

DISABILITY MATTERS

OIC DISABILITY SERVICE | STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES FORUM

EDITION #2

SEPTEMBER 2024 | @UCT_OIC



Happy Deaf Awareness Month!

In this edition of the Disability Matters Online Magazine, we explore South African Sign Language and d/Deaf awareness.



- Can d/Deaf people achieve greatness?
- Can you communicate with a d/Deaf person?
- Can you gain consent from d/Deaf people?
- Did you know that September is Deaf Awareness Month?

DID YOU KNOW?

“

Deaf with a capital D is often used to refer to people who have been deaf all their lives, or since before they started to learn to talk. They are pre-lingually deaf. It is an important distinction, because Deaf people tend to communicate in Sign Language as their first language.

”

“It's crucial not to let a disability hold you back from your passions and dreams. If God doesn't give up on us, we should not give up on ourselves. My disability has profoundly shaped my life, and I see it as a gift from God that I have learned to embrace rather than hide.” – **Siyanga Sodam, deaf UCT student**

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DISABILITY MATTERS

HEY,

DEAR READERS



I am pleased to present the second issue of Disability Matters to you, dear readers! This issue includes a number of articles that provide insight into various experiences of disability, all of which are centred around the three pillars of the Students with Disabilities' Forum (SWDF): educate, advocate, and celebrate.

In light of September being Deaf Awareness Month, we are kicking off the issue with an educational article by Siyanga Sodam, who has written about his lived experience as a deaf student. He addresses topics such as his faith, myths surrounding deaf people, and his decision to get a cochlear implant.

Our next article under the “Educate” pillar, written by Celeste Mackaill, concerns hermeneutic justice. She outlines this concept as it pertains to marginalisation & justice, and emphasises the importance of having access to language that can adequately describe collective social experiences.

We are learning about wheelchair rugby with Lexxi Pascqualli's feature article about the sport. She gives an explanation of the ground rules, history of the sport, and provides some details as to how to get involved with UCT's team!

We celebrate UCT Alumni Mpumelelo Mhlongo's amazing achievement in the Paralympics, a huge congratulations, we are so proud!

We have also included some OIC resources surrounding South African Sign Language (SASL), lip-reading, and references to SASL courses and educational materials as we advocate that you do your part in learning SASL.

We hope you enjoy this issue as much as we did. If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas for contributions to future issues, please reach out to us via the email dmonlinemagazine@gmail.com, use the same email address to engage with Tumi's story on page 11!

