

MEDIA ADVISORY

TO: All media

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ATTENTION: News Editors/ Reports

For Immediate use:

THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND INNOVATION STATEMENT ON THE RECENT DEATHS IN THE POST SCHOOL EDUCATION AND TRAINING SECTOR

The Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande is saddened by the passing of Ms Portia Mange, Mr Daniel Bhekizenzo Mabuyakhulu, Professor Audrey Msimanga and Professor Vinesh Basdeo.

Ms Mange was the current Principal of the Gert Sibande TVET College. She was admitted to hospital on 29 June 2021 due to medical complications. She passed away on 30 June 2021.

At the advent of COVID-19 in South Africa, Ms Mange led the Gert Sibande TVET College team which produced COVID-19 PPE that the college also distributed to adjacent communities.

Through Ms Mange's leadership, the Gert Sibande TVET College is renowned for its academic prowess and consistently produces outstanding results.

Mr Daniel Bhekizenzo Mabuyakhulu also lost his life on 30 June 2021 due to COVID-19 related complications. Mr Mabuyakhulu was a long-standing trade union, community and education activist, who devoted his entire life to the service of the workers and poor communities.

Mabuyakhulu dedicated more than a decade of his life to the betterment of the TVET sector through serving as college chairperson of the council at Majuba TVET College in KwaZulu-Natal.

He began his journey in the TVET sector at its inception in 2007 and was also elected as the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Colleges Governors' Council (TVETGC) Chairperson in October 2014 and served two terms in office until August 2020.

Professor Audrey Msimanga also passed on as a result of COVID-19 related complications. She was the Head of the Wits School of Education. Prior to this she served as the Head of the School of Education at Sol Plaatje University for two years.

Respected by her postgraduate students, Professor Msimanga taught courses to Master of Science and Master of Education students and supervised postgraduate student research at all levels. Her own research focused on the curriculum-pedagogy interface, with the goal of understanding how science can best be taught locally in the context of teacher and learner diversity and multilingualism. She was widely published in local and international journals, and presented at local and international conferences.

Professor Msimanga was the Chairperson of the Research Capacity Building Committee of the Southern African Association for Research in Mathematics, Science and Technology Education, and served on several research and academic bodies, including as the Associate Editor of the Journal of Research in Science Teaching.

The Post School Education and Training system also lost Professor Vinesh Basdeo, the Executive Dean of the College of Law (CLAW) at the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Prior to joining UNISA, Professor Basdeo was a senior manager (Assistant Director / Lieutenant Colonel) in the South African Police Service (SAPS). He was commissioned as a Captain in the South African Police Service (SAPS) by former State President Nelson Mandela in 1994.

Professor Basdeo published extensively in criminal justice and criminal procedure locally and internationally in accredited journals and books. He also held visiting appointments at various institutions, including the distinguished University of British Columbia, New York University and the Indira Gandhi Law University.

He also served on local and international editorial panels, and acted as referee for numerous articles, as well as for applications for National Research Foundation (NRF) ratings. He was rated as an established researcher (C3) by the National Research Foundation.

Professor Basdeo was not only seized with his own personal development but he taught a variety of law subjects at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and have provided practical legal training to criminal justice officials. In addition, he is also the co-author of a leading South African criminal procedure textbook, which is prescribed by six South African universities.

Minister Nzimande said that the Post School Education and Training system has indeed lost giants and their selfless contribution to the sector will be cherished.

“They have done much to empower many generations of young people, contributing to the body of knowledge in their own fields of specialties. Their contribution is indeed immeasurable,” said Minister Nzimande.

Minister Nzimande passes these heartfelt condolences to the families, colleagues and students of all these distinguished, selfless and exemplary leaders, academics and public servants.

May their souls rest in peace.

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