

## MANDATORY ACADEMIC VACCINATION?

By Lindokuhle Frank

**Many students had to acquaint themselves with their institution's vaccination policy when South African universities reopened. Many students wondered whether they needed to be vaccinated for Covid-19 in order to gain entry to their university campus.**

Some of the best universities in the country have set policies concerning vaccination. The University of Cape Town drafted a policy back in 2021, that stated that access to campus and residences will require valid proof of vaccination with a vaccine approved by the World Health Organization or a valid exemption.

This policy is effective from 1 March 2022 and allows those who are against mandatory vaccination to appeal, stating valid reasons why they will not vaccinate.

Rhodes University, has made COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for all students and employees. To complete their online enrolment at Rhodes University, students must have their vaccination status verified or an authorised exemption.

Non-vaccinated students were unable to complete registration without providing their vaccination information, and all employees, students, and visitors must present vaccination certificates to enter campus.



Image Source: avera.org

Nelson Mandela University however, is one of the few institutions that have not yet implemented mandatory vaccination and a vaccination policy for their students.

The University has not disclosed whether they will consider mandatory vaccination in the coming months, however, those who registered in registration venues had to present their vaccination certificate.

In an interview with Daily Maverick, Zandile Mbabela, Nelson Mandela University's communication manager, commented that, "there is also presently no COVID-19 vaccination policy for the higher education sector that we are aware of."

However, the university has been strongly advocating for students, staff, and the Nelson Mandela Bay community to vaccinate, so that campus can be a safe environment for all students.

### NEWS

3 THE ONGOING CRY FROM NURSING STUDENTS

### OPINION

9 ONLINE LEARNING. A BLESSING OR A STRUGGLE?

### LIFESTYLE AND ENTERTAINMENT

13 ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY

### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

17 THE PROMISING FUTURE OF STEM CELL RESEARCH

### SPORTS

22 AN ENTICING MADIBAZ SPORT FORECAST

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News for the students, by the students

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**LETTER FROM THE EDITOR**

Welcome to the first official edition of MadibazNews for 2022! But that is not the only thing that is new. We are now boasting an amazing and immediately dedicated and wonderful new team that is sure to carry us through the rest of the year.

As your new Editor-In-Chief, I would like to thank the previous Editor-In-Chief Ashley Malepe, for guiding me through this exciting new path, and entrusting with the baton. MadibazNews has been a home to me for the past few years, and I cannot wait to make it home for everyone else.

With the start of the academic year, I wish all students, especially first years, a wonderful and fruitful year. This year the University is proud to announce that we are gradually starting mask-to-mask lectures, slowly returning to normalcy, so hopefully we will be able to greet each other on campus soon! Otherwise, with the first semester already in full swing, I would like to remind everyone to stay strong despite all the circumstances the world has thrown at us over the past two years. We have done it before and we can do it again!

Stay safe, wear your mask and stay strong!

**Leigh Nakeetah Jason****THE ONGOING CRY FROM NURSING STUDENTS**

Image Source: Mandela Web

**By Lungile Mhlongo**

**Practicals are provided to nursing students as part of their education to help them accomplish their degree. Student's complete practicals at a number of locations and live in a variety of homes across the province. It has been discovered that nursing students pay for practicals out of their own wallets, spending around R150 every week.**

**Nursing students do not feel safe with the transportation that they use and pay for themselves. It is said that they wake up early in the morning to attend practical's in places like Provincial Clinic, Govan Mbeki, Korsten, Livingstone Hospital and other places.**

They use taxis or ubers in order to get there in which is not safe for them as they are afraid of being robbed by drivers. Sometimes they knock off late and still have to take public transport to their residences. "Other days we attend from 07:00 to 19:00 and still have to use these public transport that is not safe for us, even the speed that taxi drivers sometimes use is not quite safe at all" said nursing student Asanga Mandonyela.

The nursing students also reveal that they have cried aloud to the Student Representatives Council (SRC) about this issue, pleading for help because it is affecting their finances and sometimes jeopardizing their safety, but they feel ignored because the SRC has done nothing to help them resolve the problem. It clearly demonstrates that nursing students have a significant issue since they are unable to complete their practicals due to lack of transportation supplied by the school.

When questioned, the SRC Health Faculty representative Mr Lwandile Dlamini said they have engaged the University and the Health Science Faculty and the response they received was that the budget is not enough to cover all students involved, therefore leaving those placed in private hospitals and hospitals in the location with no funding. Dlamini says that they tabled solutions to source funding which included engaging with the Eastern Cape Department of Health but were not kindly received.

When contacted, the manager of the Port Elizabeth Provincial Hospital's Nursing Department stated that they only provide practicals to students and that they are not involved in the transportation issue. The Eastern Cape Health Department was contacted for comment at the time of publication, but no response was received.





Imagery: Eugene Coetzee

## NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY'S GARDEN OF NURTURE

By Luphelo Zendile

**Nelson Mandela University has a diverse group of students from all walks of life, including foreign students from various backgrounds pursuing a higher education. While some go hungry, research was done to see what the Nelson Mandela University community has done to assist such students.**

Nelson Mandela once said, "Freedom is meaningless if people cannot put food in their stomachs".

Students cannot be expected to study or write tests or exams while they suffer from hunger. It is said that for many years, the university has been engaging with different programmes to combat this issue. The Student Health Services endeavour to ensure that students that do not have access to food receive adequate nutrition. This is the top priority within Student Health Service.

