



**VAAL UNIVERSITY
OF TECHNOLOGY**

MEDIA RELEASE

Attention to Editors, Journalists, Producers, Bloggers: For Immediate Release

NWU AND VUT TO CO-HOST THE 5TH BI-ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE AIMED AT EXPLORING STRATEGIES TO COMBAT GBVF AND PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY WITHIN SA UNIVERSITIES

28 JUNE 2024 | VANDERBIJLPARK | The Gender Practitioners' Community of Practice (CoP), in collaboration with North-West University (NWU) and Vaal University of Technology (VUT), will host the 5th Bi-Annual National Conference on Gender-Based Violence (GBVF), Diversity, and Inclusivity. The conference will take place from 1 – 3 July 2024, at the NWU's Vanderbijlpark Campus.

Hosted under the theme "Accelerating Gender Equality for a Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Future in Higher Education," the conference will be attended by a large delegation of gender practitioners representing major South African universities. To weigh in on one of the pressing challenges of our time; gender-based violence and femicide, the gathering will also draw much interest and participation from GBVF concerned groups, researchers, policymakers and activists, as well as key stakeholders within the higher education sector. Over the years, the CoP has expanded its reach to institutions of higher learning as microcosms of society, significantly advancing efforts to address gendered harms on campuses. This includes recognising and mitigating various forms of discrimination, harassment, and violence faced by individuals based on their gender identity, diversity, and expression.

The conference will also feature an impressive line-up of distinguished speakers who are experts in their respective fields and thought-provoking panel discussions aimed at exploring strategies to combat GBVF, promote diversity, and foster inclusivity within university environments. The three-day conference will cover an array of topics, including gender sensitisation, interrogating issues that students face on sexual diversity, as well as exploring innovative ways to widen inclusivity for students with diverse sexual orientation, gender identities, and expression. Notably, another highlight of the conference will be the discussion of how HEI's can use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to combat GBVF and LGBTQIA+ crimes.

The line-up of speakers includes Professors Bismark Tyobeka and Stephen Khehla Ndlovu – the Vice Chancellors and Principals of the two host universities, NWU and VUT, respectively, and Tumelo Duke Rasebopye, the National Chairperson of CoP. There will also be presentations from Higher Health, Gauteng Department of Community Safety, Campus Protection South Africa (CAMProSA) and Kwanele Group South Africa, to mention a few.

The event will also feature interactive practical workshops, providing attendees with actionable insights and tools for creating safer, more inclusive spaces within academia. Additionally, there will be numerous networking opportunities, allowing stakeholders, academics, students, national and international delegates to connect and share their passion for advancing equity and social justice in higher education.



This gathering serves as a vital platform for practitioners to share best practices, discuss challenges, and strategize on promoting gender equity, diversity, and inclusion within higher education institutions.

NOTE TO EDITORS:

CoP was established to organize, and to create a strong network of practitioners who could look at strategic ways to ensure that all institutions are working towards eradicating gender violence on campuses. This include but not limited to ensuring compliance with governing bodies and their frameworks i.e. DHET, Higher Health who work closely with Universities in curbing the social illness in PSET sector. The CoP meets bi-annually.

For more information, please visit <https://www.nwu.ac.za/events/5th-bi-annual-national-community-practitioners-conference> .

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