

Honoris Career Centre hopes to address the growing unemployment crisis

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South Africa's unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2023 was 32,9%. This places South Africa among the highest in the world and puts the gravity of the unemployment crisis into sharp perspective.



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We need to be cognisant of the future we are creating if we continue down this path. South Africa was once the biggest economy in Africa. We can still be a global economic powerhouse if we focus on implementing systems that help to develop employment and the retention of critical skills that are in high demand.

With this ambition in mind, the Honoris Career Centre was launched at the Mancosa Durban Learning Centre in KwaZulu-Natal on 30 May.

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– Lutfiya Adam, HR and employability director at Mancosa

A haven for holistic development

Lutfiya Adam, HR and employability director at Mancosa points out that the Honoris Career Centre was launched to complement the extensive support already offered by Mancosa through its Employability Department.

"The world is currently in a recovery period from a global health pandemic, and Mancosa has noticed a growing need for in-person mentoring on issues that will enhance the employability of our graduates. Therefore, the Honoris Career Centre will not only focus on the skills development component already offered by the Employability Department, but the Career Centre will also focus on the soft skills that enhance the employability of graduates, creating a space where students and alumni can network in-person with a dedicated talent team," says Adam. The centre is designed to accommodate a range of learning styles and student/graduate engagements.

The existing initiatives and services that are offered through the Mancosa Employability Department include:

- Mentorship;
- Incubator programmes;
- Access to a live jobs board;
- Unlimited access to live and on-demand soft skills & entrepreneurial webinars from key industry experts;
- Networking opportunities; and
- Free resources as well as access the Mancosa virtual career centre.

The above will be further boosted by the launch of the Honoris Career Centre, a physical centre that students and graduates can access for support and guidance as well as network and interact face-to-face with the Employability team and the Mancosa community.

Natural progression

The development of the Honoris Career Centre follows the success of the Mancosa Employability Department, which was launched at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to Adam: "We are aware that the world of business is changing and that graduates need to constantly enhance their skills and focus on their development to prepare themselves for the hyper-competitive world of work."

Mancosa recently launched its Employability Report, which provides insights into the successful progression of Mancosa alumni in the workplace. According to the report, 88% of Mancosa graduates receive gainful employment. However, Adam points out that while this is a significant achievement, she hopes this number will increase following the launch of the Career Centre.

"For Mancosa, success is not only about gaining employment; it is growing your skills to address the skills shortage South Africa will experience. In addition, the Employability Report indicates that 22% of Mancosa alumni received a promotion within six months of graduation. This is validation that Mancosa's focus on lifelong learning is a critical narrative that needs to be developed by every South African tertiary education provider," says Adam.

The unemployment crisis is not only about the rate of unemployment; it is also about the retention of key skills. Adam points out that we are dealing with a large proportion of unemployment and a massive brain drain where critical skills are leaving the country. "The challenge now is to replenish the skills pipeline so that any critical skills leaving the country are replaced. Hopefully, the Career Centre can address and provide sustainable solutions to this through its services," says Adam.

A whole new world

The future world of work has influenced the business world since the dawn of the fourth industrial revolution in 2015 and will continue to define the future business landscape for years to come.

In line with this significant change, the Career Centre has been built to upskill, reskill and teach new skills to our students

and graduates to ensure that they can find a job and advance their career or create a lifelong career journey. The Career Centre will also focus on:

- Developing employers for the future;
- Boosting our economy through embracing digitalisation; and
- Reducing the socio-economic gap through entrepreneurship.

“Our programmes are crafted to respond to the dynamic world of work, preparing our students for the current and future world of work and providing them with skills that will equip them with the evolving macro environment,” says Adam.

One thing we have noticed is that there is a significant demand for transferable skills within the future world of work. These skills include time management, the ability to focus on and successfully execute several different projects, and the ability to collaborate with individuals outside of their sphere of influence to reach a consensus about the successful implementation of a project. “Graduates that show a high competency in these skills will be highly desirable by many companies,” says Adam.

Change management is essential

Change management is the process whereby a business is disrupted or implements self-enforced disruption that will culminate in change.

The future world of work has made this an uncomfortable reality that many businesses now have to deal with regularly, it is critical that employees buy into this process for the business to manage the change process effectively.

“This is one of the human resources mega-trends the Career Centre seeks to address. Change is always challenging for everyone. However, managing this change becomes easier if they have a transferable skill set. Therefore, businesses are looking for future employees with adaptable and flexible skills to make them an asset. Further, the Career Centre believes that, to have a live-for-work mindset, one needs to find fulfillment in their job. To aid this, focusing on one’s ‘self’, physical health, mental health, and wellbeing is critical,” says Adam.

In 2017, Mancosa became a member of Honoris United Universities, which is the first pan-African private higher education network that is committed to preparing and educating the next generation of African leaders and professionals who are able to make a significant impact regionally in an increasingly globalised world.

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