Niamh Ahern

Senior Editor

MEET OUR

CONTENT

CREATORS



Lexxi Pasqualli - Writer



Celeste Mackaill - Writer



Chevano Frans - Co-ordinator

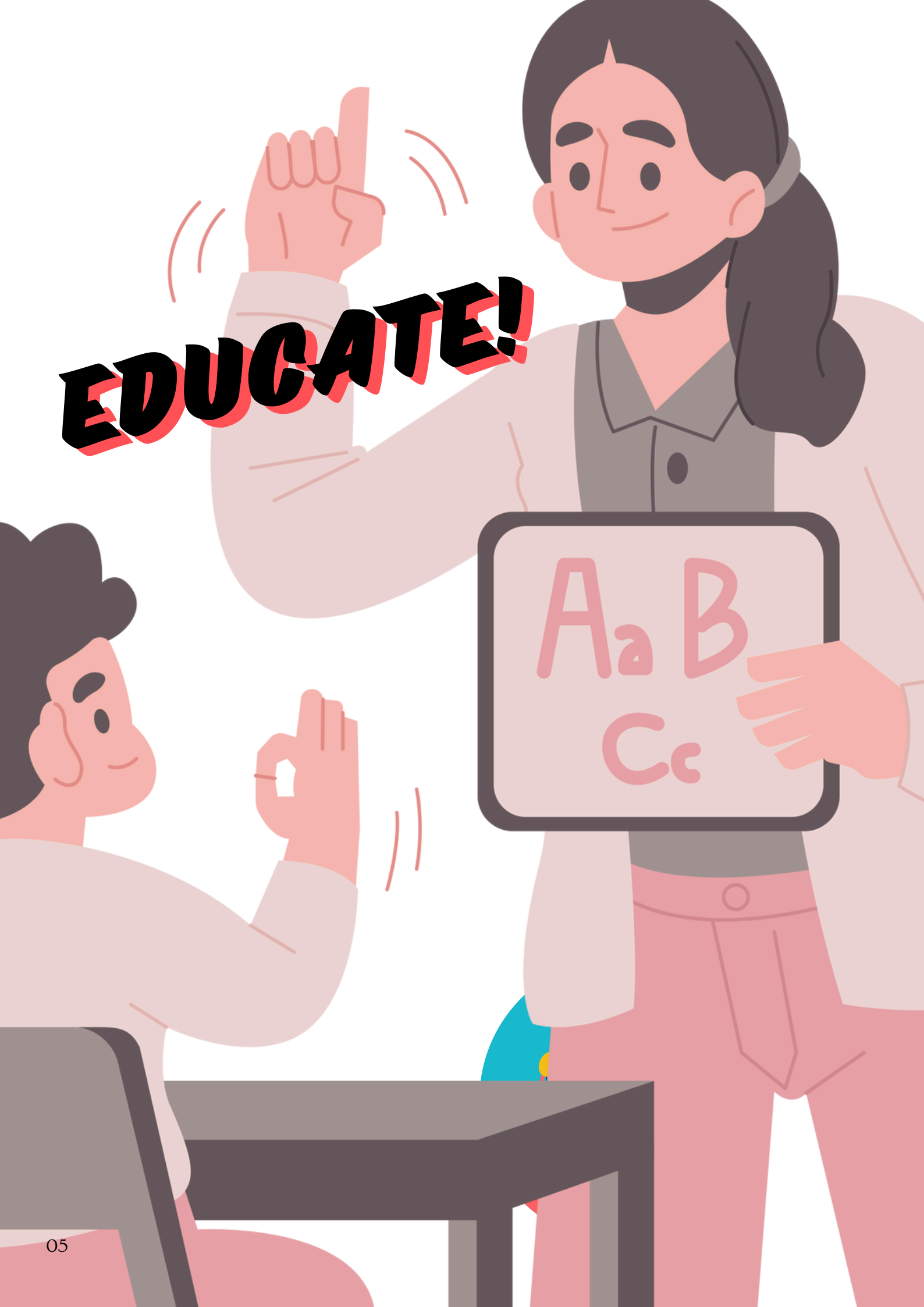


Andrew Roets - Content Creator



Lesego Modutle - Chief Editor

EDUCATE!



Dear deaf community

My name is Siyanga Sodam, and I am deaf. I have been wearing hearing aids for many years, and I hope my experience can inspire others and help shift perceptions about deaf individuals. Being deaf does not mean we are incapable of achieving our goals or pursuing careers in fields such as Engineering or IT management. I firmly believe that, with faith in God and a strong belief in ourselves, anything is possible.

It's crucial not to let a disability hold you back from your passions and dreams. If God doesn't give up on us, we should not give up on ourselves. My disability has profoundly shaped my life, and I see it as a gift from God that I have learned to embrace rather than hide.

I was born deaf, and it was challenging for me and my family to communicate. I often needed to ask people to repeat themselves and relied on lip-reading to understand them. In the past, my hearing aids were not always effective, which made it difficult for me to participate in class and communicate with others.

After discovering that my hearing loss was significant, I decided to get a cochlear implant at Tygerberg Hospital. I underwent the surgery in November 2019 and received the implant in my right ear. This has greatly improved my hearing and speech, especially during my time in grade 9. With the support of my cochlear implant, I was able to succeed academically and communicate more effectively.

I want to encourage everyone not to be discouraged by your circumstances or disability. Stay strong and courageous, and keep pursuing your dreams. May the Lord bless you and be with you always!

Warm regards,

Siyanga Sodam



HERMENEUTICAL INJUSTICE

BY CELESTE MACKAILL

Includes mild discussions of ableism

Words are very important in understanding the world. This is often intimately understood by people with disabilities, as well as many others who bear the brunt of discrimination. When your experiences are outside the preconceived notions of the norm it is very easy to be further marginalised, to be overlooked, or misunderstood. Without the words to describe it, an autistic person dealing with a meltdown often gets treated the same way as a kid upset in a toy store. The gender dysphoria a transgender person feels will often be conflated with general insecurities one feels growing up. Words are powerful tools that both explain and contain our experiences.