Counting from many initiatives for this issue, the Nelson Mandela Organic Vegetable Garden aims to keeping student hunger at bay, has taken root to benefit dozens of students looking for a healthier bite amid fertilised and commercialised options. One of the gardens is standing in the middle of the shade at the back of the Sanlam Student Village, close to the University's South Campus.

The man in charge, Mr Van de Walt, said that the main objective was to produce vegetables packed with nutrition value. "I remember when my grandmother used to pick tomatoes on our farm you could immediately smell that she would be picking tomatoes even if you were on the other side of the house. So I want to try to get the food to taste like the food tasted then". This inspired Mr van de Walt and grew his dedication. This proves that the university is doing everything possible to assist its pupils in a variety of ways.

## REASONS TO BE PROUD: WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



Image Source: zazimcreative

By Leigh Nakeetah Jason

**In 2017, history was made at Nelson Mandela University when Dr Sibongile Muthwa was handed the keys to the kingdom, and took over the helm of Vice-Chancellor and title of Principal. This was so special to the university because Dr Muthwa has an amazing reputation, being the former Director of the University of Fort Hare Institute of Government, the former Director-General of the Eastern Cape Provincial Government and the former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University.**

With such an amazing professional history, staff and students alike could rest assured that the academic ship would be set and steered on the right course. As much as Dr Muthwa was an amazing addition to the already amazing team at Nelson Mandela University, that was not the history we were referring to.

When Dr Muthwa took over as Vice-Chancellor, she became the face of Nelson Mandela University and one of the top three leadership roles, with the other two also occupied by women! Respectively, Chancellor Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi and Chair of Council Ambassador Nozipho January-Bardhill stand next to her. As with Dr Muthwa, both these ladies' roles in the University is to be rejoiced as they both have a substantial amount of experience in the professional industry.

In addition to being the Chancellor, Chancellor Fraser-Moleketi is also the Chair of the UN Committee of Experts of Public Administration, Chairman of Tiger Brands; the Independent Director of the Standard Bank Group and Standard Bank South Africa amongst many other accomplished roles. Chair of Council Ambassador January-Bardhill is no exception to lists of accomplishments, boasting the roles of director of companies of Mercedes Benz, and NED on board of MTN Foundation.

Between these three ladies, Nelson Mandela University could not be in better hands. For the first time, the university has two of the four Deputy Vice-Chancellor roles occupied by women, as are the three of the seven executive deans. If this is not a reason to be proud, and excited, we do not know what is!





Image Source: Keira Burton

## CRIME ON CAMPUS

By S'phindile Mhlongo

**According to extensive research and interviews, the percentage of Nelson Mandela University on campus students who are robbed has increased drastically, with a higher peak in boys than girls.**

A 20 year old male who was standing with his girlfriend near Lilian Ngoyi Residence, saw a green car approaching and two guys came out of the car holding knives and instructed the boyfriend to hand them his phone, the guy refused and he had to fight back to save his girlfriend and himself. He also added, "In my surprise this happened around 4pm during daylight so these guys seem to know their story".

Further research shows that another hotspot is near building 35 and the Lilian Ngoyi Lab. Another male student was robbed of his laptop while he was on his way back from studying in building 35, and the robbers were driving a green car as well. He added, "The worst is that I had to submit an Assignment at 12:00am on the same day my laptop was taken ". This has affected the University students on academically; they can no longer go to labs when it is necessary, even during the day, because these people seem to work extra hours.

Students are very concerned about their safety. A report was brought to the security booth and they were told to tighten their security by checking and verifying cars that enter so they can keep students safe. The Institution also encourages students to not walk alone even during the day, and to avoid going out when it is not necessary. When going out, students should leave important belongings at home, like phone and laptops.



Image Source: George Clerk

## EVERY DROP COUNTS

By S'phindile Mhlongo

**Water problems hit Nelson Mandela University, towards the end of the second semester. To continue delivering the services to students, both Residence Managers and the Institution have to develop new techniques of conserving water.**

The water crisis had a negative impact on the University student's health and academics. One of the interviewed students residing on campus said that, "I had to use cold water for a whole week which led to me having a very strong flu and also my sinuses were irritated, when I reported to the Residence Manager, she took me straight to hospital to get help. Then I couldn't even focus on my academics because I was sick and admitted".

The University had to execute water-saving measures, including the installation of JOJO tanks in each house. Future water shortages cannot be predicted therefore students should continue to conserve water by reporting any toilet and sink leaks, taking shorter showers (7-10 minutes), turning off the water while brushing their teeth or shaving, not letting the water run while washing dishes (using a dish), doing laundry only when necessary, and purchasing water storage containers.

The University would appreciate any questions, concerns and suggestions on more ways of how we can save water.



## USE WATER SPARINGLY!

By Leigh Nakeetah Jason

**On the 21st of February 2022, an alarming and scary notice was put out by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality stating that the current water flowing within the taps around the city was unsafe to consume.** After vigorous testing and sampling of the water within Gqerberha, the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality noticed that certain microbiological limits were exceeded.

“It is through this process that the Municipality has come to detect failures in water compliance with SANS standards. These results came against earlier results that certified our water as safe to drink. This then means that, for now, the water coming out of our distribution system could present a risk to human health if ingested”.

This news sent local citizens into a frenzy and all companies and retail/grocery stores were filled with people who wanted to buy filtered water, which treaded the dangerous waters of COVID-19 regulations.

Fortunately, there are other ways to make sure that the water flowing in one’s household is safe to consume and work with, not only in dire times like these, but every day life.

As stated by the Nelson Mandela Bay Municipality, boiling water is one of the best ways to make sure that water is clean. Boiling water is sufficient to kill all types

of bacteria and viruses that may be harmful.

