

FIRST YEAR PROGRAMME 2022

By Shitshembiso Mahlathi

Nelson Mandela University remains committed in prioritising and safeguarding the health and safety of all workers, students, and the public at large. The institution continues to ensure a safe and effective academic year amid the ongoing covid pandemic.

Nelson Mandela University welcomed its first year students towards the end of January who were eased in through a programme called First Year Success, previously known as How2Buddies. The programme began online on the 24th of January and on the 31st, orientation through this programme was conducted both online and mask to mask.

Both online and mask to mask, the first year's accomplishment was recognized. An online first-year student success program was offered from Monday, January 24, 2022, through Friday, February 4, 2022. A quarantine period for face-to-face or Mask2Mask first-year success programs was ran from Friday, January 28 through Sunday, February 6. The face-to-face first-year student success program began on Monday, February 7 and ran through Friday, February 11.

Everyone must wear a mask, exercise physical distance, and sanitize their hands according to national alert level requirements. Similarly, the University will follow COVID-19 compliance rules, which includes ensuring that the University's venues meet ventilation requirements, physical distance requirements, and all other hygiene measures.



Photo: Nelson Mandela University First year programme

To ensure the safety of students and employees, the University has taken steps to limit the number of academic events on campus. In general, some study programs will be entirely online, while others will combine online content with face-to-face and experiential learning. Students are not required to attend school if a program just offers online learning, allowing them to learn from the comfort of their own homes. They will receive learning and psychosocial support over the internet. If a program requires mask to mask communication, their faculties will alert them.

NEWS

03 GRADUATION

OPINION

05 POST-GRADUATION STRESS: WHAT NOW?

LIFESTYLE & ENTERTAINMENT

08 BUDGET TIPS FOR STUDENTS 2022

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

11 CRYPTOZOOLOGY: THE SCIENCE MYTHBUSTERS

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

We hope you had a wonderful break with your family and friends. For those continuing with their studies, Godspeed and may good things happen to you. Those done with their studies, may your new journey be ever great, full of prosperity and strength to win over your hurdles.

As we welcome the new year, 2022, we also welcome new Madibaznews family members. In the same breath, we would like to wish the outgoing a splendid year ahead. We thank you for your dedication and the wonderful work you have brought into the family, your legacy shall live on.

On that very same note, I will also be concluding my tenure as the Editor-in-Chief of Madibaznews and I will be succeeded by Leigh-Nakeetah Jason who is no stranger to the family. I cannot fully express how much I enjoyed being part of the family, interacting with you the readers, and making sure the work gets done giving you the best content with every edition. Thank you for being part of the family and may you continue doing so as MadibazNews is about to get way better than it has ever been. Thank you!

Ashley Malepe



Photo: collinsdictionary.com

GRADUATION

By Sisipho Magadla

Congratulations are never more appropriate than when accompanied by a small party. A pat on the back after a long day's work usually motivates one to perform even better, to work much harder. Since the outbreak of the pandemic in 2020, virtual graduations have become the standard, taking place the same way traditional graduation ceremonies do. The main difference is that there is no staging, no venue preparations, and no strolling onto the stage as there was previously.

The energy and the excitement are no longer the same. The virtual graduation ceremonies do not only affect students' academic performance, but they also discourage students when it comes to preparing ceremonies for celebrating their achievements. It is unfortunate that most students who were supposed to graduate in the Autumn 2020, Summer 2020 and Autumn 2021 were unable to get the experience of the contact graduation ceremony.

As the vaccination process gains momentum and the President decreases restrictions, Nelson Mandela University is hoping to bring back the mask-to-mask graduation sessions. Starting with the graduation ceremony that was hosted for Master's and Doctoral students on 14 - 15 December 2021 and Undergraduates graduating in Autumn 2022. They will also host special celebratory ceremonies for graduates who graduated virtually. The institution promises to adhere to COVID-19 regulations.



NEW RESIDENCE FOR NELSON MANDELA STUDENTS

By Ashley Malepe

Nelson Mandela University opens a new 500-bed student accommodation in Summerstrand in a bid to meet the increased demand for residences as access to education continues to widen. The new student accommodation situated behind Ocean Science Campus and Student Sanlam Village(SSV) includes “various sustainability interventions and uses a novel construction method, it forms part of the University’s broader infrastructure plans, based on its award-winning urban design framework. The latter provides a blueprint for the institution’s long-term development of campus spaces, ” stated in a news statement by the institution.

