**Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2014 - 2018**

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**Summary of the Teaching and Learning Strategy**

This document sets out a Strategy for Teaching and Learning for Stellenbosch University with a view to operationalising the vision of the University as it has been set out in other policy documents. Specifically, it is intended to give direction in achieving the aims set for this University to remain one of the leading Universities in South Africa – also in the domain of teaching and learning. It considers the context of higher education in South Africa, the intention to become representative of the diverse population of the country on a number of different levels, and to deliver graduates who have developed a set of graduate attributes which fit the standing of the University as well as the needs of the world in which these graduates have to make a good contribution.

Specifically, it has articulated the following strategic priorities:
 \* Professionalisation fo the scholarly teaching role

 \* Realisation of graduate attributes at Stellenbosch University
 \* An IT-enhanced learning model
 \* Pro-active support for a diverse student cohort
 \* Programme renewal

The diagram below represents the key elements of the strategy: the graduate attributes that the University aspires for its students to acquire; the total learning experience that should lead students to develop these attributes; and the five strategic priorities highlighted for 2014 – 2018, that should enhance the learning experience, so that these graduate attributes will actually be realised. The strategic priorities are described separately for analytic purposes, but in fact they would work together and synergistically to realise the vision.

The strategy gives broad directives, because it appreciates the different academic environments of different faculties and disciplines at the University. It assumes that the various environments will develop details for implementing strategic goals, suitable to their particular context.

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**Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2014** – **2018**

**1 Introduction**

Since the first teaching and learning strategy plan of 2002, a significant amount has been accomplished with regard to the enhancement of teaching and learning at Stellenbosch University (SU). Various localised and faculty-specific developments[[1]](#footnote-1), as well as system-wide initiatives[[2]](#footnote-2) have occurred. The strategy suggested for the period 2014 to 2018 is devised to articulate an ongoing commitment to good teaching. Many of the initiatives are based on collaborative, systemic and strategic approaches that will facilitate their effectiveness and sustainability. The strategy has been revisited and updated in order to align it with the changing world, with revised university strategic goals and to further enhance teaching excellence and student success at the university. Student success is defined as:

not only whether students have earned a degree, but also whether graduates are in fact achieving the level of preparation—in terms of knowledge, capabilities, and personal qualities—that will enable them to both thrive and contribute in a fast-changing economy and in turbulent, highly demanding global, societal and often personal contexts (Kuh 2008, cited in Framework for Institutional Quality Enhancement in the Second Period of Quality Assurance, January 2013).

The strategy set out in this document is based on the initial 2002 teaching and learning strategy*,* which referred to the Strategic Framework for the Turn of the Century and Thereafter (2000), where the University’s vision with regard to teaching was described as:

A university characterised by quality teaching, by the constant renewal of teaching and learning programmes, and by the creation of effective opportunities for learning/study.

The strategic focus has further been developed in the SU Institutional Plan of 2012 to 2016, which requires all sections of the University to enhance the knowledge base, staff and student diversity, student success and systemic sustainability. This renewed teaching and learning strategy is cognisant of all four institutional imperatives and concentrates on giving weight to the realisation of student success.

***1.1 Purpose of the document***

This is an institutional document that sets a consensus vision regarding a strategy for teaching and learning, and articulates strategic priorities for the period 2014 to 2018. The document provides a framework within which all faculties and support units can interpret the vision and strategic priorities in relation to their own conditions and plans. It also gives an indication as to how central units and administrative mechanisms can provide support for the realisation of these plans.

***1.2 Responsibilities***

With regard to teaching and learning there are varied responsibilities:
 \* the responsibility to learn and to take advantage of opportunities rests with the student; student organisations have a role to play in supporting and encouraging students, as well as in providing mentoring and leadership;
 \* the responsibility to design and implement optimal opportunities for learning to take place rests with teaching academics;
 \* the responsibility to provide and maintain adequate facilities for teaching and learning rests with organisational units in charge of the University’s physical and virtual infrastructure;
 \* the responsibility to provide professional advice and practical help to enhance teaching rests with central support units and support staff in faculties;
 \* the responsibility to provide strategic direction for the teaching function rests with the university management.

The strategy articulated in this document addresses all these groups.

***1.3 Relationship to policy framework of the University***

The relationship between this strategy and the policy framework of the University is set out in the diagram below. This diagram demonstrates that the relationship between institutional policies and strategies, and those of faculties and units, are bi-directional, with the various spheres of activity informing each other. The arrows indicate how the levels influence each other.

**The role of a strategy for teaching and learning within policy frameworks**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **National Regulatory Function, e.g. DHET, CHE, SAQA** | **Institution**  | **Faculties and support services**  | **State and Provincial Boards and Bodies influencing programmes, e.g. PAWC, DoD, SAICA** |
| Vision and framework  |  |
| Strategic plan | Faculty and centre plans  |
| **Strategy for** **teaching** **and learning**  | Faculty and centre plans focusing on teaching & learning  Student inputs and plans |
| Policies, regulations and frameworks(e.g. assessment policy; professional development framework)  |  Faculty rules and regulations |
| Three-year budget plans and activities, including indications of how faculty and centre plans will be supported |  Faculty and centre budget plans and activitiesStudent plans and activities |

**2 Context**

As a research focused university SU currently faces very specific challenges and opportunities related to its unique history, as well as to national and international trends in higher education and in knowledge development. These have an effect on how teaching and learning is shaped, and call for particular strategic priorities for the period 2014 – 2018 which are described below.

