



**VAAL UNIVERSITY  
OF TECHNOLOGY**

*Inspiring thought. Shaping talent.*



**DIVERSITY INCLUSION BELONGING EQUITY IDENTITY TOLERANCE ACCEPTANCE**



**I N C L U S I O N**



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## VISION

- To ensure that VUT increasingly becomes an accessible Higher Education Institution for people with disabilities.

## MISSION

- To remove barriers that prevent students and staff with disabilities from fulfilling their full potential.

## PURPOSE

- To offer reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities in all areas of university life, if not immediately, but on an incremental basis.
- To foster positive and empathetic attitudes towards people with disabilities.
- To provide individuals with the choice (registration/ employment) to disclose their disability or not in line with relevant legislation.
- To progressively ensure that all future buildings, renovations, facilities and services provided by the university comply with universal design principles.
- To ensure incremental basis on the University design, layout, parking and access to its buildings (including private accommodation and leased facilities) accommodate the need of people with disabilities.
- To provide for the establishment of a Disability Services Office (DSO) that will provide dedicated support services to people with disabilities.
- To promote equity for people with disabilities through access to course, buildings, learning material, residences, leisure and sport opportunities.



## SERVICES/ PROJECTS RENDERED

- Compile a data base for all staff and students with disabilities.
- Offer advice on teaching and learning methods to teaching and academic staff seeking support.
- Produce academic related material for people with disabilities in accessible formats.
- Recruitment of volunteers.
- Involvement in improving the physical accessibility on campus for all persons with disabilities.
- Sign language interpreting for people with hearing impairment, including note taking and other assistive measures.
- Assistance with registration, bursary and loan applications and interviews, as well as individual administrative support.
- Networking with organisations for people with disabilities including institutions of higher learning and the community in general regarding training, advice and support.
- Registration with DSO after registration with VUT and provide the relevant documentation (e.g. letter from doctor or hospital confirming disability).
- Liaison with academic staff, tutors and peer helpers.
- Adapted study material, referrals and exam concessions.





## Mr Selby Ngomane



and is currently registered and ready to begin with his 2nd year studies. He greatly commends his lecturers who have been patient and supportive throughout. Since registered as a student he has been introduced to the Social Justice and Transformation Unit (SJT).

The department has assisted Mr Ngomane by offering him a laptop with the Non-Visual Desktop Access (NVDA) screen reader and recorder. With continuous communication from the department, he is able to get assistance such as a designated room in order to complete and take semester tests and exams, making (his academics) as convenient as possible. Mr Ngomane feels at ease to communicate any issue he is encountering around his studies because of the positive atmosphere created by the department and support they have shown him throughout. The SJT Office works hard to ensure that all students who need assistance are well equipped with all assistive devices that can assist in improving the learning and living experience.

Selby has been described as a calm, kind and very humble individual by one of his peers and also closest friend, and because of these attributes his ultimate goal is that through hard work and determination he can obtain a qualification in Labour Law and work for the Department of Employment and Labour in the near future. In addition, with the technological advancements happening on a daily basis, more people such as Mr Ngomane will be integrated into society and departments such as the SJT Office can adapt their assistance techniques to best suit each student.

Mr. Selby Ngomane started his educational journey in the provincial capital of Mpumalanga, Nelspruit where he matriculated and had big dreams to achieve his life goals. In 2012 after completing high school, he pursued a career in Engineering where he completed his studies until his 3rd year final semester at the Tswane University of Technology (TUT)

Sadly, in 2014 he lost his eyesight and couldn't complete his qualification. With no fear Nkomane didn't lose hope in wanting to achieve his goals. He enrolled into Optima College a training facility made available for the South African National Council for the Blind, where he completed a short 3 month course. He was able to acquire skills in Computer and Braille Literacy (grade 1).

In 2020, he then enrolled at the Vaal University of Technology (VUT), where he commenced a totally new and different career path in Labour Law. Transitioning from a numerical to a theoretical based course brought along its own set of challenges however, Mr Ngomane had an appreciation for law and was determined not to give up. Although it was an undesirable year with regards to the world wide pandemic, he managed to pass his modules



## ***Mr Blessing Lubisi***

Blessing Lubisi is a 24 year-old, third year student Industrial Engineering at the Vaal University of Technology. Hailing from Mpumalanga, Blessing began his academic journey in 2018, having being admitted to university with a Grade 12 bachelor pass.

Blessing is living with albinism and has an issue concerning his vision, and this led to his first encounter with the Social Justice and Transformation (SJT) department through Mr. David Nkwenkwezi, Disability Services Coordinator. He approached me to ask if I managed to register without any hassles and I told him my only issue was with residence registrations, said Blessing

Blessing has received assistance not just with residence registration, but also in the form of academics. The department has ensured that his material is presented to him in the form of A3 paper instead of the standard A4, with his fonts increased so that he is able to read the material. During tests and exams, he writes his papers in the SJT department boardroom, with an invigilator assigned for him as well as being given extra time.

