

Early Career Scholars Project

Prof Saleem Badat supports Prof Nhlanhla Mkhize, the DVC, College of Humanities, with the coordination and management of the five-year Mellon Foundation-funded R10.9 million Early Career Scholars Fellowship Programme.

The primary aim of the five-year (2020-2024) University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) Early Career Scholars Fellowship Programme (ECSFP) is to afford early career staff research opportunities to supervise graduate students, and facilitate and support research expertise and experiences, research and publication outputs, supervision training, and generic post-doctoral studies in order to promote the development of their careers. A secondary aim is to enable academically excellent students to enter and complete graduate studies.

Recruited via an open call, the project involves 11 staff members and includes teaching relief for one semester, and research and workshop or retreat expenses.

The participants, and their projects are as follows.

Name of ECS	School/Discipline	Research
Dr. Thulani Mkhize	Arts English Studies	Feminist Spirituality: An Exploration of Nontsizi Mqgqwetho's Intellectual Contribution and its Contemporary Significance
Dr. Samiksha Laltha	Arts English Studies	Analysis of peer comments and revision of a submitted journal article; a journal article on disability in dystopia and three other articles.
Noxolo Matete	Arts Performing Arts	She's Seldom Seen Wearing Her Director's Hat Here: Interrogating the Paucity of Black Women Stage Directors in Three State-Supported Theatres in Contemporary South Africa (1999 – 2018)
Dr. Gabisile Mkhize	Social Science Gender Studies	The Impact of South Africa's COVID-19 Lockdown and the Array of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) on UKZN Staff and Students
Dr. Nokwanda Nzuzo	Social Sciences Anthropology	Female Infertility: Experiences of Black African Women
Dr. Kathryn Pillay	Social Science Sociology	The Impact of the Isolation Economy, Remote Working, and the 'double-double shift' on Working Women in South Africa Arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic
Dr. Sinazo Nomsenge	Social Science Sociology	Liberating Menstruation: An In-depth Exploration of the Socio-cultural Ecology of Menstruation in South Africa
Dr. Phindile Mayaba	Applied Human Sciences Psychology	Positioning the Dialogical Self: The Dynamics of Cultural In-betweenity and Linguistic Identity of isiZulu-speakers
Dr. Nolwazi Ngcobo	Applied Human Sciences Social Work	Sexual Scripts of African Women in Zulu Marriages from the INK Area: Negotiation and Reconstruction of Sexual Agency.

Dr. Cedric Mpungose	Education Curriculum and Education Studies	Exploring First-year Student's Experiences on the Use of Technological Resources at a South African University
Dr. Mlamuli Hlatshwayo	Education Curriculum and Education Studies	Being Black in South African Higher Education: Pitfalls, Challenges, Opportunities

In principle 80% of the fellowships are for Black South Africans and 50% of the fellowships are for females.

In early November 2021, Prof Badat organized and ran a very successful four-day retreat at Karridene Beach for 14 ECSs – seven current Mellon Fellows and seven other ECSs selected from the UKZN Humanities College. Some topics involved popular public writing, presented by *The Conversation Africa*; and developing grant proposals.

Also attended by the DVC, Prof. Nhlanhla Mkhize, Prof. Lebo Moletsane also assisted with the retreat.

Five important outcomes of the retreat are that all participating ECSs have developed personal development plans; that there is a need to develop a longitudinal study that accompanies ECS; that the funding of national ECSs be considered – which would involve similar retreats; that more UKZN ECSs be involved in the project; and that mentors be selected by the ECSs themselves rather than be appointed by Schools or departments.

At this point, the initial 6 ECS fellows published 8 peer-reviewed journal articles and chapters, with 4 articles and chapters currently in press, and three books and three articles in progress.

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