The 500-bed residence has four blocks, each consisting of 15 to 16 pods. Each pod accommodates eight students in four double rooms. The eight students in each pod will share common rooms, kitchen and bathroom facilities. The residence includes quarters for residence staff and single rooms for students, there are special provisions made for differently abled students. Nelson Mandela University remains committed to making the institution environment-friendly setting, and to also combat the water shortages that Eastern Cape faces, as such, the new residence will have access to borehole water which will feed all the toilets and water tanks. “Potable water tanks have also been installed to assist in times of emergency, especially considering the ongoing water scarcity and power outages. While budget would not allow the incorporation of PV solar panels, the three-storey pods have been constructed to allow for their introduction at a later stage,” says the University.

The first occupants of the new residence include medical school students and those from the Sarah Baartman residence, which is undergoing renovations.

The new student accommodation is the first completed project out of three projects that are expected to be completed this year, 2022. The second project with 300 beds in the same vicinity, will be opened in April. Thereafter, a further 1000 beds final project is due for completion in October.



Photo: Ashley Britton

POST-GRADUATION STRESS: WHAT NOW?

By Azizphozethu Gwija

The academic year is over and final year and postgraduate students are left with the question of what now? Where do they go from here? The unemployment statistics are not helping the anxiety that students are faced with during and after completing their studies. Believe it or not, "post-graduation anxiety" is a thing. While it might not be an official term, it is real. Many students grapple with anxiety and stress that comes with internal and external expectations stemming from post-graduation unemployment, the pressure to have your life together and, the sometimes-dramatic transition from university to the "adult world".

There are various ways to coping with post-graduation stress and the first step is acceptance. As an individual you need to accept that this big change that you are going through is scary and that things might not be going the way you planned. Once you accept your situation it will be easier for you to find ways to cope and to formulate an action plan for your future. Secondly, you need to have patience and not rush yourself to figure things out. Rather take time for yourself and focus on yourself so that you can figure out what you really want and how to get it.

Everyone in life has different life paths. Some achieve all their goals in one smooth transition but for others it is a long journey with humps, tunnels, and closed doors but we all get to our destinations eventually.



HUMAN TRAFFICKING, KIDNAPPING & CHILD ABDUCTION

Photo: 123rf.com/Tinnakorn Jorruang

By Liyema Mpompi

According to crime statistics, over 2000 kidnapping cases were reported to the South African Police Service over the period of July - September 2021. Following the staggering kidnapping of Moti brothers and many more young children; it has been noticed that there is an on-going syndicate that is targeting to abduct the most vulnerable groups of people. What remains unclear are the real intentions behind the concerning patterns. We do understand that when kidnapped get killed and their body parts are sold, or they may be used for human trafficking. In many instances it is children from wealthy families that are targeted, and in these cases the intentions are for a ransom.

Kidnapping for ransom is not a new problem, but has become a growth industry worldwide, to the extent that there are now several international insurance companies providing personal and corporate kidnapping insurance policies. Risk insurance, and the provision of related risk and crisis management services, has become an established industry and it is estimated that as much as 1 billion rand is paid each year in premiums globally.

During the festive season we saw a spark in numbers of kidnappings taking place because of many reasons, one being the fact that children playing were not in school premises during the day where they are presumed to be safe children in the streets which happens to be the hotspots where perpetrators have been reportedly committing the abductions. There has been growing calls for government intervention on this epidemic of kidnappings & abductions of children, women and vulnerable groups since the perpetrators are always carrying dangerous weapons, making it practically impossible for people to protect themselves.



POST-GRADUATION ANXIETIES

By Lindokuhle Frank

Many students are concerned about the looming academic year in 2022, while others are looking forward to their graduation celebration. The many sleepless hours spent studying for tests and exams, the stress, worry, and challenges experienced, but also the friendships and memories acquired throughout higher education are a period that one will never forget. Numerous students are looking forward to the end of the chapter and receiving their qualification, while others are excited to continue their education, others are preparing to gain work experience and find jobs, the outlook for many is gloomy.

According to statistics South Africa, in the third quarter of 2021, unemployment rate has risen to 34.9%, the highest recorded rate since 2008, and the graduate unemployment rate at 12.5%. Many graduates find themselves in the cycle of sending CV after CV with no luck, sitting at home for years unemployable because of the lack of experience, skill, and training. Many find themselves doing odd jobs that are far from their qualification to support themselves and their families.

