

HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 2026

Find out more about our programmes for 2026



CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCE | THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND REGIONAL VOICES | INTEGRATION OF
SCHOLARSHIP AND PRACTICE | CONTRIBUTION TO POLICY AND STRATEGY | KNOWLEDGE CO-PRODUCTION
AND SHARING | INSTITUTIONAL MEMORY AND LEGACY



“ An integrated eco-system towards career development in higher education ”

An Introduction

CHEC is dedicated to fostering excellence, collaboration, and capacity development towards innovation across the higher education sector.

HELA offers a comprehensive portfolio of programs, strategically designed to support staff at every stage of their career- from emerging researchers and middle managers to executive leaders, researchers and those transitioning into retirement.



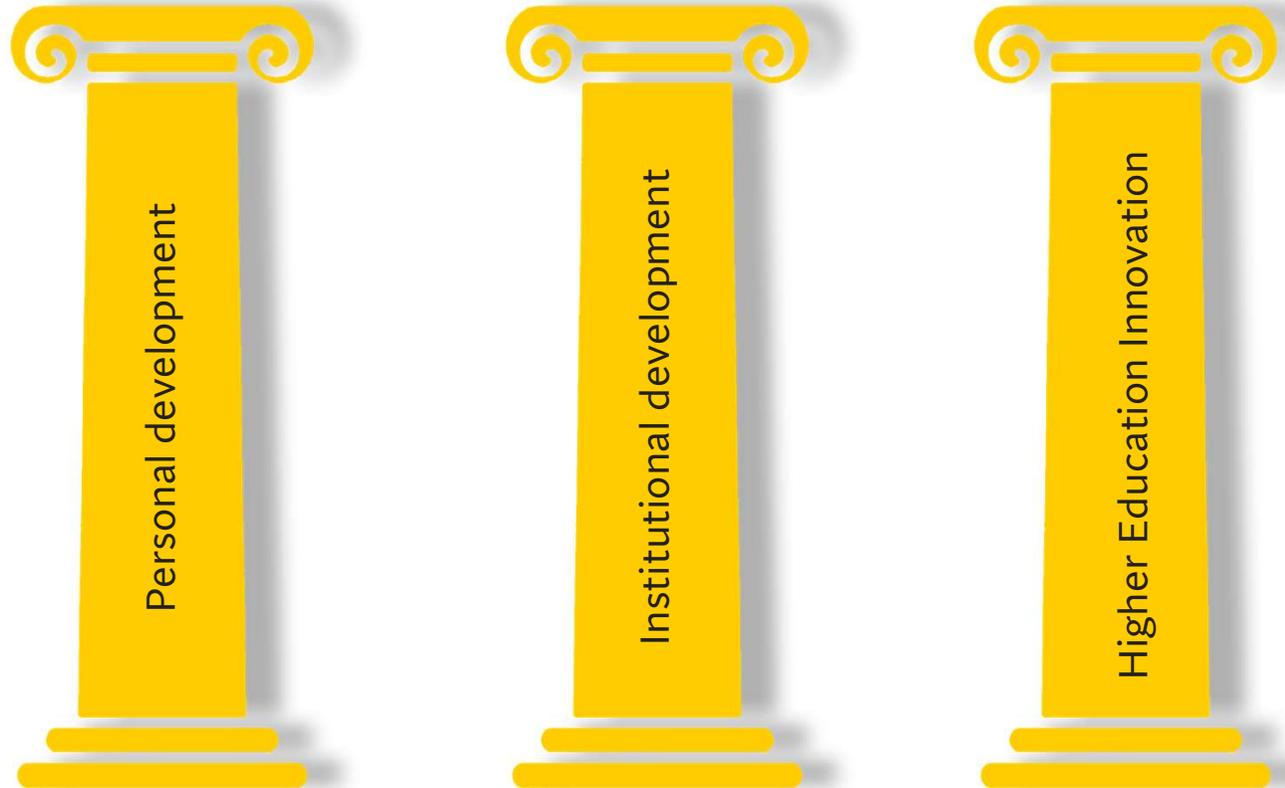
Find out more about our programmes for 2026



Value proposition & strategic intent

We provide a clear pathway for participation and provide support for the complex Higher Education system using HELA's unique co-creation model.

