

Centre for Student Counselling & Development

Division of Student Affairs

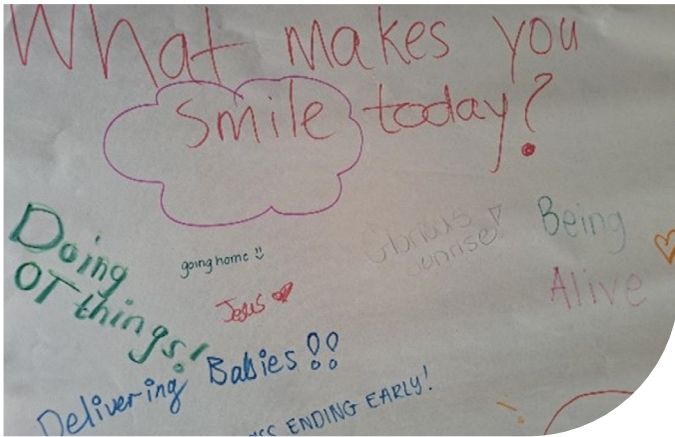


Annual Report 2023



During the CSCD's annual strategic meeting, team members collectively planted a Spekboom. Each staff member put soil in the pot with Charl Davids, the Director, adding the final touches. The Spekboom serves as a symbol of resilience, growth, and environmental sustainability. This meaningful gesture stands as a constant reminder of the strength, resilience, and unity that define the CSCD team.







Contents

Message from Dr Choice Makhetha	1
Senior Director: Student Affairs	
Message from Mr Charl Davids	3
Director: Centre for Student Counselling & Development	
Introduction	5
A Reflection on the Unit's Year	
Personalia	14
Evaluation of Services	15
Graphic summary of work session feedback	17
Involvement in Committees/Projects etc.	19
Work Sessions and Groups	19
Unit for Graduand Career Services (UGCS)	22
A Reflection on the Unit's Year	
Personalia	25
Committee Involvement	25
Evaluation of Services	25
Work Sessions and Groups	26



Disability Unit (DU)	29
A Reflection on the Unit's Year	
Evaluation of Services	32
Committee Involvement	32
Work Sessions & Groups	32
Unit for Psychotherapeutic & Support Services (UPSS)	33
A Reflection on the Unit's Year	
Personalia	36
Evaluation of Services	37
Committee Involvement	38
Work Sessions & Groups	38
General CSCD Information	40
CSCD Total Statistics	41
Research And Personal Development Of Staff	43
Educational Psychology Internship Programme	47
A Reflection on the CSCD's Involvement in the Readmissions Process	48
Psychology CPD Well Programme	49
Collaboration with ER24	50
Reflection on Social Work Services at UPSS in 2023	52
A Reflection on Extra Writing Time Concessions	53



Staff of the Centre	58
Conclusion	63
Budget	63
CSCD Oranogram	64



Message from Dr Choice Makhetha

Senior Director: Student Affairs



As we come to the end of 2023, it is important to look back to acknowledge the amount of work done. The year was extremely busy and required creative methods to balance workload, rest and personal life. Thank you to the whole CSCD team for showing up and for initiating projects that will eventually bring change and innovation to work approaches.

I want to thank the leadership team of CSCD, for providing leadership and supporting the team fully throughout 2023. Shared responsibility, and the calm and decisive nature of the Director of CSCD,

Charl Davids, ensured that new initiatives took off, while maintaining priority areas. Your accessibility as leaders made work feel lighter and more manageable. Thank you for being supportive of your team and demonstrating kindness through your leadership!

We share in the excitement of the team for the accreditations giving CSCD permission to train interns in more fields of expertise and specialisation. This had a huge effect and broadened the scope of training and practice. The CSCD is now authorised to train counselling psychologists, educational psychologists, clinical psychologists and industrial psychologists, doing cross-disciplinary work in some areas, along with coaching. This is commendable!

I am glad that, throughout 2023, there also was a greater focus on disability. The review process of the Disability Access Policy is still under way, Casual Day initiatives for disability awareness were held on the Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses, workshops were held on different aspects of disability, and difficult conversations took place with faculties on concessions during assessment periods and the inclusion of sign language as the 12th official language in South Africa.

These all added to the efforts made to empower more students and colleagues to understand and speak the language. Thank you for the work done by a very small team.

Mental health remains an extremely important aspect of wellbeing. The amount of work done to support students to maintain and regain their mental health is appreciated. Students face a lot of challenges and I know that they value the support they receive from CSCD.

Congratulations are also in order for being the host region for the 43rd Southern African Association of Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE) Conference. The Conference was a huge success and I would like to extend a big thank you to all the colleagues who took part in different ways and also presented research papers. It was wonderful to be among the different communities of practice within the field of Student Counselling and Development, working together to shape the future.

The presentations were truly empowering.

I hope the new members of CSCD already feel welcome and comfortable within the space. Each member of the CSCD team brings a wealth of knowledge, expertise and diversity of experiences to the Centre. So, when there are new colleagues, we know how much we all benefit because it is another opportunity to infuse change and innovation. Welcome again and enjoy your new career journey at Stellenbosch University.

Career Services is an important area of

our work. Processes currently under way to finalise a partnership with Gradlink and also to re-think the focus of the Career Services Office provide an exceptional opportunity to serve and empower students in ways never before imagined, as the world of work is undergoing drastic changes. Job-readiness is a crucial aspect in the lives of the current and next generation of students. All the best for this journey while you celebrate your successes. Congratulations for the Career Fair 2023 – it was a huge success and we hope to build on that achievement in 2024!

As we continue to think about students, it is important to acknowledge that hunger is a global challenge and student hunger is a huge challenge throughout higher education in South Africa. The food security initiatives led by and administered through the offices of our social workers, in partnership with Move4food, the Bursaries and Loans Office, the Pantry Project, the SRC, and the Division for Social Impact and Transformation, among others, make a huge difference in the lives of our students. We appreciate the patience, empathy and sensitivity with which this matter is dealt, as well as the high-level privacy ensured throughout. May we receive more funding and support as we prepare for 2024!

Dr Choice Makhetha

Message from Mr Charl Davids

Director: Centre for Student Counselling & Development



I am delighted to present our Annual Report for the year 2023. As we reflect on the past year, it is evident that we have achieved significant milestones, navigated through challenges, and continued to progress towards achieving our mission. This report serves as a testament to our collective dedication, hard work, and the unwavering support of our stakeholders.

In 2023, our Centre remained committed to our core values and objectives, striving to have a positive influence on the lives of

our students and the SU community we serve. Our dedicated staff, partners and supporters have played a crucial role in our achievements.

Of significance is the accreditation by the HPCSA for training counselling psychology interns. Counselling psychology interns will join our educational psychology interns in January 2024. This, together with the hours for industrial psychology interns, the rotation of occupational therapy students and the placement of the pastoral counselling Master's students, has had a significant effect on the services offered to our students.

The year 2023 also saw a focus on disability, with the start of the review process of the Policy on Disability Inclusion. This will continue in 2024. It is an important process because the Policy determines how Stellenbosch University deals with matters of disability and inclusion for both students and staff. The work of the staff in the Disability Unit in this process is commendable.

For the first time since the Covid epidemic, our Unit for Graduand Career Service had an in-person Career Fair in 2023. This was a huge success when listening to feedback from

students and companies alike. I am looking forward to the re-thinking process that is under way that focuses on empowering students in ways never before imagined. This is because the world of work is undergoing significant changes.

Mental health remains an extremely important aspect of wellbeing, along with the need for treatment and intervention. The amount of work done to support students is evident in the statistics in this report. I appreciate and deeply acknowledge the work done by staff in the Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services and the Unit for Academic Counselling and Development.

As the CSCD and SU, we are not immune to what happens in the higher education space, most notably the systemic issues with NSFAS. In this regard, I want to acknowledge the work of our social workers in relation to student hunger.

Significantly, CSCD formed part of the Western Cape Region to host the 43rd Southern African Association of Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE) Conference. Thank you to the colleagues who joined me on the organising committee for the conference. The conference was a huge success, and I also want to thank all the colleagues who took part in different ways and presented research papers.

For the first time in two years, we have a full staff complement after the appointment of two psychologists and our Deputy Director. This will indeed enhance our service delivery to our students. I hope the new staff members of CSCD already feel welcome and comfortable within the space.

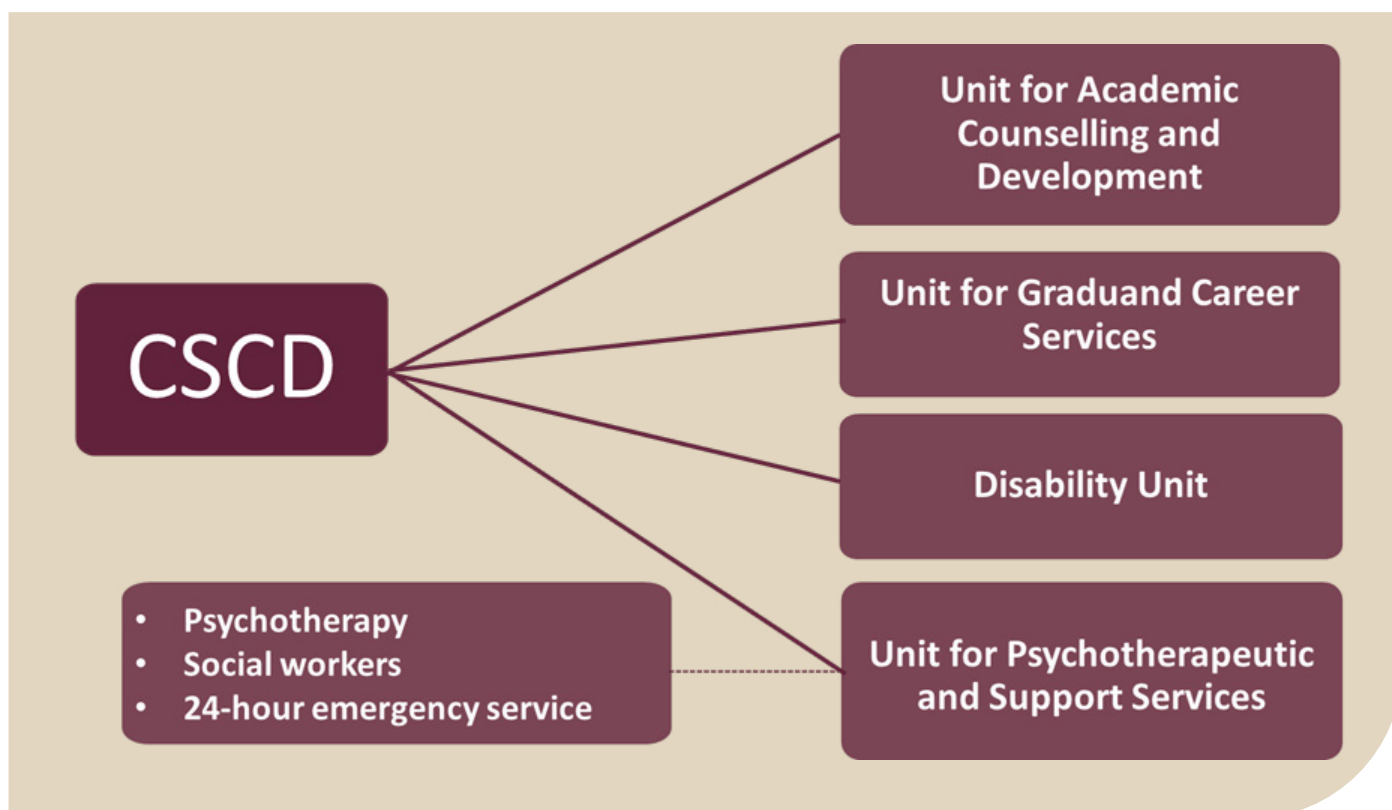
To our consultants, thank you for your commitment to be part of driving our mission. Your contributions are appreciated and acknowledged. Daily I am amazed by the knowledge, expertise and diversity of experience that each staff member and consultant brings to the CSCD.

To the staff of the CSCD – I am aware that you all go beyond the call of duty on a daily basis, and that this year was no different. Please know that all your hard work, effort, and the care that you put in to assist our students are not going unnoticed. Your collective efforts made it possible to get through this year.

My sincere gratitude to Dr Choice Makhetha, for her unwavering support and guidance. The openness with which you listen to new ideas and ventures is admirable and appreciated.

Charl Davids

Introduction



The Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) offers professional psychological support and development services to students at Stellenbosch University.

The CSCD, which is centrally situated in five buildings in Victoria Street, comprises the following units. Each unit offers a specialised service to optimise student success:

Unit for Academic Counselling and Development (UACD)

Disability Unit (DU)

Unit for Graduand Career Services (UGCS)

Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services (UPSS)

Unit for Academic Counselling and Development (UACD)

The Unit for Academic Counselling and Development's (UACD) service delivery rests on three pillars, namely a developmental perspective, systemic case management and integration, and comprehensive student-centred services. The overarching goal is to empower students to improve their wellbeing in order to experience success. The team, under the leadership of Dr Elmien Sinclair, comprises educational psychologists, a psychometrist, a registered counsellor and intern psychologists. Academic skills support and psychosocial and career development interventions are offered in the form of work sessions, lectures, psycho-educational self-help material and individual consultations.

Unit for Graduand Career Services (UGCS)

This Unit is headed by Mr Marquard Timmey, a registered counselling psychologist, and the team consists of two educators, one who manages the student development portfolio and the other who manages the graduate recruitment portfolio. The fourth member of the team is the financial officer, who takes care of the Unit's finances and administrative duties. The Unit supports students with the transition from education to employment. This could include individual sessions about their career, work sessions on CV writing, interview skills, their online profile and exposure to network

opportunities with companies via career fairs, and assistance with job-searching methods. All our counselling services are also offered online. The Unit refers employers who would like to post their opportunities on an online portal to the Gradlinc team. Gradlinc is an online recruitment portal and allows students to easily search for and apply for vacancies, internships and part-time jobs. All SU students are strongly encouraged to register on the Gradlinc portal. It is important for students to start preparing for their transition to the world of work from their first year. Several employers are also registered on the platform. This means that students can upload their CVs and search for employers' information and work opportunities.

