



# COVID-19 LOCKDOWN SA ECONOMY

## GLOBAL PANDEMIC VIRTUAL MEETINGS

Manufacturing matters | Think Tank | Experiencing the Distance | Celebrating our Alumni |

# What's inside?

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# Welcome Dear Colleagues

Prof Jan van Romburgh, acting Director of the NWU Business School, gives an overview of content as in the July 2020 version of the newsletter.



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## Introducing: NWU Business School Think Tank

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*“We have an obligation towards stimulating the South African economy with our wide range of expertise and by creating possible solutions. ”*

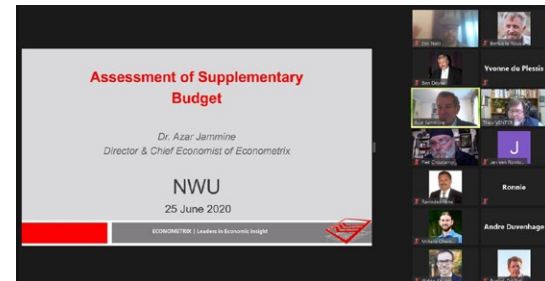
The North-West University Business School has embarked on a brand new, online initiative where current affairs within the South African sphere will be discussed via ZOOM by a panel of experts during Covid-19 and return to roundtable discussions when allowed. Journalists from various media will be invited to join the online panel discussion where real-time opinions from experts in various fields can be accessed.

On 24 June 2020, Finance Minister Tito Mboweni has delivered his emergency supplementary budget, outlining government's financial response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The NWU Business School invited dr Azar Jammine to share with us his views of this extraordinary supplementary budget. Dr Jammine is Director and Chief

Economist of Econometrix. He has been in his current position since December 1985 and has established a significant profile in South Africa as an analyst and commentator on domestic and international economic affairs.

Following his presentation, the following opinion formers provided their views facilitated by Theo Venter. They were Prof Andre Duvenhage, Dr Piet Croukamp; Prof Waldo Krugel; Theo Vorster and Albert van Zyl.

According to the minister, the Covid-19 crisis has turned the



global economy upside down, noting that in the February Budget, it was expected that the global economy would expand by 3.3% in 2020 – now the expectation is that there will be a global contraction of 5.2%.

“This will bring about the broadest collapse in per capita incomes since 1870. Throughout the world, tens of millions of workers have lost their jobs. South African unemployment increased by one percentage point, reaching 30.1 per cent in the first three months of this year,” Mboweni said.

Dr Azar Jammie provided a comprehensive overview of this supplementary budget, indicating that it was in essence a mechanism for parliament to condone financial and monetary decisions taken during the emergency and to provide a view

on the way forward.

In summary, Dr Jammie concluded that:

- The supplementary budget was an exercise of formality to acquire Parliamentary agreement for the R500bn rescue package, which according to him, increased debt with R142bn since the rest of the R500bn was acquired through redirecting existing funds or indirect expenditure.
- That the Increase in deficits and public debt was in line with expectations.
- He questions whether the published budgetary parameters were not based on unduly optimistic forecasts of economic growth?
- That only moderate tax

increases are envisaged over the next 4 years.

- That Government for once, seems to be taking the risk of an impending debt crisis very seriously.
- That Government pledges determination to rein in the public debt trajectory longer term.
- Skepticism to remain regarding the ability to rein in expenditure in the face of populism. It was also added that this budget was really designed to convince the ruling ANC of the debt crisis and not the public at large. Mboweni tried to persuade South Africans to buy into Government and Cabinet.
- Financial markets dominated by international events, rather than parlous fiscal situation, determining the unstable



movement of the Rand.

- A debt crisis longer term remains a real possibility as reflected by steepening of yield curve.
- South Africa is very dependent on FDI, but the current situation will force investors to look for local direct investment, i.e. money available in the country. It was also shown that it is not the private sector that has stopped investing, Government and SOE has done very little in capital investment themselves.

During the discussion, there was an agreement that the South African economy was already in deep trouble before the Covid-19 crisis and that it magnified the already weak areas of the economy. An example is the very negative statistics on unemployment released last

week, will further increase during 2020 as statistics become more available.

Apart from the economic impact of Covid-19, the following issues were also mentioned:

1. The world is looking more inward in terms of less dependency on other countries and this will hugely impact on China;
2. Globally, there is a changing pattern in health care management;
3. Food security has become a real issue; and
4. The Fourth Industrial revolution and digitisation of society has taken a huge leap forward.

In future, the NWU Business

School will embark on more such Think Tank initiatives. During the first Think Tank session, some 46 delegates attended. They comprised in-house NWU experts from various disciplines, NWU management, CEOs from a number of high profile organisations, and specialist journalists. "We have an obligation towards stimulating the South African economy with our wide range of expertise and by creating possible solutions." These initiatives will also take the profile and reputation of the NWU Business School to the next level," Prof Jan van Romburgh, acting School Director remarks.



# Choosing to chew the distance toffee

*A student's approach to distance learning*

*“This article will discuss the responsibility of the student when opting for registering for a programme at the Business School that is offered via the distance mode of delivery.”*

*By Dr Nelda Mouton  
NWU Business School  
Distance Education and Operational Management*

**D**istance is the way to go! From a student's point of view, you know all the challenges and perspectives that this new virtual world has to offer. You feel confident that you can bridge the distance gap and experience it as a new walk, in a brand new park, of new educational opportunities. It is cost-effective, you can work at your own pace and within your own space... anywhere, anytime! All you need is data and the internet – what a pleasure!

