

Dear HEDSA Members

We hope you are safe and well during this lockdown. Life has changed dramatically, and our survival is our humanity to each other. We refer to the HEDSA mailing listserve communique, which was sent on the 14th January 2020, to “Save-the-Date” for our HEDSA 2020 Symposium and 10 year Celebrations.

As the Executive Committee of HEDSA we deliberated on several possibilities regarding our esteemed biennial symposium, as to whether we should continue hosting it in September 2020 as planned or if it should be postponed to 2021. It was a difficult decision to take, however being informed by the current situation in our country and the COVID-19 pandemic, the Exco came to the conclusion that:

1. The safety and wellness of our membership is very important, to not be exposed to the Corona virus.
2. Social distancing is key and in a conference setting this may be compromised.
3. We considered the current information that the virus will reach its peak in September this year, which is the time for when our symposium was scheduled to take place.
4. We need to adhere to and comply with the current travel bans.
5. Using online options, i.e. webinar option, will not substitute for the value of networking and the actual experiential learning opportunity, a symposium could provide for, eg. learning more about assistive technologies etc.

We therefore concluded that the 2020 symposium and election of the Exco are postponed to 2021.

The Exco encourage members to continue with their regional collaborations, using the online technologies at their disposal, for continued sharing of experiences, challenges and adaptations during this time, to best support our students with disabilities. We will

appreciate contributions in this regard through the Regional Chairpersons further sharing on the HEDSA Google group mailing listserve.

In addition to the insights and research links provided through the mailing listserve platform, more sharing of research input on Universal design inclusive learning approaches, is encouraged and will also be made available on the HEDSA website, <https://www.hedsa.org.za/>.

Last but not least, we appeal to institutions to continue paying their annual HEDSA membership subscriptions, to keep your Institutions actively informed of trends shared in the disability support space at Higher Education Institutions.

TAKE CARE ALL. THIS WILL PASS

HEDSA EXCO