Disability Unit (DU)

The Disability Unit fosters disability inclusion campus-wide in support of inclusive education. It offers a range of services to students with disabilities, from advice on appropriate academic support solutions to accessible, tailored study materials. The Unit's activities are informed by the Disability Access Policy of Stellenbosch University (SU). We advise prospective students with disabilities about the possible support once at SU. We also discuss appropriate academic support solutions and ensure that academic material is accessible for study, test and exam purposes. The DU also offers students and staff various training opportunities. These include a Lead

with Disability programme for students and facilitating staff training through the Siyakhula training sessions. Dr Marcia Lyner-Cleophas leads this competent team.

Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Service (UPSS)

This Unit assists students with psychological and social welfare challenges. The Unit also plays a significant advocacy role, as it engages with various stakeholders who take an interest in students' wellbeing.

For students to function optimally, it is essential that the services contribute to their holistic development. A key responsibility of the Unit is to provide students with continuous and professional services. The Unit strives to attain this goal by offering a range of services on the Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses, comprising individual psychotherapy, group therapy, work sessions, a 24-hour emergency service and support pertaining to social work.

Unit for Academic Counselling & Development (UACD)

A Reflection on the Unit's Year



a) Achievements

At the beginning of 2023, we welcomed two new full-time intern educational psychologists, Jana van Aarde and Rene van Schalkwyk. They started with their twelve-month Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) accredited internships in January. Their programme kicked off with comprehensive orientation that covered the following topics:

- The different Units of the CSCD
- Neuro-agility profile
- Intake interviews and note-taking
- Psychometric assessments at the CSCD
- Screening and crisis management
- Scholastic assessments
- Career counselling with students
- Introduction to neurodiversity
- Psychotherapeutic interventions for students at a higher education Institution

As part of an exciting new collaborative initiative with the Department of Industrial Psychology at SU, the Unit welcomed three part-time industrial psychology interns on the team. Kara Friedlingsdorf, Christin Linde and Debbie Coetzee offered counselling sessions to students on Fridays under the supervision of Elmien Sinclair. We are looking forward to continuing with this initiative in 2024.

The UACD was invited for the first time to contribute to the Faculty of Science's orientation programme for new first-year students by facilitating sessions for different groups of newcomers, titled *Student Wellness at SU* and *Academic Wellbeing at SU*.

Attendance of the sessions was compulsory. The different support services offered by the CSCD and other support structures on campus were introduced, and a basic introduction to brain-based learning practices was included in the presentations.

In March, Lauren Schilder joined the UACD team in her capacity as a registered counsellor for the Extended Curriculum Programme (ECP) students. Together with Liezl Kloppe, an educational psychologist for the UACD team, they are jointly responsible for providing support to ECP students at Stellenbosch University. In 2023, a major objective for Liezl and Lauren was to enhance the visibility of UACD support within the respective faculties. Strategic conversations and collaboration with ECP coordinators at the end of 2022 and the start of the year produced valuable insights into the distinctive challenges faced by

ECP students. Based on these insights, tailor-made work session content was developed to address the needs of first-year ECP students. Subsequently, 2023 saw a significant increase in the frequency of psychoeducational work sessions, with a total of 28 being hosted within the respective faculties, and integrational follow-up activities being implemented during follow-up tutorials for the ECPs in accordance with the specific topics of the work sessions. These contributed to the different faculties' ECP curriculums by facilitating sessions covering the following topics:

- Who is the CSCD?
- Manage change with realistic expectations
- Own your choices, plan your time!
- Self-advocacy: Passion and purpose meet identity and personality
- How do boundaries and risks affect student wellbeing?
- The benefits of peer accountability
- Navigating stress with grit and resilience
- Dealing with intense emotions
- Study skills and learning styles
- Dealing with failure
- Exam skills and coping with test anxiety
- Mentorship training

The purpose of the work sessions for ECP students was threefold. First and foremost, we sought to destigmatise and advocate the availability of student support services to encourage students who find themselves at risk to reach for support earlier in their academic journey. In addition, the work sessions aimed to improve academic study skills and to foster the holistic development of ECP students. Importantly, throughout these compulsory sessions, the importance of self-advocacy and ownership in cultivating mental health literacy was emphasised. Along with individual consultations, these initiatives endeavoured to create a more supportive and empowering environment for ECP students, addressing both their immediate academic needs and their long-term wellbeing.

The UACD was tasked by Prof Deresh Ramjugernath, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching, to undertake a benchmark study on academic advising at South African higher education institutions. Good relationships were established with academic advisors at the Vaal University of Technology – who also visited SU for their own benchmark study in 2023, the University of Pretoria, the University of the Free State and ELETSA, the national association of academic advising in South Africa. A report titled *Progress Report: Academic Advising at Stellenbosch University* was submitted to Prof Ramjugernath at the end of the first term and the decision was made that the Division for Learning and Teaching Enhancement will head the Academic Advising Project at SU.

This project forms part of the Academic Renewal Programme on campus. It is envisaged that the UACD will be a key contributor to a layered approach to academic support for SU students in the future.

For the second semester, the academic work session offering was extended to include the following additional themes:

- **The power of peers:**
Accountability and goalsetting
- **The link:**
Self-discipline and motivation
- **Bounce back from failure**
- **Boost your focus and concentration**
- **Regulating intense emotions:**
Find balance
- **Socialisation and relationships**

These sessions were offered both online and in person. Attendance was good – especially for those presented online on MS Teams. The extended programme helped us to manage the client load more effectively.

b) Challenges

Last year, a new curriculum was introduced to the MBChB first-year programme. The UACD contributed to rewriting the curriculum and this year Christa Koch presented parts of the course *Being and Becoming a Health*

The defunding of students by NSFAS had a noteworthy effect on students and a significant number of our clients were affected by this decision.

Practitioner – a 60-credit module offered to all first-year students in the first semester of their studies. Lessons were learned from the first offering and the content was adapted for 2023. In 2023, the students continued with a hybrid approach to learning in this model. It was a highlight to present some of the classes in person, as the whole class could be present in one venue and they engaged well during the lecture. However, there were time-consuming challenges as well, as the first-year students struggled to adapt to the requirements of a hybrid offering, such as planning around load-shedding schedules, making sure they accessed the computer labs at Tygerberg to complete some of the online activities, managing their time effectively in order to ensure that activities are completed in the allocated time slots on their class schedule, and following through on online instructions.

The defunding of students by NSFAS had a noteworthy effect on students and a significant number of our clients were affected by this decision. Liezl Klopper invited staff from the Bursary Office, the Registrar's Division and student leaders to our monthly group supervision and we had a constructive discussion about supporting these students during challenging times. However, it remained a challenge throughout the year to provide

support within the scope of our services, while being aware that students were struggling to meet their basic needs.

Clients' utilisation of the limited support resources offered by the

Unit was also challenging from time to time. Due to the nature of our services, the need for support was not the same every month and in certain months – especially just before exams – the need exceeded the available sessions. This caused significant challenges for the management of practitioners' diaries, but our receptionists, Amanda Welgemoed and Marlene Denyssen, managed it to the best of their ability, despite the difficulties with clients often being slow to respond to their electronic communication, having to follow up regularly to finalise consent forms, and confirming appointments. Although they followed diligent administrative processes, the notable percentage of clients not showing up for appointments – both individual appointments and work sessions – is a concern.

c) Networking opportunities

- All the staff are registered members of ELETSA: Academic Advising South Africa. A new working relationship was established and several initiatives that inform the practices of the Unit developed from it.
- Elmien Sinclair and Liezl Klopper attended the Siyaphumelela Student Success work group meeting at the University of Cape

Town with delegates from Stellenbosch University, the University of the Western Cape, the University of Cape Town and the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The theme of the meeting was "Integration for Student Success", and it focused on defining student success, understanding the factors that affect this success, identifying metrics for measuring success and pinpointing strategies to support students along their academic journey to success.

- The team met with the Academic Skills Support Team of the University of Western Cape for benchmarking and to share best practices.
- Elmien Sinclair and Christa Koch attended two stakeholder meetings with the Health Professions Council of South Africa at which important issues that affect internship offerings were discussed.

d) Partnerships

- The UACD partnered with the Western Cape Education Department to offer psychological support services at AF Louw Primary School in Stellenbosch. This forms part of the official twelve-month accredited programme for intern educational psychologists.
- The UACD partnered with the Department of Industrial Psychology, Stellenbosch University to offer industrial psychology interns practical counselling exposure.

- The Unit partnered with CSLEEC to provide content for the onboarding programme for newcomer students. Elmien Sinclair also facilitated an online session for newcomers that focused on academic support for first-year students at SU.
- The Unit partnered with the Reading Lab at the Language Centre to offer reading work sessions as part of the annual academic skills work session series.
- The ECP support team – Liezl Kloppe and Lauren Schilder – partnered with support staff in the faculties to ensure that a comprehensive psychosocial wraparound support service is available for all registered ECP students.

e) Highlights

The UACD team fostered increased and fruitful collaboration with staff across various faculties to enhance the implementation of successful systemic interventions. The identified highlights for 2023 include the following:

- Christa Koch presented a self-management work session to the BSc Hons in Applied Mathematics group. The session focused on skills and strategies to support this group of students in the adjustment to postgraduate studies, with specific reference to time planning and managing their wellbeing.

It was interesting and motivating to see the successful effect that intentional and well-orchestrated institutional academic advising practices can have on the success and throughput of students at higher education institutions.

- Elmien Sinclair and Elmarie Kruger provided advisory support for the Youth Day Celebrations organised by the Faculty of Theology, which centred on student mental health. In addition, Elmien Sinclair delivered a presentation on the theme, "Nurturing Mental Health and Wellness: A Holistic Approach for Students".
- Elmien Sinclair led a work session on personality development, incorporating the Jung Personality Questionnaire (JPQ), as a component of the Optimus Programme in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.
- During the second semester, Liezl Klopper was invited by the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences to present several lunch hour work session series focusing on preparing students for the upcoming examinations.
- Elmien Sinclair presented two sessions for the Faculty of AgricSciences about stress management and time management. These formed part of the curriculum of the first-year module, *University Competence for Crop Scientists*.
- Erna Gerryts conducted a session tailored for postgraduate students, concentrating on academic skills and providing psychosocial support throughout the thesis-writing process in the Faculty of Humanities.
- The staff of the UACD and support staff in faculties with academic advisory responsibilities attended the online National Academic Advising Seminar presented by ELETSA on 19 June. It was interesting and motivating to see the successful effect that intentional and well-orchestrated institutional academic advising practices can have on the success and throughput of students at higher education institutions.
- Elmien Sinclair contributed to the Let's Talk Transformative Assessment podcast series recorded by the Centre for Learning and Teaching at SU.
- Elmien Sinclair was a guest speaker for a series of expert talks recorded by the Centre for Student Recruitment and Career Advice, focusing on supporting prospective first-year students and their parents.
- During the October school vacation, René van Schalkwyk, Jana van Aarde and Erna Gerryts collaborated with the Paarl Youth Initiative group to support grade 11 learners with their initial career planning.



Liezl Kloppe and René van Schalkwyk participated in the DSAf Wellness Committee's Random Act of Kindness event at the Stellenbosch Animal Welfare Society.

Their project aimed to help learners improve their self-knowledge and their knowledge of the ever-changing world of work to ultimately make informed career decisions. Various interactive activities and a carefully selected career assessment battery guided the process, and each learner received a formal career report with individualised recommendations which they can now further explore.

- At the start of November, Liezl Kloppe was invited to speak on RSG Kompas. This radio programme addresses contemporary issues that the youth of SA and their parents grapple with.

Liezl was asked to suggest seasoned advice to equip high school learners and students alike for their final exams. Among the topics that were addressed were study methods, navigating test anxiety, and the importance of honest communication with parents to ensure that realistic expectations are fostered.

Personalia

Lelani Cloete, who worked as an intern psychologist in 2022 and later as a consultant psychologist in 2023, successfully completed her studies and was awarded the MEdPsych degree by SU.

Lelani Cloete passed the HPCSA board examination for psychologists and registered as an educational psychologist.

Erna Gerryts welcomed the arrival of a beautiful granddaughter, becoming a grandmother.

Liezl Kloppe completed the Peninsula Ultra Fun Run (65 km) for the 6th time. She also hiked the Fish River Canyon in May and completed the Leopard Trail in Baviaanskloof in October.

Evaluation of Services

Below is feedback from a client after an academic counselling session (the client provided permission to publish anonymously. The feedback has been shortened and was translated from Afrikaans into English).

Thank you so much for the resources and the support. The session yesterday has already given me many tools that I could immediately see how applying them would help me in my studies.

I'm definitely going to study these resources in recess. Thank you so much for the effort you put into forwarding this and for giving your time to listen. This list is exactly what I need at the moment. I would also like to inform

you that I really see how the emotional counselling I received at the University started to help.

I also want to thank you for encouraging me to speak in your academic group sessions. It was awkward at the beginning, but I felt so much better afterwards, and I think it really helped that I could just build my confidence again. Both times, your sessions felt like a safe environment in which I wasn't afraid someone was going to look down on me or 'judge' me. And it was even evidenced by small actions from others who attended the session that only made one feel that it really is a supportive community.

The following feedback was received to the questions posed about the work sessions specifically:

What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was the best about the session?

- *The presenter was very nice and made me feel safe and unjudged.*
- *The engagement from the rest of the students and how the presenter facilitated a student-friendly session and encouraged us to share from our own experience. It was not a lecture style session so I was more engaged.*
- *Being asked to reflect on the information given proved to be insightful. It makes it easier to apply the information to my life, especially areas that need attention.*
- *The presenter really engaged well with us on a personal level, I felt very included.*
- *The presenter was very good and encouraged engagement. I am very socially anxious but she made me feel safe to express my feelings.*

Would you recommend this session to other students?