This concept is summed up by the term 'hermeneutical injustice'. In her book, *Epistemic Injustice*, Miranda Fricker defines the term as "the injustice of having some significant area of one's social experience obscured from collective understanding owing to hermeneutical marginalisation." That is, when a person is ignored in their ability to understand their experiences, to describe and explain them, they will face the challenges of marginalisation. They may also face issues in their work and education-based activities. These factors often compound themselves.



When members of a community cannot describe their collective social experience, they will struggle to obtain the support necessary to truly do their best in settings where that support is needed. If I did not have the words to describe the experience of being overwhelmed, I would receive no support from the academic institution and would be left struggling to achieve passing grades. This is an experience many people face and one that results in their underrepresentation in academic and work-based positions. This results in fewer people with these experiences being regarded as having the authority to make a change. They may also hold less influence in academic or work environments as a whole.

Community and understanding can be built around the words we use and along with it, the ability to advocate for our needs. In this sense, developing the vocabulary is often the first step to truly expressing the unique needs you face. Without the term “microaggression”, there is very little way for a marginalised person to describe the hidden and mundane forms of discrimination they may face. The term, which has been criticised for its reliance on subjective experience, represents the importance of social experiences and interactions others miss. For this reason, the development of words should not be left to communities of people who do not understand a social experience. This often leads to further stigmatisation of these experiences. You should not be deterred if communities in positions of power and privilege refuse to accept these terms. Making terms, even if they’re not perfect, gives power and validity to experience. It is an important step towards truly achieving equality and support that is so often needed yet so often missed.



WHAT IS WHEELCHAIR RUGBY?

BY LEXXI PASQUALLI

Wheelchair rugby is a sport incorporating elements of rugby played by competitors who have a physical disability that requires the use of a wheelchair.

Wheelchair rugby is played indoors on a hardwood court. Physical contact is permitted and forms an integral part of the game. The rules have been guided by wheelchair basketball, ice hockey, handball, and rugby union.

Wheelchair rugby is mostly played by two teams of up to twelve players. Only four players from each team may be on the court at any time. It is a mixed-gender sport, so male and female athletes play on the same teams. Players score by carrying the ball across the goal line. For a goal to count, two wheels of the player's wheelchair must cross the line while they possession of the ball. A team's backcourt is the half of the court containing the goal they are defending; their frontcourt is the half containing the goal they are attacking. Teams have twelve seconds to advance the ball from their backcourt into the frontcourt, and a total of forty seconds to score a point or concede possession.





A player with possession of the ball must bounce or pass the ball within ten seconds. Wheelchair rugby games consist of four eight-minute quarters. If the game is tied at the end of regulation play, three-minute overtime periods are played. Of course, there are rules. For example, such as striking a player from behind is not allowed.

Originally called “murderball” due to its aggressive and full-contact nature, wheelchair rugby was started in Winnipeg, Canada in 1976 by a group of quadriplegic athletes who were looking for an alternative to wheelchair basketball. Wheelchair rugby offered an opportunity for athletes with reduced arm and hand function to participate equally. It is now a Paralympic sport, having spread from Canada to the US to over 26 countries.

Today it is played and enjoyed by able-bodied athletes and is becoming popular in South Africa. While anyone can play socially, players must have an impairment in 3-4 limbs to be eligible to participate at a competition level.

The adrenalin is real, and I invite you to come and participate in the wheelchair rugby practices at the Sports Centre held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3pm to 5pm.

HAPPY ROLLING!

ADVOCATE!



Food for Thought

Submitted by Michelle De Bruyn

Tumi, Black South African girl, resides in the township of Gugulethu. Her mother raises her as a single parent. Tumi was born with profound deafness, a condition that remained undiagnosed until she reached the age of four. Prior to this discovery, she attended an early childhood development centre for children with typical hearing abilities. Her educator, Miss Zola, mistakenly interpreted Tumi's lack of verbal engagement as mere introversion.