At institutional level the University is gaining in eminence as a research-led institution. This is verified by its ranking in various systems of measurement. The potential advantages this provides should be capitalised on in teaching and learning at both graduate and undergraduate levels.

The University continues to grapple with, on the one hand, maintaining a unique identity and, on the other hand, becoming more accessible to all, specifically in terms of diversity among students and staff. This places the spotlight on language as a medium of instruction, as a challenge as well as a potential source of richness.

The University participates in an increasing number of partnerships with the public sector, professional bodies and boards, which have expectations of what it should deliver. These constitute both pressures, as well as opportunities for renewal and relevance.

The University has an important role to play in addressing a host of *socio-cultural, educational and economic challenges facing South Africa* and the wider region*.* The legacy of social divisionspersists; also in teaching and learning SU needs to take on national and local challenges related to the social and economic context. Within South Africa Stellenbosch as a region has one of the highest levels of inequality between rich and poor.These challenges affect routine teaching and learning practices of the University. Concomitantly, the University should play a role in contributing to the positive resolution of these challenges. This imperative is recognised in a University document tabled in March 2011, “Hope as a Guiding Document”.

*Limited evidence of* *transformation in South African primary and secondary* *schooling* explains the large numbers of young people who do not reach matric. Consequently students from varied social class backgrounds do not develop the kinds of skills, knowledge and attitudes which would assure access to tertiary education. Whilst the task of reforming general education is not the core purpose of higher education, and one needs to be realistic about what a university can achieve, finding creative ways to meet the challenges of inadequate school preparation remains a task for the higher education sector. Continued sustainability of educational goals of SU requires creative and effective responses to these challenges. Possible approaches to these challenges have been proposed in the Guideline Document for Academic Literacy at SU (2012) (available at [www.sun.ac.za/ctl](http://www.sun.ac.za/ctl)).

In view of *national needs* for suitably qualified and well equipped graduates, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is calling for a more targeted focus on student success and quality teaching. In accordance with *national policy*, the next round of HEQC institutional reviews will attend to this. This strategy document is also informed by DHET policy of which the implementation is supported by dedicated funding, such as the recently introduced annual ring-fenced teaching development grants.

In the context of the worldwide economic recession, and limited ability of parents and sponsors to contribute to educational costs, t*here is a demand to do more with less.* Public expectations of what a university education should deliver, are increased. For example, there is an expectation that universities provide access for far more students than currently in South Africa, as is outlined in the Green Paper on Education[[3]](#footnote-3). As for many other South African universities, SU may have reached capacity in terms of ability to expand physically, therefore virtual and technologically supported platforms have to be conceptualised for increasing student participation and student diversity.

*The changing nature of knowledge and work locally and globally* has led to a networked society, which is more connected, but also more troubled by an “information overload”. Communication of varied quality is more multimodal, allows for wider participation and has lower barriers to public engagement. This provides new, technology-mediated forms of collaboration and mentoring, leading to different learning processes. This indicates that SU teaching and learning strategies must be geared towards delivering participants in the workforce that can compete in global markets. New graduates are expected to have the ability to collaborate and at the same time to operate autonomously.

The changing context has an effect on the *role of the academic.* Academic work is increasingly subject to the pressures of financial cutbacks, competitiveness, high performance and technological change.

The current and incumbent student population has changing educational expectations and needs; it is increasingly less elite, more diverse, more financially insecure and less confident of finding employment. Such *changes in the nature of the student population* are internationally noted, which provides a new set of challenges for teaching and learning. The quality and outcomes of teaching are vital in helping to prepare graduates to rise to these challenges.

**3 Vision**

This strategy is informed by the vision SU has for the graduate it wishes to produce. It envisages SU students’ learning experience to be shaped by the formal and informal curriculum as well as by co-curricular activities. The concept of ‘graduate attributes’ with which this strategy aligns is one that describes these attributes as:

the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future. (Bowden et al. 2000, cited in Barrie, 2006:217)

***3.1 Graduate attributes***

As a creator of sustainable hope in Africa, SU aspires to create the kinds of conditions that will enable each student to acquire the attributes outlined below:

An Enquiring Mind

* Lifelong learner
* Critical and creative thinker
* Exercises responsibility for learning and using knowledge

An Engaged Citizen

* Leader and collaborator
* Social entrepreneur
* Effective in a diverse environment

A Dynamic Professional

* Problem solver
* Uses sustainable and effective technology
* Innovative

A Well-rounded Individual

* Exposed to cultural, intellectual and sporting life
* Takes responsibility for own development
* Takes informed and considered decisions.