Students at the Business School are also more mature and have work experience. Unfortunately,

it also means that they are trained to believe that education is lecturer-centred. This is the first mindshift change that students must make

*“Learning is a life-long process where each learner has his/her own process when dealing with learning perceptions and understanding what it means to learn.”*

when embarking on the distance journey. During the last years, learning has become more student-centred and the lecturer is no longer the pacemaker or the Big Brother watching over your shoulder to see whether or not you are walking the distance mile. It has become a scenario where the student has to take full responsibility of the learning process. Usually, past learning experiences also evolved around individual work and finding your way on your own in a very uncertain, isolated and distance environment. As a student, you

have to realise that this concept has also changed completely and has become a collaborative process where students bring different meanings and expectations to the virtual

classroom. Secondly, there are also new cognitive challenges that students will face in this virtual community.

The above are all true perceptions that distance education has to offer, but, with comfortability also comes responsibility. This article will discuss the responsibility of the student when opting for registering for a programme at the Business School that is offered

via the distance mode of delivery. Therefore, the focus will be twofold: Cognitive awareness and, secondly, the role of the student with regard to collaboration when doing groupwork in a module.

Learning is a life-long process where each learner has his/her own process when dealing with learning perceptions and understanding what it means to learn. Cognitive awareness acknowledges the fact that students' have different learning styles and that this will impact on their attitude towards the learning

*“Cognitive awareness acknowledges the fact that students have different learning styles and that this will impact on their attitude towards the learning process.”*

process. Successful learning is thus linked to how students interact with others during the problem-solving phase. It is also important that students should



gain the skill to reflect on their work and reflection is most efficient when students focus on the area that they need to improve on as individuals.

Cognitively, creative thinking also stimulates critical thinking which further enhances the learning experience to stimulate intellectual - and personal growth. The critical thinker will move through various phases in this thinking process which will include the identification of the problem, defining and exploring the problem, problem applicability and, lastly, integrating these concepts within the given assignment. Mainly, it should

*“Within this new era as introduced by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, collaborative learning is vital, as it leads to processes where joint activities within the group leads to a deeper sense of understanding and accomplishment.”*

always be measurable in order to identify the progress being made when thinking and applying critical processes. Therefore, the student must also be able to assess his/her own reasoning on an ongoing basis.

This said, collaboration also links with a strong cognitive presence where group members build on a common construct to make sense of every contribution in the group. Group interaction encourages the restructuring of previous knowledge and it affects the individual's cognitive

*“Within this process, critical thinking is also further stimulated as it includes attributes such as open-mindedness and flexibility.”*

processes as it creates a group, socio-cognitive involvement where shared knowledge occurs.

Within this new era as introduced by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, collaborative learning is vital, as it leads to processes where joint activities within the group leads to a deeper sense of understanding and accomplishment. Within this groupwork - and virtual environment, all students in the group should interact and there should be a strong social presence which could be enhanced by the use of various

technologies. Research has indicated that students actually learn more in a group environment as it leads to cooperation, commitment, individual accountability, deeper

- as well as a higher quality of thinking, and definitely adds to learning satisfaction. If you are one of those students who prefer to work individually, you will miss out

on the value of collaborative learning and in the process you may not develop the necessary skills for collaboration within the workplace. Within this process, critical thinking is also further stimulated as it includes attributes such as open-mindedness and flexibility. When working as a team there needs to be equal participation of all team members where socio-cultural diversity should be considered, acknowledged and respected. It is also important that students should agree on a framework within this process in order to stimulate group-member participation and interpersonal

*"The more diverse they learn to think, the better collaborators they will become."*

relations. Thus, the collaboration process requires students to think

diversely and if they master the process, they become better collaborators on a personal level, within their group and within their working environment. The more diverse they learn to think, the better

collaborators they will become.

As a student who opted to walk the distance, you will find that the gained knowledge within the distance programme, will be enhanced by various other life skills that will equip you for the soft skills needed in our new age and in the workplace.



# Celebrating our Alumni

*De Wet Bisschoff*



**A**s we constantly celebrate our successful alumni, we would like to introduce De Wet Bisschoff - a successful business executive who has 25 years' experience in large-scale business and technology transformation for clients across various industry sectors. These sectors range from communications (telecommunications and media)

to financial services (banking and insurance), resources (utilities) and the public sector (treasury)—in South Africa, Africa and Europe.

As a member of Accenture's Exco, he is also focused on the business management and leadership of the organization, collaboratively managing the financial state of the business, and ensuring the development of highly skilled workforce.

He is regularly invited to speak at industry and client events. He also delivers guest lectures on information technology at various universities.

De Wet has a degree in Computer Science from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University and a Master in Business Administration

(MBA), Management from North-West University Business School. "The MBA contributed greatly to my career development and I successfully transitioned from a technical management role into a business management position."

He has attended extensive international training on technology and business management in the USA, Asia and Europe. This includes, most recently, the University of Oxford Saïd Business School (Blockchain), Colombia Business School (Digital) and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Sloan School of Business Management (Digital Marketplaces).

Yet another alumnus of which we are very proud of!

## *Nick Efstathiou*



Nick Efstathiou, the CEO of the Central Media Group, (of which OFM Radio Station is part of) is another proud alumnus of the North-West University's Business School.

Efstathiou has been with OFM since 2001 when he was appointed as Morning Show Producer and Marketing and Events Coordinator. In 2004, he took over as Marketing Manager and in 2011, he was appointed as Group Marketing Manager of Central Media Group (CMG). In this capacity, he was responsible for the implementation and management of marketing strategies for OFM, as well as other companies within the group, namely Mahareng Publishing, Redstar Agency and Digital Platforms.

In 2012, he was appointed as General Manager of OFM. Under his leadership, OFM achieved the highest instances of time spent listening (TSL) in South African commercial radio, a Grand Prix Loerie and thirteen nominations at the Liberty SA Radio Awards

2018, with two outright wins.

"In 2017 I walked through the gates of the most beautiful campus in South Africa – the North-West University. Not as a guest, but as an MBA student. It was a perfect fit between myself; what I needed, and what the NWU Business School could offer. The lecturers and staff are truly incredible people. One works very hard, but I had a great time doing it! I embrace the words in the NWU anthem: Where the willow trees grow, the thorn tree spreads its shade, there, we grow in knowledge," Efstathiou says.