What are the options for dealing with the rising number of unemployed young people and graduates? There is a need for activities aimed at unemployed graduates. Due to their lack of work experience, these efforts must be able to assist them in identifying areas of concern and identifying factors that will assist them in being successful when applying for jobs. Training that will assist them in acquiring skills that they will need when searching for jobs and once they have found work is required. Unemployed youth are also advised to create a LinkedIn profile to accelerate chances of finding employment as most recruiters utilize this application.



BUDGET TIPS FOR STUDENTS 2022

By Shitshembiso Mahlathi

The New Year has arrived, and it's a good idea to start the year off on a healthy financial footing, which may be achieved through planning. Although budgeting may sound boring (it is something your parents always told you to do but you never did), there are various benefits to keeping track of and restricting your spending. A healthy budget is vital whether you are trying to save for a big purchase like a summer trip or a new gaming console, or you just want to be prepared in case of an emergency.

You can make a budget in four easy steps. The first step is to figure out how much money you're going to make. Consider all conceivable sources of revenue because this will set the limits of your spending. Second, figure out your outgoings, which entails determining where all your money is going. You can either sum up all your previous purchases on your bank account or just give an estimate of how much you think you can spend on each category.

Thirdly, after you have all your costs in front of you, you must calculate your weekly budget; it must be broken down into weekly budgets. Calculate your total revenue for one academic term, subtract your necessary costs for the same period, and divide by the number of weeks in a term. Finally, define some goals for yourself. These goals will help you evaluate whether you need to budget or cut back on particular expenses. Once you get into the swing of things, you'll find it strangely exciting to watch your bank account steadily grow, and you'll ultimately stop worrying about splurging on luxuries every other day.

ONE MINUTE MANAGING

By Zukisani Gali

Managing in general is difficult. There are two types of managers – one that looks at their employees as an asset, and others who allow employees to do what they are capable of, all things developmental. Kenneth H. Blanchard and Spencer Johnson help in this regard, producing a book titled “One Minute Manager”. The book lists and explains effective ways to manage and keep things under control.

The book considers three fundamental rules and aspects of managements. As a student it is a great idea to develop yourself beyond the classroom. A young man went around and asked various managers of various groups and sections what their strategies are. After concluding his journey, he had heard of a manager that believed in “one minute management”. Out of curiosity, he studied this and found amazing secrets and knowledge which aided in his self-development.

This book comes highly recommended if management is your forte – you will never go wrong. As with education, lectures and theory is never enough, going above and beyond the classroom is the method that will lead you to success. All the tips and tricks you need as a manager you will find in Blanchard and Johnson’s work. This book is available online and at all leading bookstores – take the leap and learn to lead!