***3.1.1 An enquiring mind***

A graduate who has an “enquiring mind” will be one who is curious, a lifelong learner who thinks critically and creatively, and who uses systematic methods of enquiry in knowledge development and problem solving. An enquiring mind is open to new, as well as diverse ideas, is willing to learn from the received wisdom of the past, as well as to find new ways of knowing and doing. This involves taking the best from international and received ways of knowing, as well as from indigenous, local, lay and underrepresented knowledge sources. It involves seeing the interconnectedness of different knowledge sources and systems, and being able to process ideas and information individually and in teams. An enquiring mind is discerning and appreciates the values of knowledge. Such a student will consider the responsibility and accountability that accompany knowing and learning, and will respect research-oriented approaches to decision-making.

***3.1.2 An engaged citizen***

An engaged citizen is one who understands how to contribute as a member of a team and community, thus to collaborate and be of service. A graduate becomes an engaged citizen to the extent that he/she can care for him-/herself and exercises care for others. This also implies the ability to take on a leadership role in social life and as a member of civil society at various levels, such as in the family, the workplace, at regional, national, continental as well as international level. Engaged citizenship implies appreciation of local and national connectivity on the one hand, and yet avoidance of damaging exclusivity, on the other. An SU graduate should have had the opportunity to engage critically in community interaction in the region, and to have considered potential solutions to national and international crises, such as those related to sustainability and climate change. Further, an SU graduate will be aware of the value of interaction on a global level, and be open to participating in international settings. An engaged citizen understands that transformation of society involves transformation of the self.

***3.1.3 A dynamic professional***

A dynamic professional is able to use knowledge gained at university and beyond to solve problems in the workplace, home and community. Such a professional is innovative, takes initiative and is aware of the power of entrepreneurship. He/she will have learnt the importance of ethical behaviour and what this means in practice. At the same time, a dynamic professional is effective, and harnesses own talent, as well as the capacity of others in growing and prospering. Finally, a dynamic professional has the flexibility to make career choices and decisions in relation to the changing nature of the world of work. An SU graduate should become a dynamic professional by having developed the capacity to apply and communicate knowledge, as well as sustainable and effective uses of technology in various community, business, professional and personal settings. He/she should be able to communicate in oral, written, digital and multi-modal forms.

***3.1.4 A well-rounded individual***

 A well-rounded individual senses the importance of aesthetic, cultural, spiritual and traditionally scientific modes of engagement, and understands the value of physical as well as intellectual wellbeing and sporting life. Such an individual would have had the opportunity to become a potential source of wisdom for him-/herself, as well as to those with whom he or she interacts. Thus he/she can take informed decisions. And can use his or her education to enrich life in its broadest sense. An SU graduate should be assisted in cultivating skills, values and ideas that enhance his/her own humanity. The curriculum and co-curriculum should offer opportunities for the student to grow along social and individual dimensions, and along intellectual, as well as affective dimensions.

***3.2 Teaching and Learning at Stellenbosch University***

For the University to support graduates to become enquiring, engaged, dynamic and well-rounded, the teaching and learning arrangements of the University, as well as the arrangements governing all aspects of the student experience, need to be aligned to such a vision. The following is required to achieve this:

Critical and scholarly lecturers who

* Engage in various forms of scholarship
* Are reflective and open to new ideas

Engaging curriculum design which

* Brings the outside world into the classroom
* Is current and self-renewing

Dynamic delivery which

* Is innovative and flexible
* Uses a wide variety of media functionally

Enriched campus experience which

* Encourages learning from diverse perspectives
* Provides and encourages a variety of learning contexts.

**3.2.1 Critical and scholarly lecturers**

For SU to provide the maximum in opportunities for students to engage appropriately in a research infused and enquiry based learning experience, requires lecturers who are role models, leaders, experts, partners and facilitators. They are *critical scholars*,enquiring into their own disciplinesand into the scholarship of teaching and learning. They are reflective and open to critique about their practice. The education context needs to provide conditions in which lecturers may flourish, and share their curiosity with their students.

**3.2.2 Engaging curriculum design**

Where appropriate, the curriculum should *engage* *with* broader social and environmental issues and the world of work*.* It should lead students via assessment that encourages deep learning, to take responsibility for their academic progress. It will provide opportunities for authentic and research-based learning as well as service learning. While not neglecting the received knowledge and insights of the past, the curriculum has to be current, self-renewing and applicable for the envisioned future.

**3.2.3 Dynamic delivery**

The delivery format should encourage active learning via innovative and flexible learning materials, a wide variety of media, and opportunities for collaborative and independent learning. In the lecture space and in virtual equivalents students should be given the opportunity to interrogate and to acquire knowledge; they should also be introduced to communication modes utilised in the world of research, work and community life.

**3.2.4 Enriched campus experience**

The campus should be organised to allow students to learn from peers, academics and administrative and support services staff from a variety of perspectives and social backgrounds. Real and virtual learning contexts should provide students with opportunities to develop intellectually, emotionally and culturally across an array of curricular and co-curricular offerings .

**4 Strategic Priorities**

In order to realise the vision as outlined in section 3 above, five strategic priorities have been identified, as described below.

**4.1 Professionalisation of the scholarly teaching role**

Attention is required to the professionalisation of teaching at SU for various reasons, including (i) affirming the value of teaching to enhance the intrinsic as well as extrinsic motivation of academics; (ii) improving the morale and professional identity of academics; (iii) providing guidance, especially to newly appointed academics, for teaching at SU; (iv) providing opportunities for academics to explore, become more reflective and research-oriented about their teaching; (v) enabling academics to enhance their teaching, also by innovating and problem solving; and (vi) contributing to the realisation of the SU graduate attributes and student success.

