

2025 Siyaphumelela Conference

Reimagining student success and expanding opportunity for all

On behalf of *Saide*, the coordinating body for the Siyaphumelela Initiative and the Kresge Foundation, we invite you to participate in the 2025 Siyaphumelela Student Success Network Conference. This event will take place from 8-11 July 2025 at the [Indaba Hotel, Spa and Conference Centre in Fourways Johannesburg](#).

This year's conference will go beyond the traditional. This year's conference theme, "*Reimagining student success and expanding opportunity for all*", aims to inspire delegates to reimagine traditional approaches and embrace new and innovative strategies that empower students to complete their studies successfully, thrive in their careers, contribute meaningfully to society and achieve lasting economic mobility. The theme further encapsulates our vision of scaling out, scaling up and scaling deep, fostering innovation and collaboration and driving systemic change.

About the 2025 Siyaphumelela Conference

Siyaphumelela Conference Aims

The Siyaphumelela Conference aims to:

1. **Share Evidence-Based and Scalable Interventions** – Share with delegates proven strategies that can be implemented for transformative post-secondary student success.
2. **Encourage Collaboration** – Create spaces for inter- and intra-institutional sharing of insights, learn from each other's experiences and work together to drive change.
3. **Advance Scholarship in Student Success** – Explore what student success looks like from a Siyaphumelela practitioner's perspective, how it is integrated within the institution, and deepen the academic discourse.
4. **Embed the Student Voice** – Ensure students actively participate in presentations and discussions to keep their perspectives central.
5. **Foster Innovation and Advocacy** - Advocate for Siyaphumelela as a transformative, sustainable and scalable model for Student Success, encouraging innovative practices and solutions.

Important Dates

- Proposal submission Portal open from 29 April until 21 May 2025
- Open webinar explaining conference session themes and five different concurrent session formats: 09h00-10h30 8 May 2025. [Register here](#).
- Proposals Deadline: 21 May 2025
- Feedback on Proposals: 02 June 2025
- Registration: 1 May - 20 June 2025
- 2025 Siyaphumelela Conference: 12h00 Tuesday 8 July to 13h00 Friday 11 July 2025

Cost

Registration fee: R4 500 excl. VAT payable at the official VAT rate effective 01 May 2025.

Presenters whose proposals are accepted for 30-minute and 90-minute sessions will have their registration fee waived. This applies to one presenter per 30-minute presentation or up to three presenters per 90-minute session. Exclusions include presenters of promising practice sharing sessions and poster presentations.

Accommodation

Accommodation is available at the [Indaba Hotel, Spa and Conference Centre](#), with a limited number of rooms (approximately 100 rooms) available for self-paying delegates. The conference rate is R1750 incl. VAT per person for bed and breakfast. Additional accommodation is available at the [City Lodge Hotel Fourways](#), located next to Montecasino, a 4km drive from Indaba Hotel.

Further Information

<https://www.siyaphumelela.org.za/conf/2025/index.html>

Some Conference Highlights

Keynote Presenter

Named one of the World's 50 Greatest Leaders by Fortune magazine, Timothy Renick is the founding Executive Director of the National Institute for Student Success and Professor at Georgia State University. Between 2008-2020, he directed the student success efforts of the university, overseeing a 70% improvement in graduation rates and the elimination of all equity gaps based on students' race, ethnicity, or income level. Dr. Renick has testified on strategies for helping university students succeed before both the U.S. Senate and House, and he has twice been invited to speak at the White House. His work has been covered by the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Time, and CNN and cited by former President Barack Obama.



Dr. Renick has been recognised as one of the Most Innovative People in Higher Education by the Washington Monthly. He received the Award for National Leadership in Student Success Innovation and the prestigious McGraw Prize in Higher Education. With over \$70 million in grants, he has led initiatives aimed at improving outcomes and equity in college education. Dr. Renick graduated summa cum laude from Dartmouth College and holds an M.A. and Ph.D. in Religion from Princeton University.