We use a structured approach towards the development of individual or institutional mental models, developing critical thinking and creating effective and efficient leaders.



CHEC HELA

Creating the edge through relevant and excellent capacity development

The Unique HELA Approach

Equip people with the **skills** and **insights to innovate**

- CHEC HELA uses a unique co-creation model for self development.
- CHEC HELA is an established HE leadership academy with wide reach.
- CHEC's HELA programmes are endorsed by leading bodies and built on a foundation of best practice, peer learning and a continuous cycle of mentorship and professional growth.
- Our facilitators are selected for their subject knowledge + knowledge of the HE environment

“Each CHEC HELA programme built on the last, from self-awareness to systems thinking, from reflection to purposeful impact.”

“The HELA journey provided not only tools, but a community, a safe space to think, question, and grow as a higher education leader.”

“I came expecting professional development; I left with personal transformation.”

HELA Programme Streams

Three streams



Professional Development

- Creating the Leading-Edge (CLE)
- Creating the Executive Edge (CEE)

Research Development

- Advancing Scholarship Programme (ASP)
- Academic Research Supervision (ARS)

Self Development

- OPUS Programme
- CHEC ENGAGE Mentoring Programme

HELA Programmes

2026

01

Creating the Leading-Edge (CLE)

To build and develop human capacity, to create a thriving and supportive workspace for middle managers.

02

Creating the Executive Edge (CEE)

Engage in strategic leadership through people management for senior and executive leaders.

03

OPUS programme

To provide dynamic and sustaining opportunities for academics or administrators anticipating retirement.

04

Advancing Scholarship Programme (ASP)

To support emerging doctoral and post-doctoral researchers in honing research skills, career readiness and personal development.

05

Academic Research Supervision Programme (ARS)

To equip research supervisors and managers with key competencies to enhance leadership and effectiveness in research supervision.

06

CHEC ENGAGE Mentoring Programme

A mentoring integration framework formalizing a continuous cycle of learning and leadership empowering alumni to mentor the next generation.

The capstone project is the culminating experience and leads to the CHEC Certificate of successful completion of a Programme. The capstone can be research or applications based.

CLE

“The CLE programme helped me see leadership not as position, but as practice, the art of enabling transformation in complex higher education systems.”

“I left CLE with a deeper understanding of myself as a reflective leader, aware of my blind spots and capable of leading with purpose and empathy.”

“CLE gave me the confidence to navigate institutional politics and complexity with clarity and courage.”

ASP

“ASP reignited my passion for scholarship — it reconnected me to why we write, teach, and research.”

“The emphasis on impact, purpose, and intellectual generosity shifted my perspective on what it means to be an academic.”

“ASP turned my fragmented research ideas into a coherent academic identity and output plan.”

CEE

“CEE reminded me that change is not managed; it’s co-created. The emphasis on engagement and relational trust changed how I lead initiatives.”

“This programme gave me the frameworks and tools to turn resistance into collaboration.”

“CEE equipped me to translate institutional strategies into authentic engagement with staff, students and external partners.”

OPUS

“OPUS was transformative. It made me reimagine my academic work as a deliberate contribution to institutional and societal impact.”

“This programme bridged my professional practice and my scholarly purpose, it gave my work meaning beyond metrics.”

“OPUS is where reflection meets innovation. It helped me articulate my scholarly purpose with clarity and confidence.”

