landmark development for African-centred healthcare and research, Walter Sisulu officially launched the Indigenous Health Systems Research Institute on 26 May 2026 at the Mthatha Health Resource Centre. The institute is housed within the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and is regarded as one of the first university-based institutes in South Africa dedicated to formally integrating traditional healing knowledge with scientific medical research, teaching, and innovation.

The establishment of the institute reflects Walter Sisulu's commitment to **recognising African Indigenous Knowledge Systems as a valuable component of healthcare.** The initiative seeks to bridge the longstanding divide between Western medicine and traditional African healing practices by creating a platform where traditional healers, clinicians, researchers, academics, and communities can collaborate.

According to the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Prof. Wezile Chitha, the institute affirms African traditional health knowledge and its importance in addressing the health needs of predominantly African communities. He noted that many South Africans use both traditional and Western medicine, making collaboration between the two systems both necessary and beneficial.

The institute will focus on

- Researching indigenous medicinal plants and traditional healing practices.
- Investigating how traditional and allopathic (Western) medicine can complement one another.
- Developing Afrocentric healthcare innovations.
- Preserving and documenting indigenous health knowledge.
- Enhancing teaching and learning within health sciences through African-centred perspectives.
- Promoting community engagement and culturally responsive healthcare delivery.

The institute will be led by Prof. Constance Rusike from the School of Biomedical Sciences. She explained that the institute aims to explore the intersection between indigenous health systems and modern biomedical science, recognising that traditional medicine remains widely used across African communities. Ongoing research already includes studies on medicinal plants and collaborations involving traditional healers and healthcare professionals in district hospitals.

Speaking at the launch, Eastern Cape MEC for Sport, Recreation, Arts and Culture, Sibulele Ngongo, described the initiative as a significant step toward restoring dignity, ownership, and recognition of African knowledge systems that were historically marginalised. She highlighted the role of traditional medicine in preventive healthcare through nutrition, herbal medicine, spirituality, and community care.

The institute's work aligns with Walter Sisulu's broader vision as an African university that is locally relevant while remaining globally competitive. Future collaborations are envisaged with countries such as Tanzania and India, both of which have strong traditions of indigenous medicine integrated into their healthcare systems.

The launch of the IHSRI positions Walter Sisulu as a national leader in Indigenous Knowledge Systems research. It creates opportunities for the evidence-based validation of traditional remedies, the development of culturally relevant healthcare solutions, and greater inclusion of African knowledge systems in higher education, research, and healthcare policy. By fostering respectful collaboration between traditional healers and biomedical practitioners, the institute aims to contribute to more inclusive, accessible, and community-responsive healthcare in South Africa and beyond.



RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS





Digital Skills for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Walter Sisulu continues to strengthen its commitment to producing graduates who are equipped for the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution through strategic partnerships and industry-aligned training programmes. One notable initiative during the first semester of 2026 was the continued implementation of the Samsung Innovation Campus Programme, a partnership designed to bridge the digital skills gap and enhance graduate employability.

Through this programme, **50 Information Technology students successfully completed specialised training in Coding, Programming, and Artificial Intelligence (AI)**. The training provided participants with practical, industry-relevant competencies that complement their academic studies and prepare them for the rapidly evolving digital economy.

The Samsung Innovation Campus programme **focuses on developing critical technological skills, including software development, problem-solving, computational thinking, data analysis, and AI applications**. Students are exposed to emerging technologies and real-world challenges, enabling them to apply theoretical knowledge to practical solutions and innovation-driven projects.

Beyond technical training, **the programme promotes creativity, innovation, teamwork, and entrepreneurial thinking skills** that are increasingly valued in the modern workplace. Participants also gain exposure to industry's best practices and global technological trends, enhancing their competitiveness in both local and international labour markets.

The initiative forms part of Walter Sisulu's broader strategy to strengthen industry partnerships, expand experiential learning opportunities, and ensure that graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to thrive in technology-driven environments. Through collaborations such as the Samsung Innovation Campus, the University continues to contribute to the development of a digitally skilled workforce capable of driving innovation, economic growth, and sustainable development in South Africa.



Advancing Rural Healthcare

The faculty of health launched the Rural Clinical School in Lusikisiki by Walter Sisulu in partnership with the Eastern Cape Department of Health marks a significant milestone in advancing rural healthcare and medical education in South Africa. Officially launched in February 2026 as only the second Rural Clinical School in the country, the initiative seeks to improve healthcare access and outcomes in underserved rural communities while providing high-quality, community-based clinical training for health sciences students. Located at St Elizabeth Regional Hospital, the School operates through a hub-and-spoke model that connects four additional hospitals and community health centres, enabling specialists, registrars, and students to

rotate across facilities and strengthen both healthcare service delivery and clinical education.