- *Yes, I would. This is because although you might be knowledgeable about something it helps to gain more knowledge with regard to that specific topic. Moreover, the presenter is very friendly. She elaborates on certain concepts that one may not understand.*
- *Yes! Because it is a great starting point to make you aware of yourself, where you are now physically, mentally and emotionally. And to validate that it is okay not to be okay sometimes but don't dwell on that.*
- *Definitely! I think of so many friends and acquaintances would benefit from learning the practical measures to take in setting boundaries. I think a lot of people struggle to set boundaries because they don't know where to begin.*
- *Yes, it gave me a better understanding of studying and to use different methods to work for me.*
- *Yes, I think too few people realise how beneficial these sessions are. Even with individuals I see working hard and getting good grades and succeeding, I notice aspects of their life that they are unhappy with. I think these sessions emphasise and teach students that there is a balance that needs to be maintained between your work and your personal relationships. And it aims to give you the tools for being able to set out time for both.*

Graphic summary of work session feedback

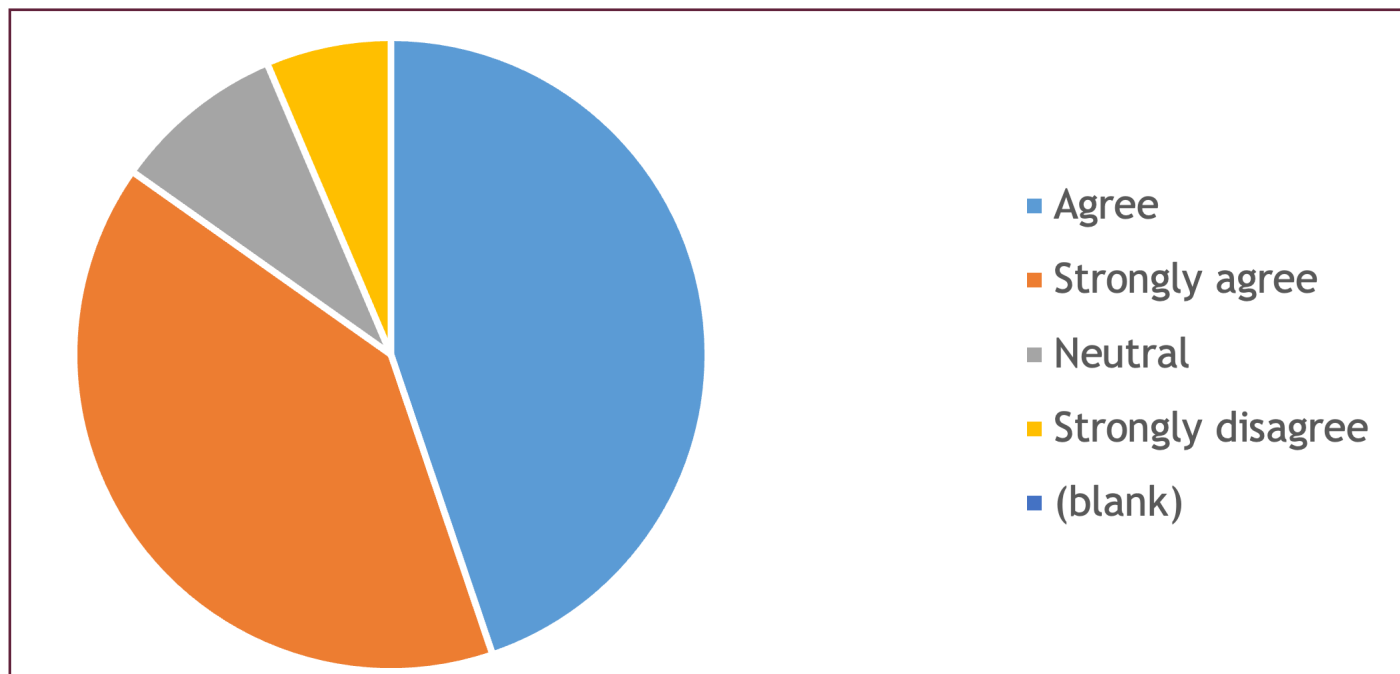


Figure 1: Knowledge and information gained from this session met my expectation

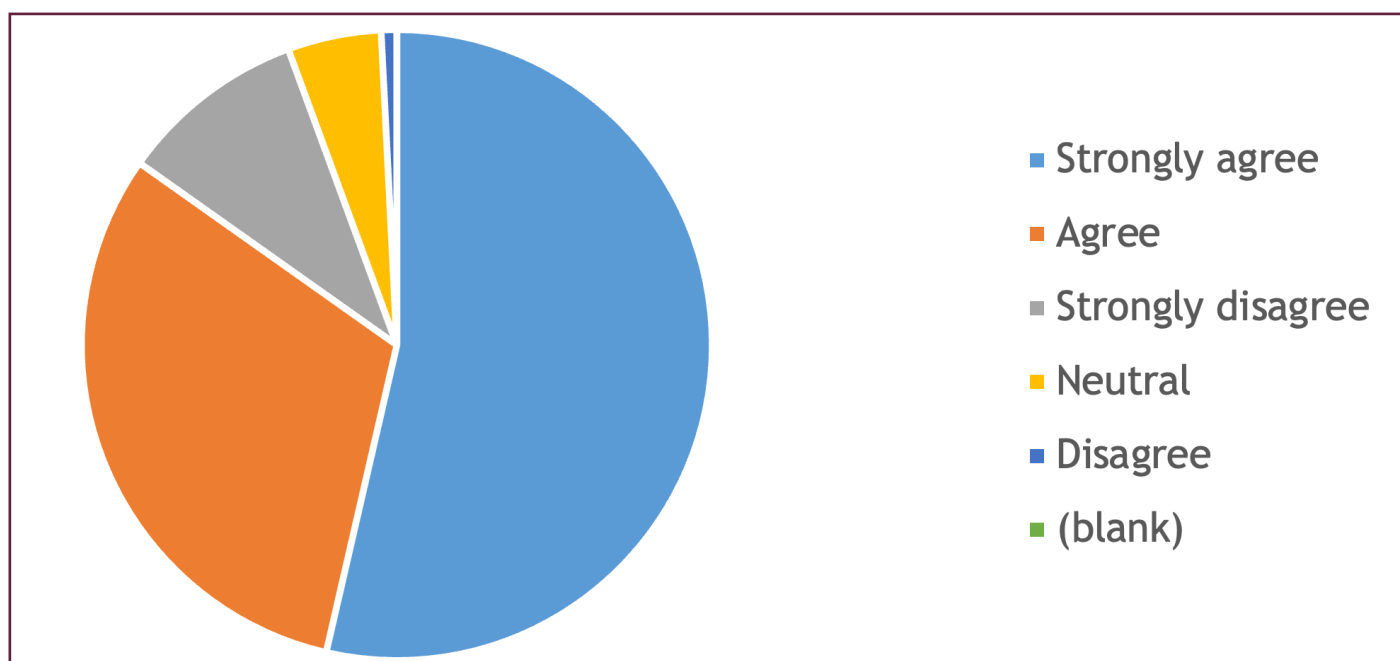


Figure 2: The content of the session will be useful/applicable in my studies/ personal development

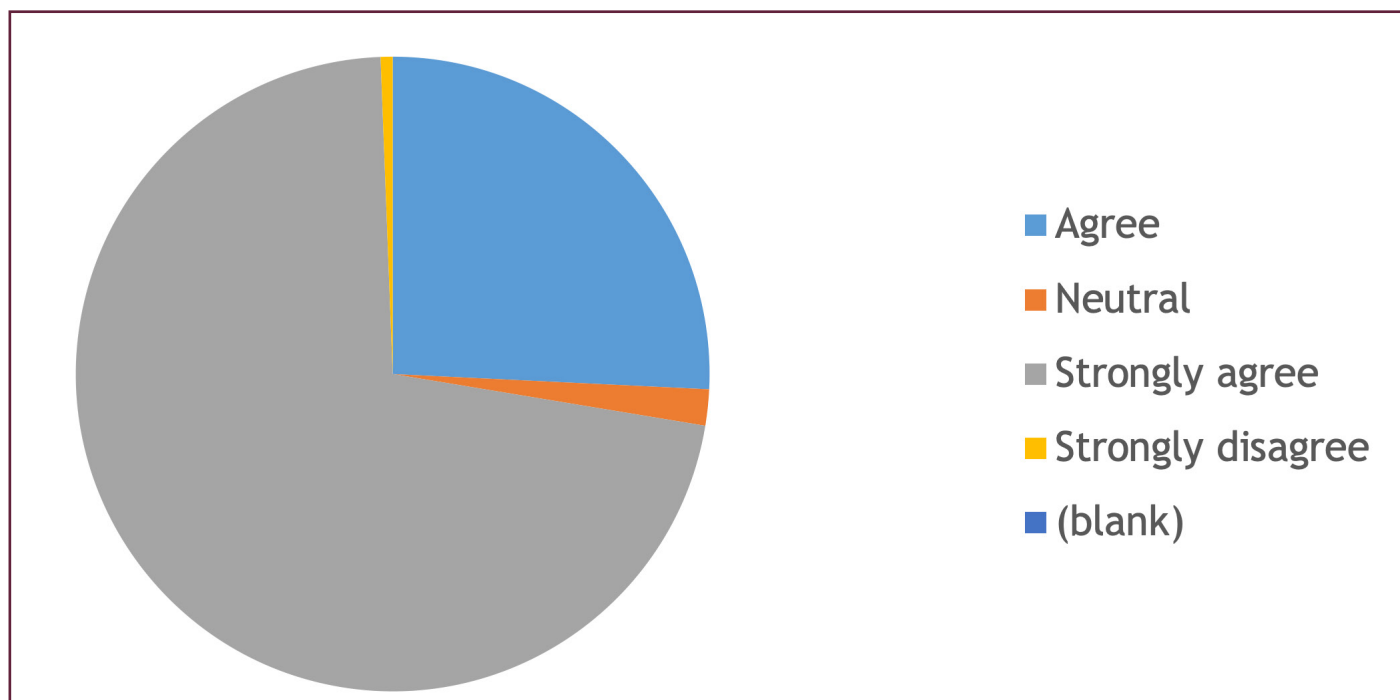


Figure 3: The facilitator was knowledgeable on the topic

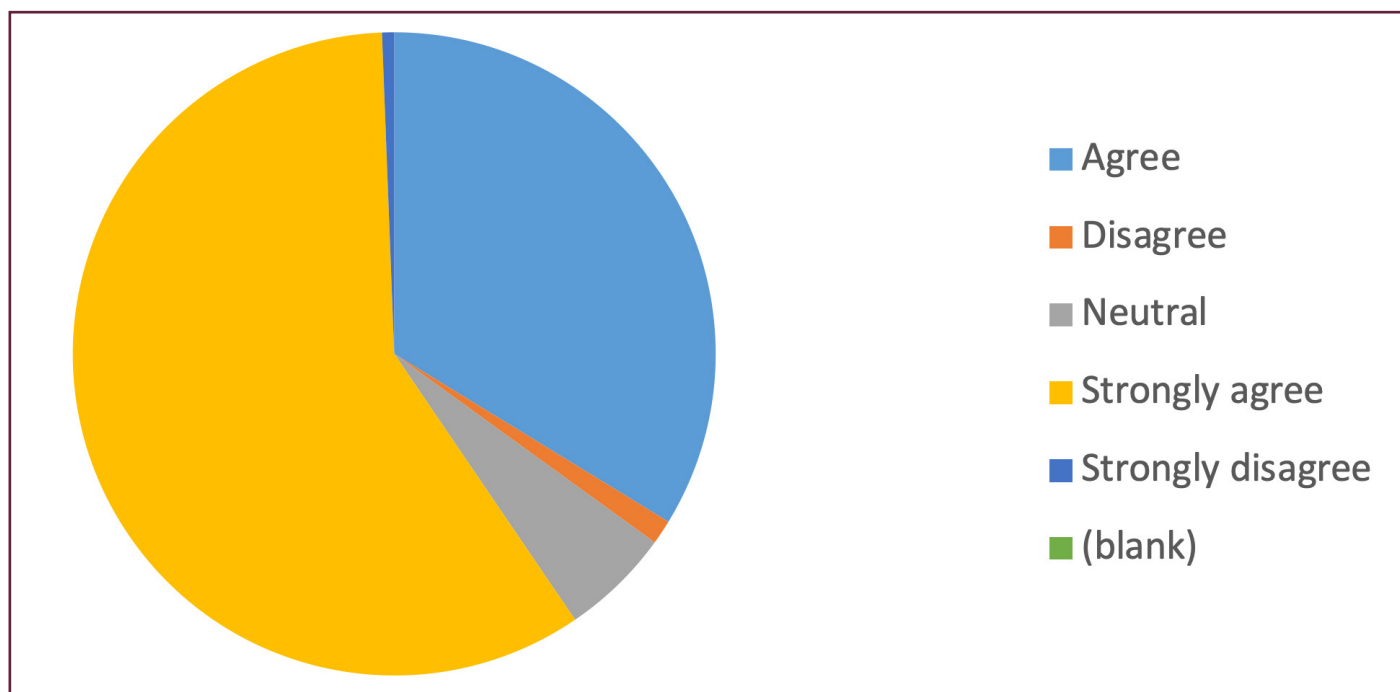


Figure 4: The facilitator presented at the correct level and presentation was well paced and organised

Involvement in Committees/Projects etc.

- Elmien Sinclair serves on the SUN Student Steering Committee of SU.
- Elmien Sinclair serves on the SUN Success Project Management Committee of SU.
- Elmien Sinclair serves on the DSAf Staff Wellness Committee of SU.
- Elmien Sinclair serves on the Leadership Development Planning Committee of SU.
- Elmien Sinclair serves on the DSAf Quality Assurance Committee of SU.
- Elmien Sinclair serves on the EDP Steering Committee of SU.
- Elmien Sinclair, Liezl Klopper and Erna Gerryts served on various faculties' Readmissions Appeals Committees.

Work Sessions and Groups

Throughout 2023, the UACD conducted a series of work sessions dedicated to enhancing particular skills aimed at fostering student success. The sessions were offered as a semester programme to clients of the CSCD. Sessions were also featured within module programmes, as well as being presented upon invitation from various faculties. Session topics included:

- Self-development
- Upgrade your study skills
- The power of peers:
Accountability and goal setting
- The link: Self-discipline and motivation
- Plan your time
- Bounce back from failure
- Boost your focus and concentration
- Regulating intense emotions:
Find balance
- Managing stress and academic burnout
- Neurodiversity
- A total of 3 010 students attended the work sessions offered in 2023.