Nick completed his Post Graduate Diploma in Management and his MBA at the NWU Business School. The latter, with 7 distinctions!

## *Dr Sayed Moinuddin Rehman*



Dr Sayed Moinuddin Rehman is another alumnus of the NWU Business School who is making a proper difference in the lives of others.

He was born in Durban in 1977 and his educational background includes a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting from the University

of Natal, a Master of Business Administration from Regent Business School and a Doctoral degree: PhD in Business Administration from North-West University. Prof Christo Bisschoff and Christoff Botha acted as his promoters.

Since completing his Bachelor of Commerce degree in 2001, and until 2012, he has held industry portfolios such as Accounting Clerk, Bookkeeper, Accounts Manager, Group Accountant and Financial Manager.

He then joined Regent Business School as an academic in 2013 where he currently lectures to Masters, Honours, Postgraduate and Undergraduate students. He manages various academic functions including leadership

as the programme coordinator for the Master of Business Administration programme.

Dr Rehman is also the chairman of Regent Business School's Student Admission and Selection Committee as well as chairman of the Programme Design, Development and Review committee. He supervises the research of postgraduate students and he is the author or co-author of papers in internationally refereed journals. He also contributes papers at international business management conferences.

Another NWU alumnus who ploughs back in the tertiary sector by developing and shaping our leaders of tomorrow.



## *Congrats Dr Retha Scholtz*

We are very proud to congratulate yet another staff member for obtaining her Doctoral degree! Dr Retha Scholtz, a senior lecturer in emotional intelligence, recently graduated! We are so proud of you Dr Retha!



## How does Covid-19 impact our economy?

Prof André Duvenhage, a political analyst, gives his take on the current lockdown regulations and its impact on the economy.

*“We are talking about between 3 and 7 million job losses, a smaller economy and a much lower national budget. And the big question: How will this affect South Africa’s future?”*





# Quantum events bring new opportunities

*by Dr Johan Jordaan, a Senior Lecturer in Operations Management at the North-West University Business School.*

**L**et's face it: the world today is a radically different place to the world three months ago. In history, certain events drastically change the world. The fall of the Berlin Wall, the atomic bomb wiping out Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the start of a World War, the crucifixion of Christ, and the list can go on. Covid-19 is such a quantum event.

With these changes often came hardship for some, loss of income for others, death and destruction for many, and that is sad. But with each of the quantum events in history came new opportunities, new industries, new ways of doing things. The fall of the wall brought business opportunities to millions, Hiroshima brought WE Deming to Japan, who reinvented the Japanese industry

and economy, wars bring new technology. Covid-19 is probably no different.

South Africa recently experienced certain business sectors grinding to an abrupt halt: schools, sports events, catering businesses, air travel. Each of these changes forces us to look for new opportunities, a few of which are discussed below.

**Reduced bureaucracy:** In the industry where I work, higher education, changing the way you teach is encouraged, but getting past the bureaucracy to get it done is traditionally a mission. Although agility is promoted, it takes forever to get a new course approved, accredited and rolled out. Covid-19 has changed that. Within one week, a face-to-face programme has gone fully online, with the blessing of the bureaucrats.

Fortunately, technology allows for it. Could this possibly impact the way we renew our driving licence... or the way we conduct court cases... or the way we sign into a public hospital?

I bet it can: in all these cases the technology does allow such a change.

Easing of political squabbling: In our local government council rooms, we debate who will be the next municipal manager and speaker, but while we are fiddling inside, Rome is burning outside. Last week, for the first time in decades, parliament agreed on an issue and a sitting was concluded in 15 minutes. How refreshing! Agreed, political debate adds rigour to the legislative process, but continuous shouting:

*“What are we really doing here? What value do we add? Are there better ways to add value?”*

“Honourable Chairman, point of order!” screams of neither order nor of acting honourably. Maybe

the health crisis we face (and the larger economic crisis that is unfolding) could remedy such destructive bickering. Let us hope that everyone on all levels of government and business would realise that we cannot afford idle talk or corruption.

Challenging of business value propositions: This is probably where the biggest gains are to be made. From small businesses to churches, from schools to corporations, from sports clubs to hawkers, the last few weeks forced us to ask some core questions - What are we really doing here? What value do we add? Are there better ways to add

value? Is there other value that we could add using our current resources? Could a mini-taxi be used for an uber ride? Could a school hostel kitchen be used for office meals? Could a private hospital be used for public healthcare? We have seen many refreshing examples of this lately: Mobile networks offering free education platforms, churches pre-recording their sermons and distributing them by mail, charities that took their service to the people, instead of waiting for the people to ask.

Maybe this is the time to critically question the way we have always added value, to whom we add the value and, most important, whether we still add value. Is the real value a car salesman offering to physically show his customer the car and to do the paperwork, or is it something else? Is the

real value a church offering the sermon on a Sunday, or is to engage and empower the people to make a difference elsewhere? Is the real value a government department that adds to follow a procedure or to provide a real service? Is the real value a manufacturer that adds to supply a product or to provide a service, of which the product is a mere incidental part.

### **Challenging our work**

**environments:** The people most drastically being affected by the abrupt cancellation of arts festivals and sports events are not the television audience, the players or the broadcasters, but the car guards, the ice-cream sellers, the coffee caravans and the casuals manning the

gates, as they have probably lost their only source of food for the week - every week. And that is sad! Although these jobs are an accessible source of income for the poor by adding real value to patrons, they might be the very reason that the people providing these services don't go and look for other opportunities, and neither do their suppliers.

*"Redefining modes of transport: Images of empty highways abound on social media, and they are both eerie and refreshing."*

The same ice-cream vendor might be able to sell his or her product six days per week instead of only on Saturday or Sunday. The same coffee caravan might be able to have a roaring business outside a banking complex. The change is in the thinking and a crisis like the present one forces one to reconsider whether the present way of doing business is the best.

