



2024-2026 Nominations

SAAIR Exco

November 8, 2025

Vice President

Vice President Mr Ashton Maherry

(Saide)



Ashton is a Programme Specialist with *Saide*, having joined Saide in October 2022. His major responsibilities are as the project manager on the Saide Siyaphumelela team, where Saide acts as a backbone organisation among the Partner and Participant universities.

Ashton was a senior knowledge applicator at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research for 12 years, with a focus on water research and spatial data analysis. Thereafter he joined Durban University of Technology in 2017 as part of the General Education team lecturing institutional general education modules. In 2018 he was appointed as the Siyaphumelela Data and Training Officer.

In 2022 he joined Saide as a Programme Specialist. He is passionate about building capacity and using data to intervene timeously before students fail. Ashton was part of the Local Organising Committee for the SAAIR Conference in 2018, a SAAIR Scholarship Recipient for the SAAIR Conference in 2019, and a SAAIR EXCO member for 2021-2024.

<https://youtu.be/fXIMUAjb9Gc>

Exco Members

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Exco Member Mr Ashton Maherry (*Saide*)



A seasoned Data Scientist with over a decade of experience in the higher education sector, specializing in data analytics, business intelligence, machine learning, and cloud computing.

I have a proven track record in leading data science teams, developing and implementing predictive models, and fostering a culture of data-driven decision-making across institutional functions.

Innocent has facilitated a variety of SAAIR workshops over the years and was recognised by the association for this contribution.

My expertise extends to strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and the development of analytics frameworks that support institutional goals.

I am passionate about using data to drive insights and improve student success outcomes.

Exco Member
Mr Innocent Mamvura
(University of the Witwatersrand)



With 14 years of dedicated experience as a secretary in higher education, I bring a wealth of organizational expertise and a keen eye for detail to support academic and administrative functions.

My passion for institutional research drives my commitment to improving educational systems through data-informed insights, ensuring that institutions operate effectively and meet the evolving needs of their communities.

I am particularly interested in leveraging research to inform strategic decisions that shape the future of higher education. As a member of the Executive Committee for the Southern African Association for Institutional Research (SAAIR),

I will be actively involved in shaping initiatives that support data-driven decision-making and institutional growth across the sector.

Exco Member
Ms Valentine Maroga
(Tshwane University of Technology)



Dr Hossein Masoumi Karakani is a statistician who currently works as a Senior Institutional Researcher at the Department of Institutional Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation (DIP) at the University of Pretoria (UP). Hossein holds a Ph.D. in Mathematical Statistics from UP, and a verified certificate in Statistical Learning from Stanford University.

In his current role, he uses data to positively impact the lives of students and staff, building interpretable, efficient, ethical, and productionable predictive models to solve practical challenges in higher education. His primary research interests include Advanced Analytics, Time Series, and Bayesian Statistics., with his work published in esteemed academic journals, and presented at national, and international conferences, such as Deep Learning IndabaX 2024.

In recognition of his leadership and research potential, Hossein was selected as a fellow in the prestigious Tuks Young Research Leadership Programme (TYRLP) at UP in 2024, highlighting his emerging influence in academic leadership. He also serves on scientific committees, including Deep Learning Indaba and the African Computer Vision School.

In 2023 and 2024, he mentored in the Kaggle BIPOC Mentorship Program, helping mentees enhance their data science skills and solve real-world problems. He has earned two Silver medals in Kaggle competitions, ranking among the top 1% of data scientists globally, and in 2021 became the first person from UP to enter Kaggle's global rankings. Hossein firmly believes that data is the new global language and that data literacy is crucial for unlocking the full potential of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

Exco Member Dr Hossein Masoumi Karakani (University of Pretoria)



Dr. Munienge Mbodila is a highly accomplished expert in computer science, holding a BSc and Honours degree from the University of Fort Hare, an MSc in Computer Science and Information Systems, and a PhD from North-West University. He also earned a postgraduate diploma in Teaching and Learning in higher education from Stellenbosch University.

His professional journey includes roles such as Network Technician at Fort Hare University, Lecturer at the University of Venda, and Lecturer and Manager of Data Analytics at Walter Sisulu University. Currently, Dr. Mbodila serves as the Manager Student Tracking and Institutional Research in the Directorate of Planning Evaluation and Monitoring at Walter Sisulu University, where he plays a pivotal role in advancing student success and decision-making through data-driven strategies.

With over 55 published articles and numerous presentations at national and international conferences, Dr. Mbodila has made significant contributions to academia. His extensive experience in research, postgraduate supervision, and student tracking frameworks enables the institution to identify trends, monitor student progress, and make informed decisions that enhance student success.

Dr. Mbodila is a passionate advocate for cultivating a data-driven university culture, emphasizing the importance of data literacy and continuous training to ensure that data initiatives are relevant, effective, and responsive to the evolving needs of the institution.

Exco Member Dr Munienge Mbodila (Walter Sisulu University)



Tebello Mofokeng is a seasoned Information Technology professional with a focus on Management Information Systems (MIS), Data Management, and IT Governance. Currently, he holds the position of Head of Management Information Systems at the University of Venda, where he plays an important leadership role in Institutional Planning.