Table 1: Community school interventions, educational psychology interns: Jana Louw (Van Aarde) and René van Schalkwyk

AF LOUW PRIMARY SCHOOL				
Type of session	Description	Term	Participants	Intern
Assessment	Comprehensive Psycho-educational	1/2	2	René
Assessment	Comprehensive Psycho-educational	3	2	Jana
Assessment	ADHD screening and appropriate referral	4	3	Jana
	Total		7	
Type of session	Description	Term	Hours	Intern
Individual	Sessions with grade R-7 learners	1	65	René
Individual	Sessions with grade R-7 learners	2	60	René
Individual	Sessions with grade R-7 learners	3	50	Jana
Individual	Sessions with grade R-7 learners	4	51	Jana
	Total		226	
Type of session	Description	Term	Hours	Intern
Individual	Parental guidance	1	6	René
Individual	Parental guidance	2	7	René
Individual	Parental guidance	3	2	Jana
Individual	Parental guidance	4	8	Jana
	Total		23	
Type of session	Description	Term	Hours	Intern
Individual	Collaboration with teachers, the principal and social workers	1	20	René
Individual	Collaboration with teachers, the principal and social workers	2	11	René

Individual	Collaboration with teachers, the principal and social workers	3	27	Jana
Individual	Collaboration with teachers, the principal and social workers	4	14	Jana
	Total		72	
Type of session	Description	Term	Hours	Intern
Individual	Supervision with Ms. Amanda van der Vyver	1	8	René
Individual	Supervision with Ms. Amanda van der Vyver	2	9	René
Individual	Supervision with Ms. Amanda van der Vyver	3	9	Jana
Individual	Supervision with Ms. Amanda van der Vyver	4	9,5	Jana
	Total		35,5	

PAARL YOUTH INITIATIVE (GRADE 11 LEARNERS)				
Type of session	Description	Number of learners	Month	Intern
Group	Group career counselling and development	12	October	Jana & René
Group	Thorough career assessment	12	October	Jana & René
Individual	Report writing and individualized recommendations	12	October	Jana & René
Individual	Supervision with Dr. Erna Gerryts (senior psychologist)	12	October	Jana & René
Individual	Feedback on career assessment and personalized recommendations shared	12	October	Jana & René
	Total hours: 64			

Unit for Graduand Career Services (UGCS)

A Reflection on the Unit's Year



The two words that would best describe our unit's 2023 would be agility and resilience. Both these words demand that you embrace challenges, step outside of your comfort zone and constantly consider how you can grow and develop despite the challenges. The areas that defined our strategic focus in 2023 were to continue the collaborations with our existing partners. We also had to manage the transition from the MatiesCareers (Symplicity) career management system to the newly developed Gradlinc platform. We furthermore continued with our transitioning from virtual

events to on-campus events. The renewal of the co-curriculum module, Connecting to Industry (Consulting Society) also taught us valuable lessons about sustainable partnerships with student societies. We had to terminate the administrative position at reception due to a lack of third-stream income. This literally meant everyone had to take up more responsibilities without any additional compensation. We also had a particular focus on resuscitating our third-stream income, as we still had to finance most of our core services from this source

of income. Despite all the challenges, our main goal remained to support our students in the best possible way to transition from education to employment.

a) Achievements

We made sure that our front desk kept on functioning both in-person and online. This was made possible by dedicated staff members who were willing to take on more responsibilities. We also employed a 20-hour per week graduate intern via the Presidential Youth Employment Initiative. We revamped the career fairs project. Although we do not receive any financial support for the biggest graduate networking event on campus, we became aware of the endless possibilities of partnering with colleagues in Student Affairs. This partnership enabled us to secure the Victoria Hub as a venue for the General and Accounting Career Fairs. Unlike our higher education peers in the Western Cape, we do not have access to venues big enough to host career fairs. This forces us to fork our large amounts of money for marquee tents that are also not conducive during the rainy month of August, when we usually have our career fairs. Another highlight was our collaboration with Anura Partners that culminated in a self-help tool for our students on how to deal with case study interviews. We are all proud of our colleague, Wilna Naude, who was nominated for the SAGEA Award in the Best Employer Representative category. Our longstanding partnership with the Centre for Business



Wilna Naude on the right

Intelligence culminated in a very informative Graduate Destination Report. Another highlight was the invitation from the IEC (Intercultural Education Corporation) for Wilna Naude to visit China from 10 to 19 December. This is a great opportunity to build new networks and a welcome acknowledgement of all the hard work she puts into the graduate recruitment portfolio.

b) Interesting Events

Our unit embarked on a pilot study with a UK-based Charitable Trust called Common Purpose. We piloted their EvolveCareers Accelerator from May 2023 until September 2023. This online course assist students to develop important career skills necessary to make a smooth transition to the world of work. The subsequent Impact Report showed improvements in the following skills, based on pre – and post-test results: agility, resilience, purpose, confidence, and employability.

Some students who make an appointment for career guidance end up sharing very personal matters that affect their career development

We hope to implement this with our mentors in partnership with the Centre for Student Life and Learning (Tracking and Mentoring) in 2024. Another factor that added value to our services was the training that one

of our project coordinators did to contain students who become very emotional during career development sessions. Some students who make an appointment for career guidance

end up sharing very personal matters that affect their career development. Her new skill helps us to strike the balance between pathology and normalising the everyday struggles of our students.

c) Partnerships and Networking Opportunities

We can report on the following partnerships:

- Transformation Office Student Leaders
- Department of Logistics
- Dietetics 3
- EDP
- OPTIMUS
- Faculty of Theology
- Sports Science
- Engineering Faculty
- Common Purpose (UK)
- Centre for Student Life and Learning
- FVZSI
- AEPA Skills Development – Department of Agriculture
- Science Ambassadors – Faculty of Science

d) Challenges

We experienced important losses in 2023. The year started with the termination of the receptionist position due to a lack of third-stream income that funded the position. The establishment of the Gradlinc platform created a lot of uncertainty about our mandate as sanctioned by Senate, as technically we would no longer be the partner when employers wanted to market their opportunities to our students. This had a profound effect on our services and processes. This effect is also reflected in our annual statistics. Our relationship with the Tygerberg Postgraduate Student Society also suffered due to a lack of a proper handover by the specific student leaders. Load-shedding also remained a major challenge

Personalia

- **Thobeka Msi** continued with her MSc Psychological Sciences studies at Brunel University, London.
- **Annette Joubert's** son got married on 9 September 2023.
- **Thobeka's** son embarked on his traditional journey into manhood from 11 November until 16 December 2023.

Evaluation of Services

We received the following qualitative feedback from students and employers:

- On behalf of the Burgiss group, I just wanted to say thank you for a well-organised Career Fair on the 17th of August.
- *Well done on a successful career fair, we had a great time, and everything was really well organised.*
- *The facilitator was passionate and lively. She kept the conversation interesting. She was knowledgeable and didn't get stuck on irrelevant details but rather only conveyed the most important information.*
- *The session was very helpful. The facilitator took us through so many steps, and I enjoyed how I could follow on my LinkedIn profile.*
- *The fact that the presenter used herself as an example and weighed in on the pros and cons of her own profile made the presentation much more personal.*

Committee Involvement

Our staff served on the following committees:

- DSAf Transformation Forum
- Training of Student Leaders
- Student Affairs Selection Committee (SASC)
- CIRCoRe Workstream on Institutional Culture
- Think Tank on the Restructuring of the CSCD

Work Sessions and Groups

The Unit for Graduatand Career Services continued with its career development work sessions covering topics like CV Writing, Cover Letters, Job-seeking Skills, Interview Skills, Personal Branding and Optimising Your LinkedIn Profile. The change to the Gradlinc platform and the lack of a proper handover between student leaders on the Tygerberg campus had a negative effect on our work sessions. We have started to address these challenges and the issues will be rectified in 2024. A total of 1 853 students attended the work sessions offered in 2023.