In my industry, higher education: Do we need textbooks or just reference to the website with the best information? Must group work be in physical groups, or could these groups be virtual? The technology exists that will enable a quantum change.

Redefining modes of transport: Images of empty highways abound on social media, and they are both eerie and refreshing. This point goes beyond lift clubs instead of driving alone and taxi transport instead of trains. The real question to be answered is whether I really need to get to the office? Many businesses have considered virtual offices, flexi-hours, work-from-home, video meetings, round-robin decision-making instead of meetings and various other ways of freeing up workspace, but many are too scared to take the leap.

The last few weeks saw all this change, and in many cases, the work continued ... with shorter meetings, less bureaucracy and more outputs.

This virus might just be the shove

organisations need to open up new possibilities, to de-clog the highways, to change travel time into productive time. Yet again, the technology exists, but up to now, the will did not.

There are no correct answers to these questions, but they still need to be asked. If you do not at least attempt to ask and answer them, you are at risk of becoming obsolete, not just during the coronavirus crisis, but during the decades that will follow this

quantum event. Your response to the crisis will either help you reduce the length of the queue of people waiting for food, or it will add you to the queue. There are solutions to those frustrations

*"I want to challenge you, the person who reads this, to write down at least one possible opportunity emerging from this quantum event."*

that always bugged many of us, and a quantum

event might just be the nudge we need to turn those frustrations into opportunities.

I want to challenge you, the person who reads this, to write down at least one possible opportunity emerging from this quantum event, whether in your job, your private life, your financial situation or simply in your thinking... and then to pursue this opportunity.

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## *Thinking Ahead*

The NWU Business School's EXCO recently had a brainstorming session with renowned marketing expert, Jeremy Sampson.

Interesting discussions took place where the autonomy of the Business School was under the spotlight. Various branding and marketing exercises will follow in due time.



*From left standing: Prof Ronnie Lotriet, Prof Christo Bisschoff.*

*From left to right sitting: Dr Johan Jordaan, Prof Anet Smit, Jeremy Sampson, Prof Jan van Romburgh, Prof Raymond Parsons, Prof Christoff Botha.*



# MBA With a Twist

*by John Skinner*



**E**nrolling for a Masters degree in Business Administration inherently implies that a student wishes to be equipped and empowered to fulfill an effective organisational leadership role currently or in future. At the heart of being able

to lead others with inspiration a leader needs to be cognitive of the needs and motivations of those you are leading. In the modern day and age and especially with the more recent pandemic Covid19 event and its associated new ways of working it has become clear that leaders will be expected to

adopt innovative means to lead organisations of people. Leading people just to remain positive or pushing organisations towards its goals, regardless of the impact on the workforce will no longer suffice to make organisations sustainable. There is a stark

realisation that leaders will be required to lead with inspiration which implies due consideration of what drives people to be self-directed and motivated in the absence of supervision and other traditional means of management controls.

The North-West University Business School was quick to respond to the aforementioned insight and implemented significant ADDITIONS to its program. In pursuit of maintaining the School's learning relevance and continuous improvement it was also decided to introduce a novel voluntary leadership coaching program to MBA students. The intent with this program is mainly to equip students with foundational people centric principles for their current

or future leadership roles. The program is mainly built on the theoretical underpinnings of Contemporary Neuroscience but also contains elements of the Study of Change, Positive Psychology, Systems and Learning Theory.

Through a series of one-on-one insightful brain-based coaching conversations, a self-directed learning and solutions focused approach students were introduced to practicing the principles of:

- Building self and social awareness
- Deepened thinking
- Internal and external conflict management
- Insightful decision-making
- Finding balance
- Personal productivity
- Change management
- Confidence management
- Purpose and Values

The Leadership Coaching programme is supported on a part time basis by John Skinner, a 59 year old qualified Neuro

Leadership Institute (NLI) coach, an Electrical Engineer and MBA alumni of the NWU. He has held numerous leadership and project management SME positions within the manufacturing and petrochemical industries. He has a passion for the development of inspirational leaders and harnessing individual growth through personal mastery. He is married, lives in Potchefstroom, enjoys time in the air as a private pilot and stays relatively fit through mountain biking regularly.



# *Flying our Flag!*

The NWU Business School prides itself on the outstanding quality of its experts and this expertise is also held in high esteem by the media as it is evident in the hundreds of quotes and mentions that our staff regularly receive in newspapers, online media, radio and television.

In the first 5 months of 2020, a total of **375 media mentions** of the NWU Business School were monitored. These media clips had a total advertising equivalent value of **R28.15 million!**

We wish to congratulate our colleagues, **Prof Raymond Parsons, Theo Venter, Prof Andre Duvenhage and Dr Piet Croukamp** for flying the NWU Business School's flag high!



# Surviving a pandemic: South Africa economy post Covid-19



**T**he global Covid-19 pandemic has seen unprecedented economic disruptions during the last few months.

According to North-West

University (NWU) professor of Economics at the NWU Business School, Prof Ravinder Rena, it will take a very long time for the country's economy to recover meaningfully after the measures introduced by government to curb

the spread of the global virus.

“South Africa’s lockdown also impacted domestic prices and supply chains, and almost every sector of the economy has been negatively affected,” he says.

“It is important to note that the South African economy has been underperforming for more than a decade, especially since the global financial crises of 2008/2009.

“During 2014-2019, tax collections were less than targeted, causing a sharp increase in government debt levels. These fiscal imbalances prompted all major ratings agencies such as Moody’s, Standard & Poor (S&P) and Fitch to downgrade South Africa’s sovereign debt status even before the Covid-19 lockdown impacted the economy.”



Prof Rena highlights that before going into the national lockdown youth unemployment levels were at an all-time high with no respite in sight.

He adds that there is an expected increase in those numbers as many businesses have had to close as a result of the lockdown.

Post Covid-19, Prof Rena is of the view that government needs to bring real reforms that can broaden and accelerate the recovery of the economy. He signals a stronger focus on the rural economy as one such reform to unlock the kind of economic growth needed in what will be an ailing economy for the near future.