He suggested that there should be a representative within the university's SRC that works closely with the SJT department, which can be able to speak for them and raise their individual and collective matters so that their pleas and plights are heard.

He alluded that the department move closer to other facilities so that it can be easily accessible.

## Mr Tshanduko Ratshipanga



Tshanduko Ratshipanga is a 24-year-old student at the Vaal University of Technology (VUT), currently studying his Advanced Diploma in Logistics Management. Born in Arcacia, Pretoria and raised in Venda by his mother, his early beginnings were rocky, as he had to relocate back to his native home in Venda due to circumstances. He copes with cerebral palsy, which is a congenital disorder of movement, muscle tone or posture. He further states that with him, during his novice ages, the condition was a bit difficult to bear compared to now.

Tshanduko's journey at VUT began in 2018, enrolling for Logistics which he states was not much of a walk in the park as people tend to say. "It is just a matter of knowing what you want and knowing who you are", he added. He added that the course has been a delight to him despite his rocky start since it has instilled a sense of growth within him and has introduced him to a few associates along the way, which has really benefitted him during his undergraduate years.

With regards to the Social Justice and Transformation Unit (SJT), Tshanduko said that the department has played a monumental role in his studies, paving a way

for his career by assisting him in acquiring training and a bursary from CBI-Electric (Circuit Breaker Industries). Before accessing the services of the department, which in part was introduced to by his aunt who attended the university previously, he resorted to figuring things out on his own. He then gave credit to the SJT department, claiming that it is very underrated, with people lacking knowledge of how helpful it has been, with him being a testimony to how pleasant his experience with the department has been.

Furthermore, Tshanduko commended the work of Mr. Malcolm Mahange who has made efforts to ensure that they all attain some level of satisfaction from the work that the department is willing and capable of offering.



## ***Mr Kabelo Monnapula***

Kabelo Monnapula is a 26 year old male who was born and raised in Mahikeng where he completed his elementary school and moved to Pretoria and managed to complete his matriculation.

Kabelo's vision is slightly impaired and usually requires assistance and extra time to complete tests and exams.

Mr. Monnapula enrolled into the Vaal University of Technology in 2016 and began his educational path by graduating with a National Diploma in Mechanical Engineering. His passion for engineering was ignited at an earlier stage when he realized the contentment that one gains from designing projects and watching them come to life. He was further attracted into engineering because it gives one diversity to work in a variety of industries. After graduation he chose to upskill himself further by registering for an Advanced Diploma in Operations Management in 2021. The decision to go into Operations Management came as Kabelo felt that it would give him an advantage in the industries he would like to venture into.

He, as many as other students, was introduced to the Social Justice and Transformation Unit through the Financial Aid Department at VUT. He goes on to describe his relationship with the department as very good because "they were kind and generous to accommodate me" says Kabelo. Some of the assistance received from the department included ensuring that he received extra time during semester tests and exams, and that the question papers were printed in large fonts so as not to inconvenience him.

He also goes on to elaborate his satisfaction with the job done by the department and hopes that more students such as himself gain access to VUT.

In the near future Mr. Kabelo Monnapula has the desire to see himself having achieved his goals, of opening and running his own successful company.



## **Mr Rethabile Khabane**



From a young age Mr. Rethabile Khabane watched his father work as a pharmacy assistant, with little knowledge that this would inspire him to pursue a career in Organic Chemistry. The international student from Botha-Bothe, Lesotho then took it upon himself to enrol for a National Diploma in Analytical Chemistry at the Vaal University of Technology (VUT) in 2013.

The inspiration he draws from his love for his career path has created a high level of determination in him and a willingness to attain his goals regardless of his circumstances. Rethabile's mobility is impaired and he relies on a wheelchair to go about his everyday life. However, even with his impairment he has always had a passion for the organics and determines himself to achieve his goals.

Rethabile was then introduced to the Social Justice and Transformation Unit (SJT) of the university where their mission is to remove barriers that prevent students and staff living with disabilities from fulfilling their full potential. Due to the nature of Mr. Khabane's disability, the department has provided him with a wheelchair and some study skills in collaboration with the Student Counselling Services department

in order to make his tertiary experience pleasant and enjoyable.

Through the years, Rethabile has accumulated historical debt on his tuition fees and with the help of the SJT Unit the debt was paid in full. The company offering the bursary was CBI Electric African Cables, who in partnership with the SJT have made it their sole mission to provide financial support to the VUT students.

CBI Electric has also absorbed Rethabile, amongst other students, into their workplace environment where he is able to acquire skills and gain experience in his field of study. He is now employed as a Laboratory Assistant Trainee and aspires to gain the necessary skills that will assist him in becoming a successful researcher. With the right determination, his 5 year goal is to have a well-established production company of his own.

