

**SACOMM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025  
NELSON MANDELA UNIVERSITY  
WEDNESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2025**

**CHAIRS:**

Outgoing President: Prof Mehita Iqani  
Incoming President: Prof Sisanda Nkoala

**Administrative officer/public official/executive coordinator/membership officer**  
Ms Annelize Vermeulen

**Banking officials**

Ms Annelize Vermeulen  
Prof Colin T Chasi

**Conference convener**

Chair of the LOC of the University who propose to host the conference. This hosting changes annually.

**AGENDA**

**1. SACOMM BUSINESS**

- 1.1 Opening and welcome
- 1.2 Vote of thanks to 2025 conference LOC
- 1.3 Confirmation of the agenda
- 1.4 Matters arising from the previous AGM
  - 1.4.1 Adoption of Statements Policy
- 1.5 Outgoing President's report
- 1.6 Financial Report
- 1.7 Call for 2026 conference hosts

**2. INTEREST GROUPS**

- 2.1 Vote of thanks to outgoing ExCo
- 2.2 Words of farewell from outgoing Interest Group Coordinators

**3. ELECTIONS OF NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- 3.1 Presentation of list of nominees
  - 3.1.1 Introductions by candidates
- 3.2 Voting
- 3.3 Announcement of results

**4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**5. CLOSURE**

## 1 SACOMM BUSINESS

### 1.1 Opening and welcome

Prof Mehita Iqani opened the 2025 AGM and welcomed everyone present. A number of 42 SACOMM members attended the AGM.

### 1.2 Vote of thanks to 2025 conference LOC

A note of thanks was expressed to the 2025 LOC, and congratulated on a successful conference at Nelson Mandela University from 8 – 12 September 2025.

### 1.3 Confirmation of the agenda

The proposed 2025 AGM agenda was confirmed by all present.

### 1.4 Matters arising from the previous AGM

#### 1.4.1 Adoption of Statements Policy

All SACOMM members present at the AGM were in favour of adopting the policy statement. The final doc is uploaded on the SACOMM website here:

<https://sacomm.org.za/public-statements/>

#### **Public Statements**

Note to members:

This document has been accepted by the ExCo, and we propose for it to be voted on by membership at the 2025 AGM. We present it here as a working document until then. Any feedback can be shared with the ExCo, or brought to the AGM for discussion.

**SACOMM ADVOCACY AND PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY:**

Presented by: **Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam** (Chair, Communications Advocacy and Activism Stream)

#### **Purpose and Scope:**

The South African Communications Association (SACOMM) is a professional body that represents academics from around southern Africa working in media, journalism, communications and related fields. SACOMM's cardinal objectives include, among others, to provide a forum to promote communication research, collaboration, and debate among media and communication practitioners, the industry, academics, and students; to promote networking and academic debate; and to facilitate professional communication practice in Southern Africa. SACOMM aims to uphold the principles of human rights and non-discrimination through our core values.

The purpose of this SACOMM Advocacy and Public Communications Strategy is to set out under what conditions, values, and processes we make and disseminate public statements about issues that are relevant to us as an association; issues affecting our field and members, and broader issues to which communication and media is central; embedded within a society that is in dire need of our intervention, activism and advocacy when the occasion demands. Such SACOMM statements will ideally aim to reflect our critical position on any of such relevant issues. Such SACOMM statements may respond to global, regional, and local issues.

#### ***Topics on which SACOMM could issue public statements:***

- Pedagogy and research practice in our field
- Government policy and regulation with relation to media, comms, journalism etc
- Media and communicative dimensions of other political, social, economic, cultural issues
- Media and communicative dimensions of human rights issues
- Safety of journalists, media workers and academics.

Statements can be reactive or proactive, meaning that they can either be made as a response to an ongoing issue or they can be made in lieu of an issue that is yet to take place but is pivotal to the field or our members.

### ***Are there specific issues on which we may not make statements?***

We should consider “South Africa” as the boundary for what we can and cannot comment on. Where it is a global issue, we would consider the relevance of South Africa to it (or vice versa) and this has to be clearly and carefully articulated.