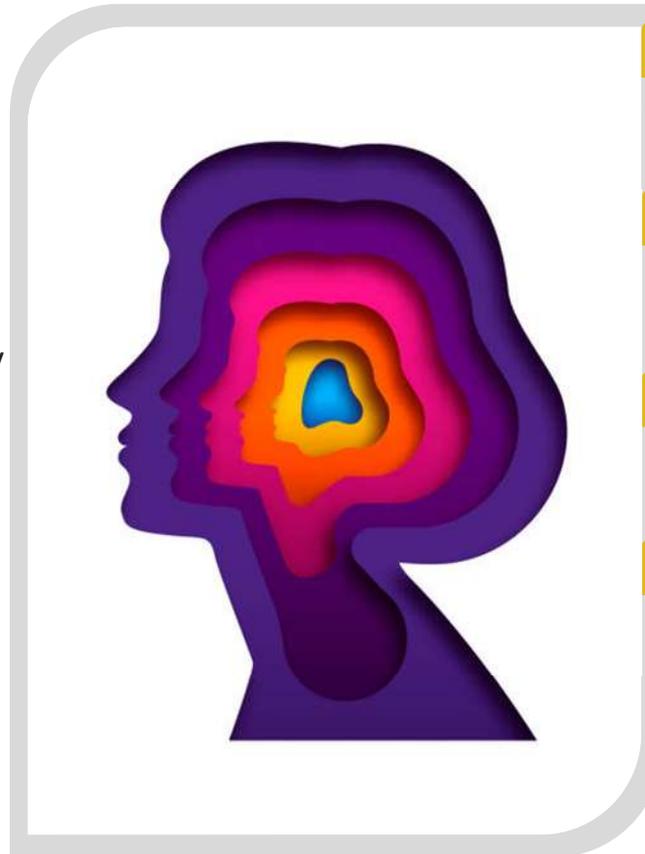
1. Creating the Leading-Edge (CLE)

HE Middle Management Programme

What is it about?

Designed to meet the management capacity development needs of academic and administrative middle managers and to create effective networks of key managers in HEIs. Purpose: “To build and develop human capacity to create a thriving and supportive HE workspace.”

Endorsed by Universities South Africa for its relevance and responsiveness to developing and supporting the leadership and management knowledge and skills required, for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the systems, processes, people and technology requirements of our universities.



Offered virtually over 12 4-hour sessions.

1

Target audience

Heads of Departments and units, Directors, Middle managers

2

Three courses with three sessions each

HE Strategic Space | Creating a Thriving Work Environment | Technology & Innovation Perspectives.

3

Duration

6 months Programme runs April to June 2026.

4

Key dates

Registration closes: 24 March 2026.

Orientation: 2 April 2026

CLE 1: 7, 9 & 10 April 2026

CLE 2: 4, 6 & 8 May 2026

CLE 3: 1, 3 & 5 June 2026

2. Creating the Executive Edge (CEE)

HE Senior Management Programme

What is it about?

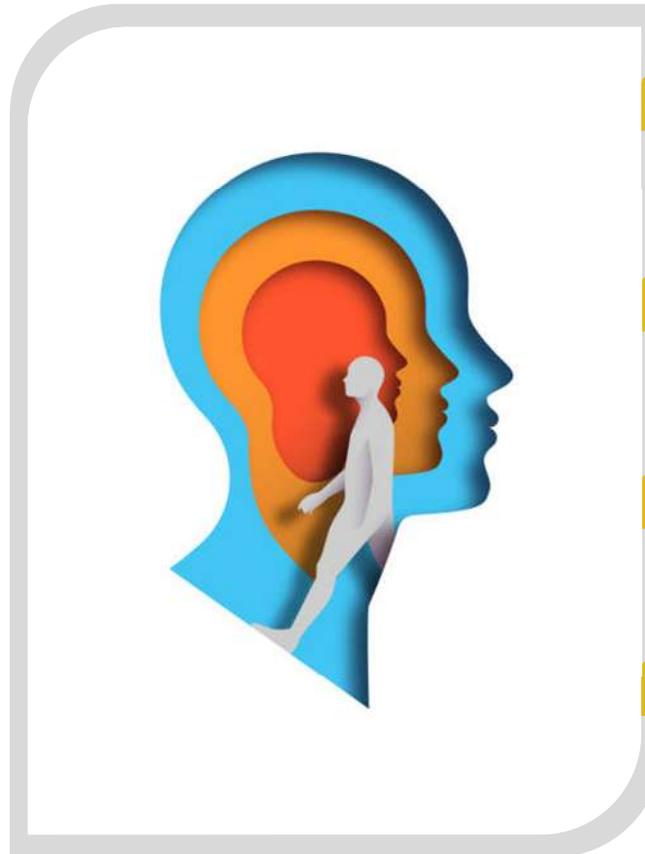
Programme is designed to meet the strategic needs of senior and executive management in HEIs.