# INFORMATION



## LYMPHATIC FILARIASIS

Lymphatic Filariasis, commonly known as Elephantiasis, is a tropical parasite disease that affects the lymph nodes, a small bean-shaped structure that is part of the immune system, and the lymph vessels, which form part of the human body. It is considered a chronic disease that can last for years. This disease is widely spread through animals or insects such as mosquitoes that are already infected. A bite from these mosquitoes deposits a parasite that travels through the human body to the lymph system.



Although having a long term effect on the lymph system, Lymphatic Filariasis is a relatively rare disease also known to cause swelling in the legs, arms and genital area. It increases the risk of contracting bacterium infections that usually harden and thicken the skin. In some instances, some people do not develop any symptoms whereas others have shivering chills and body aches.

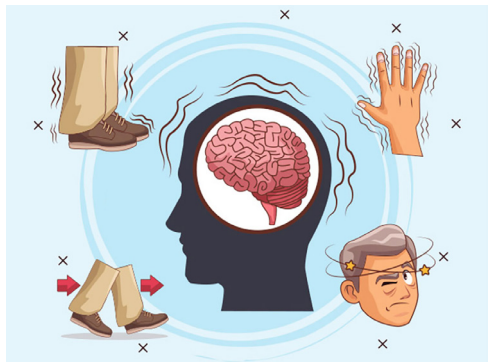
The most common symptom associated with this disease is swelling or swollen lymph nodes. This may include the acute inflammation of lymphatic vessels. There are various treatment methods that can be used once an individual has a medical diagnosis, like a prescribed drug that is taken on an annual basis, in order to kill the parasite in the human body.

Specialists that can be visited to seek assistance include:

- Primary Health Care Provider – Deals with prevention, diagnosis and treatment of diseases.
- Infectious Disease Doctor- Treats infections especially those of a tropical kind.

## PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Parkinson's disease is a disorder in the central nervous system that includes tremors that affects an individual's movement. The nervous system becomes damaged in the human brain causing dopamine levels to decrease drastically and leading to numerous symptoms of Parkinson's disease. More often than usual, symptoms will begin with a tremor in one hand that cause slow movement, stiffness and loss of balance. Which in turn will affect an individual's:



- Muscular - stiffness and difficulty standing
- Sleep –early awakening, nightmares and restlessness
- Whole body – fatigue, dizziness, trembling and poor balance
- Speech – difficulty speaking
- Facial – jaw stiffness, neck tightness, blank stare and reduced facial expression

- Motion- trouble walking and maintaining balance
- Mentally – memory problems and behavioural change through time

Treatment for this disease include dopamine promoter, anti-depressants and cognition enhancement. In a household, an individual is advised to do physical exercises as a form of treatment. Several doctors are also necessary such as a neurologist to treat nervous system disorder and a primary health care practitioner for diagnosis and assistance with treatment.

It is not usual for people to develop this disease at an early age. Parkinson’s disease usually affects people around 60 years and older. Although not curable, a person can live well over 10 – 20 years being diagnosed. With early detection and treatment, maintaining the quality of life becomes easy and adaptable.

## MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS

Multiple sclerosis can be described as a chronic condition where your immune system eats away at the protective layers covering your nerves. Resulting in damage that disrupts the communication between an individuals’ body and their brain.

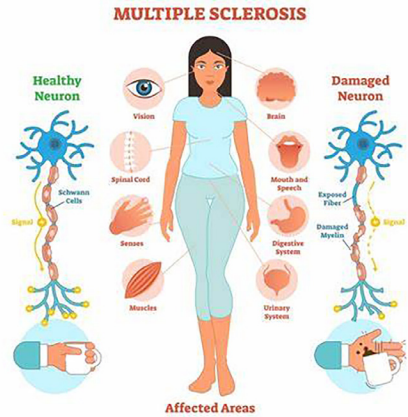
People who suffer from Multiple Sclerosis are likely to have symptoms that vary in severity. This means that no 1 individual can have symptoms that are identical to another person. It is also noted that an individual can have this condition for a long period of time and display no symptoms.

Major symptoms may include:

- Vision loss/ pain in the eyes
- Tremors in hands and limbs
- Muscle cramps / difficulty walking
- Frequent mood swings and anxiety
- Numbness of the face.

The above are just a few of the indicators that may suggest a check-up with your General Practitioner (GP). In cases where an individual is diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis their treatment options include immunosuppressant. Immunosuppressant is medication that will overpower the immune system and can assist with suppression of symptoms, thus gradually slowing down the progress of the condition in the human body.

Chemotherapy, Anti-inflammatory, Physiotherapy, and other disease-modifying drugs can be used to delay disability and reduce the symptoms. In order to access such treatments it is important to do consultations with specialists such as a Neurologist, speech therapist and physiotherapist. Though Multiple Sclerosis is a long lasting incurable disease, many people who start treatment at an early stage manage to reduce the inflammation and damage that is caused to the nerve cells. It also assists with the pain severity and finding a better solution of managing the condition, therefore providing a standard (an average) life for the individual.





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