### **Audience Identification:**

SACOMM statements will typically be addressed to the general public, but with specific focus on critical public spheres, including government, civil society, policymakers, the media, and also SACOMM members.

The statements would ideally be distributed via various channels, including SACOMM website, SACOMM mailing list, social media, press/media releases, affiliate/cognate media organisations such as SANEF, etc.

### **Guiding Principles:**

SACOMM public communication and advocacy statements are made within the context of our core and guiding principles and ethos, including human rights advocacy, non-discrimination, ethical integrity, collaboration and respect, representation and inclusivity.

The idea is that as we strive to uphold these values, we also prioritise making a meaningful impact in the field of media, communications, and journalism and champion a culture of respect and equality in our community.

### **Process for Issuing Statements:**

It is important that we consider the process for creating and approving public statements.

- Statements can originate from various SACOMM streams, from individuals or from SACOMM ExCo. Individual members must be current member in good standing.
- It is preferable that requests for statements include multiple voices in order to accurately represent the range of opinions held by SACOMM members.
- Upon receiving requests for statements, the SACOMM ExCo will evaluate whether the subject or issue in question should be pursued further.
- Subsequently, if the ExCo determines that the matter is deserving of further action, requesters may be asked to provide a written statement to the ExCo for evaluation.
- ExCo can thereafter verify the accuracy and validity of the statements.
- ExCo may circulate the message to SACOMM members for endorsements, which can be in the form of a vote, depending on the sensitivity and complexity of the proposal.
- If ExCo unanimously supports the proposed statement, it is disseminated without being put to a vote by members. If no unanimous consensus is reached, we convene an ad-hoc committee to meet and deliberate on the feasibility of the statements.

In the end, it is the duty of the SACOMM Executive Board to determine whether to officially support or disseminate a statement. After receiving approval, statements can then be formally disseminated through various platforms, and translations can be made if required.

### **Content Elements:**

Proposals or requests for statements may be submitted with the following elements covered:

1. **Context:** Briefly explain the issue or event.
2. **Position:** Clearly state SACOMM’s stance or viewpoint.
3. **Rationale:** Provide evidence or reasoning behind the position.
4. **Call to Action:** Suggest actions or solutions.
5. **Contact Information:** Include relevant SACOMM contacts for further inquiries.

### **Engagement with Media and Stakeholders:**

We do not intend to actively engage with the media and other stakeholders in the event of SACOMM statements being released. If the media requests to talk with SACOMM further on any matter, ExCo can determine whether or not to accommodate this.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

SACOMM may not monitor the impact of statements made. The chair of the Communications Advocacy and Activism stream in consultation with the president and vice president shall ensure that an archive is kept on our website in case an ad-hoc assessment of statements is required.

### 1.5 Outgoing President's report

#### SACOMM President's Report

Prof Mehita Iqani (September 2023-September 2025)

At one of our SACOMM Executive Committee meetings, it was decided to start a new "tradition", where outgoing presidents would offer a short report to association members about their term as President. In this spirit, I would like to share a few notes as I prepare to hand over the leadership of SACOMM to our colleague, Prof Sisanda Nkoala.

The past two years at SACOMM have seen the research field of media and communication research and pedagogy thriving. I am constantly encouraged by the wonderful new PhDs being minted and seeing the thought-provoking and critical work coming out of our field.

Our 2023 conference took place in Johannesburg, at AFDA, and our 2024 conference took place in Stellenbosch. Both were wonderful gatherings and hosted productive and enjoyable exchanges of current research in our field. We are looking forward to the 2025 conference at NMU in Gqeberha and we thank the LOC (led by Dr Janelle Vermaak-Griesel) for all their work in organising it.

As an ExCo our focus in the past two years has been to establish new opportunities for exchange and community building outside of the annual conference (which remains a firm fixture on all of our annual calendars). We have done so by encouraging members of the ExCo to arrange webinars relevant to their interest groups, and we are proud to share that over the past two years several interesting webinars were organised and attended. We hope that these will remain a fixture of future ExCo activities, and we have archived the list of our initiatives on the SACOMM website.