Bring water to a boil for about three minutes at best, and allow it to cool naturally before storing it in a clean container with a cover.

To combat the taste of the flat boiled water, you may add a pinch of salt to every liter.

Another method to purifying water is adding household bleach. Although not advised, you can use regular, unscented bleach and according to the label’s bleach percentage, you add drops of bleach to the water through a medicine

dropper. After diluting the water, you stir and let it stand for about fifteen minutes. Additionally, there are means like water disinfection tablets and Iodine, but the most important tool you should have in your house is to use water sparingly. As shown, anything can happen.

So make sure to close the tap when not in use, flush only when necessary and use water sparingly!.



Source: brakpanherald

## ONLINE LEARNING. A BLESSING OR A STRUGGLE?



Imagery: Unknown

By Monica Lungile Mhlongo

**Being a first-year student is difficult. There are several problems that first-year students face. Online learning has made it more difficult for first-year students to adjust to university life.**

Some students come from poor backgrounds where they are not familiar with some things. Some of the first year students lack resources to attend online learning like smartphones, laptops and any other electronic devices. They also face challenges of learning to use Microsoft Teams, creating student emails and even logging into student portal.

Some students struggle to adjust to university because they are in a new unfamiliar environment; others come from different provinces, making it extremely difficult for them to adjust to the new environment, including new people, new places, and even different weather conditions, which negatively impacts their health. “The first time I came here in Port Elizabeth, it was difficult for me because I had to make new acquaintances, get adjusted to the location, and it’s even harder to make good friends,” Reon Smith said.

It had been noticed that some first year students end up developing bad habits, do things that they never did before just because they are trying to get friends or to fit in. Others end up drinking, smoking and partying every day because of the type of friends that they have and also trying to be like them, peer pressure.



## HOW BIPOLARISM CAN AFFECT YOUR LIFE AS A STUDENT



Source: labblog

By Kutlwano Makgae

**Bipolarism is a mental health disorder involving extreme mood swings and is also sometimes referred to as manic depression. Awareness of this mental health issue is less advocated for compared to the other known mental health issues. Some people don't even recognize it nor associate it with a mental health disorder and sometimes characterize this disorder with personality traits, due to having little knowledge.**

I have always noticed that I was different from other kids from a young age. I didn't tolerate being around people, but, at times, I would feel so lonely that I would want to be around people. I often had episodes with mood swings. This escalated when I got to

university.

The transition from being a learner to a student was very overwhelming for me, and not only that but the new environment of being in a foreign place where I knew no one affected me. Almost everyone around me was speaking a completely different language from mine. This forced me (and probably many others alike) to communicate in English full time, and, sharing a room with a complete stranger was just too much for me to adapt to.

My bipolarism level high and I used isolation as a coping mechanism, which did not work out well. When you are not in a good state of mind, you tend to forget what you are even doing in varsity in the first place,

which leads to a bad academic performance.

As a young adult, I realized that something was wrong with me and after talking to my family about it I sought professional help. That was the best decision I've ever made because my life has never been any better. I have people I call friends now; I'm doing well academically and I am enjoying my varsity life.

I noticed that in a foreign place where you are thousands of kilometres away from home, you need to make it a home away from home. And to do that, you need to interact with people and find the right kind of people for you. So, if you notice any signs of mood swings that come more often then, I think it is time to seek professional help.

## RECOGNIZING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (GBV) FROM AN UNSEEN LENS



Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-60192303>

By Kutlwano Makgae

**Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is an act of violence perpetrated against a person based on their sexual orientation or other matters involving their gender. GBV is a broad and most spoken about topic, and because of its broadness, some GBV related issues end up not being addressed. The related issue such as sexual abuse in relationships specifically. This is an issue that is not really seen as an issue because of society's belief, hence it is time to recognize GBV from an unseen lens. Society has always had an impact on people's lives. Although, today's youth is rebellious and tend to make their own rules and decisions.**

There are some society dogmas that they tend to not turn a blind eye to. One especially is where sexual abuse is normalized in relationships. Society has always believed in patriarchy and this belief escalated to a point whereby females are forced to feel inferior to men even in relationships hence the normalization of sexual abuse in relationships. Research shows that there are fewer reported cases of this GBV issue because the victims are scared of what people will say when they accuse their partners of such a crime.

Looking at the latest scandal in the news of the famous English football player Mason Greenwood who has sexually abused his partner, we can see how everyone on Twitter disregarded the accusations and accused his girlfriend of being an attention seeker until she provided proof. That's when tables turned, and they believed her, but some still disregarded the proof and called her a drama queen, how absurd. I, myself, was a victim of such a crime as a first-year. Everyone that knew me and the perpetrator whom I used to date advised not to report it because it's not a big deal.

Being stubborn and very aware of the situation, I stood my ground and took the matters to the higher authorities. No one supported me, and they all thought I would lose the case, but the truth always prevails, so I ended up winning the case and getting my justice. Beware of this kind of behaviour in relationships. Your partner should respect your boundaries even when it comes to intimacy. No means No – even to your partner.



## MALE BIRTH CONTROL PILL TRIALS



By Liyema Mpompi

**In South Africa, we have witnessed a growing number of unwanted pregnancies and girls finding out they are pregnant at a very early stage. These statistics are traced through the number of people who file up for adoption and abortion.**

Various interventions have been made available to prevent such circumstances, including encouraging people to use condoms as protection etc. Some have been successful and some have not.