“After 26 years of constitutional democracy, the existing South African economic models are

outdated – we need to look for a new vision and new growth models for sustainable economic development,” says Prof Rena.



*Prof Ravinder Rena, professor of Economics at the NWU Business School.*

## Our hope lies in the power of the people

Potchefstroom is known as the city of expertise, and residents, business owners, students, academics. The local business chamber and the JB Marks Municipality have now joined hands to provide immediate relief to those who need it the most.

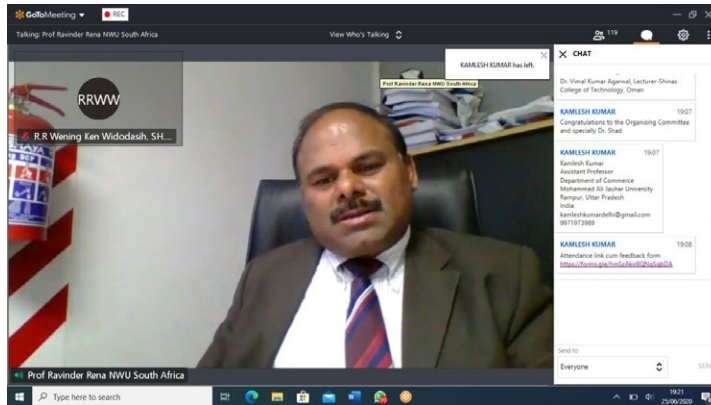
A disaster relief committee was recently established to provide assistance to some 13 000 households in the Potchefstroom area who are earning no income during the national lockdown.

The Business School's Theo Venter explains in the video below.





# Prof Ravinder Rena invited to various international conferences



**P**rof Ravinder Rena, a Professor of Economics at the NWU Business School has participated in eight International Conferences and Webinars during the period February to June 2020 as a resource person or keynote speaker organised by different higher educational institutions in India and Oman.

The events included:

- The International Webinar on “Role of Business Education in Global Economy”, organized by the Sanjivani College of Engineering;
- The International Professional Development – A Webinar Series on “Economy and Business

around the World: Challenges and Opportunities” organised by the College of Business, University of Buraimi.

- The International Webinar on “Challenges of Covid-19 on Global Economy”, organised by the DhananjayRao Gadgil College of Commerce, affiliated to Shivaji University Kolhapur, Maharashtra, India.

- The International Virtual Conference on “Novel Corona and Novel Challenges: Life Ahead with Covid-19” organised by the Sri Guru Gobind Singh Post-Graduate College, Affiliated to Panjab University (PU), Chandigarh, India

- The International Webinar on “Impact of Covid-19 on Global and Indian Economy”, organised by the Department of Economics

and IQAC of Mahtma Phule Arts, Science and Commerce College, affiliated to University of Mumbai.

- International Webinar on “Impact of Covid-19 on Emerging Markets and Global Economy” organised by the Institute of Business Management and Research, Chakan.

- International Webinar on “Challenges to Higher Education – Post Covid-19” organised by the Vasant Kanya Mahavidyalaya, A Women’s Post-Graduate College, Affiliated to Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India.

- International Conference on “Inclusive Development through Social Innovation: Opportunities and Challenges” organised by the Army Institute of Management and Technology, Greater Noida, Delhi.

The participants included Vice-chancellors, Deans, Directors, Executives from private and public sectors, Non-Governmental Organisations together with faculty members, researchers, post-graduate students attended from more than 27 countries.

“I thoroughly enjoyed it as there were interesting interactions with participants in question and answer sessions,” Prof Rena says. More than 4 000 participants for some of these conferences were live telecasted on YouTube and Facebook channels.

Prof Rena emphasized that this global pandemic created unprecedented challenges for the last six months which killed close to half a million people across the globe and 9.3 million people were infected by this virus. “There are

huge economic disparities that exist among the nations in the world.”

Prof Rena alluded that this is a serious socio-economic issue the global leaders, policy-makers and economists must begin to think and act on it immediately. “It is to note that paradoxically, five countries such as the USA, China, Japan, Germany and the UK possess more than 50% percent of the income (about 45 trillion dollars) of this world and five countries, such as India, Nigeria, DRC Congo, Ethiopia and Bangladesh contribute 50% of the global poverty. This is of serious concern and needs to be addressed,” Prof Rena stated.

# A different kind of working

Professors Jan van Romburgh, Leon Jackson and Anet Smit of the North-West University Business School attended the final project presentations of Exxaro's employees. They have completed the Leadership in the Connection Economy program and the presentations are part their final assessments. The program is presented by Thinking Fusion whilst the Business School acts as academic host by overseeing and endorsing the quality of these kind of programs. Although due to Covid 19, the presentations were presented virtually, it is with appreciation that we can mention that all of the presentations were of an exceptional high quality.

The presentations were, despite the lack of a live audience and

the lockdown challenges of an exceptional high standard, as always. The evaluation of the POE's have started and the indication is that quite a number of distinctions can be expected. A Leadership in the Connection Economy programme is offered over 15 contact sessions spread over seven months. Successful completion not only requires that at least 12 sessions are attended but also a portfolio of evidence completed with four projects, of which one is a systems thinking project, dealing with a messy problem of the particular organisation. That is what was presented on 19 May.

The success of the presentations, done to the EXCO of Exxaro, is captured in the following posted by members of Exco on the MS



Teams chat:

“Support it - very powerful concept- well done to the team”

“Great preso! I like the Power of X! Just do it and grow as leaders”

All the projects presented on the day were approved for implementation. Well done to the facilitators as well as the participants!

# Policy Uncertainty Index: Real economic recovery for SA still lies ahead



“There is ample global evidence of the extent to which the lockdowns on economic activity have been enormously disruptive to supply chains and trade links throughout the world.”

has loomed large in much of the recent economic debate in SA. This publication is published quarterly. Herewith, a summary of the latest PUI.

