

8 May 2026

## Celebrating Excellence: Advanced Diploma in School Leadership and Management Recognition Function

The Advanced Diploma in School Leadership and Management Office, within the School of Professional Studies in Education, recently hosted a Recognition Function to celebrate the achievements of its graduating students.

The event brought together key stakeholders who contribute to the success of the programme, including Faculty leadership, lecturers, mentors, support staff, representatives from the Northern Cape Department of Education, and the programme’s funder, the SIOC Development Trust. The gathering provided a meaningful platform to recognise both student success and the collaborative efforts that support the development of school leaders.



The atmosphere was marked by a strong sense of pride and appreciation as graduates were acknowledged for their hard work, resilience, and commitment.

The occasion celebrated not only the accomplishments of the students, but also the partnerships that continue to strengthen the programme’s impact.



A special acknowledgement is extended to Prof Molly Fuller, whose leadership continues to guide the growth of the programme and its contribution to shaping effective school leadership.

Overall, the Recognition Function reflected a shared commitment to excellence, collaboration, and the advancement of quality education.



## SPSE & SPE (Block B) Excel at FEDU Awards



Colleagues from the School of Professional Studies in Education (SPSE) and the School for Professional Education (SPE) (Block B) at the Mahikeng Campus of the North-West University were recognised for their outstanding contributions at the 2025 FEDU Awards.

The awards ceremony, held on 24 March 2026, brought together staff in a spirit of celebration and recognition. SPSE and SPE (Block B) distinguished themselves by receiving the majority of the awards, reflecting their continued commitment to excellence in teaching, research and community engagement.

### Among the notable achievements:

**Dr Celestin Mayombe** - First Runner-up for the FEDU Most Productive Established Researcher,

- First Runner-up for the EduHRight Most Productive Established Researcher, and for a
- Community Engagement Initiative.

**Dr Kgali Mampane** received a Faculty Teaching Award.

**Dr Matthews Makunye** received both a Faculty Teaching Award and an Academic Teaching Practice Award.

**Dr Mbali Tsibuli** received a Novice Award.

**Mr Mompoti Setlogelo and Prof Darrell De Klerk** were recognised with the Aristotle Award for wisdom, relevance, and sustained excellence in teaching, with Prof De Klerk also receiving Second Runner-up for RIH Most Productive Established Researcher.

**Dr Elsabe Wessels, Dr Khido Ramadie, and Ms Alcarian Kruger** were each recognised with Service-Learning Awards.

**Dr Rosa Modiba** received the Innovation in Teaching with AI Technology Award.

These accolades highlight both individual excellence and the collective strength of SPSE and SPE (Block B), reinforcing their contribution to advancing quality education at the NWU.

In addition, Ms Kruger has successfully completed her MEd and is set to graduate later this year, while Prof De Klerk recently reached the milestone of 300 citations for his research outputs since 2019.

## FEDU Master's and PhD Bootcamp a Resounding Success



FEDU recently hosted its inaugural Master's and PhD Bootcamp from 17-19 April 2026 in Rustenburg, bringing together postgraduate students and academic staff from across campuses. The event took place at Sundown Country Estate in the Pilanesberg, a centrally located venue accessible to participants from Potchefstroom, Mahikeng and Vanderbijlpark.

The bootcamp received an overwhelmingly positive response, with 152 students and 60 staff members in attendance. The programme commenced on Friday evening with a welcome by Prof Lloyd Conley, followed by a World Café activity that created space for students to reflect on their postgraduate journeys.

Saturday's programme featured a series of enriching academic sessions. Prof Dorothy Laubscher guided students on developing strong research proposals, followed by Prof Liberty Hove's session on theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Prof Minrie Greeff, representing the NWU Research Integrity Office, led a discussion on research ethics, drawing on insights from the film *On Being a Scientist*. Later sessions included Prof Kobus Mentz and Prof Josef de Beer on quantitative and qualitative research, while Prof Elsa Mentz and Prof Johan Botha concluded the day with a focus on supervision and effective student-study leader relationships.