He is responsible for spearheading initiatives in data integration, business intelligence, and strategic planning support. As a data lead on the Siyaphumelela project, Tebello drives efforts to enhance student success through data-driven decision-making. He has a solid background in IT service management, data analytics, and institutional reporting, ensuring that systems are implemented to provide essential insights to university management and external stakeholders, particularly in alignment with the Department of Higher Education and Training's compliance requirements.

Tebello is pursuing a Master of Philosophy in Information Technology Governance from Nelson Mandela University, building on his academic credentials, which include a Management Development Programme from the University of Cape Town and a Postgraduate Certificate in Entrepreneurial Management and Leadership from the University of Venda. He also holds several technical certifications, including SQL Server, ITIL Foundation, and Cisco.

Throughout his career, Tebello has successfully contributed to projects that promote data governance and analytics, enabling high-level decision-making through tailored dashboards and automated reporting. His commitment to leveraging technology to improve institutional effectiveness, data quality, and governance makes him a dedicated IT leader who is well-equipped to support the objectives of SAAIR.

Exco Member Mr Tebello Mofokeng (University of Venda)



Enna Moroeroe is a dedicated professional with extensive experience in Higher Education and Institutional Research. She holds a Master's in Higher Education Studies and a B.Ed. Honours in Early Childhood Development from the University of the Free State (UFS).

Having transitioned from a secondary school educator to an institutional researcher and project manager at UFS, Enna excels in research and project management. Her primary responsibilities include conducting institutional research and monitoring the digitalisation implementation plan.

She was recently appointed as Deputy Director of Institutional Planning at the UFS, overseeing and monitoring the UFS Annual Performance Plan (APP). Enna's contributions to the higher education sector are highlighted by her comprehensive research reports and published academic papers.

She is passionate about impacting the Higher Education sector, fostering student growth, and advancing higher education through evidence-based decision-making

Exco Member **Ms Enna Moroeroe** (University of the Free State)



Ayanda Nongogo is a seasoned Institutional Planning practitioner who is currently working as a Principal Information Analyst at UKZN, specializing in Institutional Research and strategic data analytics to drive executive decision-making.

Prior to joining UKZN, Ayanda was Deputy Director of Management Information at MUT during which time she also served as Acting Director of Monitoring, Evaluation & Reporting. In these roles, she coordinated data-driven reports for the university council.

With an extensive career spanning over 14 years in the realm of higher education of which 10 years are in Institutional Planning environment, Ayanda has established herself as a results-driven professional, specialising in Institutional Planning, Strategic reporting initiatives, data analytics and data governance.

She brings expertise in enrolment planning, HEMIS management, and funding allocation. Holding a Master of Commerce in Management (UKZN) and complemented by previous degrees from UCT and WSU, Ayanda has developed impactful tools used across universities and is a key figure in shaping institutional strategies.

As a member of SAAIR and a mentee in the High Risers - Women in Technology Programme, her leadership and innovations continue to advance the sector.

More about me:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ayanda-nongogo-mcom-in-management-a07575aa>

Exco Member Ms Ayanda Princess Nongogo (University of KwaZulu-Natal)



Ben is currently employed as an Institutional Researcher in the Institutional Planning and Quality Assurance (IPQA) department at Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU). He has 12 years of research experience, including over 8 years in Higher Education (HE).

Ben's key performance areas include conducting impact studies and institutional surveys, as well as creating quarterly performance, annual, and DHET reports for SMU.

Since 2013, he has been a member of SAAIR, where he has also facilitated workshops and presented papers focusing on student success.

In 2017, the SAAIR Executive Committee offered him a scholarship to attend and present at the SAAIR's conference hosted by Namibia University of Science and Technology in Windhoek.

Ben has been an SAAIR EXCO member since 2022 and currently serves as the Treasurer.

He also co-authored Chapter 7 of the book "Utilisation of South African Research on Higher Education," which was virtually launched at the 2021 SAAIR Annual Conference. Ben is currently pursuing a PhD at the University of Pretoria. He also enjoys playing volleyball.

Exco Member **Mr Benjamin Ntshabele** (Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University)



I am based in the Office of the Registrar at the University of Cape Town and have been in the higher education sector for over 15 years.

I have almost a decade of experience navigating the intricacies of the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) processes, specifically handling the student and postdoctoral facets.

Further to this, I am involved in areas such as academic structure, graduations, short courses, and other audit related responsibilities.

I have been an active invested member of the SAAIR community for several years and will strive to add value by encouraging greater collaboration and participation amongst institutions, as well as act as a bridge between higher education institutions and the various government authorities regarding critical sector issues.

Exco Member
Mr Sean Sivertsen
(University of Cape Town)



Dr Lerato Sonia Tladi is a seasoned institutional researcher with 15 years of experience acquired through her role as a Specialist Institutional Researcher at the University of South Africa.

She, therefore, has extensive knowledge in the field, having undertaken various IR activities on various topics, such as environmental scanning, benchmarking activities, briefing analytic reports and surveys, amongst other things.

This, coupled with her sharp analytical skills, inquisitive mind, and attention to detail, would make her a valuable member of the SAAIR exco.

Exco Member
Dr Lerato Tladi
(UNISA)

