



RESEARCH DAY

The Optentia Research Focus Area in the Faculty of Humanities at the North-West University invites you to a research day.

Cultivating humanity: Generating and sharing evidence

Date: 26 September 2018 from 10:00 to 18:00

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Background

We are acutely aware of the challenges facing us in Africa and the world, for example, to find ways to promote human health, well-being, and flourishing, to implement and maintain high-quality education over the lifespan of individuals, to create opportunities to channel the energy and ideas of the youth, to contribute to economic growth, and to enhance governance in order to accomplish effective and efficient service delivery. Research by James Heckman (see <https://heckmanequation.org>) has shown that cognitive and non-cognitive capabilities determine the health, social and economic success of individuals and societies. Moreover, we know from research that people in disadvantaged environments are at much greater risk of being unskilled, having low earnings, and facing personal and emotional troubles.

The philosopher Steven Pinker (2018) acknowledges that societies face formidable problems, but argues that the solutions lie in the Enlightenment ideal of using reason and science to deal with these problems. Barry Schwartz (2015) points out that theories of human nature can produce changes in how people behave: a theory that is false can become true simply by people believing it's true. Instead of good data driving out bad data and theories, bad data change social practices until the data become good data, and the theories are validated. D'Ancona (2018) wrote about "post-truth", the "new war on truth and how to fight back." The author wrote: "If institutional failure has eroded the primacy of truth, so too has ... misinformation, false propaganda and phony science that has arisen in recent years."

Sound research, reason and connection of researchers across disciplines are, therefore, vital to develop innovative theories and evidence-based solutions to problems. Moreover, trust, care and presence are crucial concepts when people connect to cultivate humanity.

Aims of the Research Day

The research day is an event designed to promote research and creative inquiry and make an opportunity available to share and discuss research. The research day aims to do the following:

- Share research findings regarding the cultivation of humanity from the perspectives of different disciplines and research entities at the North-West University (NWU) as a unitary institution.
- Provide an opportunity for students (specifically postgraduate students), community members and leaders, employees in private and public institutions, and policy makers to become aware of research projects in entities at the NWU, and to discuss research findings with researchers.
- Provide an opportunity for postgraduate students and researchers to connect with users of research findings and develop their perspectives on cultivating humanity.
- Build multidisciplinary networks of researchers, policymakers, and practitioners to tackle the challenges associated with cultivating humanity.



Venue

The research day will take place at the Big Lapa and surrounding areas at the Vaal Triangle Campus of the NWU in Vanderbijlpark, South Africa.

Format

Submissions could include, but are not limited to posters, works of art, computer programs, digital or manual drawings, displays, and models. Presenters should keep in mind that the project must be small enough in size that it is movable by the presenter without additional assistance and could sit or stand on a small display table. Presenters are encouraged to have a series of talking points that identify the salient features of the project and seek to engage the audience in the work being presented. Every submission should have at least one takeaway message that can be tweeted (140 characters).

Presentations could include, but are not limited to:

- a prestige lecture;
- a staged panel conversation, dialogue, or debate;
- applications (e.g., on computer or IPAD); and
- posters.

All participants (staff members, students, practitioners, community members, and representatives of public and private organisations) will have the opportunity to discuss research projects and posters with researchers.

Invitation to Submit Abstracts

We invite researchers from all entities at the NWU to participate in the research day at the Vanderbijlpark Campus. Please submit your abstract online: go to www.optentia.co.za, Go to **Events**, and click on **Research day**. You will find a link to the abstract submission there.

Email: marinda.malan@nwu.ac.za

Tel.: 016 910 3515

Registration

Please register online: Go to www.optentia.co.za, go to **Events**, and click on **Research day**. You will find a link to the online registration there.

Contact one of following persons for more information:

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Important Dates

Last date for submission of topics: **5 September 2018**

Last date for registration: **14 September 2018**