The value of the CEE lies in the development of strategic leadership who values transformation, communication and performance engagement.

The programme focuses on human-centricity in executive management and leadership.

Purpose: "To engage in strategic leadership through people management in HE."

Offered virtually over 4 4-hour sessions.



1

Target audience

Deans, Executive directors and senior managers

2

Four courses

Leadership and strategy in the new context | NeuroScience of Personal Mastery | Leaders as change agents in the new HE context | Systems thinking in HE: The Nature of the Beast in Higher Education .

3

Duration

6 months

4

Key dates

Registration closes: 21 July 2026
Orientation: 31 July 2026
CEE 1: 3 August 2026
CEE 2: 7 September 2026
CEE 3: 5 October 2026
CEE 4: 2 November 2026

3. OPUS Programme

Rewiring for retirement

What is it about?

Provides dynamic and sustaining rewiring opportunities for academics or administrators to continue learning and contributing to scholarship and foster social connections close to retirement with the intention of paying it forward to uplifting developing minds. We come from the perspective that retirement is up to the institution, but your response is up to you. Do you feel as though you are losing your sense of identity, belonging and importance.

This programme is about putting YOU first.

Offered virtually over 4 4-hour sessions.



1

Target audience

Academics, researchers, professionals within five years of retirement

2

Four sessions

Self-calibration for a different game | Calibrating and understanding different games | Creating a new reality | Self-designing .

3

Duration

4 months

4

Key dates

Registration closes: 8 May 2026
Orientation: 15 May 2026
OPUS 1: 18 May 2026
OPUS 2: 25 May 2026
OPUS 3: 1 June 2026
OPUS 4: 29 June 2026

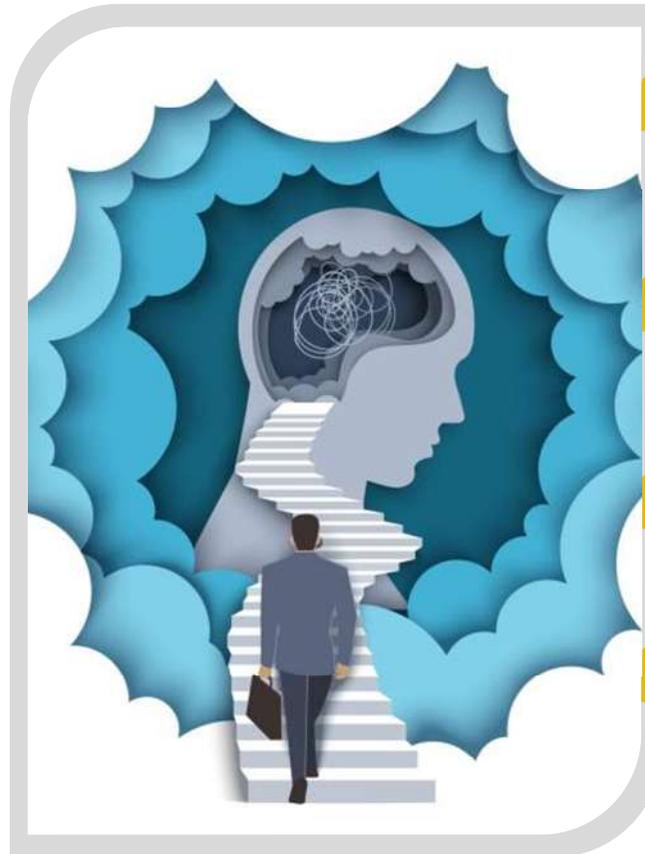
4. Advancing Scholarship Programme (ASP)

Planning your research career through knowledge

What is it about?

A holistic professional-development initiative that empowers emerging and postdoctoral researchers to advance their research capability, personal effectiveness, and career readiness through four domains (knowledge and intellectual abilities, personal effectiveness, research governance, and engagement for impact). It provides structured mentorship, peer networking, and practical learning culminating in a capstone project and CHEC certification, ensuring participants are well-equipped to thrive as impactful scholars

Offered virtually over 12 4-hour sessions.