- The 2Q 2020 PUI remained deep in negative territory at 57.4, compared with 59.8 in 1Q 2020. The latter was the highest PUI recorded since the inception of the index five years ago.

- Unsurprisingly the economic impact of the Covid-19 lockdown has kept the PUI at a high level, with the economy now in a deep recession.

**P**rof Raymond Parsons is a professor at the North-West University School of Business and Governance and is a recognised authority on the South African economy and its implications for business, and has

played a leading role in organised business for many years.

As co-developer of the Business School's Policy Uncertainty Index (PUI), launched in early 2016, the role of policy uncertainty

- The International Monetary Fund's (IMF) latest World Uncertainty Index (WUI) in April indicated that globally the level of uncertainty related to the

coronavirus was “unprecedented”.

- The IMF’s recent forecast in June of negative global economic growth of -5% in 2020 adversely affects SA’s small open economy.

- Positive announcement in SA of R500bn economic support package (estimated about 10% of GDP) in April.

- The supplementary budget on June 24 warned of a possible sovereign debt risk crisis in SA and outlined economic and fiscal steps that could be taken to avert it.

- The PUI is likely to remain elevated for the time being.





# Prof Tommy expanding his expertise

**W**e wish to congratulate a former director of our Business School, Prof Tommy du Plessis, for being appointed as an Assessor for the International Business Graduates Association.

This Association is an international membership and quality assurance body of world-leading and high-potential Business Schools who share a commitment for responsible management practices and lifelong learning, and are looking to provide positive impact on their students, communities, and the economy as a whole.

The Association's services include, among other, quality assurance services delivered to

Business Schools and similar institutions, aimed at continuous improvement and positive, measurable impact to increase a Business School's credibility and influence. Also, consultation and mentorship services to Business Schools to improve their marketing & admissions, programme design, alumni interaction, teaching methods, and career development services. Prof Tommy has been a member of the Association of MBA's (AMBA) Faculty of Assessors since 2017 and served on the assessment panels of 13 Business Schools in Africa, India, Saudi Arabia and France.

He still teaches as Adjunct Faculty but is also involved in the corporate sector and serves



on several Boards of Directors – both in executive and non-executive capacity. His industry experience fits well with his academic profile.

Prof Tommy, we wish you all the best with this appointment!

# Organisational ‘Leaders in Crisis’ during Covid-19: Strategic thought, behaviour and coping support

by Prof Yvonne du Plessis -  
PhD (Organisational Behaviour)



**L**eadership during a crisis, where crisis refers to an unforeseen situation, as currently experienced globally with the Corona epidemic, calls for all our leaders to take on a much more engaged role and show care. It has been well researched that leadership during disasters and emergencies can minimize the damage inflicted by an event whilst lack of successful

*Where does this leave you as leader and how are you going to be the leader who minimizes the possible damage that can be inflicted by this sudden ‘dark’ situation?*

leadership exacerbates the impact. Where does this leave you as leader and how are you going to be the leader who

minimizes the possible damage that can be inflicted by this sudden ‘dark’ situation?

Leadership behaviour in general and specifically during change is a core outcome of our Business School’s programmes and developmental intent. The main reason for focusing on the continuous development of a leader is that leadership behaviour plays a significant role - on multiple performance levels - within an organisation, i.e. on individual (self and employee), group (e.g. amongst peers, work units, teams, forums, social platforms), the organisation itself (e.g. strategy and policy development, organisational culture and system implementation to mention a few).

During a crisis situation leadership behaviour is also challenged as to: What should I do (or not do), When should I do it, Where should I do it, Who should be involved, Why should I do it and How should I do it?

All of these requires “Thinking and more Thinking”- do not rush into a crisis!

The following are three lessons from Boin and t’Hart’s (2003) research that may give you some support in your role as ‘leader in crisis’ to avoid reform-induced crisis (meaning that the action you take leads to more crisis):

1) Leaders need to formulate a crisis management philosophy, which can help to negotiate the

inherent dilemma of reparation and reform;

2) Leaders should not push reform without considering

*“Leaders need to formulate a crisis management philosophy, which can help to negotiate the inherent dilemma of reparation and reform.”*

performance is already under scrutiny; and

3) Crisis-induced reform creates exceptional challenges for the

long term - it is not a quick fix and has to be viewed from a systemic nature (cause and effect scenarios).

A message from the NWU Business School to all the leaders out there:

opposite arguments. If they use the crisis to ignore critics, they will mobilize their own opposition at a time when their

*“Trusting the team is an important element in team coping, particularly because being part of a core team allows for sharing the pressure.”*

Know that we, as a responsible Business School, care for you and all the people you have to keep inspired during these stressful times. Irrespective of the level of leadership you hold in your organisation, you are still human too, and need to feel that you are not alone in this mace.

Herewith a few personal behavioural strategies mentioned by South African leaders during crisis and coping (Van Zyl & Du Plessis, 2012: 412):

- Individual coping strategies – positivity anchor yourself in a belief (being it through mindfulness or a religion), balancing work and life, looking for support from someone as a sounding board or who can take over decision-making

responsibilities at home, as well as allowing 'me time to think', that is emotional separation in an attempt to depersonalize actions.

- Team coping strategies - draw on your core team and/or the team reporting to you, your peers who are in the same situation in order to cope better with stressors. Thus having a core team and not facing all the challenges alone. Trusting the team is an important element in team coping, particularly because being part of a core team allows for sharing the pressure.

- Organisational rationalization strategies by attempting to rationalize your actions in response to the crisis. This means having to convince yourself that you are doing the right thing, seeking guidance, and believing in the organisational plan of action during the crisis and beyond.

# Join the NWU Business School on Mandela Day

Join us on 18 July in covering the distance by participating in a virtual physical activity challenge.