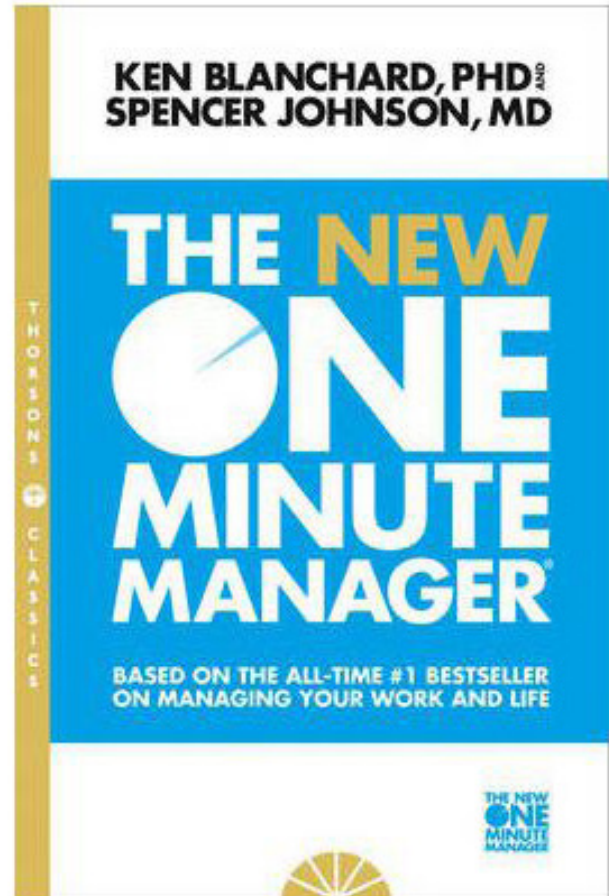


Photo: Takealot.com



CHALLENGE 2022 WITH SELF LOVE

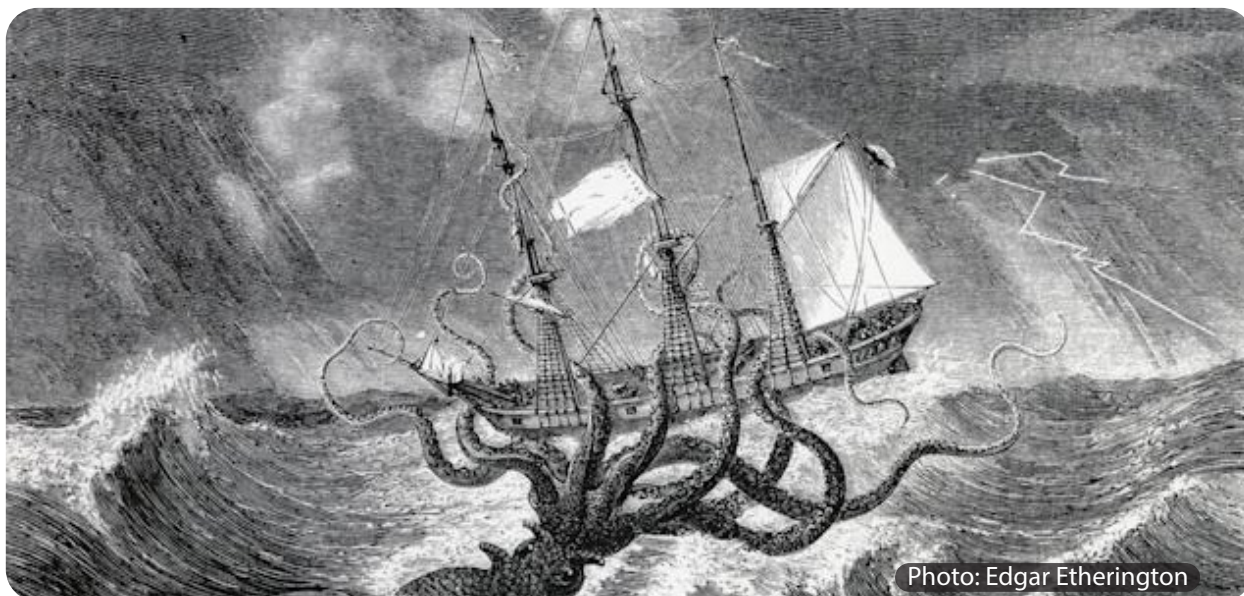
By Azuka Manqola

Upon entering the new year, you should manifest greatness, gratitude, prosperity, and new beginnings. Let 2022 be your year and be proud of yourself. To grow, you must reflect and change.

This year should be the one where you escape your comfort zone, go out there and try new things. If you are thinking of starting a business, then do so! Want to start a YouTube channel? Do it now! You are never ready enough to start something. When manifesting greatness, you believe that what you want to do will lead to success. Manifesting gratitude means that you see fruitful or things pertaining to good connotations in your actions. Manifesting prosperity means that you have a positive mindset towards the goals you want to achieve. Before and after manifestation, you should be grateful.

We should all be thankful that we have made it thus far, especially during a pandemic, and we should remember that the opportunity to live is simply a blessing. So let us build ourselves, go outside and manifest! Remember that everything has its own starting point, so do not compare your journey with someone else's, be you, do you and most importantly, manifest only great things.

Have a wonderful new year.



CRYPTOZOLOGY: THE SCIENCE MYTHBUSTERS

By Hlengiwe Phiri

For centuries we have been entertained by tales and movies about creatures such as Big Foot, werewolves, Lochness monsters, and more but have you ever questioned their legitimacy? Well cryptozoology is dedicated to answering all those questions and more. Cryptozoology is a pseudoscience on a never-ending pursuit to find the existence of elusive organisms that roam around the planet and through it a variety of cryptids were proven to be real.

In the previous decades, stories about the kraken (a giant squid-like sea monster, popular in Scandinavian folklore) spread like wildfire which created a division amongst people, some believed it existed others were against the notion. This debate was silenced in 2006 when Japanese researchers caught a giant squid which is what the Kraken is based on. From there on there have been sightings of dead giant squids washed ashore. In South Africa an ancient fish believed to have been extinct, the coelacanth, was found thriving in the ocean further adding to the discoveries

Prior the 1790's Australians spoke of a duck, beaver, and otter looking animal. This made the world think it was a gimmick but to their surprise this animal is what we know as a platypus, and it is no longer classified as a cryptid. In the Indonesian island locals reported the sightings of a fierce giant lizard that ate everything leaving no evidence behind, this shocked the biology world that scientists thought it was just folklore, it was in 1910 that these lizards were introduced to the world and named the Komodo dragons.