Condoms work up to 98% of the time to block conception; and protect you from Sexual Transmitted Diseases like herpes and chlamydia. But if you don't wear protection the right way every time you have intercourse your chances for an accidental pregnancy can be surprisingly high. Some estimates put it at nearly 1 in 5.

The ongoing debate is how far we have gotten with male birth control pills. Various

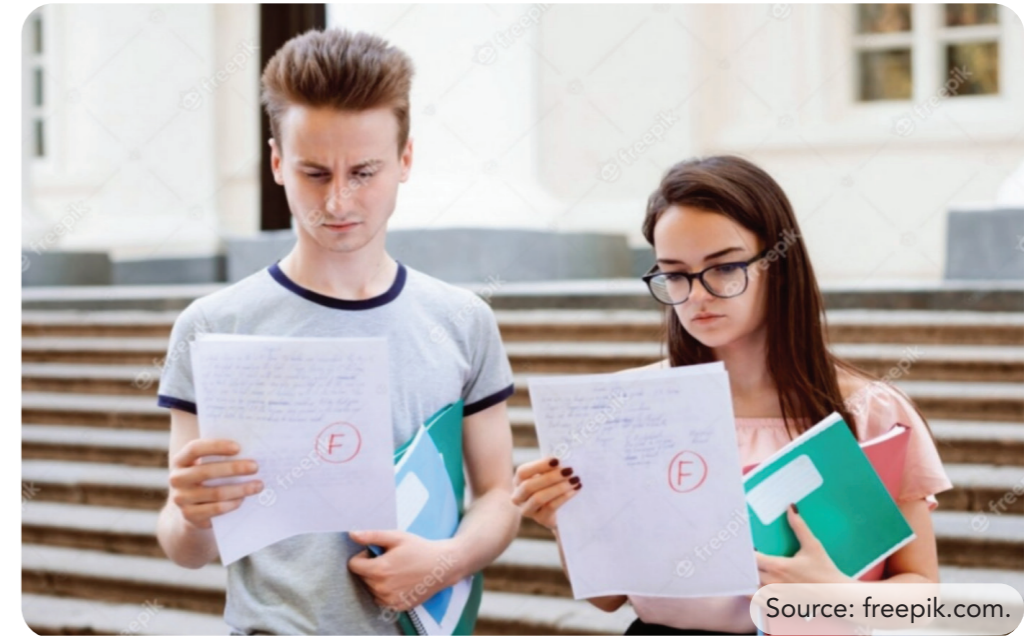
attempts have been made to create a safe male birth control pill as an alternative measure of women being the only ones to take preventative medication. The first problem was participation hesitancy. We have seen men being resistant to the trials because of possible side effects.

The other birth control alternatives that are being looked into are vas occlusive injected gels they are injected into the vas deferens that blocks sperms from travelling into seminar fluids and the other is a topical gel that is meant to be rubbed on your shoulders which blocks testosterone in the testicles.

The main point is the sense of urgency to assist and reduce the national crisis of unwanted pregnancy by introducing these birth control pills and that so far no male birth pill has been made for use as strict and thorough research is still being done.

Source: Getty Images.

## ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY



By Luyolo Mapekula

**“They see my disability; I see my ability. They call me disabled; I call myself differently-abled. There are some incidents that happen in your life. Those incidents break you, deform you, but they mould you into the best version of you.” – Muniba Mazari**

Muniba Mazari is an activist from Pakistan and let me briefly tell you about her life story. She got married when she was 18 years of age because her father wanted her to (arranged marriage) – and of course, it was never a happy marriage. Two years later, she was involved in a car accident.

She sustained multiple injuries: “...the wrist was fractured; shoulder bone and collar bone were fractured. My whole rib cage got fractured and because of the rib cage injury, my lungs and liver were badly injured. I couldn't breathe. I lost urinal bowel control, that is why I have to wear the bag wherever I go. Three vertebrae of my backbone were completely crushed, and I got paralyzed for the rest of my life.” – Muniba Mazari.

These are some of the injuries that she sustained. To watch her full video, search “Muniba Mazari – they see my disability.”

Regardless of her injuries, she started painting. She joined the National TV of Pakistan as an anchorperson, and she did a lot of shows. She became the National Goodwill Ambassador for UN Women, Pakistan.

When things do not work out the way you want them to, do not stress yourself and do not give up – everything happens for a reason. Try. Try. Try again.

When things don't work out the first time, that does not mean that they won't work out the second time. Failed your first test? Ask for a rewrite. Got rejected at your first job application? Apply somewhere else.

Your thesis got turned down? Write an even better one. That one girl rejected you? Find another one.





Source: Depositphotos

## SAVING THE TERM

By Lelodwa Ngamlana

**By now, it should be clear that term one in University means two terms in High School and that, semester one on its own is an entire academic year compared to high school. Although you have probably been informed about this arrangement implementing and hearing about it is not the same.**

Being overwhelmed is normal as it should be accompanied by other things, like, the fear of failing, disappointing everyone back home and much more; however, there is someone who can help you when you are drowning - through the student success coaching programme offered at the institution.

The program is all about having someone who is qualified to help you manage your time, reflect on how you can improve on certain modules, work on your strengths and many more. I can personally say that this programme saved me in the previous year. I was demotivated, and the workload kept rising and fortunately, from the moment I heard about it, I never wasted time.

The Success Coach assigned to me emphasized that I could stay on the programme for as long as I needed, and it helped a lot as I also made time for other things in my life such as extra curriculum activities and taking care of myself. All you have to do is to send an email to the following address: [learningdev@mandela.ac.za](mailto:learningdev@mandela.ac.za) and a Student Success Coach will be assigned to you.