1. Choose a 67-minute physical activity or a combination of activities to pledge your contribution.
2. Post your photos or videos on the NWU Business School's Facebook page. Use #CoverTheDistance
3. Optional donation of R67. Funds will be donated to needy schools in the North-West Province.
4. Click here to register: <https://bit.ly/38eDBb4>

Follow the NWU Business School's Facebook page for more info...



# Manufacturing matters!

## South Africa must dramatically increase its economic activities

by Prof Ronnie Lotriet,  
NWU Business School.

**T**he point we are now experiencing in South Africa is that MANUFACTURING MATTERS! Already with the Presidential Job Summit 2018 (what became of all those good plans?) it was clear that South Africa is no longer productive - a generalization, but true.

Is COVID-19 not a desperate wake-up call for SA! Are we slowly becoming a type of Chinese colony? Look at the significance of the import from China and the trade (im)balance with them. Now with COVID-19 you realize how

important a degree of economic independence is! No country in the world is totally economically independent, but to only engage in stuff that is not viable in your own economy.

Of course, there are strategic considerations here, but these are not relevant now. The fact is, SA must now empower its people and protect against unfair competition - how much dumping is actually happening within our borders? How many illegal traders are crossing our porous boundaries where no import tax or levy is

*"Is COVID-19 not a desperate wake-up call for SA! Are we slowly becoming a type of Chinese colony?"*



placed (much needed fiscal income)?

Then those cheap parallel products are

used to by the foreign owned businesses to compete with the local offerings. Small business in our township economy is extremely troubled by foreigners (read: illegal) - destroying local capacity. These illegal business people must now be returned to



the countries of origin without blinking or blushing.

However, legal permit holders must possess skills that are not locally available. Then the necessary local content requirement and skills transfers must be adhered to.

But that in itself is only the proverbial tip of the iceberg! Drive around this beautiful country

of ours and see where are physical production activities? Premises are empty, lands are unprocessed, in communities there are no food tunnels

to be self-sufficient. No wonder

the manufacturing sector's contribution to South Africa's GDP is a long-term downward curve. It has to be turned around.

It is clear that the informal sector of the economy is growing much faster than the formal sector nationwide - see the desperation, the survivalist mode of our people in this!, but also the negative impact on fiscal income for government. The township

*"It is clear that the informal sector of the economy is growing much faster than the formal sector nationwide - see the desperation, the survivalist mode of our people in this!, but also the negative impact on fiscal income for government."*

economy has no significant manufacturing - we have become a nation of buyers and resellers. Where is the collaborating spirit - a basic form of cooperative organising for micro and

small businesses outside the agricultural sector? The latter to tap into, among other things, the benefits of economies of scale.

Even China places great emphasis on providing services to businesses in the real (production) sector of its economy. In 2020, several initiatives were launched to the Chinese SMMEs such as credit quotas for credit recipients, re-lending interest rates, and value-added tax exemptions on interest revenues with a state financing guarantee fund behind it.

I would like to highlight a practical aspect or two here. In the markets there is a saying "the trend is my friend". Worldwide, the discarding culture is transforming into a recycling culture, but not in South Africa. Not many garbage is recycled from individual

households to the business sector. In 2017, there were approximately 8,359,509 tons of municipal waste in South Africa but nothing was recovered!

The recycling rate of plastic and glass is around 40%.

With the lockdown, it is the ideal opportunity to clean up our dirty towns and cities while many economic activities are at a standstill. In this industry there is a lot of potential for job creation, but the whole value chain needs to be explored because in a job-hungry South Africa it can provide a haven for thousands in both the informal and formal sectors. Ironically, this is exactly the path indicated by informal individual junk collectors.

*“With the lock-down, it is the ideal opportunity to clean up our dirty towns and cities while many economic activities are at a standstill.”*

This industry is green and here the government of the day can provide the necessary infrastructure to make waste recycling more production efficient - a thoughtful

compilation of the total flowchart of such a supply chain network is a good tool for its economic activities to plan and implement!

Here, the organised Business Chambers in each town or city can also partner with local governments to pave the way for a viable industry. A much improved business and government relationship is a critical factor for the shrinking economy of South Africa. What has become of the social contract for South Africa? And may I remind you what a leading

politician in America years ago noted - “it’s the economy stupid!” implying the bread and butter issues matters so much. And I want to add – “one person’s spending is another person’s income”.

South Africa must dramatically increase its economic activities. How true amid the Corona virus lockdown! But a contradiction in case is well illustrated by the current media campaign on radio stations about employers who do not pay minimum wages - amid a crisis and an escalating work-hungry economy! And shouldn’t the leading World Economic Forum (Davos) now show leadership with directional support?

# Our Teaching and Learning are thriving!

by Dr Joseph Lekunze, Research  
Manager NWU Business School



## Introduction

As a result of the developing pandemic of the COVID-19 disease and the President's directive for a lockdown of the country for a period from 26 March 2020 (24:00) to date, it

is important to reconsider the normal way of executing Business School research activities, processes and interaction with our PhD, MBA and Post-graduate Diploma students as well as prospective students for the 2021 academic year.

## Research activities' schedule from March 2020

The Business School lauds the resolve of all students and staff members in staying safe throughout this confinement. Covid-19 came as a hit below the belt and the research office was forced to readjust its activities accordingly.

Today, the Business School research office has come a long way communicating virtually (Via Zoom, e-Fundi, Panopto, Microsoft Teams, etc.) and still doing all to keep the warmth of

the family, and we are succeeding in keeping the flame aglow. In many sectors of national daily life, some stringent measures have been uplifted with a continuing consciousness of keeping barrier measures in order to keep Uncle Corona (Covid-19) at bay. To this end, the Business School Research Office convened the following research workshops and activities over the past three months.

## 1. PhD selection workshop (12-14th May 2020)

The PhD programme in Business Administration of the NWU Business School follows a four-phase approach: (a) a pre-doctoral workshop for conditional acceptance to the programme, (b) a full proposal colloquium for unconditional admission into the programme, (c) a methodology

presentation colloquium, and (c) results and findings colloquium and final thesis submission.