Siyaphumelela Scholars

The Siyaphumelela Scholar Programme is an inspiring initiative designed to recognise and celebrate outstanding students from our network of 20 universities across South Africa. Four scholars will be selected from nominations submitted by these institutions, highlighting individuals who exemplify dedication, resilience, and a commitment to success in their studies. Each selected scholar will have the opportunity to develop and present their "I Am" poems, a powerful expression of their personal journeys, identities, and aspirations. These poems will be recited during the conference, providing a platform for the scholars to share their unique voices and stories. The conference will culminate in a panel discussion on the final day, where the scholars will engage in a thought-provoking dialogue, reflecting on their experiences and the transformative impact of the Siyaphumelela Initiative.

Call for Proposals

Proposals

We seek proposals addressing session themes in five different concurrent session formats:

90-minute Multi-Institutional Session: Incorporating robust and multi-institutional engagements in a session theme related to work streams, imbizo style discussions, cluster dialogue time – with case study presentations, workshops, etc.

30-minute Evidence-Based Sharing (20 min presentation and 10 min Q&A discussion): Including the use of data to demonstrate successful strategy execution in one of the session themes and providing strong evidence of success with substantive improvement in student and institutional outcomes.

Promising Practice Sharing (10 min presentation and 5 min Q&A): Highlighting new or evolving innovation in one of the sub-themes but does not yet have evidence to support widespread adoption and scaling. The aim of the promising practice proposals is to create additional opportunities for the network to participate in the conference. This session may be particularly suited for student presenters or co-presenters.

Siyaphumelela Network Partner Sharing (for Institutional Leads) (20 min presentation and 10 min Q&A): As in previous years, partner institutions have been allocated a space in the conference programme. This year the sharing will be in parallel sessions and focus on a selected session theme. We request that at least one student be included to share their perspective.

Posters: The posters are reimagined for Siyaphumelela 3.0 and are intended to provide an opportunity to a) showcase the visuals and artefacts that have been produced through Siyaphumelela or b) an alternative option for promising practice sharing. These should be broadly aligned to the session themes.

[For additional suggested guidelines, please click this link.](#)

Session Themes

Proposals are encouraged on evidence-based practices for student success within the following themes:

- **Student Support** – including holistic student supports, academic and peer advising, first year experience, senior student experience, mental health, design/systems thinking, AI chatbots, and gender-focussed interventions.
- **Use of Data** – including equity performance gaps, tracking and interventions of high impact modules, student tracking, data ethics and governance, know your students and use of AI in data analysis.
- **Institutional Change** – including student success committees, use of ICAT, student success frameworks, policies, monitoring and evaluation and mental health frameworks.
- **Teaching and Learning** – including digital transformation and use of AI, learning design, authentic learning and assessment, curriculum, literacy and mathematics, or open education resources
- **Student Voice** – focussing on how the student voice has been embedded or used to inform student success practices or understand the student journey.
- **Beyond Completion** – considering employability, graduate attributes, transition to post-graduate studies, self-employment, entrepreneurship etc.

Identifying what Proposal to Submit

	90-minute multi-institutional session	30-minute Evidence-Based Sharing	Promising Practice Sharing	Siyaphumelela Network Partner Sharing	Poster
Are you an institutional lead at a partner university?				Yes	
Are you involved in student success interventions at your institution with strong evidence of success?		Yes			
Are you involved in a new or evolving student success practice at your institution and want to share it with others?			Yes		Yes
Are you a student involved in a student success intervention and want to share your perspective?			Yes		Yes
Are you a work stream, regional network, or Partner, and want to propose a longer multi-institutional engagement?	Yes				
Do you have visuals and artefacts that have been produced through Siyaphumelela?					Yes
Are you not yet part of the Siyaphumelela Network and want to share your student success intervention that has strong evidence of success?		Yes			
Are you not yet part of the Siyaphumelela Network and want to share your new or evolving student success practice with others?			Yes		Yes

Further Information

There will be an open webinar explaining conference session themes and five different concurrent session formats from 09h00-10h30 on 8 May 2025. [Please register here.](#)

The deadline for proposal submissions is 21 May 2025. Proposals can be submitted via the [conference website](#) from 29 April 2025.

Please direct any queries to info@siyaphumelela.org.za