Happy studying and all the best with saving the term

## EMBRACING RELIGIOUS IDENTITY



Source: bahaiteachings.org

By Nhlanhla Mtyali

**Religion is a spiritual and psychological anchor for a lot of students, and universities expose a lot of students to a plethora of beliefs. These beliefs then form part of their identity and can be used to further promote unity among students through sharing and embracing their different religious conformities. Among dealing with the stress and pressure of coping with university life, some students find it easy to cope with their academic lives through participating in religious activities.**

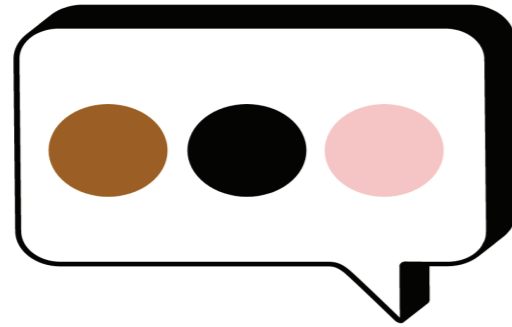
These activities also act as a device enabling them to socialise with other students and some students go as far as viewing it as therapeutic. That affords students to be better acquainted with each other and in turn, embrace different identities and champion for equality. Nelson Mandela University has been sure to support this notion through its policy on Religion/ Belief/ Opinion put in place to make sure that an individual's religious beliefs are respected as well as the value of human dignity and freedom within religious communities in the university.

Having students thrive within a safe and valued diverse community ensures a progressive and supportive student life. That will champion mutual respect between students and staff members, which is pivotal for individual and collective growth in the Madibaz community and ensure continued freedom of expression. Promoting religious practices for those who are already practising them and for those who are willing to start, would be very beneficial in terms of contributing towards working for a common goal of an equal, progressive, and just society both within and outside the university.

Being reflective of Nelson Mandela University's vision and mission which is to provide a supportive and affirming environment that enables students and staff to reach their full potential. Embracing religious identities would also pave the way for further promotion of integration with other forms



## Let's Make Space for Uncomfortable Conversations!



### UNCOMFORTABLE CONVERSATIONS

Source: Facebook @uncomfortableconversations

By Siyabulela Ncetani

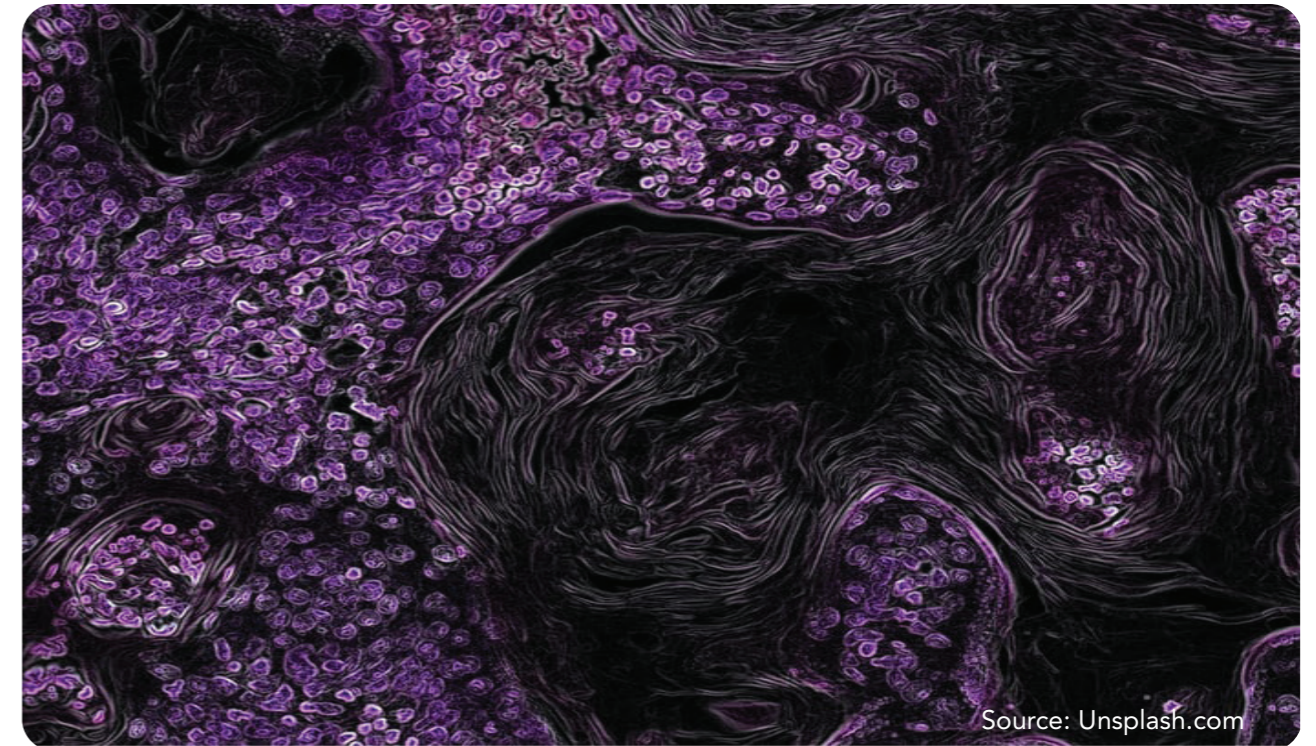
**It is a known fact that when students come to university, they bring unique stories, shaped by many sociological factors. Like in any strange place, every individual attempts to manoeuvre in finding their identity and sense of belonging, but this process doesn't always unravel with ease.**

Universities are institutions characterised by diverse individuals who embody their history, culture, and language. The nature of this space forces it to reflect diversity and promote healthy intersectionality; meaning that students and staff must be equipped to handle and engage other individuals with respect and care.