Walter Sisulu Vice-Chancellor Professor Thandi Mgwebi described the Rural Clinical School as a “game-changing intervention in the delivery of quality healthcare services in rural communities,” highlighting the University’s commitment to socially responsive education and community engagement. The initiative also addresses the longstanding challenge of training healthcare professionals far from the communities they intend to serve. As noted by Eastern Cape Health MEC Ntandokazi Capa, the School brings medical education directly into rural healthcare settings, allowing students to gain firsthand experience of the realities and challenges of rural healthcare delivery. Academic activities commenced in January 2026 with the first cohort of ten final-year MBChB students completing their clinical training within the rural healthcare environment. The Rural Clinical School builds on Walter Sisulu established tradition of community-based medical education, including its Integrated Longitudinal Clinical Clerkship programme, which has previously demonstrated positive contributions to healthcare service delivery in rural Eastern Cape communities

“Game-changing intervention in the delivery of quality healthcare services in rural communities,”

- Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Thandi Mgwebi



Prof. Albert Modi

Professor Albert Thembinkosi Modi is a distinguished South African agricultural scientist and academic leader, serving as the Executive Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Walter Sisulu. An NRF C2-rated researcher, he has made significant contributions to agricultural science, food security, climate resilience, and sustainable development.

In recognition of his expertise and leadership, Prof. Modi was recently **appointed to the Executive Committee of the National Science and Technology Forum**, where he represents South Africa's higher education sector. This prestigious appointment reflects his growing influence in shaping the country's science, research, and innovation agenda.

RESEARCH AWARDS AND PUBLICATIONS





**Prof.
Mxunyelwa**

Research excellence remains a key pillar of the University's commitment to academic advancement, innovation, and societal impact. Through the dedication of its researchers, academics, and postgraduate students, the institution continues to produce high-quality scholarly publications and to earn recognition through prestigious research awards. These achievements not only enhance the University's research profile but also contribute to knowledge creation, evidence-based solutions, and the advancement of communities locally, nationally, and globally.

Recent Journal articles

Recent scholarly contributions by Professor S. Mxunyelwa demonstrate a strong commitment to advancing knowledge in entrepreneurship, tourism development, public policy, and higher education marketing. **His research focuses on addressing socio-economic challenges in rural communities, promoting sustainable tourism enterprises, and strengthening institutional competitiveness.**

In 2026, Professor Mxunyelwa published a study titled *The Role of Rural Tourism Entrepreneurship Business in Rural Economic Development*, which examines how tourism-based entrepreneurial activities contribute to economic growth, employment creation, and community development in rural areas. This work builds on his extensive research in rural entrepreneurship and sustainable

development. DOI: 2026.

In 2025, he authored *Rural Entrepreneurship Success Factors for Sustainable Tourism Ventures: Evidence from the Wild Coast*, which identifies key factors influencing the sustainability and success of tourism enterprises in one of South Africa's most important rural tourism regions. The study provides practical insights for entrepreneurs, policymakers, and development practitioners seeking to strengthen rural economies. Evidence from the Wild Coast DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36096/ijbes.v7i6.1052> 2025

Further contributing to entrepreneurship scholarship, Professor Mxunyelwa co-authored *Lack of Government Support: A Hindrance to Entrepreneurship Development of the SMTE Sector in Buffalo City, South Africa* (2025), which critically examines policy and institutional barriers affecting small, medium, and micro tourism enterprises. The study highlights the importance of government intervention, funding, and capacity-building initiatives in fostering entrepreneurial growth. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4102/apspdpr.v13i1.853> 2025

Expanding his research into the higher education sector, Mxunyelwa co-authored *Brand Marketing Communication Strategies for Public Universities: The Case of KwaZulu-Natal Province, South Africa* (2025). This study explores strategic communication and branding approaches that can enhance university visibility, stakeholder engagement, and institutional reputation in an increasingly competitive higher education environment. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51415/ajims.v7i2.2463> 2025.

Collectively, **these publications reflect Professor Mxunyelwa's dedication** to producing impactful research that informs policy, supports entrepreneurship development, promotes sustainable tourism, and contributes to the advancement of higher education management and marketing. His work continues to make a valuable contribution to academic scholarship and socio-economic development in South Africa.

THE WAIT IS OVER!

GATE PORTAL LAUNCH

**Graduate, Alumni, Tracking and
Engagement (GATE) Portal**

Connecting Graduates, Alumni, Employers
and Opportunities through one digital platform.