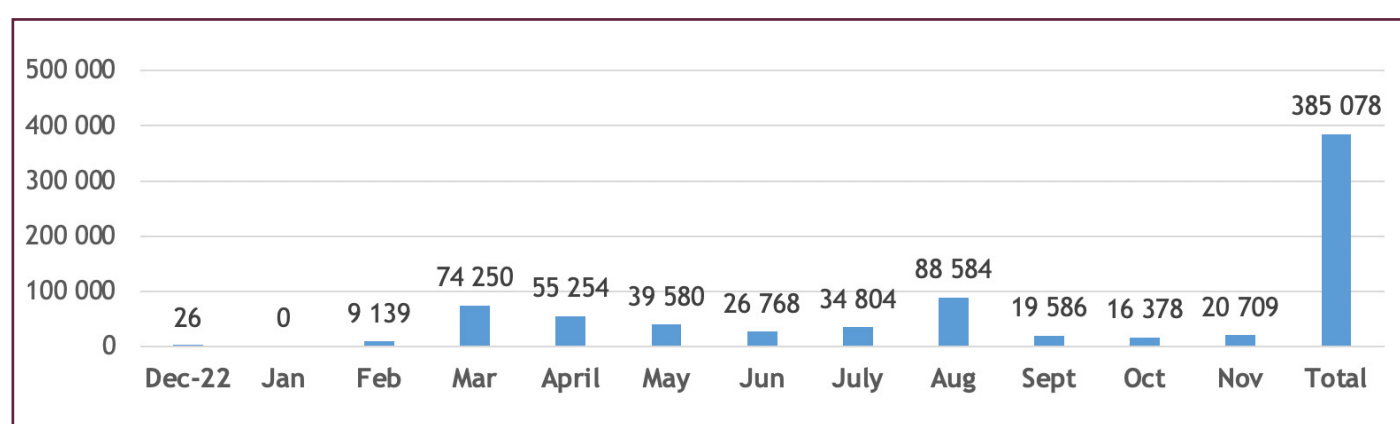


Figure 5: Mailshots – Students Reached

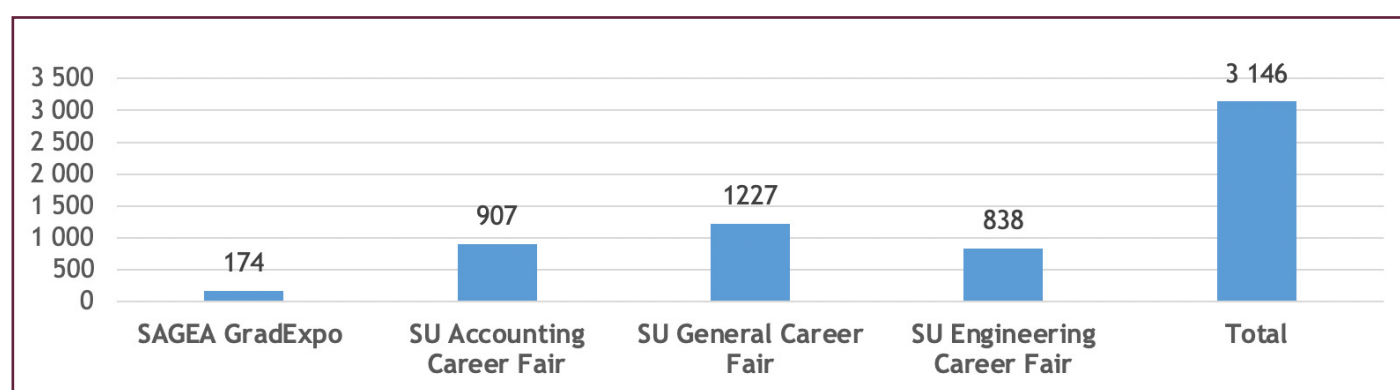


Figure 6: Career Fairs Registered SU students

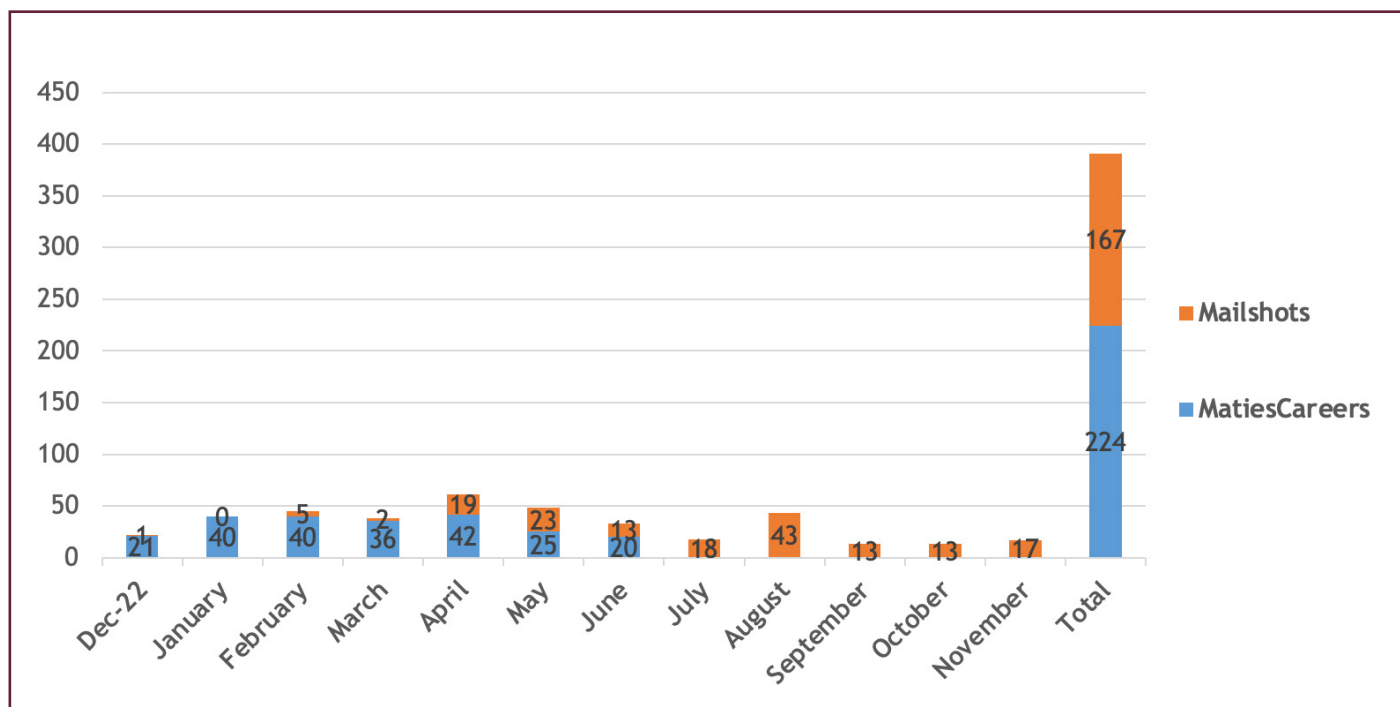


Figure 7: Jobs posted on MatiesCareers and Mailshots

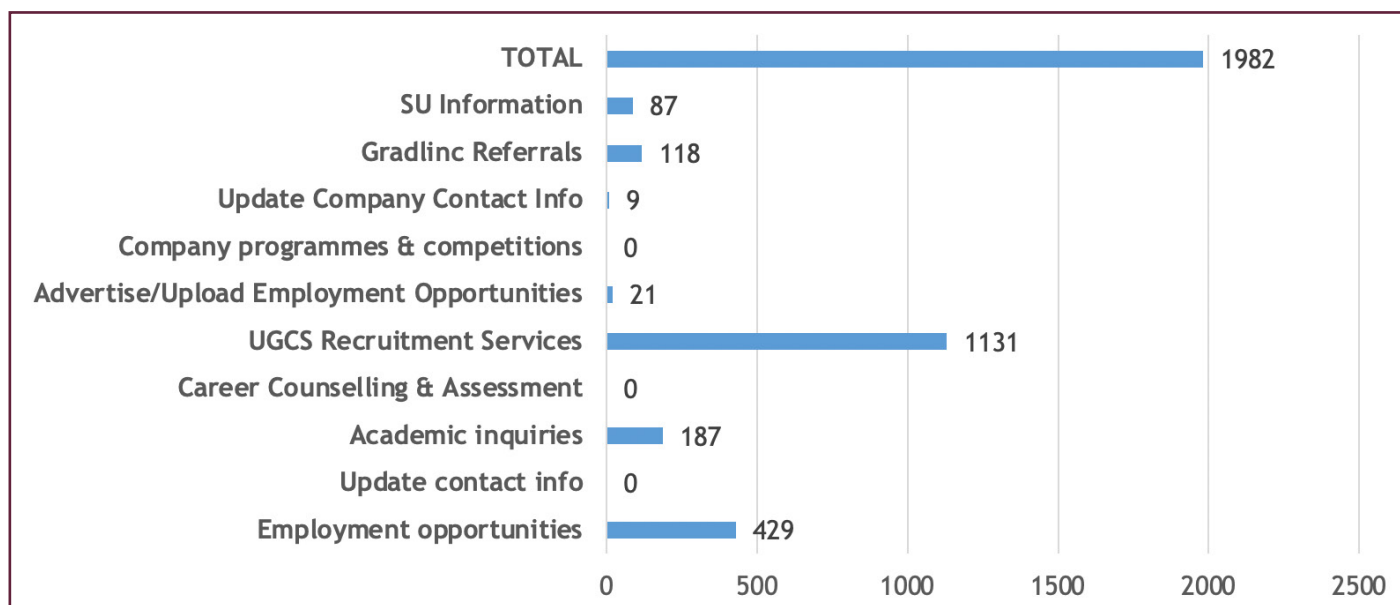


Figure 8: Student and Employer Enquiries

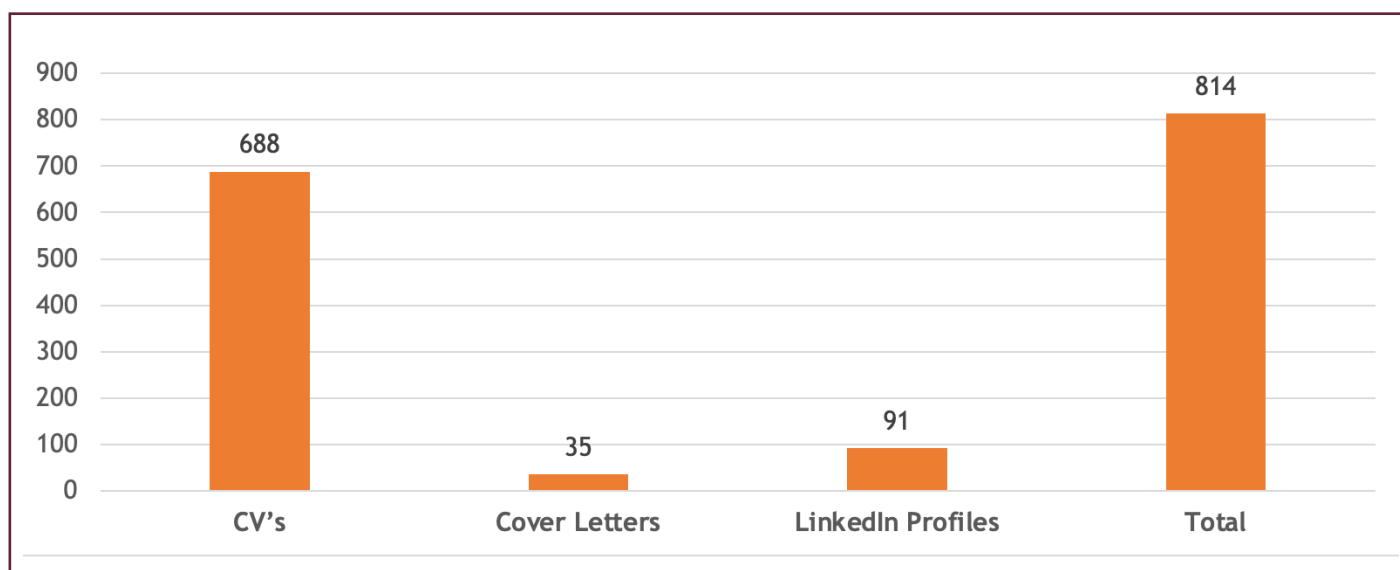


Figure 9: Career Development Editing Services

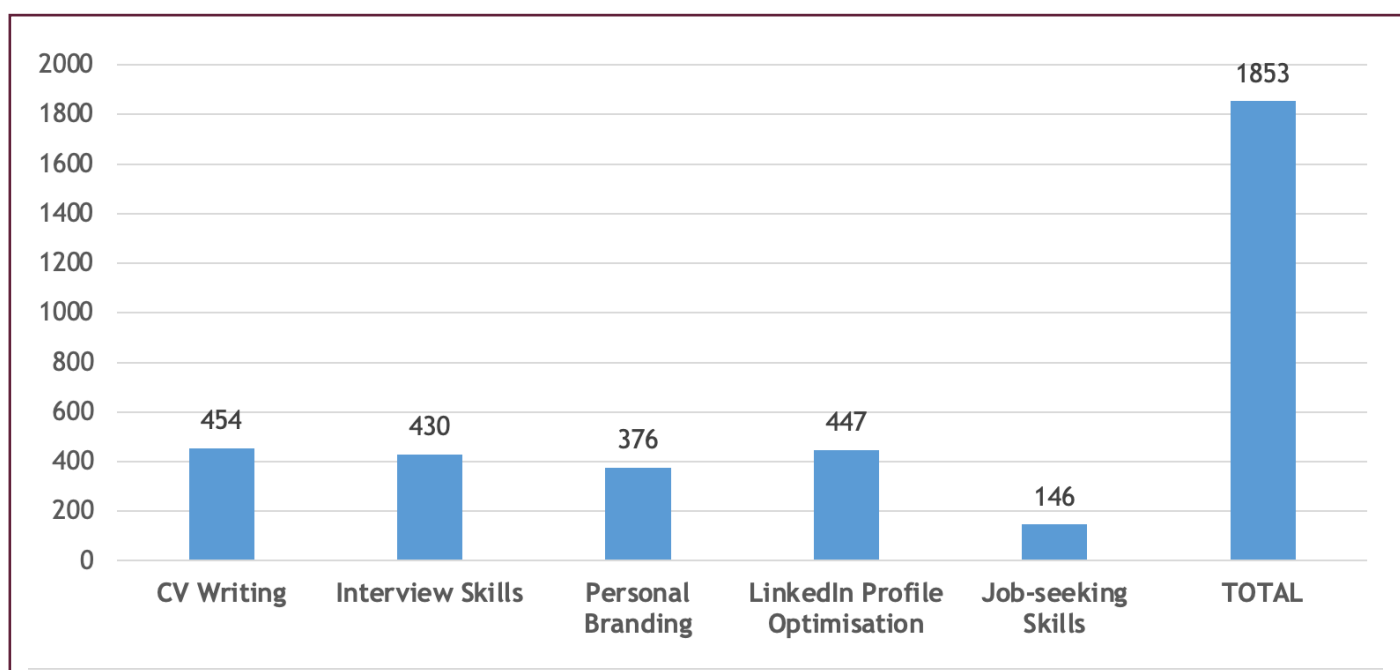


Figure 10: UGCS work sessions participants

Disability Unit (DU)

A Reflection on the Unit's Year



a) Orientation for first years

This year, our 2 February walk-in orientation session for first-year students and their parents was held across two offices, the Resource Office at HUMARGA and the DU offices at 39 Victoria Street. We also had individual orientation sessions for students experiencing discomfort in the big-group context.

b) Lead with Disability programme

More students took part in our co-curriculum recognised hybrid Lead with Disability programme this year. For the first semester



six-week programme, 86 students participated, and in the second semester we had 42 enrolments. The aim of the programme is to raise awareness around diversity, inclusion and disability. Students enjoyed the new interactive sessions on assistive technology and engaged with someone with a disability by asking questions about their work, study and life experiences.



On 1 September 2023 we celebrated Casual Day, themed "Share A Smile".

c) Training with staff

Several tailored disability-inclusion workshops were held for staff, inter alia with Neelsie Security staff, Stellenbosch Campus Security, CECO, the Corporate Communications and Marketing Division, the DRD Transformation Committee, Library staff, etc.

d) Training with students

We did training with senior student leaders, individual student communities, welcoming period monitors, critical engagement HC, mentors and first-year students.

e) Casual Day: 1 September 2023

On 1 September 2023 we celebrated Casual Day, themed "Share A Smile". Our target for this year was 700 stickers and we sold 530 stickers for our beneficiary, the Stellenbosch Work Centre. This year, the organising team consisted of the Disability Unit, Transformation Office, DSAf (Stellenbosch and Tygerberg), Equality Unit, HR: Wellness, SRC and TSRC, and Dis-Maties.

Various Casual Day activities were held on the Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses, such as face painting, bowling and information booths. The Bellville Campus has also requested to be involved in Casual Day in 2024.

f) Siyakhula (We are growing)

Our focus this year in collaboration with HR was on staff wellness, where we had Paws-for-Life engage with staff around the various kinds of support dogs that can enhance emotional wellbeing. An occupational therapist did a session on practical wellness techniques.



Paws-for-Life engage with staff around the various kinds of support dogs that can enhance emotional wellbeing

g) Healing and memory event: 3 August 2023

The Equality and Disability Unit hosted a panel discussion titled: Healing and memory – Unpacking the challenges faced by first-generation university students. The purpose of the event was to have a meaningful discussion about the challenges first-generation university students experience. The panel discussion allowed two first-generation students to share their experiences of accessing higher education amidst the various challenges such as structural barriers, not feeling a sense of belonging and financial difficulties.

h) DSAf Disability Awareness Campaign

We hosted our Disability Awareness Campaign for DSAf staff from March until June. Our first session was a good introduction to the world of disability, during which staff could voice the questions and controversial points around disability. The sessions focused on various aspects about disability, like myths about visual impairments, the value and meaning of service dogs, mental health and its impact on daily living, and a neurodiversity discussion.

Evaluation of Services

A few students reflected on our services this year. Overall, the spontaneous reflections were positive. Some challenges were brought to our attention, such as the noisy Neelsie, faulty equipment that affected students with physical disabilities, some lecturers not adhering to test concessions, and sudden increased expectations from the Assessments Office such as providing and training scribes. Matters could largely be resolved, but some remain outstanding and are in the process of being addressed. Given the integrated nature of disability work at SU, we engage with role players campuswide in line with inclusive education as the backdrop.

Some student feedback:

Student 1:

After reflecting on everything you shared today, again I must thank you for your support. I'm speechless thinking of the great privilege I have to learn from you. I will not make a mess of the trust you've placed in me, and the hope you have reignited in me.

Student 2:

... The best thing to happen so far cause academically I'm already stacking my A's. I don't believe it, I was so close to giving up. Thank you so much XXXX. My appreciation for your help is very endless, not even just endless very endless! So much love from me to you ...

Committee Involvement

- DSAf Transformation Forum (Melanie Willems and Marcia Lyner-Cleophas)
- SU Welcoming Programme Committee (Melanie Willems and Luigia Nicholas)
- CIRCoRe: Student Life and Communities workstream & Institutional Transformation Committee (Marcia Lyner-Cleophas)

Work Sessions & Groups

This year, the Disability Unit facilitated various disability inclusion and awareness-raising sessions with students in residences and work sessions at Den Bosch and online, and to staff in faculties and support services. New training was done with security staff on the Tygerberg campus, which was an exciting addition to the training offered. We reached approximately 1 698 students and 724 staff this year and we look forward to continuing these activities on campus in the new year!

Unit for Psychotherapeutic & Support Services (UPSS)

A Reflection on the Unit's Year



This year has been an exciting and productive year for the Unit. We had the pleasure of appointing three new staff members during the year – including a new Head: UPSS/ Deputy Director: CSCD (Lynn April). In terms of new ventures, the Unit collaborated with two academic departments to offer students a platform for their practical rotations, and also started the process to provide internships for Counselling Psychology Master's II students in 2024.

