

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 08 May until 30 May 2025
- Open webinar explaining conference session themes and five different concurrent session formats: 09h00-10h30 8 May 2025. [Register here](#).
- Proposals Deadline: 30 May 2025
- Feedback on Proposals: 13 June 2025
- Registration: 8 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:

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.

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.

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.

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.

[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

	Siyaphumelela Network Partner Sharing	30-minute Evidence-Based Sharing	Promising Practice Sharing	Poster	90-minute multi-institutional session
Are you an institutional lead at a partner university?	Yes				
Are you an institutional lead at a new partner university?	Yes		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 30 May 2025. Proposals can be submitted via the [conference website](#) from 8 May 2025.

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

Partner Presentations Sessions

PRESENTATION DETAILS

As in previous years, partner institutions have been allocated a 30-minute space with 20-minute presentation and 10-minute discussion in the conference programme. This year the sharing will take place in a parallel session and will focus on a session theme chosen by the institution. We request that at least one student be included to share their perspective.

Presenters

Insert the last name and initials of each presenter in Harvard reference format. The student co-presenter, who is the partner institution's sponsored student delegate, will need to register for the conference using the token provided.

Presentation Title

The presentation title should provide an overview of the presentation in a maximum of 100 characters including spaces.

Proposal (1500 characters, approximately 250 words)

The narrative should provide proposal reviewers with an accurate and engaging description of the presentation. The description will be included in the Siyaphumelela programme. The narrative should include the following:

- **Intended Evidence of Success**
Each partner presentation should include intended or actual quantitative or/and qualitative evidence of success.
- **Inclusion of Student Perspective**
Provide the student's perspective on the institution's Siyaphumelela work.
- **Taking it to Scale**
Describe the planning, strategies, challenges, and success within the scaling process.
- **Eliminating Equity Gaps**
Illustrate the Siyaphumelela aim of eliminating equity gaps based on socio-economic status, gender and/or race.
- **Evaluation**
Explain how the work has been (or will be) evaluated, providing examples of key indicators used or planned, and any progress made against your key indicators.
- **Key insights**
Describe any helpful insights /or lessons learned that will be shared during your presentation, and who would benefit from these insights

30-minute Evidence-Based Sharing Sessions

PRESENTATION DETAILS

The 30-minute evidence-based sessions are 20-minute presentations with 10-minute discussion. They include the use of data to demonstrate successful strategy execution in one of the session themes and provide strong evidence of success with substantive improvement in student and institutional outcomes.

Presenters

Insert the last name and initials of each presenter in Harvard reference format.

Presentation Title

The presentation title should provide an overview of the presentation in a maximum of 100 characters including spaces.

Proposal (1500 characters, approximately 250 words)

The narrative should provide proposal reviewers with an accurate and engaging description of the presentation. The description will be included in the Siyaphumelela programme. The narrative should include the following:

- **Evidence of Success**
Each 30-minute session presentation should include quantitative or/and qualitative evidence of success. At least two or more semesters of student success data are strongly encouraged.
- **Inclusion of Students**
Describe how students have been involved in the implementation practice. Specify the number of students involved as beneficiaries of the intervention or in the sample size of the analysis. Include how student feedback has been incorporated.
- **Taking it to Scale**
Describe the planning, strategies, challenges, and success within the scaling process.
- **Eliminating Equity Gaps**
Illustrate the Siyaphumelela aim of eliminating equity gaps based on socio-economic status, gender and/or race.
- **Evaluation**
Explain how the work has been (or will be) evaluated, providing examples of specific indicators being used or planned.
- **Key insights**
Describe any helpful insights or lessons learned that will be shared during your presentation, and who would benefit from these insights

Promising Practice Sharing

PROMISING PRACTICE DETAILS

The Promising Practice sharing sessions are 15 minutes with 10-minute presentations and 5-minute discussion. These can highlight new or evolving innovations in one of the session themes but do 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.

Presenters

Insert the last name and initials of each presenter in Harvard reference format.

Presentation Title

The presentation title should provide an overview of the presentation in a maximum of 100 characters including spaces.