The recognition of and support for good teaching requires attention to general conditions of service and facilities, such as the time and financial support that lecturers might require to develop or redesign a programme (or module). This requires attention to allocations of workload, capacity and facilities at faculty or departmental level and should be taken up in various SU strategic documents.

Examples of recent initiatives to professionalise the scholarly teaching role at SU are:
 \* the annual PREDAC four day breakaway for newly appointed lecturers;
 \* the annual SU Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) Conference;
 \* the Fund for Innovation in Research on Learning and Teaching (FIRLT)/Fonds vir
 Innovasie in Navorsing oor Leer en Onderrig (FINLO) fund;
 \* funding as part of the DHET’s Teaching Development Grant, which has been set aside for
 the SU Teaching Fellowships and grants to study and professionalise teaching;
 \* the institution of Deputy Deans for teaching in several faculties and the formal
 constitution of the Centre for Health Professions Education.

One important challenge that remains, is to find a comprehensive understanding of professionalisation of tertiary level teaching that will suitably promote and acknowledge good teaching across faculties.

The decision to decentralise academic support into faculties in 2012 is a further motivation for this strategic priority. It presents new opportunities for the systemic and integrated promotion of teaching and learning, but requires establishment of new structures with regard to support for teaching at the University.

This priority is articulated in the following strategic objectives:

4.1.1 To define “good teaching” within different contexts so that it can be defined, promoted and rewarded at all levels;

4.1.2 To develop a critical mass of expertise in each faculty for (i) providing leadership with regard to teaching and learning; (ii) supporting the professional development of others in the faculty; and (iii) exploring opportunities to research and enhance teaching.

**4.2 Realisation of graduate attributes at Stellenbosch University**

Graduate attributes are acquired via the formal academic programmes as well as informal or co-curricular campus experiences. At the level of the individual programme, the more specific graduate *outcomes* are required – these would reflect the University’s graduate attributes, the SAQA outcomes and disciplinary and industry related specifications. This priority is further articulated in various SU strategies and documents, including the US Institutional Intent and Strategy for 2013-2018, the Guideline Document for Academic Literacy at SU (tabled at the CLT on 13 August 2012) and the work of the Task Team on the Use of ICTs in Teaching and Learning (tabled at the CLT on 17 April 2013). These three documents are listed here as they intersect and the various strategies need to be correlated. For instance, the graduate attribute of ‘an enquiring mind’ requires a student to acquire academic literacy, which includes appropriate reading and writing skills; the graduate attribute of a ‘dynamic professional’ requires a student to acquire digital literacy, which includes the mastery of appropriate IT skills. Also, the attributes of ‘a dynamic professional’ and ‘a well-rounded individual’ within the South African context, require awareness of the value of multilingualism, appreciation of the linguistic diversity in the country, and development of skills using more languages than one.

This priority is articulated in the following strategic objectives:

4.2.1 To define graduate attributes context-specifically within disciplines, faculties, support structures and student bodies;

4.2.2 To provide guidelines, training and support for the embedding of graduate attributes and graduate outcomes in all programmes;

4.2.3 To embed graduate outcomes in academic programmes and graduate attributes in co-curricular activities;

4.2.4 To develop a framework for monitoring the attainment of graduate attributes and outcomes.

**4.3 IT-enhanced learning model**

The teaching approach and graduate attributes that SU strives to achieve, acknowledge the importance of digital literacy, thus also of state of the art IT facilities and suitable use of social media. There is a minimum level of proficiency with IT and digital literacy that can be expected from any SU student, although actual levels of engagement with IT differ across programmes and disciplines. Similarly, there is a minimum level of proficiency with IT and digital literacy that can be expected from any SU lecturer. The observation that most students entering a university are very familiar with IT, having had advanced prior access to computers and smartphones, is directive; however, this cannot be generalised. Overall, students’ proficiency with digital literacy for academic use is highly varied, and requires attention. Similarly, academics at SU have varied levels of familiarity with IT and its potential use in the classroom. This emphasises the need for training, support and sharing of good practice. It should be noted that the Strategy on IT and Teaching and Learning of April 2013 offers a comprehensive strategy for this priority.

This priority is articulated in the following strategic objectives:

4.3.1 To ensure that curricular programmes reflect the judicious use of IT in teaching and learning with a view to realising the graduate attributes and student success;

4.3.2 To ensure that support and co-curricular activities, where appropriate, use IT with a view to enhancing the SU experience;

4.3.3 To ensure that curricular and co-curricular programmes take place in optimal physical conditions with a view to supporting an IT-enhanced learning model.

**4.4 Pro-active support for a diverse student cohort**

In order to realise student success in all its dimensions the learning needs of a diverse student cohort should be considered and catered for. The advantages of having diversity within student groups should be capitalised on. Projections for the University institutional transformation plans have been set for 2013 – 2018. These projections refer to diversity largely in terms of race; this strategy considers a broader set of parameters, including language, gender, age, nationality, social class or able bodiness. In certain respects the student cohort is changing naturally to reflect broader South African demographics; for example, the ratio of English:Afrikaans[[4]](#footnote-4) students has already reached 50:50.

