



Newsflash

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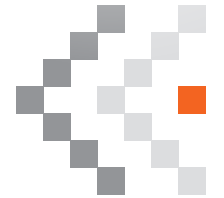
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UNIVERSITY
OF
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COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
AND ECONOMICS

CBE Staff Member Prof Lethiwe Nzama-Sithole in the Media



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City Press Interview

<https://www.news24.com/citypress/trending/what-back-to-school-means-for-first-year-tertiary-students-20250113>



The College of Business and Economics leadership proudly announces and congratulates Prof Lethiwe Nzama-Sithole's (Associate Professor and Deputy Head of the Department of Commercial Accounting) for her valuable contribution for the positive impact of first-year student peer mentorship. She was profiled and acknowledged through multiple media interactions in January 2025. These prominent media platforms include radio stations SAFM, Alex FM, and Channel Africa; TV news channels; Newzroom Africa and eNCA and online newspapers such as City Press and IOL.

These features showcased her study's significance and celebrated her nomination in the Women in Education category of the prestigious Woman of Stature Awards, South Africa. This widespread acknowledgment underscores the importance of her research in shaping educational practices and empowering students through innovative mentorship programme.

As part of the UJ and College of Business and Economics' First-Year Experience, each year, first-year students are paired with trained and experienced peer mentors to support them with the huge transition from high school to university life. This initiative offers guidance and fosters a sense of belonging during the critical adjustment period. Initially designed as a six-month program for the first semester, it was extended to the second semester during the COVID-19 pandemic to address heightened student needs. In 2022, Professor Nzama-Sithole conducted a cross-sectional study to assess the program's impact on students' quality of life and resilience during and after the pandemic. Using data from 110 participants collected through validated instruments like the COVID-19 Impact on Quality of Life and the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), the study provided key insights.

The findings revealed that 87% of participants experienced improved quality of life due to the program during the pandemic, with 69% reporting sustained benefits post-pandemic. Students also demonstrated strong resilience, achieving a high BRS composite score of 3.61, reflecting their ability to adapt and thrive amid adversity. Beyond academic support, the program equipped students with critical life skills to navigate challenges effectively. These results highlight the program's value as a model for fostering resilience and enhancing student well-being, particularly during crises.

The initiative aligns with global priorities, contributing to UN SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).