On Sunday, Prof Mlamuli Hlatshwayo, Director of COMBER, presented on academic writing and publishing, followed by the closing session, *Postgraduate Survival Guide*, facilitated by Prof Carolina Botha.

The bootcamp concluded on a memorable note, with students breaking into song—capturing a spirit of unity and echoing FEDU's ethos of care: *"Supervisor, hold me with your hands so that I don't fall in the fire."*



## Tshimologo for Future PGCE Teachers



From 13-15 March, the School of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education proudly hosted its first Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) excursion at Camp Wildside in Rustenburg. The excursion brought together PGCE students from Mahikeng, Vanderbijlpark, Potchefstroom, and distance learning cohorts, creating a diverse and dynamic learning community. This marked a meaningful tshimologo - a new beginning - in shaping the professional journeys of future educators.

The initiative responds to research indicating that student teachers often enter the profession with limited perspectives, largely shaped by their own schooling experiences. Structured excursions such as this provide valuable opportunities to deepen understanding, foster professional identity, and strengthen a sense of belonging within the faculty and the broader university community - particularly within a multi-campus institution such as the NWU.

The excursion aimed to immerse PGCE students in innovative pedagogical approaches, while promoting collaboration and bridging the gap between theory and practice through contextualised learning experiences.

Students worked in small, cooperative groups comprising peers from all campuses. They engaged with key themes such as inclusive education, social justice, resource improvisation, and critical reflection on their development as future educators. A series of interactive sessions was facilitated by academic staff and practitioners, including Prof Aubrey Golightly, Prof Sukie van Zyl, Prof Magda Kloppers, Ms Lizelle van Schadewijk, Ms Eunice Pretorius, Prof Adri du Toit, Prof Josef de Beer and Mr Helgaardt Meintjes.

Additional sessions and activities were supported by Dr Gordon Sekano, Dr Moleboheng Mokhele, Dr Andrew Mutsvangwa, Dr Shepherd Mlambo, Mr Mojuta Motlhamme and Ms Ikanyeng Senna.

This successful excursion reflects the Faculty's commitment to innovative teacher education, collaboration and the holistic development of future educators -  
*a tshimologo worth celebrating.*



## FEDU Graduate Behind the Winning ACADEX Name

Following the LMS Name Reveal event held on 28 April 2026, where the NWU community officially welcomed ACADEX as the University's new digital teaching and learning platform, special recognition was given to the creator of the winning name - former Faculty of Education student, Siyanqoba Siganga.



The launch event celebrated the collaborative efforts of staff and students across the University, with ACADEX emerging as the chosen name from thousands of submissions received from the NWU community. Inspired by academic excellence and innovation, the name reflects the University's vision for the future of teaching and learning.

Siyanqoba, who completed his fourth year at the Vanderbijlpark Campus last year, is now teaching at a school in Pretoria. His contribution not only earned him recognition during the official launch event, but also a R2 000 voucher for the winning submission.

For the Faculty of Education, Siyanqoba's achievement is a proud reflection of the impact that FEDU graduates continue to make in the education sector and beyond. Commenting on the moment, Prof Josef de Beer described it as *“heart-warming, and it epitomises the spirit of Tshimologo.”*

The event further highlighted the importance of student and staff collaboration in shaping the future of digital learning at the NWU, with ACADEX symbolising a shared vision of innovation, growth, and academic excellence.

A video from the event, shared by Siyanqoba Siganga, further captured the excitement and significance of this memorable occasion.

## FEDU Staff Shine at International Education Conference in Bali

Five staff members from the Faculty of Education - Mr Jan Kruger, Dr Janet Kruger, Dr Jennifer Sheokarah, Dr Merna Meyer and Prof Deon Van Tonder - proudly represented the NWU at the 12th International Conference on Education (ICEDU), held from 26-28 March 2026 in Bali, Indonesia.

ICEDU 2026 brought together educators, researchers, and policymakers from across the globe to engage in discussions on adaptive teaching, innovative research and inclusive policy development aimed at advancing education internationally.