The start of every year is very busy for our Social Work services, who assist with emergency accommodation and food security to newcomers (145 requests were handled in January alone). The majority of the staff members were involved with the readmissions process – not just in advocating for students via the supporting documents we provide, but also serving on the various Readmissions Committees. Requests for appointments for therapeutic support pick

up rapidly at the Unit once classes start, and the UPSS managed a steady stream of clients throughout most of the year. The consultants we engaged played an important role in assisting the UPSS to avoid a waiting list and extended waiting periods during 2023. The UPSS also offered a range of support and

developmental groups that students could join covering various topics. As always, the UPSS values the role ER24 plays in making it possible for the Centre to collaboratively provide a 24-hour crisis service to students. The Unit managed to provide 9 690 individual sessions in 2023.

a) Achievements

Towards the end of 2022, the Centre forged new relationships with academic departments that offer professional training. This led to eight final-year occupational therapy students being placed at the Unit to complete their mental health rotation under the Unit's auspices, as well as one Theology Master's student specialising in pastoral care. This enabled the Unit to extend the range of our therapeutic services to an even more multidisciplinary offering. In addition to providing individual sessions, the occupational therapy (OT) students developed and facilitated a life skills group focused on adjustment and various coping skills. The OT students also developed guidelines for services, as well as infographics on depression, anxiety, neurodiversity, exam preparation, etc. Another highlight was the quarterly mental health campaigns facilitated by the OT students – focusing on services, exam stress, mental wellness and peer support (images below). Both the Unit and the students experienced these placements as a very successful endeavour and will build on this in the future. The Unit also embraced the

opportunity to appoint two interns as part of the Presidential Youth Employment Stimulus programme – in addition to providing counselling, these interns assisted in setting up and managing an Instagram account to promote our groups and resources.

Another pivotal initiative by the Centre was undergoing an accreditation process by the HPCSA as a counselling psychology intern training site. One counselling psychology intern has been appointed at the Unit for 2024 as part of this programme, and a clinical psychology intern will do a tailored internship at the Unit's Tygerberg Office.



Coffee lids for the mental health campaign



Pictures of the quarterly mental health campaigns facilitated by the OT students – focusing on services, exam stress, mental wellness and peer support

Staff from the UPSS participated in the various committees on campus that contribute to student wellness.

b) Interesting events

Various presentations, training sessions and support groups were facilitated throughout the year, addressing topics that applied to student wellness. Creative expressions evenings hosted by the Applied Theatre honours programme students, together with the CSCD, were another high point.

The therapeutic and developmental groups included themes that covered grief, relationships, coping skills for depression and anxiety, mindfulness, sleep, habits for success, addictive behaviours, sexuality and identity, stress management, neurodiversity as well as debriefing spaces. The social workers also collaborated with other stakeholders of the University to offer a financial literacy workshop for bursary students.

c) Partnerships and networking opportunities

The UPSS works closely with the other units within the CSCD to provide a holistic service to students. Further partners in terms of service delivery to students include the other two DSAf Centres (CSC and CSLEEC who merged to form CSLL), the Centre

for Bursaries and Loans, the Registrar's Responsibility Centre, Campus Health, the Stellenbosch Provincial Hospital and other

psychiatric service providers, support staff and lecturers in the various faculties, the Dell Young Leaders programme of the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, as well as other student financial aid programmes/student wellness and support programmes. Staff from the UPSS participated in the various committees on campus that contribute to student wellness. This past year we have also forged close relationships with the Department of Occupational Therapy and the Theology Faculty, as described above.

Personalia

- We welcomed **Eugene Booysen** (clinical psychologist) and **Nontozamo Tsetse** (counselling psychologist) to our staff complement in May.
- **Lynn April** filled the position of Head: UPSS/Deputy Director: CSCD in October.
- **Belinda Sheldon/Fredericks** (administrative officer, Tygerberg Campus) also added to the UPSS family when she got married in June!

Evaluation of Services

Feedback from the last two Occupational Therapy IV students on their practical experience at the CSCD:

We have had the most wonderful time and met the most incredible people... Thank you for your constant support and advice. Thank you to all the staff that never fail to put a smile on our faces! Thank you for guiding us when we didn't know what we were doing and always being there for some words of encouragement. We have learnt so much from all of you and have grown personally and professionally. It is amazing to see the work you do here to help students. We hope we have been able to add something special to your lives too, and that you learnt a little more about OT and what we do in the mental health sphere!

Client feedback on the OT service:

The OT students have helped me a lot to find balance between my responsibilities, while prioritising my mental health. I learned skills to make my academic and personal life easier.

Client feedback on therapeutic services:

This year was my first year back on campus [after taking a mental health break,] and the therapeutic services helped me a lot to readjust to academics and a balanced student life in general. The staff were always friendly and assisted me effectively. I learnt valuable

lessons about myself, my support network, my academics and as a professional through my therapist's guidance.

Feedback on the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction work sessions:

- *The course has encouraged me to find activities I enjoy doing and pursue them. I have started up yoga in response and try to walk in nature a few times a week.*
- *I am grateful for the weekly sessions as it reinforces the commitment to just show up, for yourself.*
- *I am prompted in the day, by random things, to take stock of my surroundings, feelings and sensations, in other words to be mindful. When I am feeling overwhelmed by stress, I am able to observe this and take a step back, breathe and reassess.*
- *I am more aware of my body sensations that bring me "back".*
- *I'm slowly starting to automatically turn to mindful breathing or periods of short meditation in between all the activities that happen everyday or during the times I start to feel stressed.*
- *I am starting to notice minor things like the beauty of nature whenever I am walking. I am encouraged by the fact that I am starting to care less about things that do not really matter.*

Feedback on Building Relationship group:

I attended [the] group for about four weeks and it was a great experience for me. I got to learn that I am not alone in my struggles. I learnt from my fellow group mates about the way that they went about dealing with issues that I experienced. The structure of the group meeting is wonderful because we get to learn from each other. It's always comforting to know that someone else has gone through what you are going through and the tips are helpful. I have also made a few friends from the sessions.

- DSAF Leadership (Vastrohiette Gilbert, Sinazo Nyembezi and Devine Kamalie)
- CIRCoRe (Lizzie Witbooi and Sinazo Nyembezi)
- NSFAS Task Team (Lizzie Witbooi)
- FMHS Undergraduate Student Health Committee (An-Maree Nel)
- DSAF Tygerberg Committee (An-Maree Nel, Sinazo Nyembezi, Carmen Balie, Nontozamo Tsetse)
- SAACDHE Organising Committee (Lizzie Witbooi)
- Rector's Awards for Excellence Achievement (RAEA), Student Affairs Selection Committee (Elmarie Kruger)
- Advisory Committee for Tygerberg Student Affairs (ACTSA) (An-Maree Nel, Elmarie Kruger)

Committee Involvement

Staff of the UPSS participated in various committees on campus that contribute to student wellness:

- Readmissions Committees (Munro Strydom & Jan-Hendrik Meyer: Arts and Social Sciences; Nordlind Fouche and Elmarie Kruger: Engineering; Deviné Kamalie & Vastrohiette Gilbert: AgriSciences; Elmarie Kruger: Education; and Carmen Balie: Medicine and Health Sciences)
- CSCD Think Tank (Munro Strydom, Carmen Balie)

Work Sessions & Groups

The groups offered included developmental as well as therapeutic groups with a variety of themes:

- Addictive behaviour (3 sessions)
- Habits for success (4 sessions)
- Sleep seminar (3 sessions)
- Various life-skills groups focused on adjustment (19 sessions)

- Mindfulness for wellbeing and general functioning (17 sessions)
- Presentations in Faculties and Residences on several topics (17 presentations)
- Financial literacy (2 workshops)
- Depression and Anxiety skills groups (71 sessions)
- Building Relationships (7 sessions)
- Debriefing regarding experiences on the Clinical platform (FHMS) (3 sessions)
- Dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT) (15 sessions)
- General support group (7 sessions)
- Grief/Bereavement (15 sessions)
- LGBTQI+ (27 Sessions)
- Mindfulness for self-care (24 sessions)
- FMHS Post Graduate students (2 sessions)
- Training sessions with leaders on campus (4 sessions)
- Wellness for Healthcare workers (Best Version Conversations) (12 sessions)

A total number of **3 990** students attended the **252** sessions offered at the Unit the past year.

General CSCD Information



At the Centre we believe in a consultative management approach. The Director manages the Centre, along with the Deputy Director and the Management Committee. The Committee consists of the heads of the four units, as well as a senior psychologist

from UPSS. The Management Committee assists the Director with strategic planning throughout the year, as well as revising and realigning objectives where necessary. Thank you for your input throughout the year!

CSCD Total Statistics

Table 2: Number of individual sessions per CSCD units

DU	537
UACD	4 103
UGCS	5
UPSS	9 690
Grand Total	14 335

Table 3: Number of sessions per Gender

Female	9 732
Male	4 499
Other	104
Grand Total	14 335

Table 4: Number of sessions per Faculty

Agrisciences	898
Arts And Social Sciences	3 364
Econ and Management Sciences	2 626
Education	645
Engineering	1 428
Law	397
Medicine And Health Sciences	1 559

Science	2 104
Theology	237
Blank	1 077
Grand Total	14 335

Table 5: Number of sessions per population group

Asian	55
Black	5 543
Coloured	2 753
Indian	520
White	4 025
Withheld	361
Blank	1 078
Grand Total	14 335

Table 6: Number of sessions per campus

Business School	167
Elsenburg	95
Stellenbosch Campus	11 527
Tygerberg Campus	1 469
Blank	1 077
Grand Total	14 335

Research And Personal Development Of Staff

a) Training

- **Jana Louw** completed the BWRT Level 1 Training
- **Liezl Kloppe** completed the EMDR Level 1 Training
- **Liezl Kloppe** is currently enrolled for the Traumatic Stress Studies Certificate offered by the Trauma Research Foundation
- **Nordlind Fouché** completed a two-year IMISA (Institute for Mindfulness South Africa) Postgraduate Certificate in Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction course successfully and is now a qualified Mindfulness-based Interventions teacher (partially sponsored).
- **Carmen Balie** attended a course on Tension and Trauma Release Exercise (self-sponsored).
- **Elmien Sinclair** was selected for the Student Affairs and Student Success Training Programme presented by HELM. The programme kicked off with a two-day workshop in Johannesburg on 26 and 27 May. This was followed up with bi-weekly online training sessions.
- **Lizelle Apollis:**
 - Short Course: Workshop in Academic Writing Skills for Research Proposals (29–31 May)
 - CPD Opportunity: Global Health Webinar – Assistive Technology Over Time and Place Through an Ecosystemic Approach: A Global Health Matter (8 June)
 - Competency Progression and Assessment Workshop Series: Workshop 1 – The Co-curriculum Competency Progression Framework (29 June)
 - Developing a South African Student-Centred Framework: The Interconnectedness of Being, presented by Dr WP Wahl (25 August)
 - Humanising Transformation Think Tank (31 August)
 - Supervisory Leadership Development Programme (20-21 September)
 - Universal Design for Learning and Technology session (11 October)
- **Melanie Willems:**
 - SUNstudent Project Owner Onboarding training sessions (24, 26, 30 January)
 - SUNstudent: Introduction and guidance to create backlog tickets for Exams
 - Concessions Capability (13,17, 19 April)
 - Universal Design for Learning and Technology session (11 October)

b) Conferences attended

Christa Koch, Erna Gerryts, Liezl Kloppe, Lauren Schilder, Elmien Sinclair, Charl Davids, Marcia Lyner-Cleophas, Melanie Willems, Lizelle Apollis, Lizzie Witbooi, Sinazo Nyembezi, Vastrohietie Gilbert, Deviné Kamalie, An-Maree Nel and Elmarie Kruger attended the 43rd Annual SAACDHE conference in Stellenbosch from 11 to 13 September. The conference was hosted by the Western Cape Region – the theme was Returning, Remembering and Reconnecting. It provided wonderful opportunities to connect with other institutions and to gain and share knowledge. The self-care activities were not only enjoyed but proved to be highly beneficial. The papers that were presented at the conference were well received.

The titles of the papers were as follows:

- Liezl Kloppe, *Investigating the impact of changes in NSFAS funding on the wellbeing of students at SU*
- Christa Koch, *Intern supervision in a multidisciplinary model: Rationale, benefits and pitfalls*
- Erna Gerryts, *Involving a thesis support manager: An innovative model for evaluating postgraduate students and supervisors*
- Elmien Sinclair, *A Social Justice Perspective for Student Counselling Services*
- Marcia Lyner-Cleophas, Melanie Willems and Lizelle Apollis, *The complexities of test and exams concessions and looking towards solutions at Stellenbosch University*



Christa Koch, Erna Gerryts, Liezl Kloppe, Lauren Schilder, Elmien Sinclair, Charl Davids, Marcia Lyner-Cleophas, Melanie Willems, Lizelle Apollis, Lizzie Witbooi, Sinazo Nyembezi, Vastrohietie Gilbert, Deviné Kamalie, An-Maree Nel and Elmarie Kruger attended the 43rd Annual SAACDHE conference in Stellenbosch from 11 to 13 September

- All the UACD staff attended the National Academic Advising Seminar (NAAS) 2023.
- HEDSA, NMMU (21–22 September): Marcia Lyner-Cleophas (panel facilitation)
- International Conference on Education Quality (ICEQ), Morocco (25–27 October): Marcia Lyner-Cleophas, Lizelle Apollis and Claudia Saunderson, *Universal design for learning as support for the inclusion of Deaf student teachers in training*
- International Conference on Education Quality (ICEQ), Morocco (25–27 October): Lizelle Apollis and Luigia Nicholas, *Transformational leadership for students in a disability awareness transcript recognised programme at Stellenbosch University*



International Conference on Education Quality (ICEQ), Morocco (25–27 October): Lizelle Apollis and Luigia Nicholas,



Luigia Nicholas and Lizelle Apollis at the Disability Research Hub Conference

- Staff of the UPSS participated in the CPD WELL programme that included articles on various topics. Staff also attended various other online training opportunities to develop their skills and expand their subject knowledge.
- Luigia Nicholas and Lizelle Apollis attended the DSAf Transformation Summit 2023 (12 April) and Disability Research Hub Conference (24–25 May)
- Melanie Willems attended the SU Transformation Indaba, Protea Hotel, Techno Park (19 October)
- Luigia Nicholas, Marcia Lyner-Cleophas and Lizelle Apollis was involved with the AfriNEAD conference from 29 November to 1 December.