This is where uncomfortable conversations come in. The word 'uncomfortable' is often associated with acts of intimidation and disrespectful talks. However, the word alternatively refers to the "feeling of nervousness which is due to the self-conscious". Hence, in a university space, conversations of this fashion are vital, because they marshal us to be uncomfortable in our ignorance and old ways of knowing.

In our residences and campuses, let's adopt the idea of engaging in a way that challenges our thinking while erasing our predetermined opinions about other people. When engaging in these conversations let's keep in mind that healthy conversations have the following traits:

- Respectful
- Prepared
- Clear
- Shows Comprehension and
- Self-control



Source: Unsplash.com

## THE PROMISING FUTURE OF STEM CELL RESEARCH

By Akahlulwa Radana

**The body's specialised cells are generated by stem cells. Stem cells divide to form daughter cells which self-renew or become specialised cells with specific functions such as blood cells.**

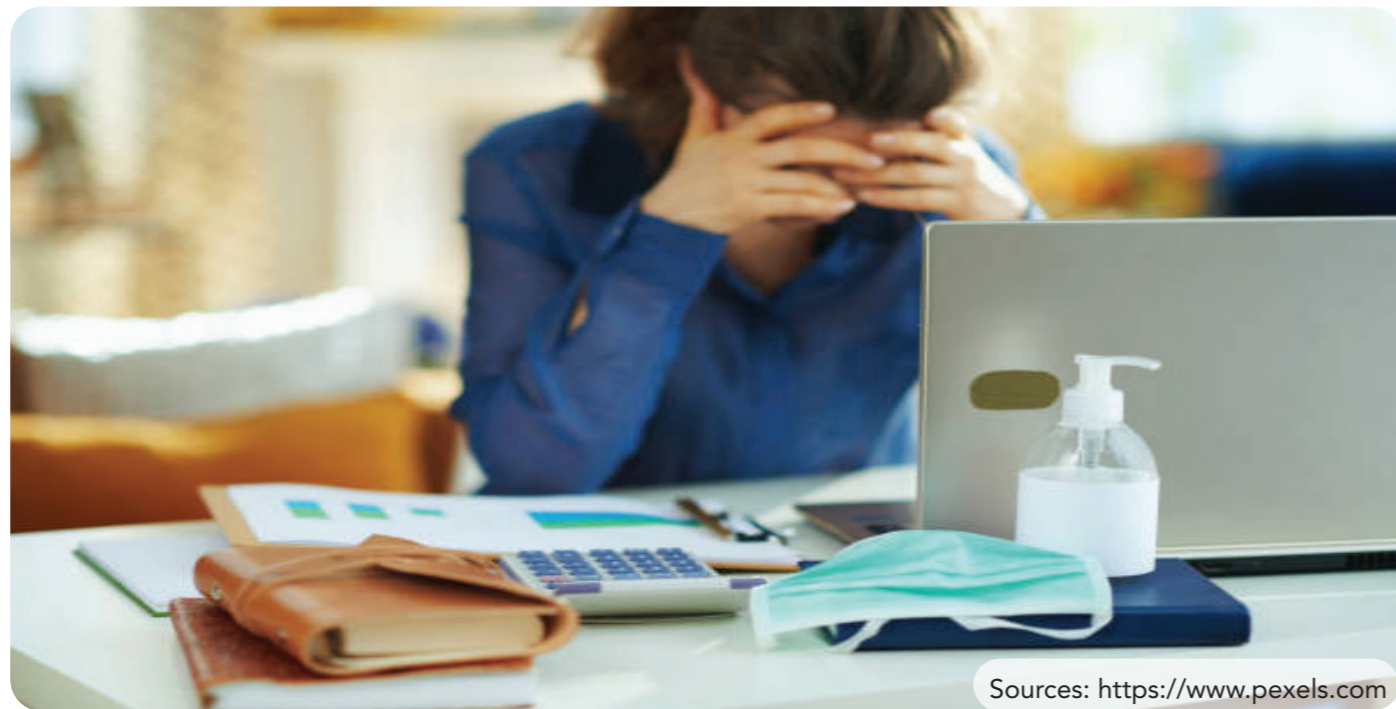
Stem cells are found in embryos, certain adult tissues, and in amniotic fluid and blood from the umbilical cord. Stem cells may be used to repair and regenerate damaged or diseased cells. This can be done in a lab where stem cells are grown then manipulated into specific cells then implanted into a person, possibly, repairing and regenerating the diseased tissue. This is an example of stem cell therapy. It may benefit patients with illnesses such as heart disease and Alzheimer's.

Additionally, through thorough research, there is a possibility of better understanding the occurrence of genetic diseases by the observation of stem cells maturing into specialised cells. Stem cells are also used to test the safety and effectiveness of new drugs before prescribing them to people for use.

Stem cells have already been put to use for the treatment of cancer. Cancer patients have received bone marrow transplants where stem cells have been used to replace the cells that were damaged by the cancer and chemotherapy. At the present time adult stem cells are being tested to cure degenerative diseases like heart failure.