The conference marked a significant achievement for the NWU delegation, with Prof Deon Van Tonder, Dr Janet Kruger,

and Mr Jan Kruger receiving recognition as Session Best Presenters during the conference awards ceremony. Their awards affirmed the quality and impact of their scholarly contributions on an international platform.



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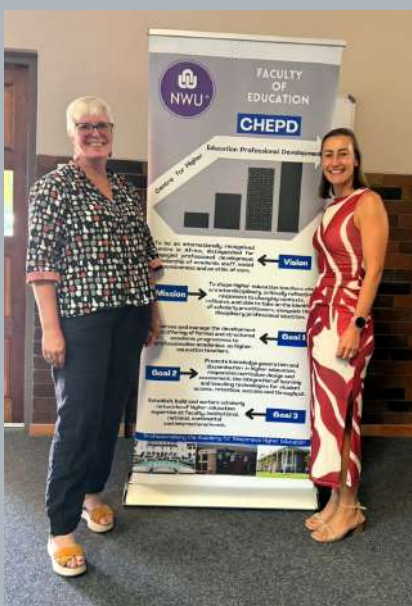
NWU’s involvement within the ICEDU community is set to expand even further, as the conference moves to Bangkok, Thailand, in 2027. Dr Jennifer Sheokarah has been appointed as Country Coordinator for the upcoming conference and will play an important role in facilitating national participation and strengthening international collaboration.



These achievements reflect the Faculty of Education’s continued commitment to scholarly excellence, global engagement and meaningful contributions to the advancement of education.



## CHEPD Hosts Mini-Dissertation Writing Workshop for MEd Students



The Centre for Higher Education Professional Development (CHEPD) recently hosted Prof Sioux McKenna for a Mini-Dissertation Writing Workshop presented to students enrolled in the MEd in Higher Education Studies programme.

The workshop formed part of the 2025 cohort’s third and final Block Week and focused on preparing students for the mini-dissertation component of the programme as they transition into their second year of study.

During the session, Prof McKenna guided students through important aspects of the postgraduate research journey, while also acknowledging the range of emotions often experienced at this stage of study, including excitement, anxiety, curiosity and feeling overwhelmed.

The workshop further explored the expectations of a Master’s degree graduate, emphasising critical engagement with theory and practice, the ability to address complex issues, design and evaluate research, make evidence-based judgements and communicate findings effectively.



Students were encouraged to reflect on their existing coursework and readings when refining their research topics, while practical guidance was provided on mapping the research field, constructing scholarly arguments and developing focused research questions.



Prof McKenna also highlighted the importance of viewing writing as an ongoing practice rather than a fixed skill and encouraged students to engage consistently with their writing throughout the research process.

The workshop concluded with practical advice on planning and managing the mini-dissertation process



over the coming months, providing students with valuable support and guidance as they continue their postgraduate research journeys.

## COMBER Welcomes Newly Appointed Extraordinary Professor, Prof Fiona Blaikie



Professors Darryl Balia, Fiona Blaikie, Lloyd Conley & Mlamuli Hlatshwayo, together with Dr Merna Meyer & Prof Josef de Beer

The Faculty of Education recently welcomed Prof Fiona Blaikie from Brock University in Niagara, Canada, as a newly appointed Extraordinary Professor in COMBER during her visit to the NWU from 13-16 April 2026.

Prof Blaikie brings extensive international academic and leadership experience, having previously served as Dean, Chair of AERI, Associate of the Posthumanism Research Institute, and Chief Examiner for the IBO Visual Arts programme. She is also recognised as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in the Arts and Humanities division.

During her visit, Prof Blaikie engaged with staff and students through a series of in-person meetings and scholarly presentations focused on contemporary issues in education and academic scholarship.

On 14 April 2026, COMBER hosted an interactive workshop titled *Emerging Methods: Worlding and Art-led Inquiries*. Drawing on perspectives from history, politics, sociology, and anthropology, Prof Blaikie explored contemporary global challenges through feminist theoretical frameworks. Her presentation offered valuable insights into shifting identities, being, and becoming within complex socio-political contexts, while highlighting the role of art-led inquiry in understanding and engaging with an increasingly unsettled world.

