

## **Moving the Middle Launch**

**A collaborative, integrative staff-student development approach for student success**

**24<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

The Moving the Middle project of Siyaphumelela 2.0 focuses on 1) understanding the multiple challenges that are impacting on student success which creates a large middle cohort that remain in transition in academic programmes and 2) identifying and implementing strategies for enhancing success. The aim is to contribute to developing (w)holistic graduates with the acumen to be both adaptable and able to respond to a rapidly evolving higher education, profession and world that remain 'in-becoming'.

The project involves a collaborative and integrative staff-student development strategy and has considered a programmatic approach that involves enhancing success for all students including students in the middle. This approach views the curricula as the sites for critique and transformation for enhancing student success.

The project entails a research, data driven approach that considers our students and staff as partners and co-researchers who will work collaboratively with the Moving the Middle team. This will encompass a multi-pronged initiative that will include identifying and implementing high impactful pedagogical practices through staff development and simultaneous student development activities.

# Programme

Programme Directors: Dr Rosheena Jeawon and Mrs Nalini Chitanand

09:00 - 09:10	<b>Opening and Welcome: Prof Livingstone Makondo (Acting Director CELT)</b>
09:10 - 09:20	<b>Address by Prof Nokuthula Sibiyi (DVC T &amp; L)</b>
09:20 - 09:30	<b>Project Overview: Mrs Nalini Chitanand (Project Coordinator)</b>
09:30 - 09:35	<b>Naming the Moving the Middle Project: Mr Mzwa Khumalo (FYSE Coordinator)</b>
09:35 - 10:30	<b>Keynote Address: Dr Sherran Clarence</b> <i>Enabling Powerful, Sustainable Change in Higher Education</i>
10:30 - 11:00	<b>Tea Break</b>
11:00 - 12:45	<b>Workshop</b> <i>Developing an Inventory of High Impactful Practices for Student Success</i>
12:45 - 13:00	<b>Closing Comments and Vote of Thanks: Mr Sipho Zulu (High Impact Practices Project Leader)</b>

## Keynote address

*Dr Sherran Clarence*



***Dr Sherran Clarence*** is a research associate in the Centre for Higher Education, Research, Teaching and Learning (CHERTL) at Rhodes University. Her professional development work focuses largely on academic writing development work and doctoral and postdoctoral writers and writing, as well as disciplinary teaching and learning work. Her research to date largely centres around academic writing development, teaching, learning and curriculum work, and creating more socially just and inclusive educational environments for students and lecturers. Her new book is out now: *Turning Access into Success. Improving University Education with Legitimation Code Theory* (Routledge, 2021).

## ***Abstract***

### Enabling Powerful, Sustainable Change in Higher Education

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Teaching and learning happen in complex contexts within universities shaped by a range of diverse factors that shape how we engage in education. These factors include socioeconomic status and what that means for prior access to schools, libraries, computers and other learning resources. They include 'race', gender and ability, which also influence prior and current engagement with lecturers, peers, resources, etc. Context is key: to better enable the curriculum we design and the pedagogies and assessments we use, we need to understand the context we are working in. One of the ways we can do this is by using theory to help us stand back from and reflect on aspects of our context we may struggle to critique or separate ourselves from. But not any theory will do. If we agree that universities are fundamentally social spaces, that disciplinary teaching and learning is informed by long-developed sets of values, dispositions, knowledges, and skills that need to be taken on by students, that our job is to socialise students, at the very least, into these ways of becoming and being successful, then we need particular theories. Specifically, I argue we need critical social theories that give us a language with which to talk about both the individual and social aspects of knowledge, knowing, and learning. This is powerful because it can move us away from deficit approaches to understanding students and their learning towards more critical, systemic accounts of inequity, access, and success in our contexts. This is vital for creating socially just, inclusive and context-relevant university education. This address and discussion will trace some of the main trends shaping higher education today, especially classroom interaction and curriculum development, and will focus on how theorising our teaching and learning can enable new understandings and critiques that can enable meaningful change.