1

Target audience

Emerging, Doctoral & Post-Doctoral Researchers

2

Four domains with three sessions each

Knowledge and Intellectual Abilities | Personal Effectiveness | Research Governance and Organisation | Engagement, Influence and Impact

3

Duration

6 months programme.

4

Key dates

Registration closes: 2 March 2026

Orientation: 13 March 2026

ASP 1: 16, 17 & 18 March 2026

ASP 2: 13, 14 & 15 April 2026

ASP 3: 11, 12 & 13 May 2026

ASP 4: 22, 23 & 24 June 2026

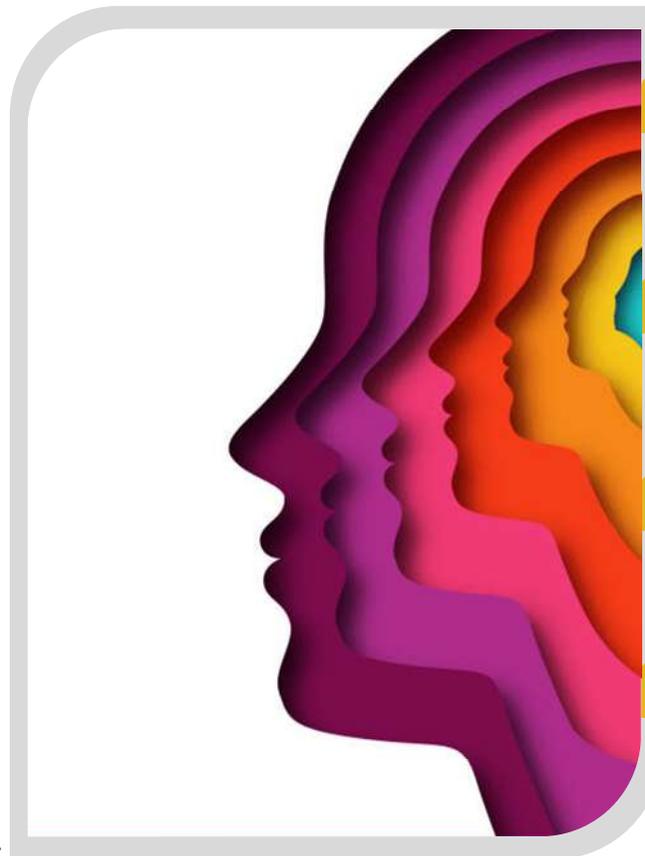
5. Academic Research Supervision Programme (ARS)

Support for research supervisors and managers

What is it about?

A structured capacity-building initiative that strengthens supervisors' leadership, mentoring, and ethical research-management skills across four competency areas (supervisory leadership, ethics and integrity, mentorship and student development, and collaborative research environments). It equips research specialists to foster excellence in postgraduate supervision, align supervision with institutional and global priorities, and culminates in a Capstone project and CHEC certification that recognises practical mastery and peer learning.

Offered virtually over 12 4-hour sessions.



1 Target audience
Academic Research Supervisors & Managers

2 Four key competencies with three sessions each
Supervisory Leadership | Ethics & Integrity |
Mentorship & Student Development |
Collaborative Research Environment..

3 Duration
6 months August to November 2026.

4 Key dates
Registration closes: 2 August 2026.
Orientation: 14 August 2026
Domain 1: 17, 18 & 19 August 2026
Domain 2: 14, 15 & 16 September 2026
Domain 3: 12, 13 & 14 October 2026
Domain 4: 16, 17 & 18 November 2026

6. CHEC ENGAGE Mentoring Programme

HELA alumni participate in mentoring programme

What is it about?

A core component of the CHEC HELA ecosystem is the **CHEC ENGAGE Mentoring Integration Framework**. This framework formalizes a continuous cycle of learning and leadership by empowering alumni to mentor the next generation of higher-education professionals.



1

Target audience

Selected members from previous programmees mentor the next generation of higher-education leaders, strengthening collaboration, retention, and institutional excellence across the Western Cape.