Cryptozoology has answered many of our question and brought clarity to the science world. Although it is pseudoscience it acts as a line that separates science from mythology and continuously proves that the lack of evidence doesn't imply that there's no existence.



Photo: University of Witwatersrand

HOMINID CHILD SKULL REVEALS THE ENIGMATIC LIFE OF HOMO NALEDI

By Hlengiwe Phiri

The Rising star cave system in Gauteng revealed to us one of its many hidden historical treasures; deep in a narrow cave fissure, about 12 metres from Homo naledi's discovery area, lied the scattered skull fragments of a young hominid.

Child Leti, short for Letimela meaning 'the lost one' in Setswana, lived in the middle Pleistocene and is believed to have been between the age of 4 and 6 prior to their death according to their skull size and baby teeth emerging to adult teeth. Child Leti belongs to the Hominidae family similar to humans and other great apes, meaning they were able to walk upright, and they used tools. The discovery of a baby skull could tell us a lot about how Homo naledi species used to live. Furthermore, this could give clarity to the identity of modern Homo sapiens and where we inherited our behaviours from. Leti's gender is currently unknown although Dr Lee Berger who led the project refers to Leti as 'her'. This discovery was astounding because well fossilized young bones are hard to find due to them being underdeveloped meaning they are fragile and thin; this makes it nearly impossible for them to last for a long period.

Scientists and palaeontologists hypothesize that the discovery of the hominid remains could indicate that the rising star cave system was a burial site for the species. What influenced this hypothesis is the finding of the hominids' remains and now adding to the list, the child's remains, in a single area that is mostly inaccessible. The absence of any tools or artifacts, and the lack of evidence showing the involvement of animals that could have possibly carried the bones to that area further supports this hypothesis. It is believed that if this hypothesis is correct this could lead to a more detailed understanding of anthropology, and it could possibly help us in shaping our future.

This also leads us to address the notion of digital personas, as most of us have one. A personality that is specifically molded for the digital space. This persona can be swayed to suit the specific digital space. So, in a way this presents itself as some sort of a performance but again life in its entirety is a whole circus of performances.

I am in no way saying that technology is negative, all I am trying to do is evaluate this phenomenon that has become part of our constant daily lives.



Photo: Faeron Wheeler

RESEARCHERS OF THE PAST

By Asithandile Ntsondwa

The thought of going back to the past to rediscover how the world was before what we know has always been a wondrous thought. The ability to dig up old bones and reconstruct animals that lived before us and discover ancient tombs of historic humans has always been a fascination to humans. With disciplines such as archaeology and palaeontology it is all made possible. Just like the palaeontology many of you might know, palaeoecology studies past life but focuses more on the interactions of organisms between each other and their environment over the geological timescale.

In 2019, Nelson Mandela University opened its doors to the palaeoecology laboratory to enrich the Quaternary research database of southern Africa with primary focus on the Cape south coast of South Africa and Cape Floristic Region. The laboratory is led by Dr Lynne Quick and senior laboratory technician, Ms Erin Hilmer. Several undergraduate and postgraduate students eager to learn about palaeoecology have joined Dr Quick and Ms Erin Hilmer. Palaeoecology is the study of past ecological changes spanning from the Quaternary till the Holocene (500 million years till present day).

The laboratory has been set to expose students to the many wonders of the discipline. One of those ways includes field trips to places such as Zuurberg Mountains located near the Addo National Park, to sample undisturbed sediment sequence using various methods. Not only are students shown the field and laboratory work, but they are also given the opportunity to interact with top researchers in the field from South Africa and across the globe.

“My experience can only be described as eye opening and exciting. The field trips allow me to not only engage with other researchers and collaborators, but it also gives me the chance to experience what it means to get your hands dirty,” said Mr Luke Nel, a Botany Honours student with a passion for palaeoecology. Mr Nel also added that he mostly looks forward to the future as there are countless opportunities at the palaeolab waiting for students to grab on. There is a lot to be discovered beyond those laboratory doors, it just needs people that are curious and ready to discover.

If you would like to know more about paleoecology in general you can visit the African Centre of Coastal Palaeoscience’s website to view publications and current research that is being done: <https://accp.mandela.ac.za>. If you are more interested to see what the Nelson Mandela University’s palaeolab research team gets up to, you can visit their social media pages: instagram - @thepaleolab, Facebook – The Palaeolab.