A total of 162 PhD applications were received for the 2020 academic year. Two PhD selection workshops were organised, with one of them being a virtual workshop for the first time due to COVID 19 for the 2020 academic year. During the first workshop (November in Mafikeng), 18 applicants out of 45 candidates were selected. The second virtual workshop, hosted via Zoom (12-14 March 2020 in Potchefstroom) conditionally accepted 19 applicants out of 57 candidates for our PhD programme to complete our 2020 intake.

There were an estimated 92 participants during the virtual workshop with 47 concept

proposals presented over four days with an average of 32 academics at any point during the workshop.

The Business School hopes to unconditionally admit 10 PhD students out of the 37 conditionally accepted applicants on all sites to replace those who have graduated in 2020. Only those conditionally accepted student who will successfully present a full proposal in a faculty colloquium within six months from date of conditional acceptance will be allowed to register as PhD students (granted full admission).

## **2. MBA research day (12 June 2020)**

A virtual MBA research day for Phase I and II students was organised by the Business Research office on 12 March 2020. It is a prestige day where

students have the opportunity to interact with both external and internal supervisors for MBA research projects.

The workshop was chaired by Prof Christoff Botha (Academic Research Chair of the Business School). An average of 100 students and academics participated in the workshop at any point in time. The School Director, Prof Jan Van Romburgh welcomed students and academic staff. Presentations were made on the following key issues: research administrative processes, ethics application processes, scientific committees' processes, statistical analysis, library processes, etc. Challenges encountered by students with regard to supervision and application for ethical clearance numbers were extensively discussed. A total of 85 Phase I MBA students were

allocated supervisors for the 2021 academic year.

### **3. PhD proposal, methodology and finding colloquiums**

Since the lockdown, a total of four PhD colloquiums have been organised virtually with an estimated 24 students together with promoters either presenting a full proposal, methodology or findings.

### **4. Scientific committee meetings**

Business School Research Chair (Prof Christoff Botha) oversees the management and control of all research committees.

The Business School Scientific Committee Chairs:

- i. General management committee – Prof Ronnie Lotriet
- ii. People's Management Committee – Prof Leon Jackson

The Scientific Committee has a dedicated research administrator, Ms Christie Munro (she works with the chairpersons and manages all administrative matters, e.g. meeting schedules, agendas, minutes of meetings, communications to members, etc.). Prof Christoff Botha signs off all PhD ethics proposals, while Prof Ronnie Lotriet chairs all general management scientific committee meetings and signs off all documents (e.g. ethics applications) and Prof Leon Jackson chairs all people management scientific committee meetings and signs off all documents (e.g. ethics applications).

Since the Covid-19 lockdown, the scientific committees of the Business School committed to meeting every fortnight to:

- evaluate and approve master's and PhD student research proposals before submission to the Ethics and Higher Degrees Committees as needed.
- evaluate the applications of business school staff research projects before submission for ethics approval as needed.
- discuss and/or evaluate the application of external funding proposals (e.g. NRF projects) before submission to the relevant research office when needed.
- recommend the appointment of examiners before submission to the relevant Higher Degrees Committee as needed.
- appraise and recommend the ethical risk level of research projects/proposals before submission to the applicable



Ethics Committee as needed.

- oversee and/or schedule colloquiums as required.
- monitor the progress of students through the acceptance of progress reports.
- make recommendations for warnings, termination or other related matters to the Higher Degrees Committee (if applicable).

Under the lockdown period, the Business School scientific committees have evaluated more than 72 ethics applications with regard to their risk levels and submission to FEMS ethics committee for final approval and issuing of ethics number.

## **5. NWU virtual graduation May 2020 (PhD and MBA graduates)**

The North-West University Business School graduated a total of 68 students from all the campuses with a total of 61 MBAs and seven PhDs in Business Administration. Internal and external academics who were supervisors to the graduates are: Prof Anet Smit, Dr Retha Scholtz, Dr AA le Roux, Prof CJ Botha, Prof R Lotriet, Prof SP vd Merwe, Mrs N Nkhumalo, Mr PJ Greyling, Prof TE du Plessis, Prof JC Visagie, Prof CA Bischoff, Dr JA Jordaan, Mr JC Coetzee, Prof I Nel, Prof SW Musvoto, Dr N Mouton, Dr G Albert, Dr S Kopung, Prof Y Du Plessis, Dr JN Lekunze, Prof CO Miruka, Dr GN Molefe, Prof R Rena and Mr U Luvhengo.

Furthermore, the FEMS examinations committee has approved four PhDs and 14 MBAs for the July graduation.

Internal and external supervisors responsible for guiding these students are: Dr Viljoen, Prof Musvoto, Dr J Jordaan, Prof R Rena, Dr G Albert, Prof JJ Prinsloo, Prof R Lotriet, Mr JC Coetzee, Dr S Kopung, Dr Lekunze, JN, Prof PA Botha, Prof Y Du Plessis and Prof N Mavetera.

Currently, five reports have been referred back to supervisors and students for resubmission, six reports are currently still under external examinations. In total, 97 reports were submitted for examinations with a total of 86 finalised for graduation by mid-June 2020.

## **Conclusion**

In light of developments across the world in terms of the duration of lockdown periods to curb the spread of the virus, we may see a prolonged period of lockdown

that will put our research activities in support to the Business School academic project for the year at risk if we do not take decisive action.

The Business School, under the vibrant and thoughtful leadership of Prof Jan van Romburgh and all members of the Business EXCO and with the support of Prof Babs (DD R & I FEMS), support the

research office to go online with the research activities in support of our academic projects, which have been key to our resilience to COVID disruptions.

Furthermore, as far as will be possible, given the challenges in limiting services provided to Business School clients during the period of lockdown, we will continue to provide our students with

communication, communication and communication via tools available within our virtual mode of provision.

We are decisive in our actions with regard to services for the remainder of the 2020 academic year, so that our students' progress is not held back by Covid-19 disruptions.