c) Research

This year marked our final collaboration with Universum as they decided to discontinue the Universum Surveys in South Africa. We compiled an online version of our annual Graduate Recruitment Booklet. We look forward to publishing the results of the December 2023 and March 2024 Graduate Destination Survey in partnership with the Centre for Business Intelligence.

d) Publications

- Lyner-Cleophas, M.M., Saunderson, C.P. & Apollis, L.** (2023). Universal Design for Learning as Support for the Inclusion of Deaf Student Teachers in Training. In Building Inclusive Education in K-12 Classrooms and Higher Education: Theories and Principles. Eds [Kiyoji Koreeda](#), [Masayoshi Tsuge](#), [Shigeru Ikuta](#), [Elizabeth Minchin Dalton](#), [Linda Plantin Ewe](#) DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7370-2
- Lyner-Cleophas, M.M. & Saunderson, C.** (2023). Conference publication. Approaches and Practices on Inclusiveness and Internationalisation. A contribution to "Inclusivity at Stellenbosch University". University of Strasbourg <https://www.unistra.fr/reseau-anime/anime-academic-network-on-inclusiveness-multilingualism-and-excellence/publications>
- Dalton, E.M., Jackson, R.M., Bracken, S., Satar, A.A., Aabi, M., Khurana, A., **Nicholas, L.**, Power, O. & Ewe, L.P. (2023). Creating an International Collaboratory for Leadership in Universally Designed Education: INCLUDE as a Global Community of Practice. In [Building Inclusive Education in K-12 Classrooms and Higher Education: Theories and Principles](#) DOI: 10.4018/978-1-6684-7370-2.ch001
- Gbollie, E., Bantjes, J., Jarvis, L., Swanevelder, S., Du Plessis, J., Shadwell, R., **Dauids, C.**, Gerber, R., Holland, N. & Hunt, X. (in press). Intention to use digital mental health solutions: A cross-sectional survey of university students' attitudes and perceptions toward online therapy, mental health apps, and chatbots. Digital Health
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Educational Psychology Internship Programme

Internship reflection

The past year has been a journey of self-discovery and learning beyond measure. A life-changing internship where we had the privilege to freely ask for support and be exposed to multiple professionals' inputs. I owe my deepest gratitude to every CSCD and AF Louw Primary colleague and greatly appreciate the role each of them fulfilled. A special thanks to: Charl Davids, who inspires me to become the best psychologist I can be; Munro Strydom, for your calmness and practical advice; Amanda van der Vyver, for being so approachable; Erna Gerryts, for challenging me to think outside of the box; Christa Koch, for the structured way in which you approach life; Elmien Sinclair and Claudia Saunderson, for the kind way in which you managed us; and Lauren Schilder, for becoming a dear friend. You're the foundation on which I am building my psychology career and I'm excited to see what my future will hold.

– Jana Louw (Van Aarde)

Wow, what a year this has been! Starting the programme with no prior experience and uncertain of what to expect, I was fortunate to have trustworthy "strangers" who guided me and set the tone for the psychologist I aspire to be. These strangers turned into mentors who taught me more than I could have imagined, and colleagues who trusted me to be part of their team. They provided me with the opportunity to advance my knowledge and skills through learning and asking numerous questions. I am truly grateful to all of my supervisors and the staff at the CSCD for their guidance and support throughout this journey. This year in my career will always hold a special place in my heart as I embark on my journey in the field of psychology.

– René van Schalkwyk

A Reflection on the CSCD's Involvement in the Readmissions Process

As in previous years, a number of CSCD staff and consultants served on the panels of the faculty readmission subcommittees.

As part of the decision-making process, some students were referred to the CSCD by these subcommittees, and psychologists contacted students to obtain further information and provide feedback and/or recommendations regarding whether they should be readmitted to SU. Furthermore, some students who were granted readmission were referred to the CSCD to discuss the support they would need in the new academic year. Some subcommittees also referred students who were *denied* readmission to the CSCD for debriefing, containment and support.

The RAC handled a total of **1 718** applications for readmission in 2023. This is an increase of 14.53% in comparison to 2022 and represents the highest number of applications in the last nine years. Economic and Management Sciences received the most applications (29.86% of total applications), followed by Engineering (22.2%), Science (15.8%) and Arts (14.7%).

A total number of 26 students were referred to the CSCD as part of the decision-making process (C36/C37), while another 17 students who were denied readmission (B) were referred to the CSCD for specific support.

Requests regarding the referral of C code cases included the following:

- a. further information regarding the situation that affected the student's academic performance, including more information on claims made in the readmission application form;
- b. information regarding the student's current mental health, e.g. whether a student's mental health challenges have been addressed (in most of these cases, a report from a mental health professional had been received that *confirmed the challenges*, but did not provide information about the response/adherence to a treatment plan);
- c. information on whether the student was ready to perform academically (whether the student had the ability and/or motivation), including how the student would cope with the academic demand;
- d. further information on the student's support plan for the year, including information on funding/financial situation and living arrangements;
- e. information on the student's proposed change to a different course; and
- f. outstanding reports from mental health practitioners, including reports from the CSCD.

Besides the CSCD's involvement by way of the *referrals* from the RAC discussed above, the Centre also provided support to students who approached the CSCD for assistance at their own initiative. Referrals were also made to the CSCD by Advocate Rina Meyer, who is the ombud of Stellenbosch University.

As in previous years, many students were also referred to the CSCD as a condition of their readmission (with, in most cases, specific recommendations from the RAC). The aim of referrals of students who were granted readmission with the condition to visit the CSCD (D38 or F44) was to encourage students to make use of the academic support, career guidance/development and psychotherapeutic services offered by the CSCD, including support groups and work sessions. In some cases, specific

recommendations were made regarding interventions for the students' mental health (in response to mental health challenges reported in the readmission application form or identified by the CSCD representative on the RAC panel). In applications where the CSCD representative identified challenges or concerns that required more urgent attention, the CSCD readmissions coordinator was alerted and arrangements set in place.

Proposals for consideration for the 2024 RAC process include evaluation of the application process and rules regarding this process, the creation (and communication) of new codes for students who are denied readmission, the addition of a practitioner's report and motivation for course change to the current application form, and changes in the role the CSCD plays in RAC meetings.

Psychology CPD Well Programme

The Psychology CPD Well programme has been offered by the Centre for Student Counselling and Development since 2003 and is a Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA)-accredited Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme. Psychologists, registered counsellors and psychometrists can enrol for different options to obtain CPD points.

Charl Davids has headed the Psychology CPD WELL programme since the beginning of 2022 after the resignation of Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee. Together, the

team – consisting of Charl Davids, Elmien Sinclair, Sanet van Zyl, Christa Koch, Anri Magerman (until 30 September) and Lezel Jansen (from 1 October) – ensured that the programme continued to run smoothly by implementing suggestions made in 2022. HPCSA accreditation for courses in 2023 was challenging, as accrediting institutions that act on behalf of the HPCSA made some amendments to the accreditation rules. This is to ensure that only courses that meet high professional standards are offered to professionals. The team, however, made

sure that all the courses on offer met the prescribed standards. This year, we offered a 30 CEU-accredited course tailor-made to meet the training needs of psychometrists for the first time.

The following options – in a variety of combinations – were on offer during 2023:

- Option B (four online presentations covering the following topics):
 - Dr Karlien Conradie: *Teaching student psychologists – case conceptualization as poetic articulation*
 - Ms Sarah Silber: *Exploring and embracing neurodiversity*
 - Dr Elize Morkel: *Narrative therapy with clients who present as queer*
 - Dr Sharon Truter: *Ethics in cognitive assessment: The South African context*
- Option C General (10 topical articles and multiple-choice questionnaires)
- Option C Industrial Psychology (10 topical articles and multiple-choice questionnaires)
- Option C General Psychometry (10 topical articles and multiple-choice questionnaires)
- Option C Top Up 15 General (five topical articles and multiple-choice questionnaires)

- Option C Top Up 15 Industrial Psychology (five topical articles and multiple-choice questionnaires)

With an economy tightening its belt, catering to all clients on the economic scale was essential. In addition, we offered a group discount for practitioners working in companies or private practice. In a digitalised world, we are competing more than ever to stay relevant and ensure that our clients are kept intrigued with our offerings.

Final participant numbers for the different Options in 2023 were as follows:

- Option B Plus C General Psychology: 61
- Option B plus C Psychometry: 10
- Option B plus C Industrial Psychology: 20
- Option C General Psychology: 194
- Option C Psychometry: 19
- Option C Industrial Psychology: 170
- Option C General Psychology Top Up 15: 7
- Option C Industrial Psychology Top Up 15: 4

Collaboration with ER24

The CSCD and the Campus Health Services of SU partnered with ER24 to offer registered SU students 24-hour access to trauma counselling and medical support. The service comprises emergency medical services, trauma counselling (telephonically or face-to-face) and medical assistance via the medical hotline.

The UPSS provides sessions for emotional/ psychological crises during office hours, and the dedicated SU ER24 crisis line provides support after hours. Very close collaboration exists between these two partners, and students who are assisted overnight are followed up by the UPSS the next working

day. The ER24 counsellors provided invaluable support this year when critical incidents took place on campus. Students and staff invariably expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the way in which the ER24 counsellors engaged with them during such times.

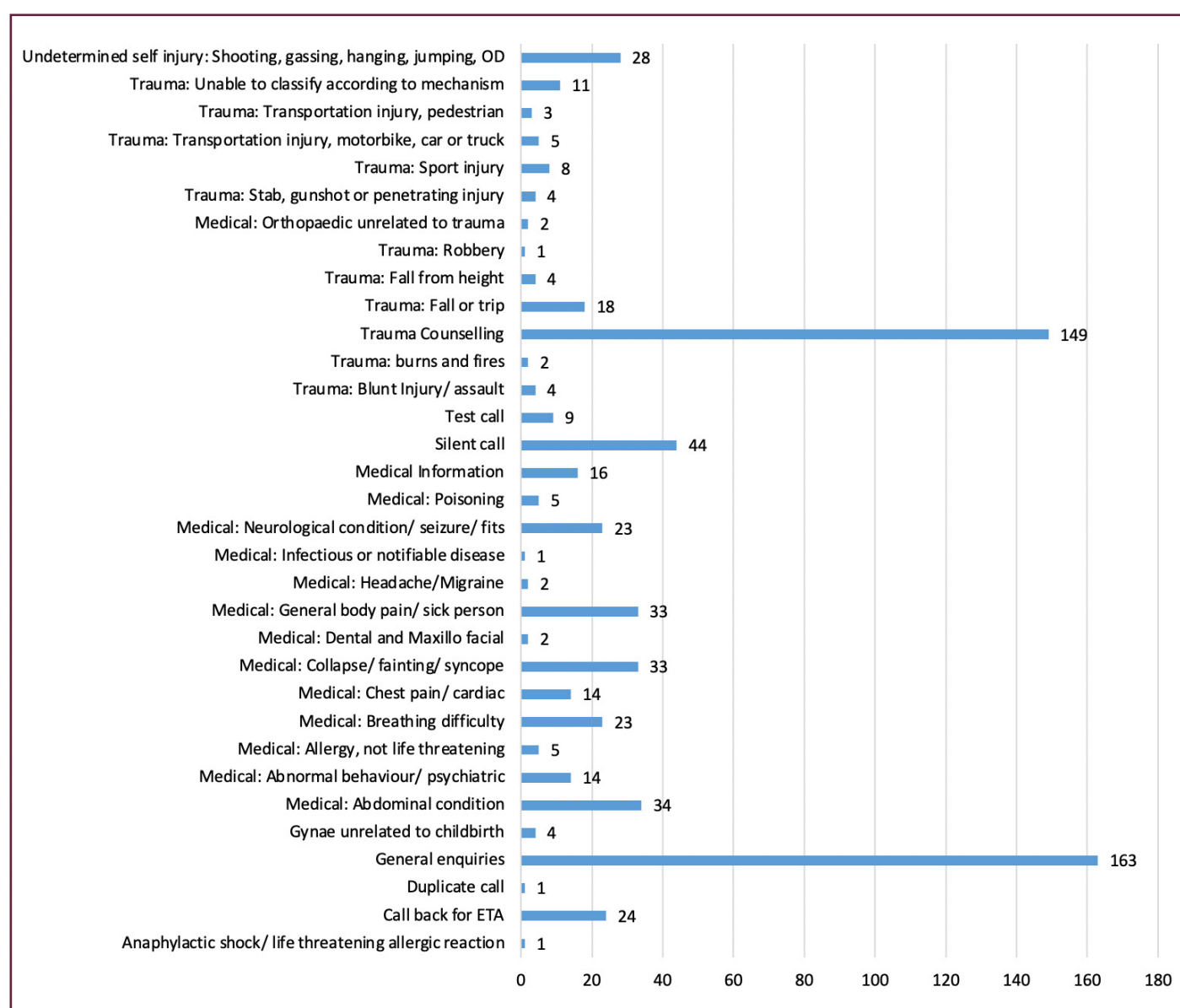


Figure 11: Total ER24 reports, 1 January to 31 December 2023

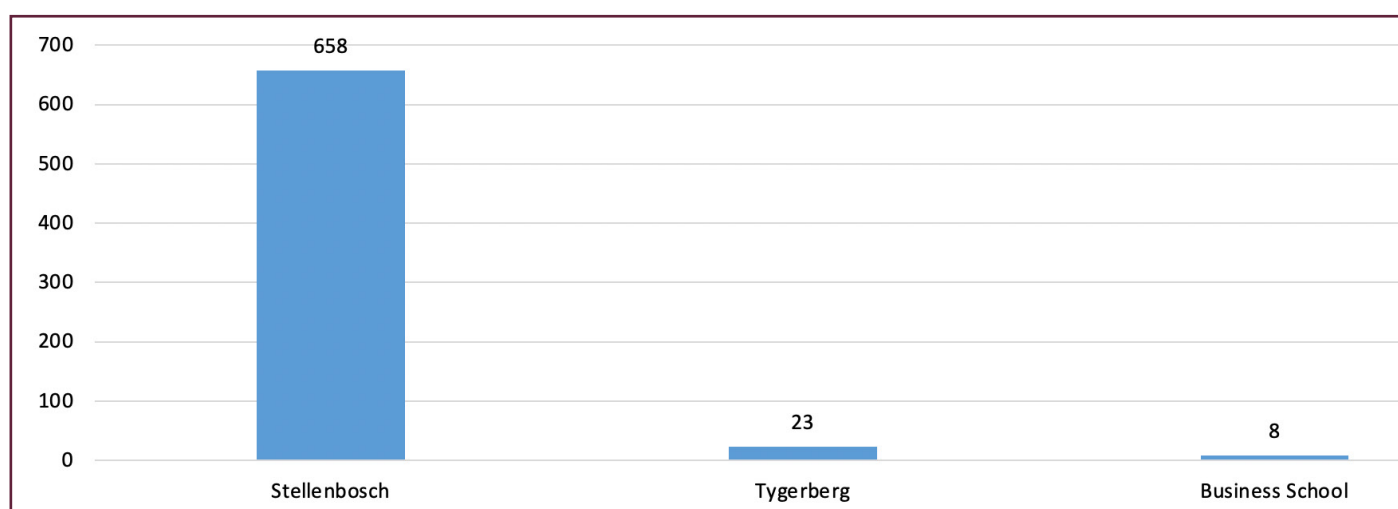


Figure 12: Total ER24 calls per campus, 1 January to 31 December 2023

Reflection on Social Work Services at UPSS in 2023

Social work services provided by the Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services (UPSS) include, but are not limited to, food security. This section is a reflection on Food Security as one of the major services provided by the social workers at the unit, and a main concern for students who do not have sufficient financial aid that covers food expenses.