2

Three streams

Research & Academic Development | Leadership & Management | Women in HE

3

Duration

Pilot project with ten participants over the course of the year

3

Key dates

Own schedule

CHEC HELA 2026

Quick summary



Find out more about
our programmes for
2026 >>



Professional development

PROGRAMME	TARGET AUDIENCE	PRIMARY FOCUS	DURATION & KEY DATES	COST (PER PERSON)
Creating the Leading-Edge (CLE)	Middle Management (Heads of Departments, Managers)	Management capacity development in three courses: HE Strategic Space, Creating a Thriving Work Environment, and Technology & Innovation Perspectives.	6 months April to June 2026. Registration: 24 March 2026.	R8000 per course (Total R24,000 for full programme)
Creating the Executive Edge (CEE)	Senior & Executive Management (Deans, Senior Directors)	Strategic leadership and human-centric executive management, focusing on leadership, strategy,	6 months August to November 2026. Registration: 21 July 2026.	R8000 per course (Total R32,000 for full programme)

Research development

PROGRAMME	TARGET AUDIENCE	PRIMARY FOCUS	DURATION & KEY DATES	COST (PER PERSON)
ASP	Emerging & Post-Doctoral Researchers	Hones research skills, career readiness, and personal development across 4 domains (Knowledge, Personal Effectiveness, Governance, Impact).	6 months programme. Registration: 2 March 2026.	R8000 per domain (Total R32,000 for full programme)
ARS	Academic Research Supervisors & Managers	Equips supervisors with 4 key competencies: Supervisory Leadership, Ethics & Integrity, Mentorship & Student Development, and Collaborative Research Environment.	6 months August to November 2026. Registration: 2 August 2026.	R8000 per competency (Total R32,000 for full programme)

Self leadership

PROGRAMME	TARGET AUDIENCE	PRIMARY FOCUS	DURATION & KEY DATES	COST (PER PERSON)
OPUS Programme	Academics & Administrative Professionals Anticipating retirement (within 5 years)	Supports "rewiring the self" for life after the institution, focusing on self-calibration, intentional attention, creating a new reality, and self-designing.	4 months May to June 2026 (4 courses).	R8000 for the full programme
Mentoring programme	Academic and administrative staff participating in the CHEC HELA 2026	CHEC HELA alumni working one on one with a selection of current participants to provide support	Own time	

Empowering voices in HE

01

Critical conversation breakfast series

02

CHEC Books

- The *Books and Critical Conversations Breakfast Series* forms part of this knowledge-exchange and leadership-development mandate. It provides an informal yet intellectually rigorous space for academics, senior managers, and thought leaders to engage with ideas shaping higher education and society.
- Strengthen the intellectual and leadership capacity of higher education institutions in the Western Cape through collaborative learning, dialogue, and thought leadership.

CHEC Critical Conversation breakfast series

Purpose

The CHEC Critical Conversations is designed as a forum for engagement across the four universities and our strategic partners in the Western Cape on critical issues and discourses in SA HEIs.

We recognize that the academic landscape has become increasingly complex and that answers need to be found for problems that previously did not exist.

The CHEC Critical Conversations provides our region u with an opportunity to share ideas and contribute to regional higher education innovation by discussing our strategies and lessons learnt through our business continuity, risk, and other applications.



**Be on the look out
for our invitations**

Join the conversations

They are free



CHEC Books – a shared legacy of collective scholarship & knowledge co-production

01

COVID Management responses

COVID-19 management and responses. Lessons learnt for the future

EDITOR: Prof René Pellissier

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260031>

The book deals with teaching and learning and management issues in an effort to formulate lessons learnt for future discontinuity in the HE domain.