Another achievement of the ExCo during this period has been to debate and present a policy for making public statements. This policy was drawn up by Dr Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam (to whom I'm very grateful for leadership on this matter), and it will be voted on at the 2025 AGM for formal adoption by the association.

SACOMM was formally accepted as a member association of the International Communications Association in late 2024. This represents a wonderful opportunity to continue to introduce the wealth of research and theory emanating from our part of the world to the global communication studies community. We also have informal and formal affiliations with SANEF, the US National Communications Association, and the IAMCR.

SACOMM has also reached out to our "sister" association in East Africa, the EACA, and initiated conversations about collaboration and support between our two parts of the continent. We hope that this can be built on in future participation in one another's conferences, as well as collaborations between our members.

I would like to thank SACOMM members for their trust in me to serve as President during the past two years, and I would also like to thank the wonderful colleagues who have served with me on the ExCO during this time: Prof Sisanda Nkoala, Dr Andre Gouws, Dr Meli Ncube, Dr Nonhlanhla Ndlovu, Dr Bimbo Fafowora, Dr Jane- Ane Raath and Dr Chikezie Uzuegbunam and Dr Marennet Jordaan.

Wishing all the best to the next elected ExCo.

### 1.6 Financial Report

The financial matters of SACOMM is in place, and SACOMM is in good standing and compliant with SARS.

### 1.7 Call for 2026 conference hosts

At the closure of the meeting, no 2026 host was nominated.

## 2 INTEREST GROUPS

### 2.1 Vote of thanks to outgoing ExCo

A note of thanks was issued to the 2023-2025 EXCO. All contributions were highly conducive to SACOMM.

### 2.2 Words of farewell from outgoing Interest Group Coordinators/Summary of 2025 events

Strategic communication

Dr Bimbo Fafowora

Rhodes

My stream only organised a webinar on verifying online information in October 2024. The webinar was facilitated by Carina van Wyk, Africa Check's Head of Education and Training at the time. About 147 people registered, while about 45-50 people joined the webinar live. In 2025, I had plans to establish a link between industry practitioners and academics so that there could be an exchange of knowledge between both groups. Also, my plan to host a webinar on disability awareness among journalists and journalism students didn't sail through because the facilitators had other engagements.

Media studies and journalism

Dr Mareneth Jordaan

Stellenbosch University

Not present and AGM and conference

No specific activities to add for 2025.

Screen studies

Mrs Jane-Ann Raath

AFDA

Not present at AGM and conference

No specific activities to add for 2025.

Communication studies

Dr Alette Schoon

Rhodes University

1 Aug 2024: Hosted an online webinar with Code for Africa about using their tool Civic Signal  
12 September 2025: Organised a one-day DigiMethods Africa post-conference workshop on using various digital methods tools. This included visualisation of data, coding with an AI assistant, retrieving news articles across the continent with Civic Signal, visualising textual content with Voyant, setting up a scraper for scraping of websites, using social media scraping and analysis tools Zeeschuimer and 4CAT. I'm happy to report that 12 people attended the event on Friday which was hosted by myself and Thandeka Bukula, one of our PhD students. It all went well and we are keen to host the event again at future conferences. Thanks again, Mehita, for your great leadership and also to other members of the executive for being such an awesome team, it was a pleasure working alongside all of you. Good luck, Sisanda, with leading the new executive, I know you are going to be brilliant and look forward to seeing where you take the organisation.

## Communication education and curriculum development

Mr Andre Grouws

Akademia

The SACOMM stream for Communication Education and Curriculum Development presented a webinar by Dr. Jako Olivier from the Commonwealth of Learning in Canada. Dr. Olivier examined how the integration of Generative AI into the creation of open educational resources (OERs) raises ethical and practical questions about the openness and value of these resources. The presentation addressed issues around the creation of OERs that are open, inclusive and relevant. Dr Olivier is an Adviser: Higher Education at the Commonwealth of Learning in Vancouver, Canada and an Adjunct Professor of Open Education at the University of Nova Gorica, Slovenia. He is a member of the advisory board of the Open Education for a Better World initiative. Previously, he was a professor at the North-West University, where he was also the first UNESCO Chair on Multimodal Learning and Open Educational Resources. He is rated as an established researcher by the National Research Foundation, and his research and advocacy work relate to open educational resources, open and distance learning, self-directed learning, micro-credentials, localisation and multilingualism in open education.