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Prof Fiona Blaikie engaging attendees during her workshop presentation

This was followed on 15 April 2026 by a Brown Bag Session titled *Teaching in Ontario, Canada: Teacher Preparation, Regulation and Agency - The Ministry, EQAO and the College of Teachers*. During the session, Prof Blaikie shared perspectives on teacher education within the Canadian context and reflected on the impact of economic systems on education and policy.

The Faculty extends its sincere appreciation to Prof Blaikie for her insightful and thought-provoking contributions, which enriched discussions on international teacher education and scholarly engagement.

Special acknowledgement is also extended to Vice-Chancellor Prof Bismark Tyobeka for hosting a luncheon in honour of Prof Blaikie, as well as to Faculty management for their warm welcome and presentation of published works by Prof Josef de Beer. Appreciation is further extended to the COMBER secretariat and directorate, Prof Marinda Neethling, Prof Mlamuli Hlatshwayo and Dr Merna Meyer for coordinating and hosting the visit.

Most importantly, gratitude is expressed to all staff members who attended and actively contributed to the dynamic scholarly discussions throughout the visit.

Please find the links below to recordings of Prof Blaikie's workshop and Brown Bag sessions.

[Brown paper bag Session](#)

[Workshop Session](#)

## Pathways to Equity in and through Life Orientation in South Africa and Health and Physical Education in Sweden - A Collaborative Partnership



Group photo taken during the visit to Keagile Primary School in Ikageng.

Colleagues from the NWU Life Orientation and Physical Education subject group, Prof Julialet Rens, Dr Chanelle Kemp and Mrs Nellytia Motaung-Montshiwa, recently hosted colleagues from Linnaeus University in Sweden as part of an ongoing international research collaboration between the two institutions.

The visit created valuable opportunities for academic exchange, collaborative reflection, institutional engagement, and joint scholarly

development. It further strengthened partnerships focused on equity, teaching and learning, and social justice within education.

Programme highlights included academic meetings and collegial engagement with NWU staff members across various projects and spaces, as well as collaborative article-writing sessions aimed at supporting ongoing and future joint research outputs.



The school visit, collegial discussions & classroom engagements added valuable practical depth to the programme.

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From left to right: Prof Katarina Schenker (Linnaeus University), Prof Newly Marongwe (NWU VC), Prof Julialet Rens (NWU PC), Prof Susanne Linner (Linnaeus University), Mrs Vernique Diedricks (NWU VC), Dr Chanelle Kemp (NWU PC). Front: Mr Helgaardt Meintjes (NWU VC).

The visiting scholars also participated in teaching and learning activities, including classroom attendance and academic discussions with students and colleagues. A meaningful visit to Keagile Primary School in Ikageng provided insight into the local school context and educational practices on the ground.

*The visit highlighted the value of international partnerships in creating spaces for reflective dialogue, shared perspectives & collaborative growth in teaching, learning, support & educational practice.*

In addition, discussions explored the background and continued development of TOP in South Africa, including the role of training and support structures in collaboration with colleagues from Educational Psychology.

Social and relationship-building activities further strengthened professional ties between the participating colleagues and institutions, contributing to a spirit of collaboration and mutual learning.

The visit highlighted the value of international partnerships in creating spaces for reflective dialogue, shared perspectives and collaborative growth in teaching, learning, support and educational practice.



Discussion session and engagement with colleagues from our Vaal Campus



Game drive at Lekwena Wildlife Estate.

## Psycho-Social Education Shine at GROW in Academia Summit



From left to right: Ms Nomsa Mohosho, Ms Vernique Diedricks, Prof Newly Marongwe, and Ms Skyler Pedro.