The book is available for download (as soft copy for free) **from the following platforms:**

Google (e-book): <https://bit.ly/43Ng65k>

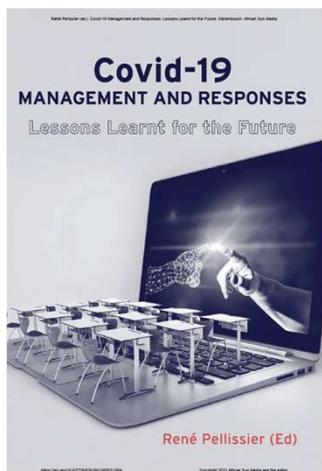
Takealot (printed): <https://bit.ly/3KVfIKx> (at R380)

ITSI (e-book): <https://bit.ly/43EUHeC>

Amazon

(printed): <https://amzn.to/43VwLDH> (Amazon does not host free e-books)

ASM (printed): orders@africansunmedia.co.za

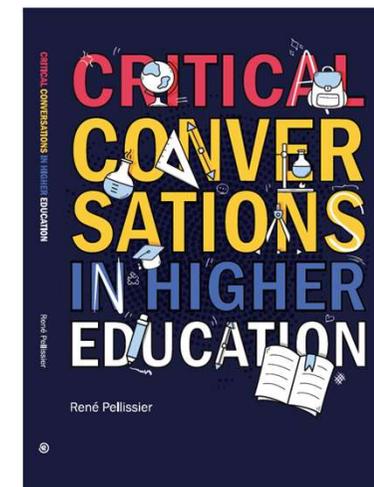


Critical Conversations in Higher Education

EDITOR: René Pellissier
Almost completed

Reimagine higher education in an era of disruption and transformation. Higher education in South Africa stands at a critical juncture. Confronted by widening inequality, the digital revolution, systemic injustices, and shifting global and local expectations, universities are being called to radically rethink their purpose, structures, and practices. This book is a response to that call.

02





Don't miss out on this opportunity!

Register here:

[CHEC HELA 2026 Programme Registration Form – Fill out form](#)

OR

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THANK YOU

WE APPRECIATE YOUR TIME



Creating the Edge in Higher Education Leadership

CHEC Higher Education Leadership Academy (HELA) offers a comprehensive portfolio of programs strategically designed to support staff at every stage of their career—from emerging researchers and middle managers to executive leaders and those transitioning into retirement.

[Explore Programmes](#) →

[Get in Touch](#)

Our Approach

HELA offers a clear pathway for participation, supporting the complex HE system using a structured approach towards the development of individual or institutional mental models for effective and efficient leadership and critical thinking capacity development using a co-creation model.



Personal Development

Equip individual staff members with the skills and insights to thrive in their roles and advance their careers.



Institutional Development

Support institutions in building capacity and fostering collaborative excellence across the higher education sector.



HE Innovation

Promote innovation and best practice in higher education leadership and management across the sector.

Our Programmes

Explore our six comprehensive programmes designed to support leadership development across all career stages.



Creating the Leading-Edge (CLE)

HE Middle Management Programme

Build and develop human capacity to create a thriving and supportive

create a thriving and supportive workspace for middle managers.

[Learn more →](#)



Creating the Executive Edge (CEE)

HE Senior Management Programme

Engage in strategic leadership through people management for senior and

people management for senior and executive leaders.

[Learn more →](#)



Advancing Scholarship Programme (ASP)

Research Career Development

Support emerging doctoral and post-doctoral researchers in honing research

doctoral researchers in honing research skills and career readiness.

[Learn more →](#)

What Our Alumni Say

Hear from participants who have transformed their leadership through HELA programmes.

"I left CLE with a deeper understanding of myself as a reflective leader, aware of my blind spots and capable of leading with purpose and empathy."

Creating the Leading-Edge (CLE)

"CEE reminded me that change is not managed; it's co-created. The emphasis on engagement and relational trust changed how I lead initiatives."

Creating the Executive Edge (CEE)

"ASP reignited my passion for scholarship, reconnecting me to why we write, teach, and research."

Advancing Scholarship Programme (ASP)

"OPUS was transformative. It made me reimagine my academic work as a deliberate contribution to institutional and societal impact."

OPUS Programme

Ready to Transform Your Leadership?

Join CHEC HELA and discover how our programmes can support your professional growth and institutional excellence.

[Contact Prof René Pellissier](#)

[Contact Ms. Sisipho Zweni](#)

H CHEC HELA

Creating the edge through relevant and excellent capacity development in higher education leadership.

Quick Links

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[OPUS Programme](#)
[CHEC ENGAGE](#)

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