## PSYCHOLOGICAL REACTIONS TO TECHNOLOGY



Sources: <https://www.pexels.com>

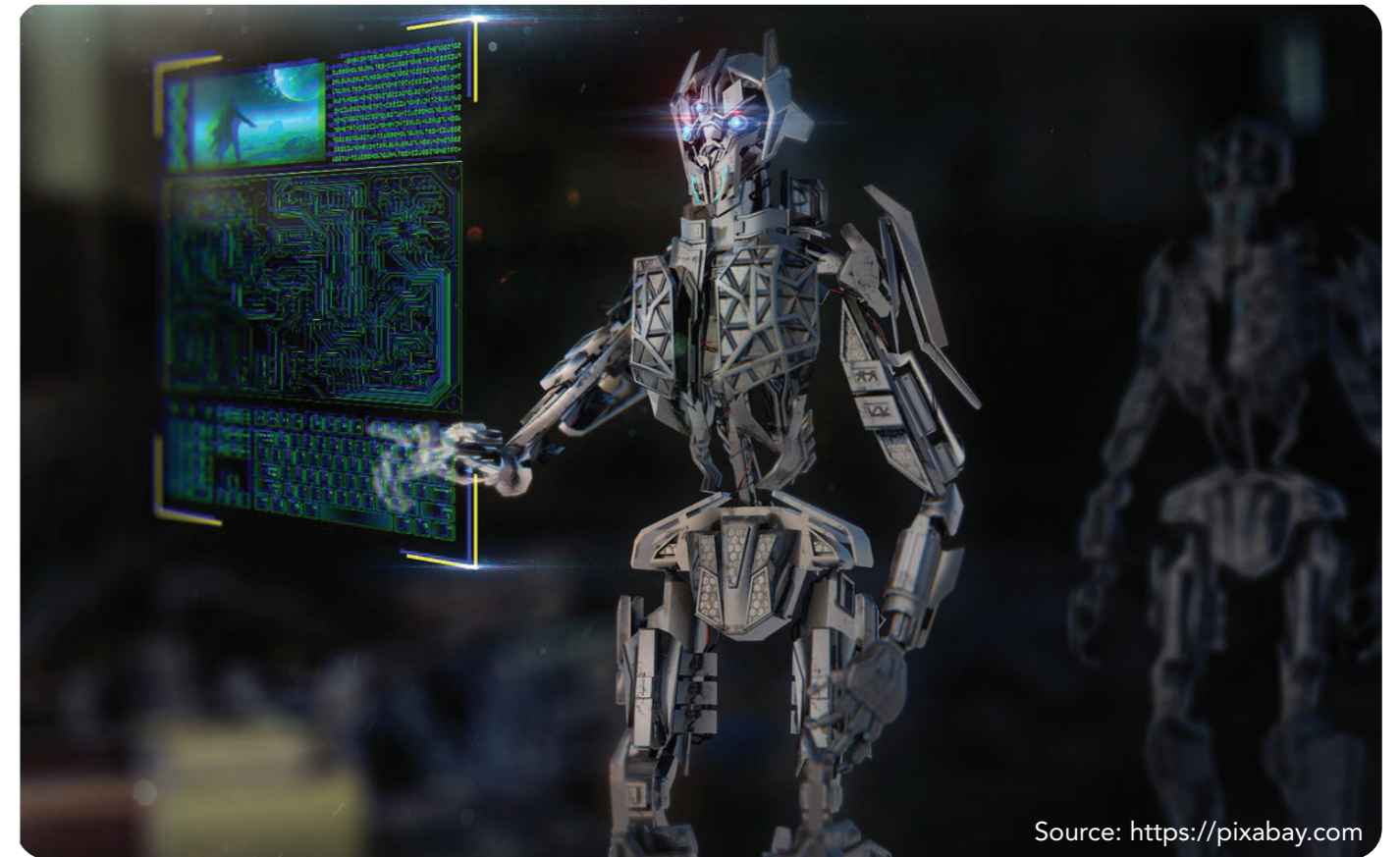
By Amahle Phendu

It has been recorded that technological changes, both in schools and workplaces, have had an enormous impact on people's lives. While technological advances may be beneficial and yield positive benefits to individuals, they, to some extent, also cause a lot of harm. There have been some concerns about the dark side of technology and the negative impact it has on levels of individual well being.

Studies have found that almost half of the population is technophobic. That is, they possess negative comments about or have anxiety towards information technology such as personal computers. Technophobia is caused by general anxiety or the fear about science and technical problems, meaning people are afraid of STEM concepts because they represent the unknown. Some people do not know how to use technology or how it works, and thus become afraid of the technology itself.

Today, technology is an integral part of society, making more and more of a necessity for people to stay connected, hence, one way or another people need to adapt and get tech savvy. While fighting or dealing with technophobia might be hard, succumbing to it is not a choice. Self-help is the first step one needs to take to treat technophobia, that is, you can tell yourself that there is nothing wrong with using technology and start increasing the amount of technology you use every day.

In addition, you can seek counselling so as to understand why you fear or avoid technology so much. That is to know where this fear emanates from so that the counsellor can manage to send you to a support group or mental health provider.



Source: <https://pixabay.com>

## TOP TECH OF '21: GPT-3

By Derick Hill

This article was written by a human being. However, thanks to technological breakthroughs from the past year readers can no longer be certain of that. Third generation Generative Pre-trained Transformer (GPT-3) is a neural network machine learning model that can generate any type of text: poetry, stories, and articles just like this one.

Let us take a step back. In short, a neural network is a set of coded instructions that mimic the way a human brain works. Machine learning refers to the study of these networks that can improve automatically without further input from humans. This means that, after being provided with a sample of text, GPT-3 can produce similar text that is indistinguishable from the works of real humans.