Diversification is being actively sought on a number of levels.

On undergraduate as well as postgraduate level SU aims to increase the number of educationally disadvantaged students it reaches, although to discern disadvantage remains a challenge. Also, SU intends to provide an opportunity to access new markets, which will include extending its reach to a “learn and earn” grouping, thus to more mature students, as well as restructuring the undergraduate offering to include more applied learning which is relevant to the context in which students are to be employed.

Students with disabilities are increasingly welcomed at SU, which increases the need for greater guidance and support to academics who teach such students. This is particularly so as some disabilities are not directly visible or measurable. With regard to internationalisation of the student body, especially at postgraduate level, a number of initiatives are already underway.

Specific initiatives to accommodate a diverse cohort, include (i) bursaries to educationally/financially disadvantaged students; (ii) Extended Degree Programmes, focusing on the first year of study for targeted students; (iii) the First-year Academy, including tutoring and mentoring for first-year students; (iv) institutionally-funded Language Plans for each faculty; (v) facilitating services for disabled students, such as transferring material into Braille; (vi) support for international students via the Postgraduate and International Office; and (vii) scholarships for PhD students from African partner universities (PANGeA) via the Graduate School in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

The idea that more could be done to take care of a diversity of students, is acknowledged in for example the Report of the Task Team on a Welcoming Culture for SU. A useful approach to the curriculum arrangements known as “universal learning design” is to cater pro-actively via instruction, services, information technology and physical spaces,[[5]](#footnote-5) for a diverse student cohort and to maximally apply uses of physical facilities and IT to this end.

This priority is articulated in the following strategic objectives:

4.4.1 To cater pro-actively for actual and anticipated student cohorts in all programmes;

4.4.2 To systematically develop measures and use them in assessing student educational disadvantage and student needs.

**4.5 Programme renewal**

Curriculum and programme renewal and reflection on the total programme offering of a University is an important part of its academic processes. Previous comprehensive programme renewal processes at US include those of 1999 – 2000, during the initial SAQA procedure for the interim-registration of qualifications; of 2003, at the request of the then newly appointed Rector, Prof Chris Brink; and of 2010 – 2011, for the Higher Education Sub-framework (HEQSF) alignment process. Motivating reasons for continuing with curriculum renewal include (i) optimizing the teaching and learning processes; (ii) managing work pressure on staff; (iii) responding to and taking the lead in new knowledge developments; (iv) responding to and innovatively developing new approaches to learning and teaching; and (v) responding appropriately to changing societal needs.

This priority is articulated in the following strategic objective:

4.5.1 To comprehensively analyse current programmes and plan for programme renewal and rationalisation in the broader context of enrolment planning and
the implementation of the size and shape plans of the University.

**5 Reporting**

The annual reports of centres and faculties are expected to refer specifically to the objectives set in this strategy. Suggested activities that could be used in articulating the SU prioritised strategies in various contexts, are listed in Addendum A. Action Plan 2.4 gives directives as to targeted monitoring activities. Extracts of the reports from different environments will be incorporated in the SU Annual Teaching report which is compiled by the CTL.

**Addendum A**

 **Action Plans attached to Strategy or Teaching and Learning 2014 - 2018**

The Action Plans described here are linked to each of the Strategic Priorities described in sections 4.1 to 4.5 respectively.

**Summary of Action Plans**

**1 The professionalization of the scholarly teaching role**

1.1 Good teaching should be defined, promoted and rewarded at all levels.

1.2 A teaching hub to be established in each faculty

**2 The realisation of graduate attributes in the Stellenbosch University experience**

2.1 The context-specific definition of graduate attributes or more discipline-related graduate outcomes by all faculties, support structures and student bodies.

2.2 The embedding of graduate outcomes in academic programmes and graduate attributes in co-curricular activities.

2.3 The provision of guidelines, training and support for the embedding of graduate attributes and graduate outcomes in programmes.

2.4 Development of a framework for the monitoring of the attainment of graduateattributes and outcomes.

**3 IT-enhanced learning model**

3.1 All SU curricular programmes will reflect the judicious use of IT in teaching and learning in order to realise graduate attributes and student success.

3.2 SU support and co-curricular activities will reflect the use of IT in order to enhance the SU experience.

3.3 SU curricular and co-curricular programmes will take place in optimal physical conditions to support an IT-enhanced learning model.

**4 Proactive support for a diverse student cohort**

4.1 Programmes to cater pro-actively for actual and anticipated student cohorts

4.2 Measures to assess student educational disadvantage and student needs to be developed systematically.

**5 Programme renewal**

5.1 Comprehensive analysis of current curriculum offerings and plan for programme renewal and rationalisation.

5.2 Preparation for programme renewal and rationalisation

**1 The professionalization of the scholarly teaching role**

**1.1 Good teaching should be defined, promoted and rewarded at all levels.**

 Activity: the Vice Rector (Teaching) will set up a task team that will:

* + - develop a comprehensive definition of good teaching that takes into account definitions of student success and the SU graduate attributes.
		- provide an overview of methods to assess good teaching as these are used across the University and at other universities; the overview will include rubrics used by international and national teaching associations, and will draw up principles of good practice for use across faculties and for benchmarking. The forms of evidence required will be quantitative and qualitative. This will consider an overarching set of items that co-determine the quality of teaching, such as teaching load, throughput, student perceptions, perceptions of peers, perceptions of potential employers, administration, coordination, developmental work, take up of formal programmes, opportunities to professionalise, opportunities to innovate. The task team will consider previous documents prepared at SU in this regard. It will also consider issues of quality at different levels of teaching, e.g. lecturer to professor, and contextual differences on disciplinary and faculty-level.
		- provide suggestions for the reinstatement of an institution-wide teaching excellence award that will allow for a systematic preparation for participation in the Heltasa/CHE Annual National Teaching Excellence Awards System.
		- provide advice to the Senate Academic Appointments Committee as to how it can adopt a more robust approach towards the assessment of candidates’ teaching ability where this is pertinent to the particular appointment. (For example, the Committee requires a summary of graduates’ research outputs. Something similar should be required for the demonstration of teaching experience.)
		- provide advice for the recognition of good teaching as part of an integrated approach to the annual performance evaluation system.
		- suggest additional measures to reward, promote and recognise good teaching, at faculty and institutional level.
		- provide advice to the Rector and Vice Rectors so that a unified message goes out to the institution on the importance of the three roles of the academic, and how this message can be conveyed at all levels.

Responsibility: Vice Rector (Teaching and Learning) and task team comprising representatives of the academic staff, the Centre for Teaching and Learning and Institutional Planning. Input from Human Resources and Institutional Planning and Research will also be solicited.

Timeline: A report should complete the proposal in stages, with suggestions on performance evaluation by November 2013; a teaching excellence award by June 2014; and the final report by November 2014.

Budget: The taskteam will not require financial support. Anticipated funds for a teaching excellence scheme could be an annual amount of R300 000 – R500 000 for a recipient to spend in a teaching award account on teaching development, or own use.

**1.2 A teaching hub to be established in each faculty**

 Activity: Each faculty will develop a proposal for how it provides (or intends to provide) leadership and support for teaching and learning, and where necessary, what additional support is required. The dimensions of teaching and learning that require leadership and support include: graduate outcomes, achievement of graduate attributes (where measureable), programme and module design, assessment, tutor programmes, IT and teaching and learning, professional development, advice and support to students (undergraduate and postgraduate), Extended Degree Programmes, arrangements for students with disabilities, language as medium of instruction, academic literacy, research on teaching, and evaluation of programmes.

These proposals will take into account the following:
 - the principle that professional development of the teaching role occurs
 most effectively when located at the level of the department;
 - existing expertise in relation to the science of good teaching and professional development (it is not purely a craft);
 - the multiple tasks and overburdening already experienced by academic staff, so that they may not simply be able to take on new tasks without careful restructuring.

 These proposals will include a clear definition of the role of the Deputy Dean (Teaching and Learning) or equivalent responsible for leadership and coordination with regard to teaching and learning in each environment.

 Responsibility: Deans reporting to the Vice Rector (Teaching and Learning)

 Timeline: Reports due by October 2013. Arrangements for additional support to be in place by January 2014.

 Budget: For staff who can support the teaching hubs the following sources of support are available:
 - the equivalent of 80% of one full-time CTL staff member (one additional appointment will need to be made to realise this complement);
 - two IT support personnel on two-year appointments using DHET Teaching Development Grant funds;
 - Existing funds from the Teaching Development Grants already allocated to supporting capacity in faculties, which include: R230 000 per faculty in 2013 and R741 000 in 2014.
 - Existing funds held centrally and disbursed to faculties for the scholarship of teaching and learning, which include: R650 000 annually for FIRLT/FINLO; R600 000 annually for Teaching Fellowships; and R835 000 per year for two years from the Teaching Development Grants for workshops, attendance of teaching short courses and programmes.

**2 The realisation of graduate attributes in the Stellenbosch University experience**

**2.1 The context-specific definitions of graduate attributes or more discipline-related graduate outcomes by all faculties, support structures and student bodies.**

Activity: Faculties are to decide whether they wish to develop context-specific graduate attributes, or adhere to the institutional list. Programme committees are to reflect on their existing outcomes and consider to what extent these require updating in the light of the institutional and faculty attributes and outcomes. This exercise will be conducted at programme as well as module level. Support service structures and student bodies will indicate how they support students to acquire the SU graduate attributes.

 Responsibility: Deans, programme convenors, module convenors, directors of support units and student committees. Information on this exercise will be included in annual reports of faculties and units and reflected in faculty and unit plans. CTL personnel working in faculties will contribute to this process.

 Timeline: To be conducted in 2013 and discussed in reports and plans written in 2014.

 Budget: None required.

**2.2 The embedding of graduate outcomes in academic programmes and graduate attributes in co-curricular activities.**

Activity: Programme teams, module level lecturers and/or teams, support units and student committees will undertake an appraisal of their offerings and where necessary redesign these in order for them to provide opportunities for students to acquire the SU graduate attributes or programme level graduate outcomes.

 Responsibility: Deans, programme convenors, module convenors, directors of support units and student committees, with support from CTL and other support personnel.