The revelation of Tumi's condition occurred during a school recital. During the performance, Tumi remained noticeably disengaged. Miss Zola, attempting to capture her attention, loudly called out "Tumi!" in an effort to coax her off the stage. Tumi, however, remained unmoved, her gaze directed towards the audience. This incident served as a catalyst, prompting Tumi's mother to recognize the possibility of an underlying issue. Subsequently, she sought the expertise of an audiologist at the local day hospital, who confirmed Tumi's profound hearing impairment.

At the age of five, Tumi's mother enrolled her in the Dominican School for the Deaf in Wittebome. Initially, Tumi found herself intimidated by the environment, where individuals communicated through animated gestures and hand movements. However, she soon discovered a sense of belonging and comfort within the school's community. It was here that Tumi began her journey of acquiring South African Sign Language (SASL) and immersing herself in Deaf culture.

The school rapidly evolved into a surrogate home and family for Tumi. In stark contrast, her actual home environment was marred by a significant communication barrier. The inability to effectively converse with her mother and other family members resulted in a palpable disconnect. This linguistic chasm not only impeded daily interactions but also hindered the transmission of cultural knowledge within the household. While Tumi flourished in the school's signing environment, where her peers communicated in a language she comprehended, she encountered considerable challenges in learning English as her second language. The crux of this difficulty lay in the fact that many of her hearing teachers lacked proficiency in Sign Language. This deficiency severely hampered their ability to effectively impart knowledge and facilitate learning.

The process of mastering reading and writing in English proved particularly strenuous for Tumi. This struggle was exacerbated by the fact that SASL lacks a written equivalent and was not utilized as the primary medium of instruction at the school. Furthermore, it was not recognized as a home language in the classroom setting. These factors combined to create significant obstacles in Tumi's acquisition of new concepts, ultimately resulting in an educational experience that was markedly inferior to that of her hearing counterparts in the community.

Moreover, Tumi found herself deprived of the incidental learning opportunities that her hearing peers routinely enjoyed. The wealth of general information typically gleaned from overheard conversations at home, radio broadcasts, and television programs remained largely inaccessible to her. This information deficit extended to everyday scenarios, such as the casual exchanges one might overhear while traveling in a communal taxi, further widening the gap between Tumi's worldview and that of her hearing peers.

What do you think communities can do to create an inclusive environment for Tumi? Email us on dmonlinemagazine@gmail.com and we might feature your answer in the next edition of Disability Matters Online Magazine!

South African Sign Language

A	B	C	D	E	
F	G	H	I	J	
K	L	M	N	O	
P	Q	R	S	T	
U	V	W	X	Y	Z

Source: <https://za.pinterest.com/pin/335236765986510095/>



HOW TO TALK TO A LIP READER



GAINING CONSENT FROM A DEAF PERSON

1

CLEAR MOUTH AND FACE

Keep hands away from mouth and face.



2

NO OBSTRUCTIONS

Do not have any obstructions by your mouth, e.g talking while eating or drinking.

3

TRIM MOUSTACHE

If you have a moustache, make sure it is trimmed away from upper lip.

4

DO NOT SCREAM

Communicate in your normal tone.



5

SPEAK NORMALLY

Do not exaggerate speech or lip movement.





WHERE CAN I LEARN SASL?