On 6 March, the School for Psycho-Social Education was proudly represented by its women leaders at the Gender Responsive Opportunities for Women (GROW) in Academia Summit, held in celebration of International Women's Day. The summit brought together academics, institutional leaders, researchers and advocates for meaningful dialogue, shared learning and collective action towards more inclusive and equitable academic environments.

Ms Vernique Diedricks, Subject Group Leader for Life Orientation, and Ms Skyler Pedro, Subject Group Leader for Early Childhood Development and Education, were awarded certificates in recognition of their successful completion of the 10-month GROW in Academia programme.



Funded by the British Council and delivered in collaboration between North-West University and the University of Lincoln, the programme focused on advancing gender-responsive opportunities for women in higher education.

The structured initiative included a series of online and hybrid webinars, as well as a dedicated mentorship component. These engagements supported participants in developing self-awareness, accessing career guidance and strengthening their capacity for academic leadership and career progression.

The achievement reflects the School's ongoing commitment to empowering women in academia and fostering leadership within higher education.

A recap of the day can be viewed [here](#).

## Student Creativity Shines in EDCC413 Podcast Assessment



Listen to the podcast [here](#):

podcast embedded within PowerPoint slides.

Dr M. Shula, Lecturer in Education Leadership and Management based at the Vaal Campus, recently shared an inspiring example of student excellence from the Educational Management and Leadership (EDCC413) module.

For the first assignment, lecturers across all three campuses, including the distance cohort, collaboratively designed a podcast-based assessment. Students were required to select one of three prescribed topics and develop a

One group from the Vaal Campus delivered an outstanding submission that stood out for its creativity, clarity and academic depth. Dr Shula noted that the group's work was graded as the best podcast submission for the module.

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In their podcast, the students explored the applicability of Lewin and Kurt's change model within a school context, using the "*Sunrise Primary School*" scenario provided in the assignment. Their work demonstrated strong conceptual understanding as well as the ability to translate theory into practical educational settings.

Dr Shula reflected that this experience challenged assumptions about student capability, highlighting the importance of recognising students as active contributors to knowledge creation rather than passive recipients of content. He further expressed appreciation for the group's work and indicated his intention to share the podcast across his professional networks in celebration of their achievement.

This submission serves as a powerful reminder of the creativity and potential within our student body. *Halaala!*

## Research Partnership Meeting Strengthens GET Curriculum Collaboration



On 21 April 2026, NWU staff members Dr Thapelo Mokgadi and Mr Sikhumbuso Sibanda hosted representatives from the Department of Basic Education, together with Prof Muchativugwa Hove from the Research Incubation Hub (RIH), for a strategic partnership and research collaboration meeting focused on the General Education and Training (GET) Curriculum.

The purpose of the engagement was to strengthen institutional relationships and advance a proposed collaborative research project structured around four key priorities: *Joint Professional Development Initiatives; Curriculum Alignment and Support; Research and Innovation Partnerships; and Student Teacher Support and Classroom Placement.*

The first phase of the collaboration will focus on joint professional development initiatives, including the co-design and facilitation of workshops, seminars, and enrichment programmes for language teachers in the GET phase. The partners also agreed to explore curriculum alignment between university

programmes and provincial expectations, including CAPS and emerging policy directions.

Further discussions highlighted opportunities for collaborative research and innovation, particularly in literacy, language teaching methodologies, and learner performance, as well as strengthening mentorship and school-based practicum support for student teachers.

It was agreed that follow-up engagements will include joint school visits identified by the Directorate to support teaching and learning, as well as the co-hosting of workshops and seminars. The pilot phase will be implemented in selected schools around Mahikeng to test feasibility and refine the project.

In the longer term, the initiative is expected to be formalised through ethical approval processes and developed into a sustained joint publication and research project, contributing to meaningful impact within the education sector.

A graphic with a blue and orange geometric background. A white box contains the text for the Friday Feel-Good News submission invitation.

Friday Feel-Good News

May 2026

**You are invited to contribute to the Friday Feel-Good News!**

Have a story, event, achievement or act of kindness to share?

Submit it below in Word format (max 300 words). Minimum of 1 relevant photo

[Start now](#)