Proposal (1500 characters, approximately 250 words)

The narrative should provide proposal reviewers with an accurate and engaging description of the presentation. The description will be included in the Siyaphumelela programme. The narrative should include the following:

- **Evidence of Success**
Include a description of the quantitative and qualitative evidence being collected to determine the effectiveness of the strategy.
- **Inclusion of Students**
Describe how students have been involved in the implementation practice. Specify the number of students involved as beneficiaries of the intervention.
- **Taking it to Scale**
Describe how it could be scaled if successful.
- **Eliminating Equity Gaps**
Illustrate the Siyaphumelela aim of eliminating equity gaps based on socio-economic status, gender and/or race.
- **Evaluation**
Explain how the work has been (or will be) evaluated.
- **Key insights**
Describe any helpful insights or lessons learned thus far that will be shared during your presentation, and who would benefit from these insights.

Poster Details

POSTER DETAILS

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

- a) We would like to provide partners and regional networks a platform to share the illustrations, visuals or artefacts that have been produced arising from Siyaphumelela work. For example, these could be visual depictions of student success work at your institution, or regional network, historic visuals that were produced in previous years, illustrations of student success frameworks or other frameworks, infographics or interesting artefacts.
- b) We also encourage posters as an alternative opportunity for promising practice sharing, which could share new or evolving student success innovations, or new perspectives or understandings of student success. This session may be particularly suited for student presenters or co-presenters.

Still to be confirmed, the intention is to display the posters in the plenary venue, with opportunities provided in the conference programme for delegates to engage with the posters and their presenters. A webinar specifically for poster presenters with tips on how to produce a good quality poster will be held prior to the conference. Successful posters must be printed professionally following specific guidelines that will be provided later.

Presenters

Insert the last name and initials of each presenter in Harvard reference format. Specify if the presenter or co-presenter is a student.

Presentation Title

The Poster title should provide an overview of the poster in a maximum of 100 characters including spaces.

Proposal (1500 characters, approximately 250 words)

The narrative should provide proposal reviewers with an accurate and engaging description of the poster. The description may be included in the Siyaphumelela programme.

The narrative should be different for the different poster types.

As a guideline for a) Visuals the narrative should include the following:

- **Background**
Background to the visual depiction or artefact that was produced, including who produced it, when it was produced, why it was produced, and how it was used or will be used.
- **Description**
Narrative describing the visual depiction, concept or artefact that has been produced.
- **Key insights**
Describe any helpful insights or lessons learned and who would benefit from these insights.

For b) Alternative format for sharing promising practices, the narrative should include the following:

- **Evidence of Success**
Include a description of the quantitative and/or qualitative evidence being collected to determine the effectiveness of the promising practice strategy or intervention.
- **Inclusion of Students**
Describe how students have been involved in the implementation practice. Specify the number of students involved as beneficiaries of the intervention.
- **Taking it to Scale**

Describe how it could be scaled if successful.

- **Eliminating Equity Gaps**

Illustrate the Siyaphumelela aim of eliminating equity gaps based on socio-economic status, gender and/or race.

- **Evaluation**

Explain how the work has been (or will be) evaluated.

- **Key insights**

Describe any helpful insights or lessons learned that will be shared during your presentation, and who would benefit from these insights

90-minute Multi-Institutional Sessions

PRESENTATION DETAILS

The 90-minute sessions incorporate robust and multi-institutional engagements related to work streams, imbizo style sessions, cluster dialogues, in depth engagement on a student success theme with case study presentations and discussions, workshop, etc.,

Presenters

Insert the last name and initials of each presenter in Harvard reference format. If successful, the additional presenters will need to register for the conference using the 90-minute session code generated by the system.

Proposal Title

The title should provide an overview of the session in a maximum of 100 characters including spaces.

Proposal (1500 characters, approximately 250 words)

The narrative should provide proposal reviewers with an accurate and engaging description of the session. The description will be included in the Siyaphumelela programme. The narrative should include the following:

- **Proposed Outline of the Session**
This should include a draft outline of the session. Proposals that are structured around presentations only, without discussion, are discouraged, unless the session involves case study presentations by multiple institutions on a session theme.
- **Session Outcomes**
Explain the session outcomes. What will the delegates learn or be able to do after the session and how is this work relevant to advancing student success?
- **Student Inclusion**
Specify how students will be involved in the session.
- **Eliminating Equity Gaps**
Illustrate the Siyaphumelela aim of eliminating equity gaps based on socio-economic status, gender and/or race.
- **Key insights**
Describe any helpful insights or lessons learned that will be shared during your session, and who would benefit from these insights.
- **Delegate Engagement**
Explain how delegates will be engaged in authentic learning in the session.