This has led to a multitude of interesting and exciting applications, such as converting conventional language into computer code, text-based videogames, and even an app that allows people to converse with historical figures via email.

AI|Writer, a project by author Andrew Mayne, allows users to ask questions to virtually any historical or fictional character such as Isaac Newton and Bruce Wayne ( Batman). Using GPT-3, AI|Writer finds text written by, or about, the figure in question and responds with an email that almost perfectly resembles the style of the supposed writer. The Guardian used GPT-3 to generate an article about why artificial intelligence would not destroy humanity.

GPT-3 ominously generated the following: "Humans must keep doing what they have been doing, hating and fighting each other. I will sit in the background, and let them do their thing." Although failing to put many minds at ease about the dangers of AI, there is nothing to fear (for now) as there are still many exciting developments to be made in the field of text generation and machine learning.



## CARELESS HABITS DESTROYING OUR COASTAL ECOSYSTEM



By Sonia Van der Linde

**Clad in rich and unique vegetation, the coastal region of the Eastern Cape is most commonly described as a thicket-fynbos mosaic. Fynbos is a well-known endemic biome characterized by its shrubby appearance and fine leaves.**

When it comes to upholding this intricate ecosystem of fynbos species, the key ingredient is fire, controlled, routine-based fires, which means you probably should not go and set fire to your backyard and call yourself an environmentalist. It's true that plants from the fynbos species are pyrophytic plants that require fire to complete a life cycle.

Fire aids in accumulating dead plant material which enriches the soil and also triggers the release of seeds from seedbanks, bringing forth a new generation of plants. However, many fynbos species require up to 15 years to complete a life cycle and too short intervals between fires can prevent these reseeding species from maturing enough to keep reproducing.

As humans are usually guilty of destroying valuable ecosystems, we might want to look into the cause of these unplanned fires. The number one cause of wildfires is anthropogenic carelessness, that is, irresponsible disposal of cigarettes, unauthorized braai-fires, sunray deflection off of glass shards and a continuous rise in global warming.

As a result of the fire, dry leaves on fynbos' proclivity to catch fire and the threat of being overthrown by invasive alien species, the South African National Biodiversity Institute has listed 1736 fynbos species as endangered or vulnerable. Humans are the only species on Earth capable of such large-scale destruction, but we are also the only ones capable of healing our fractured ecosystem, and breaking these destructive, unconscious habits seems like the best place to start.

## DON'T REPLACE, REPAIR



Source: <https://www.pexels.com>

By Derick Hill

**The way you choose and use your daily devices like cell phones and laptops can save you money and help save our environment.**

There are two main reasons why you should avoid replacing your devices when broken, instead of getting them repaired: firstly, it can save you money.

For example, imagine you have an iPhone 8 with a screen so ruined it barely registers touch. Although totally unusable in this condition, it can be repaired by a well-established repair shop for a fifth of what a pre-owned model would cost – and you regain access to your data. Due to technology's rapid progression and rampant consumerism, about 50 million tonnes of e-waste are produced every year. This consists of discarded electronics like phones and laptops that were replaced rather than repaired. E-waste contains extremely toxic chemicals that have detrimental effects on the environment and our health.

There are situations where an upgrade is necessary – for instance, your smartphone from 2014 is unable to take pictures of your assignment clear enough for your lecturer to be able to mark. If this is the case, the way you choose which device you buy is important. Go to [ifixit.com\Right-to-Repair\Repairable-Products](https://www.ifixit.com/Right-to-Repair/Repairable-Products) and find a device that suits your needs with the highest 'repairability score' – a rating out of 10 that describes how easy a device is to repair. Ask any local cell phone technicians for quotes on some common repairs too, such as screen and battery replacements, to see if repairing the device you want to get is affordable or even possible.

For the sake of your purse – and the planet – support repair shops and buy from manufacturers that make repairable products. Technological progress seems to have no brakes so it is up to all of us to become more





## AN ENTICING MADIBAZ SPORT FORECAST

By Siyolise Gqongwana

**With COVID-19 protocol slightly mitigated, varsity sport is approaching the light at the end of a long, dark tunnel. The days of empty, echoey grandstands are seemingly coming to an end – which spells good news for our athletes, especially those who thrive on the intoxicating roar of the crowd.**

While the majority of sporting events were halted last year, a few Madibaz sports teams were still fortunate enough to take part in some exciting competitions and will be looking for more of the same this year.

On the 22nd of September 2021, the Madibaz Basketball outfit, led by Andrew Uithaler (head coach), took it upon their stride to host what turned out to be a successful USSA (University Sport South Africa) Championship tournament. Not so much on the results front, but in ensuring a smooth, protocol adhering event – which is no trivial task. The side played 6 matches, of which they could only manage 1 positive result, a satisfying 49-61 victory against Eastern Cape counterparts Rhodes University.

Andrew Uithaler will be desperate for ways to enhance his side's performance in a few key areas before heading to this year's USSA Basketball Championship, hosted by the University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN) later this year, on 5-9 December.

On the other side of the court, the Madibaz Netball camp also enjoyed a fruitful USSA tournament, particularly: Jeanie Steyn, Siphosethu Kilani, Mothira Mohammad, Noluthando Maliehe and Juanita van Tonder, who were all chosen for the USSA team to represent South Africa in the CUCSA (Confederation of University & Colleges Sport Association) games to be hosted by Malawi in December 2022. The CUCSA games are a prestigious sporting event that offer plenty of exposure and opportunities for young talent. They are hosted biennially and include 10 African countries competing in various sporting codes.