## Communication advocacy and activism

Dr Chikezie Uzuegunam

Rhodes University

### 1. SACOMM Webinar

The Communications Advocacy and Activism Stream of the South African Communications Association (SACOMM) organised an online SACOMM webinar on the 30th of April 2025. It was well attended by a range of participants, including SACOMM members, students, and people from the academic community, with over 35 attendees.

**Speaker:** Koketso Moeti

**Topic:** 'I want my faith in journalism/the fourth estate back.'

Koketso Moeti has a long background in civic activism and has over the years worked at the intersection of governance, communication and people power. She currently serves as the founding executive director of amandla.mobi. In 2025 she was announced as a Charles F. Kettering Global Fellow. She is also an inaugural Aspen Advanced Advocacy Fellow; inaugural Keesb Democracy fellow; Mulago Foundation Rainer Arnhold fellow; inaugural Collective Action in Tech fellow; an Atlantic fellow for racial equity; an inaugural Obama fellow and an Aspen Institute New Voices senior fellow. Moeti serves as an expert Advisor to the World Economic Forum's 'Partnering with Civil Society in the Fourth Industrial Revolution' initiative; a WITNESS board member and a founding reference group member for the Civic Tech Innovation Network. She is an alumnus of the Inclusive Global Leadership Initiative (IGLI) summer institute, hosted by the Sié Chéou-Kang Center at the University of Denver. When not working, Moeti can be found writing and has been published by The Guardian, Project Syndicate, City Press, Al Jazeera and the Mail & Guardian among others.

**Location:** Online via Zoom

**Format:**

This webinar will consist of a 40-minute presentation by Koketso Moeti, followed by a 20-minute Q&A session.

## Summary of the Webinar

The SACOMM seminar featured a discussion on the role of journalism in democracy, led by Koketso Mwetl, a civic activist and founding executive director of Amandla.mobi. Chikezie E. Uzuegbunam welcomed attendees and emphasized the importance of the event, which included a presentation followed by a Q&A session. Koketso encouraged audience participation by posing questions about the significance of journalism, setting the stage for an interactive dialogue on the future of the industry.

Anthea Garman highlighted the critical role of journalists in holding power accountable, using the Gupta leaks as a case study. Chikezie presented a more optimistic view of societal progress, while Evelyn Odhiambo cautioned that improvements in quality of life are not universal. The discussion then shifted to the future of journalism, with Tanya and Sara noting the industry's adaptation to digital changes, although some participants expressed concerns about the preparedness of certain aspects of journalism to meet upcoming challenges.

Koketso shared personal experiences that illustrated the impact of journalism on community issues, emphasizing the need for media to prioritize informing the public amidst rising misinformation. He discussed the mixed effects of journalism, citing examples of both its successes and failures in addressing societal issues. The conversation also touched on the importance of verifying facts and the role of journalists in combating misinformation, with participants encouraged to share their perspectives on these challenges.

The seminar concluded with a focus on online activism and its implications for journalism. Koketso and Silas Udenze discussed the complexities of digital spaces in activism, warning against the dominance of digital oligarchs and the potential for misinformation to undermine legitimate concerns. Koketso also addressed disparities in internet access and the need for democratic ownership in digital spaces. The session underscored the interconnectedness of activism, social change, and media, highlighting opportunities for collaboration among participants.

### **1. Drafting of SACOMM's First-Ever Statements Policy**

Under the leadership of Dr. Uzuegbunam, the Communications Advocacy and Activism Stream of SACOMM accomplished a landmark achievement by conceptualizing and drafting the association's first official Statements and Public Communications Strategy. This document establishes a formal framework for how SACOMM engages with public discourse through statements on issues relevant to media, communication, and society. This pioneering effort positions SACOMM as a proactive and principled voice in public debates, especially on issues intersecting media, communication, and social justice. It empowers the association to respond to pressing societal challenges with clarity, unity, and purpose.