Courses available in Cape Town

Deaf Community of Cape Town

Tel: 0217127904

Email: dcomct@gmail.com

Hands with Words by June Bothma

Tel: 087 063 8920

Email: info@deafinition.co.za

Eden Language Academy

<https://eden-la.com/language-courses-sign-language/>

Online courses and word lists

SASL Online

<https://www.saslonline.co.za>

Real SASL

<https://www.realsasl.com/>

National Institute for the Deaf

<https://national-institute-for-the-deaf.myshopify.com>

Courses offered by tertiary institutions

SASL Beginner Level 1A at Stellenbosch University Language Centre

<https://languagecentre.sun.ac.za>

Wits Centre for Deaf Studies

<https://www.wits.ac.za/centre-for-deaf-studies/>

UFS SASL Short Learning Programme

<https://www.ufs.ac.za/sasl>

NWU South African Sign Language

<https://humanities.nwu.ac.za/languages/south-african-sign>

CELEBRATE





University of Cape Town

388,138 followers

6h • 🌐

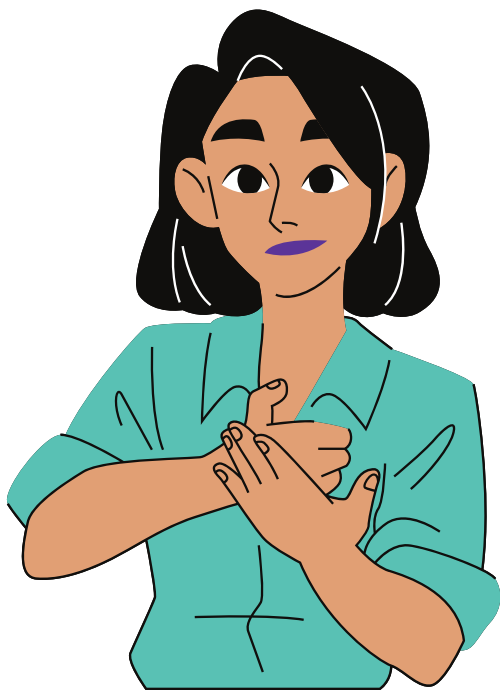
Congratulations to UCT chemical engineering alumnus Mpumelelo Mhlongo, who won a gold medal in the men's T44 100m sprint final on Sunday, 1 September 2024, securing South Africa's first medal at the Paralympic Games in Paris.

CONGRATULATIONS!



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD





Hands-on Learning

UCT Language Indaba

The University of Cape Town (UCT) will be hosting a Language Indaba at the Leslie Social Building, UCT, on 12 September 2024. This event is aimed at showcasing the work that each department has done to promote Multilingualism in Higher Education.

With the theme being "Promoting Understanding," the Office for Inclusivity & Change's Disability Service (OIC/DS) will promote the understanding of Sign Language and Deaf Culture, in light of South African Sign Language being approved as one of the 12 Official Languages of South Africa.

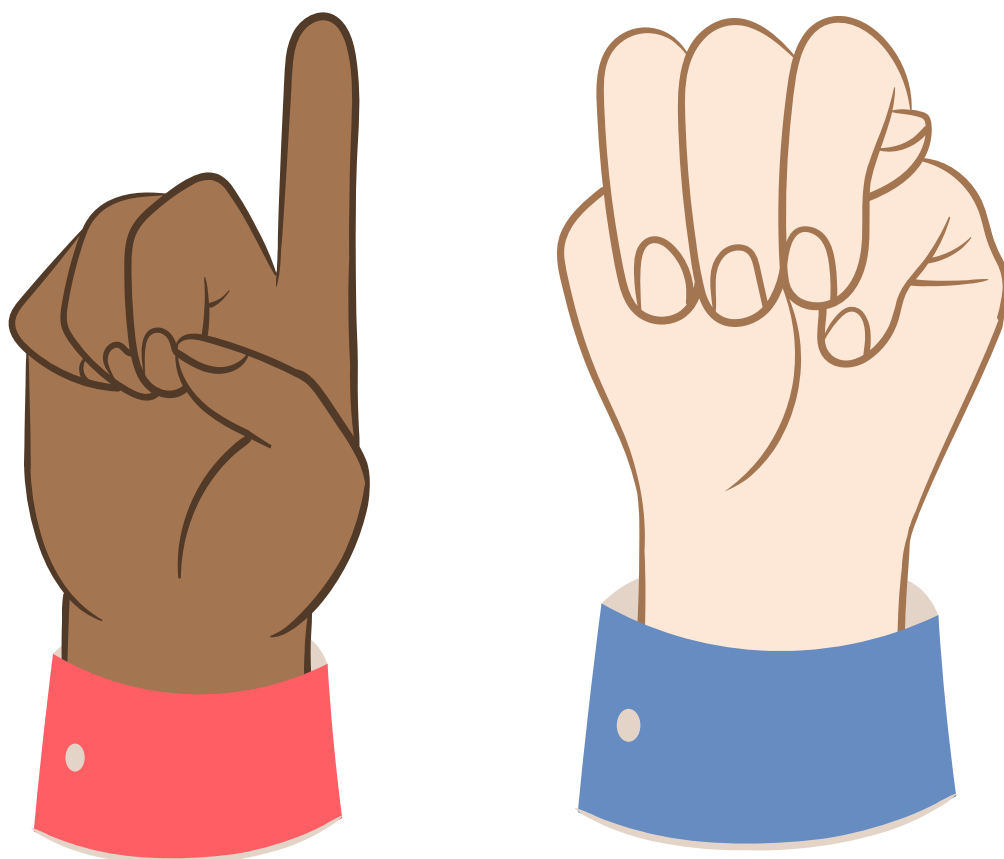
Our showcase will include:

- Information on the challenges faced by Deaf persons when there is no accessibility to Sign Language,
- Advocacy to encourage the community on the importance of learning Sign Language and Deaf Culture.
- An exhibition of the South African Sign Language projects that the OIC/DS has initiated within the institution.
- Information on how to gain consent from Deaf persons.
- Interactive Sign Language games where the most enthusiastic participants will win OIC merch.

Mark your calendars and join the celebration—we can't wait to see you there!

DATE: 12 September 2024
TIME: 10h00am - 14h00pm
VENUE: Leslie Social Building

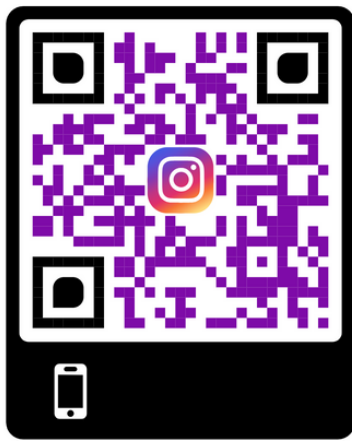




DM
NOW

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OIC DISABILITY SERVICE



The University of Cape Town's (UCT) Disability Service (DS), situated in the Office for Inclusivity and Change (OIC), is geared towards removing all physical, policy, information and attitudinal barriers that may prevent students and staff with disabilities from fulfilling their potential. We are dedicated to the creation of a discrimination-free and inclusive environment in which students and staff with disabilities are able to enjoy full, independent and effective participation in all aspects of university life. The Disability Service strives to create an enabling learning and occupational environment for students and staff with disabilities, where their learning experience and career aspirations are equal with their abilities, and where their talents are nurtured and developed. This entails providing innovative support for time sensitive solutions for students and staff with a wide variety of disabilities and complex medical conditions.

Email: disabilityservice@uct.ac.za

The work of the Disability Service includes:

- Disability advocacy and sensitisation
- Improving access to inaccessible venues and allocating accessible parking bays according to UCT's Traffic Policy
- Providing accessible transport within residences and lecture theatres
- Specific mobility orientation for staff and students with disabilities
- Providing accessible residence accommodation
- Providing lecture and study materials in an accessible format for persons with sensory impairments
- Student support, psychological education and assessment for mental health concerns and specific
- Learning disorders
- Facilitating extra time applications and/or other accommodations concerning examinations and test-taking
- Supporting the development of academics to ensure accessible education

Introduction to the Students with Disabilities' Forum (SWDF)

BY ANDREW ROETS & JERED SHORKEYD

What is the SWDF?

The Students with Disabilities' Forum (SWDF) is the official student governance structure for students with disabilities at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The SWDF is a representative sub-structure of the Students' Representative Council (SRC) underneath the portfolio of the Student Advocacy Co-ordinator, and is almost entirely composed of students with disabilities. The SWDF is meant, among other things, to hold student leaders accountable through informing them about the issues that persons with disabilities face on campus, and provides a link between students with disabilities, the SRC, and UCT as an institution.

The SWDF has three areas of focus: educate, advocate, and celebrate. As a Forum, the SWDF aims to educate UCT (and society at-large) about various disabilities, both visible and invisible, as well as about the various struggles that persons with disabilities experience. Additionally, the SWDF aims to advocate for students with disabilities in an effort to make UCT more inclusive for all persons with disabilities. The SWDF also aims to celebrate students with disabilities as part of an effort to embrace and empower students with disabilities.

SWDF Stakeholders WhatsApp Group



Contact Information:

SRC Student Advocacy Co-ordinator: srcadvocacy@uct.ac.za

Co-Chairperson: swdfchair@uct.ac.za

Secretary: swdfsecretary@uct.ac.za

Social Media: @SWDF_UCT

Sub-Divisions (feel free to join them if you want to get more involved):

Educate

Advocate

Celebrate

Thank
you

for reading the DM online magazine!