 Timeline: The planning process will begin with pilots across faculties in January 2014 and be ready for the academic calendar of 2016. Other programmes will follow as ready.

 Budget: this is indicated at 2.3.

 **2.3 The provision of guidelines, training and support for the embedding of graduate attributes and graduate outcomes in programmes.**

Activity:

1: Training for programme convenors, module convenors and lecturers will be provided at a central level and within faculties. This training will include benchmarking with other universities and the use of best practice examples at SU. The initial phase will focus on orientation and key concepts, with support for pilots in each faculty to follow.

2: Training for student committees on embedding graduate attributes into all aspects of student life.

 Responsibility:

1: Institutional team including CTL members, Language Centre and selected individuals in faculties.

2: Frederik van Zyl Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership Development (FVZS Institute) in conjunction with various SU centres.

 Timelines:

1: Development of guiding document and first level training by December 2013; support for pilots in faculties in 2014 and 2015.

2: Training to be provided from 2014 and annually thereafter. Existing structured co-curricular programmes will be adjusted accordingly.

 Budget:

1: R556 000 is allocated from the Teaching Development Grant for 2013 – 2014 (but can be extended) for: training, materials and other support required directly for the piloting process (via the FIRLT/FINLO process), and visiting experts on local and international curriculum development.

2: The FVZS Institute will have to source additional funds to ensure this takes place.

**2.4 Development of a framework for the monitoring of the attainment of graduate attributes and outcomes.**

 Activity: A framework for an overarching formative and summative evaluation system will be developed that will include:

1: The use of student feedback at module and programme level with a section for students to indicate how the module catered for the graduate attributes.

2: Graduate tracking (qualitative and quantitative measures).

3: Evaluation of the pilot programmes per faculty (qualitative and quantitative measures).

4: Research project on assessment and graduate attributes (how assessment in various programmes assesses for graduate attributes and outcomes; how assessment encourages learning and how this can be improved).

5: Investigate the use of an e-portfolio for the student experience based on the pilot conducted at the Medical and Health Sciences Faculty.

6: Implementation of the student portfolio/co-curricular transcript

7: Evaluation of co-curricular programmes run through the FVZS Institute.

Responsibility: the same team indicated at 2.3 for the framework, with specific responsibility as follows:

1: The Centre for Teaching and Learning and task team to revise the student feedback system.

2: Programme Convenors, Institutional Planning and Research, FVZS Institute and Careers Office.

3: The same team indicated at 2.3

4: The Centre for Teaching and Learning.

5: Medical and Health Science Faculty with support from the CTL.

6: Student Affairs (including the FVZS Institute), SRC and Registrar’s Office.

7: Student Feedback.

Timeline:

1: To be instituted in 2014.

2: First five year cycle to commence in second semester, 2014.

3: 2014 and 2015 throughout each year.

4: To be completed by end 2015.

5: Pilot in Medical and Health Sciences to be evaluated by end 2014; recommendations to be made for action in other faculties – to be implemented by the second semester, 2015.

6: Ready for implementation in 2014.

7: Currently taking place/needs revision for 2014.

Budget:

1: No cost

2: If managed centrally this will require R500 000 every five years (to be sourced), alternatively it would have to be conducted within faculty budgets.

3: R300 000 in 2014 and 2015 (to be sourced, but possibly via Teaching Development Grants savings).

4: R100 000 from within the CTL budget for example for transcriptions and consultancy for statistics.

5: R50 000 for development and evaluation (still to be sourced).

6: (Need to get more information).

7: No additional budget.

**3 IT-enhanced learning model**

**3.1 All SU curricular programmes will reflect the judicious use of IT in teaching and learning in order to realise graduate attributes and student success.**

Activities:

1: Based on the revised graduate outcomes and additional considerations, programme teams will decide what forms of IT (equipment and applications) are required, and what additional human or material support is required to embed these in the programmes source requirements.

2: All requirements will be negotiated and sourced as far as possible.

3: IT-related ongoing training will be provided via centrally led workshops, short courses, fellowships and faculty-led activities.

4: The ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the redesign of the programmes will take place. In addition a more dedicated research project on IT and student learning will provide valuable insight.

Responsibility:

1: Programme convenors, to report to ITOL (for planning and systemic support).

2: The requirements will be considered by IT (software and hardware); ITS (for satellite and related technology); and the CTL (for design and training support).

3: Training to be provided at faculty level, as well as centrally, by the CTL

4: This should be undertaken by the same team as at 2.3.1, namely the team evaluating the realisation of graduate attributes in the curriculum, with special attention to research on the IT-related issues by the CTL.

Timeline:

1: Plans due November 2013 to ITOL and thereafter as part of faculty reports and plans to Senate.

2: By end 2014.

3: Ongoing, from April 2013 and annually (for example, currently the CTL advertises three short courses a year).

4: 2014 and 2015.

Budget:

1: No cost.

2: Funding for hardware for example for wireless will be reflected separately in the Strategy for IT in Teaching and Learning.

3: Funding for training and support has been sourced from the Teaching Development Grant (for two posts and training: R1 500 000 for 2013 – 2015).

4: This will be absorbed by funding from from the Teaching Development Grants and regular CTL central support and support in faculties.

