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Disconnected within boundaries addressing the needs of parenting students at higher education institutions as an integral part of student life

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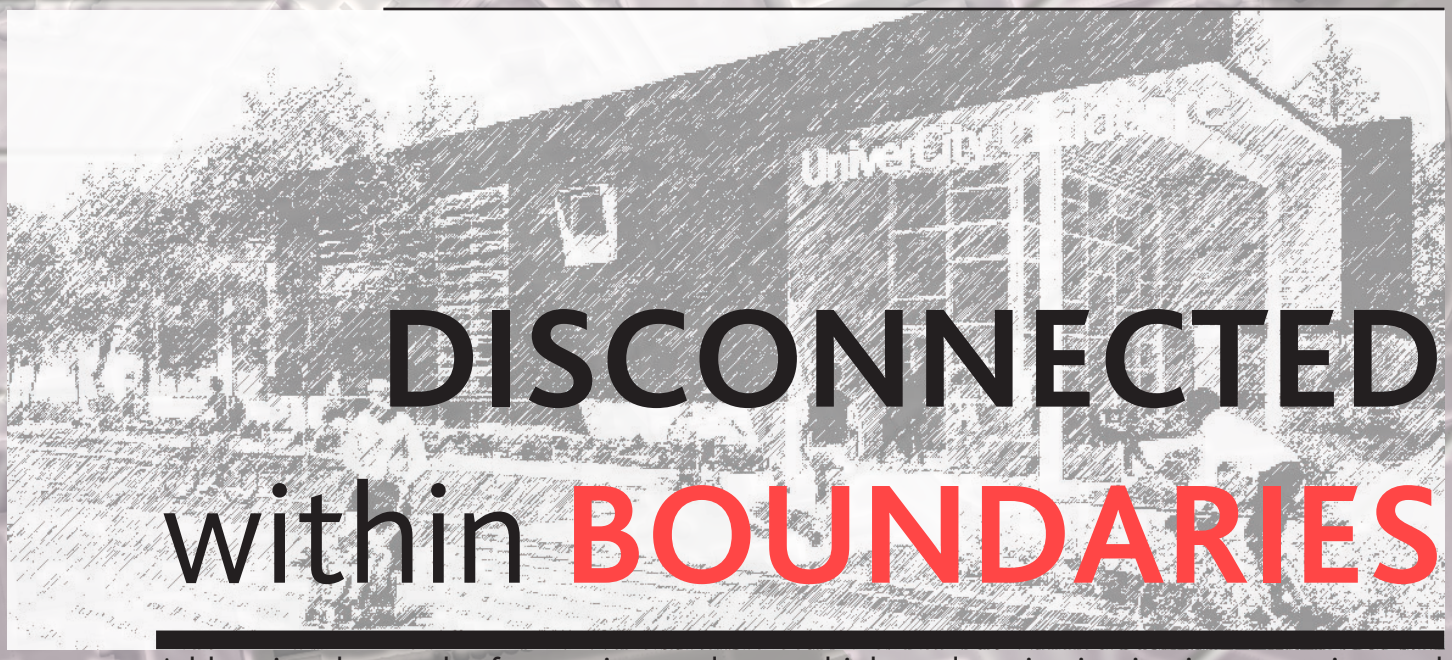
History shows the power of the university as an institution in society and how its architecture has tried to adapt as rapidly as its constantly evolving environment. This research is set within the context of the University of the Witwatersrand in South Africa.

The student population globally is changing and there are some students who are choosing to combine parenting with studying. Given the situation of a new genre of students entering universities across the world, trans-programming in the university environment is inevitable. This research looks at the university environment – its campuses and spaces, and how accommodating it is to students that do not fit the traditional university student mould. The subject matter of the report is the student-parent.

Non-traditional students in the form of student-parents are not accommodated for in terms of spatial design and their social needs on university campuses. The research looks at the economic, spatial and institutional obstacles that prevent access for those students with added work of reproductive (unpaid) labour such as parenting. The report looks at how these issues differ and/or align with forms of exclusion. In addition, my research report will investigate what exclusion in architecture is, to create a foundation for the discussion on higher education institutions being inclusive.

Our environment affects our development and the development of our offspring; trans-programming of facilities is needed to generate a design that is inclusive. In addition to the research aim, the report aims to answer the question of whether the university campus can accommodate student-parents and their child(ren) and family in a secure environment on campus. The research report demonstrates through the design that university education needs to be universally accessible in every aspect and no student should be denied or prevented from the opportunity because of their decision to have a child or children.

The research reflects my journey as a single mother and aspiring architect in search of her spatial identity in the university landscape and the professional world at large.



DISCONNECTED within BOUNDARIES

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