LIVE FROM

10 JULY 2026



VISIT THE PORTAL

alumni.wsu.ac.za

CONNECT • OPPORTUNITIES • TRACK • ENGAGE • BELONG

GRADUATE AND ALUMNI TRACKING & ENGAGEMENT PORTAL

The Graduate and Alumni Tracking & Engagement (GATE) Portal has been introduced to strengthen relationships between the university and its graduates.

Purpose

The Alumni Relations Office is making significant strides to strengthen connections among alumni across South Africa's provinces, the Southern African Development Community region, the African continent, and internationally. Achieving this objective requires a robust and accessible online platform that enables meaningful engagement regardless of geographical location. As a university, we are confronted by the complexities of a rapidly changing world, including social, economic, political, and technological transformations. Addressing these challenges requires a collective effort that brings together graduates, the University, industry partners, and other stakeholders to contribute towards sustainable development and institutional growth.

The Graduate and Alumni Tracking and Engagement Portal serves as a strategic solution to these challenges by providing a centralised platform for alumni interaction, networking, communication, and collaboration. A key benefit of the platform is the centralisation of alumni data, which allows the University to maintain a comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date database of graduates. Through this centralised system, Walter Sisulu can efficiently track alumni career progression, employment status, professional achievements, geographical distribution, and areas of expertise. Reliable alumni data will enhance communication, facilitate targeted engagement initiatives, support graduate tracer studies, strengthen fundraising and mentorship programs, and provide valuable insights for institutional planning and decision-making. Ultimately, the platform will foster a stronger, more connected alumni community while promoting shared developmental experiences and advancing the University's strategic objectives.

Key benefits

- Data integrity and accuracy.
- Access events, networking, and opportunities.
- Advance opportunities for graduate employability.
- Support student success through mentorship programs
- Stay connected with your institution.
- Contribute to financial sustainability and partnership.

Graduation Statistics for 2025/2026

The 2025 Graduation Dataset marks a significant academic achievement for the University, with the total of 6,785 graduates successfully completing qualifications across a diverse range of faculties and academic programmes. This milestone demonstrates the institution's continued commitment to student success, academic excellence, and the development of skilled graduates capable of

contributing to national and global development.

The cohort comprises both undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, highlighting the University's comprehensive academic offering and its capacity to support students at multiple levels of higher education. The inclusion of postgraduate graduates is particularly noteworthy, as it contributes to the development of advanced skills, research capacity, and professional expertise required in key sectors of the economy.

The distribution of graduation awards across 2025 and 2026 reflects standard academic and administrative processes associated with programme completion timelines, examination cycles, and graduation scheduling. This ensures that students who complete their studies at different times during the academic cycle are appropriately recognised for their achievements.

The graduation figures also serve as an important indicator of institutional performance, student retention, and throughput rates. A graduating class of this magnitude reflects the collective efforts of students, academic staff, support services, and university leadership in creating an environment conducive to learning and achievement. Furthermore, these graduates represent a growing network of alumni who will contribute to various sectors, including education, healthcare, business, science, engineering, public administration, and entrepreneurship.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Alumni Networking Sessions

Convocation marathon.

Walter Sisulu student mentorship program.

Walter Sisulu alumni leadership lecture.

Graduate and Alumni Portal launch and awareness Campaign.

Walter Sisulu alumni awards.

Friends of Walter Sisulu giving circle.

Conclusion

The first semester of 2026 has been marked by significant achievements and milestones for Walter Sisulu, reflecting the institution's unwavering commitment to academic excellence, innovation, transformation, and societal impact. From celebrating the success of thousands of graduates and showcasing inspiring journeys of students and alumni, to advancing research excellence, entrepreneurship, and community engagement, the University continues to demonstrate its role as a catalyst for positive change.

The appointment of visionary leaders, the accomplishments of distinguished alumni, and recognition of the University's growing global standing, including improved performance in international sustainability rankings, further underscore Walter Sisulu's commitment to producing graduates and knowledge that contribute meaningfully to local, national, and global development. These achievements are a testament to the dedication of students, staff, alumni, partners, and stakeholders who collectively advance the University's mission.

As Walter Sisulu looks ahead, it remains steadfast in its pursuit of excellence, inclusivity, and innovation, while continuing to empower individuals, transform communities, and create opportunities for future generations. The stories highlighted in this newsletter serve as a reminder that, through education, research, and service, Walter Sisulu continues to shape leaders, inspire change, and build a brighter future for South Africa and beyond.

By Nocwaka Pangwa

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