**3.2 SU support and co-curricular activities will reflect the use of IT in order to enhance the SU experience.**

Activity: All units and student committees will be invited to indicate what support they require to integrate IT into their programmes.

Responsibility: Units include: Language Centre, Centre for Student Counselling and Development, the Postgraduate and International Office, Student Affairs and student committees. Plans to go to the ITOL committee to consider and allocate additional resources.

Timeline: September 2013 for plans, and January 2014 onwards for implementation.

Budget: Units would budget from within own line items. IT would also be asked to budget for this.

**3.3 SU curricular and co-curricular programmes will take place in optimal physical conditions to support an IT-enhanced learning model.**

Activity: The building of new teaching and learning facilities on the campus, in residences and the renovation of existing facilities will reflect the need for optimal use of IT in the classroom, innovative uses of space, and the more networked, collaborative, mobile and flexible forms of learning that accompany the use of IT in and out of the classroom. The plans drawn up by programme convenors to reflect the realisation of graduate attributes and use of IT will be used to guide this use of space and facilities.

Responsibility: Facilities and IT in consultation with faculties and relevant support units.

Timeline: Ongoing and immediate.

Budget: This will be included into existing and future budgets of IT and Facilities. More detail will be provided in the Strategy on IT and Teaching and Learning.

**4 Proactive support for a diverse student cohort**

**4.1 Programmes to cater pro-actively for actual and anticipated student cohorts**

Activities:

1: All programmes are to indicate via faculty plans how they plan to maximise the value of student diversity and anticipate the learning needs of existing or anticipated student cohorts. This will include an indication of how the linguistic diversity of the student cohort will be managed (for example, the use of parallel English and Afrikaans classes, the T-option, use of interpreting). Units catering for the co-curricular experience are to indicate how they will maximise the value of student diversity and anticipate the needs of student cohorts.

2: The systemic approach adopted in the First-year Academy be extended to the entire undergraduate curriculum, building on the success and findings of the First-year Academy.

Responsibility:

1: All programme convenors, reporting to faculty academic programme committees, the Language Planning and Management Team (TBB) and the PAK/ABK. All unit heads via their line function.

2: All faculties with support from student and academic support services.

Timeline:

1: By 2014

2: By January 2014.

Budget:

1: To fund from a central source and faculties to budget for the rest.

2: The FYA Budget to be increased and apportioned directly to relevant support centres (eg. CTL, Student Affairs) and faculties.

**4.2 Measures to assess student educational disadvantage and student needs to be developed systematically.**

Activities:

1: Design and pilot an access model for educationally disadvantaged students, that takes into account a broader set of indicators than only race. This activity targets access to the Extended Degree Programmes in particular.

2: Design and pilot a scheme to identify student risk at first-year level.

Responsibility:

1: CTL, selected Faculty members, Tracking Unit.

2: Student support appointed staff in the faculties of Health, Education, Science and Law.

Timeline:

1: Pilot in 2013 and roll out in 2014.

2: Pilot ends December 2013; roll out in 2014 in selected faculties.

Budget:

1: No cost in pilot phase, during which cost of full roll out will be ascertained.

2: No cost in pilot phase, during which cost of full roll out will be ascertained.

**5 Programme renewal**

**5.1** Comprehensive analysis of current curriculum offerings and plan for programme renewal and rationalisation.

Activity: Conduct an analysis to rate every programme with respect to: registration figures, graduation rates, FTEs on programme; and how it fits in with the strategic priorities of the university, in order to identify programmes that score low in terms of such a matrix.

Responsibility: Institutional Research and Planning (IRB) to support a task team set up by Academic Planning.

Timeline: August 2013

Budget: No cost

**5.2 Preparation for programme renewal and rationalisation**

Activity: Conduct discussions in faculties to decide on yearbook changes and the phasing out of programmes.

Responsibility: Taskteam report to be considered by Deans and Vice Rector (Learning and Teaching), to be tabled at Faculty Board Meetings, and on to Senate.

Timeline: First semester for 2014.

Budget: no cost at this stage.

NOTE: Many activities within the strategic priorities 3, 4 and 5, while considered separately, can be managed simultaneously or in an integrated manner, especially in the faculties.

1. Examples of faculty-specific initiatives involving collaboration are the integration of academic literacy in the Law Faculty; the African Doctoral Academy based in the Arts Faculty; and the collaborative revision of the first-year provision in the Theology Faculty. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Prominent examples of system-wide initiatives are the First Year Academy and, allied to this, the enhancement of the culture of learning in the residences. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Chapter Seven of this Green Paper gives dedicated attention to students with disabilities in higher education, considering the role of IT in providing assistive devices and other creative responses. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Here we refer to students with Afrikaans and English as first language (L1) and/or as medium of instruction (MoI), because students with African languages as L1s have all had another language (mostly English) as MoI from their fourth year in school, or earlier. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Universal Design is defined in the US Assistive Technology Act of 1998 as: a concept or philosophy for designing and delivering products and services that are usable by people with the widest possible range of functional capabilities, which include products and services that are directly usable (without requiring assistive technologies) and products and services that are made usable with assistive technologies) cited by Sheryl Burgstahler in *Universal Design in Higher Education: From Principles to Practice* (2010) Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)