Emerging scholars

Dr Meli Ncube

Stellenbosch University

Dr Nonhlanhla Ndlovu

Rhodes University

For the 2024/2025 Emerging Scholars stream, we sought to clarify and define the concept of an "emerging scholar," though this proved challenging. With the support of our host institution, Nelson Mandela University's Department of Media and Communication, we introduced a new initiative: an Emerging Scholars Pre-Conference. Unlike in previous years, this provided a dedicated platform for emerging scholars to present their work, exchange ideas, and network with peers. The event was highly successful, attracting strong participation and offering significant value to those at the early stages of their academic careers.

We also noted that SACOMM had limited social media presence and resolved to strengthen its visibility by opening LinkedIn and Facebook accounts to be managed by the Emerging Scholars co-convenors. Additionally, the Department of Media and Communication at Nelson Mandela University had created Instagram and LinkedIn accounts to promote SACOMM 2025. It was agreed that the co-convenors would assume responsibility for these accounts on behalf of SACOMM, with the understanding that future host institutions could temporarily use them to market and publicize their conferences.

### **3 ELECTIONS OF NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

#### **3.1 Presentation of list of nominees**

The list of all nominees for exco stream positions were circulated.

##### **3.1.1 Introductions by candidates**

Nominated candidates gave short introduction of themselves and their field of expertise.

#### **3.2 Voting**

Voting took place via online voting method.

#### **3.3 Announcement of results**

The 2025-2027 exco are as follows:

#### **SACOMM 2025/2027 EXCO**

##### **President**

Dr Sisanda Nkoala  
UWC

[sisandankoala@gmail.com](mailto:sisandankoala@gmail.com)/[snkoala@uwc.ac.za](mailto:snkoala@uwc.ac.za)

##### **Deputy President**

Prof SM Tyali  
UNISA

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##### **Strategic communication**

Dr EM Motloutsi  
UNISA

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##### **Media studies and journalism stream**

Dr Kealeboga Aiseng  
WITS

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##### **Screen studies**

Dr Janelle Vermaak-Griesel  
Nelson Mandela University

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##### **Communication studies**

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**Communication education and curriculum development**

Prof Priscilla Boshoff

RHODES

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**Communications advocacy and activism**

Mr Trevor Hlungwani

UNISA

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**Emerging scholars**

Ms Soligah Solomons

NWU

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Mr Seakga Tladi

UJ

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[seakga.tladi03@gmail.com](mailto:seakga.tladi03@gmail.com)

**4 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None.

**5 CLOSURE**

The meeting ended at 14:00

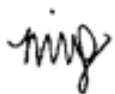
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Minutes of the 2025 AGM compiled by Ms Annelize Vermeulen



Ms Annelize Vermeulen

Minutes of the 2025 AGM approved by the outgoing president Prof Mehita Iqani



Prof Mehita Iqani

ADDENDUM A  
**CURRENT EXCO 2023-2025**  
**SACOMM 2023/2025 EXCO**

**President**

Prof Mehita Iqani  
Stellenbosch University  
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**Deputy President**

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**Media studies and journalism stream**

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**Screen studies**

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**Communication studies**

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Rhodes University  
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**Communication education and curriculum development**

Mr Andre Gouws  
Akademia  
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**Communications advocacy and activism**

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**Emerging scholars**

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Dr Nonhlanhla Ndlovu  
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**NEW EXCO 2025-2027**  
**SACOMM 2025/2027 EXCO**

**President**

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**Deputy President**

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**Strategic communication**

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**Communication education and curriculum development**

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RHODES  
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**Communications advocacy and activism**

Mr Trevor Hlungwani  
UNISA  
[Hlungt1@unisa.ac.za](mailto:Hlungt1@unisa.ac.za)

**Emerging scholars**

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