Due to inadequate financial aid, food insecurity is becoming an increasingly challenging issue for students. The new NSFAS funding model for 2023 further worsened the situation by capping food allowances. However, social workers at the unit collaborated with the Centre for Bursaries and Loans, as well as other relevant structures across the University, to find ways to help students bridge the gap in their food allowances.

Our partnerships with various catering companies located in different residences on

campus, including the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences and DSAF, have greatly assisted us in our efforts to provide food to students in need. Earnest appreciation goes to students in a few residences who assisted their own students in need with food through their own residence pantry project, including the Tygerberg Pantry Project. The partnerships and collaborations have helped immensely to alleviate the pressure on the #Move4Food Fund, which is our main source of funding for food security. In July 2023, the social workers conducted an online survey to investigate the effect of the food security service on students' overall wellbeing. The survey was sent to 300 students and received a 100% response rate. Below are some of the voices of students who have accessed the service.

Feedback on the service from students:

Words cannot express the gratitude I feel for the incredible support I received. It was a game-changer that made all the difference in my life. It's extremely difficult to study on an empty stomach. Words can never be enough to describe how much of an impact the food assistance had for me and I will forever be grateful for this amazing initiative.

First, I would like to thank the social worker's office for replying fast to my need and assisting me with food allowance. Not having food or not having enough food is stressful and frustrating. I could not focus on other important things because I must think that I have to bother my friends to buy me something to eat. With the assistance it helped me that I do not have to bother people to buy me food or even borrow money.

A Reflection on Extra Writing Time Concessions

At Stellenbosch University (SU), we work within an inclusive education model, as framed by education policies in South Africa. Students are accepted at SU based on academic merit. Where students with disabilities need academic support to optimise their academic potential, reasonable measures are taken to welcome and include them where this causes no undue burden to departments. Students mostly come to SU with a longstanding history of learning, social, health, psychiatric, physical or sensory difficulties. At other times, these conditions might be due to the recent onset of debilitating illness or injury, or an underlying medical condition.

According to the SU Disability Access Policy of 2018, reasonable accommodation is a

principle that underpins our efforts to support students with disabilities in their quest for academic success. The SU Disability Access Policy is currently under review, as is a range of our process documents. The concessions processes and practices in particular are under the spotlight and a committee has been set up to further engage with this. The committee consists of Assessment Administration, Academic Records and Graduation Office (AARGO) and the CSCD (Disability Unit included).

a) The Resource Office services (of the Disability Unit)

The Resource Office of the Disability Unit is primarily responsible for making academic

material, including assessments, accessible to students who need this to read, study and do assessments. This office rendered services to 74 students (60 undergraduates and 14 postgraduates). Ten of the students are blind; 20 are partially sighted and 44 received support for learning disabilities.

The undergraduate distribution per faculty is as follows: Arts and Social Sciences (25 – 4 graduating), Law (5), Economic and Management Sciences (7 – 3 graduating), Engineering (7 – 1 graduating), Education

(7 – 2 graduating), Theology (1), and Natural Sciences (8).

The 14 postgraduate candidates are registered for the following programmes: BA Hons (1), BCom Hons (1), Hons B Ed (1), M in Rehabilitation Studies (1), M in Ancient Cultures (1), MA Sociology (2), M Social Work (1), MSc Food Science (1 graduating), LLD (1 graduating), PgCE (FET) (2 graduating), PhD Psychology (1), and one student who completed a short course in labour dispute law.

b) Students who disclosed a disability on application to SU

The number of students who disclosed a disability when applying to SU (in all years of study) totalled 662 in 2023. The table from 2018 to 2023 below are given for comparative purposes and illustrate the various categories of disabilities (Table 7).

Disability	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Blindness	10	9	6	13	11	7
Cerebral Palsy	0	2	0	1	2	2
Chronic Health Impairment	49	34	34	42	44	40
Deafness	23	23	18	21	14	17
Diagnosed Mental Health Disorder	53	73	78	121	141	156
Diagnosed Reading Disorder	46	27	34	30	29	36
Diagnosed Writing Disorder	17	20	14	11	13	17
Mobility Or Orthopaedic Disability	25	42	36	41	38	51
Neurological Disability	16	23	28	53	58	84
Other Disability Or Condition	36	28	47	34	37	55

Other Hearing Disability	47	72	87	142	113	112
Other Visual Disability	42	61	74	85	65	68
Speech Disorder	4	9	8	13	8	17
Total	368	432	462	607	573	662

Table 7: Students with declared disabilities

c) Students receiving concessions in 2023 for tests and exams

In 2023, a grand total of 915 students received concessions, as indicated in Figure 13 below. Most of the support was in the form of extra writing time (900) as the primary concession. Additional concessions (183) include enlarged font size, computer use, assistive technology use or the use of a scribe or reader. Students receiving concessions represent 2.86% of the estimated 32 000 student population at SU.

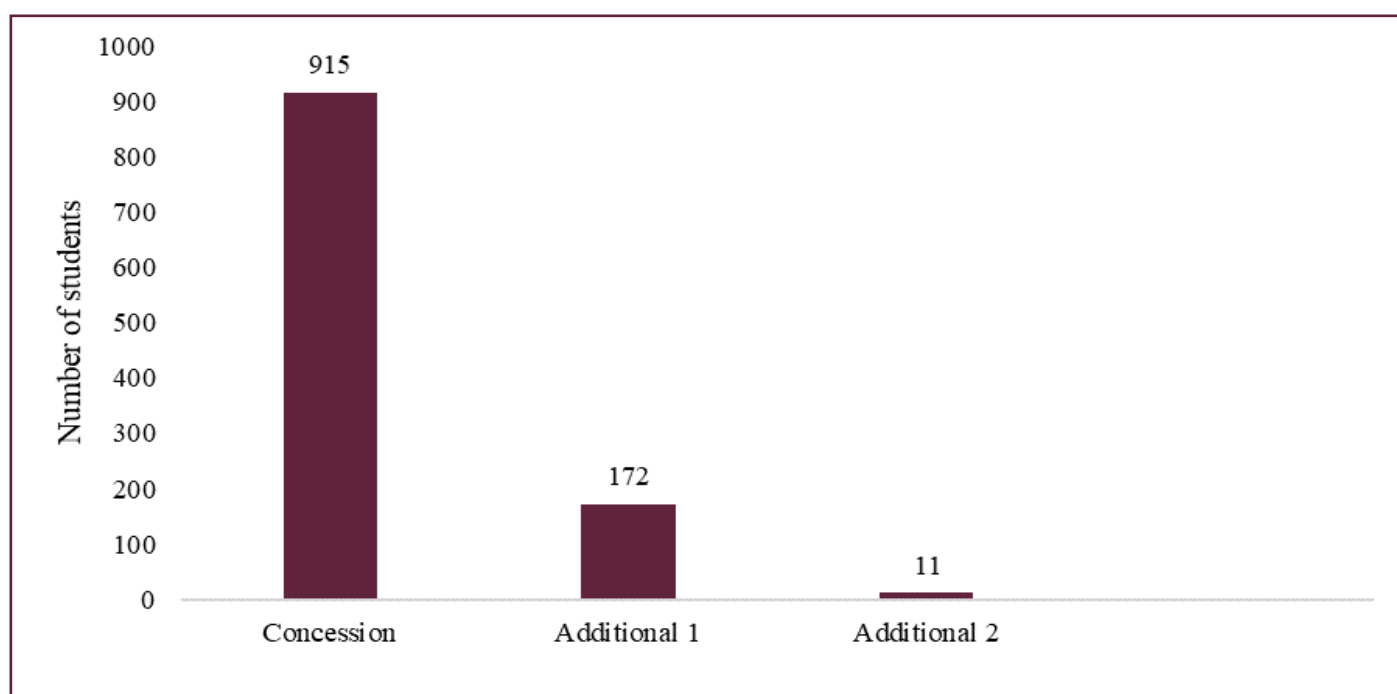


Figure 13: Number of concessions in all faculties and years (as of 26 October 2023 – SIS)

d) Range of concession categories in 2023

Figure 14 below gives a breakdown of the concession categories for registered students during 2023.

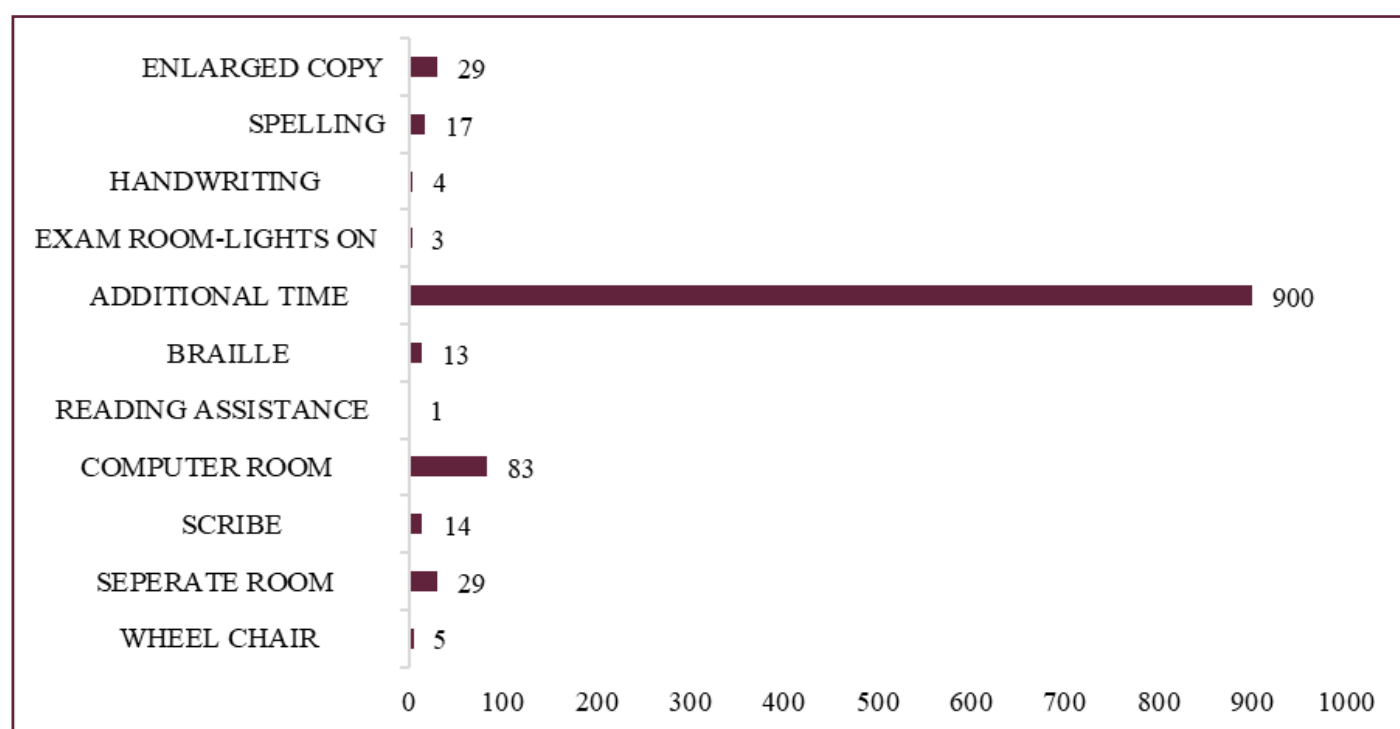


Figure 14: Number of concessions categories for 2023 (26 October 2023 – SIS)

e) New applications for test and examination concessions for 2023 only

The number of new applications processed for 2023 totalled 419. Of these, 412 were approved and seven were rejected. Rejections could come about due, for example, to insufficient collateral information to warrant extra support, or incomplete applications. In such cases, we would follow up with the students regarding other

measures, such as academic or therapeutic support, as concessions are only one intervention method.

f) Closing dates for 2023

This year, the Extra Writing Time Committee had four closing dates for test and examination concessions, two in the first semester and two in the second semester. These dates are decided on in liaison with AARGO to ensure that timeous preparations

can be made for such support. In the past five years, we included a representative of the academic staff of both the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences and the Faculty of Engineering as part of the CSCD Extra Writing Time Committee that deliberates on each applicant who applies for assessment support. As the landscape of our students with disabilities changes and they are studying in all faculties, we envision broadening the committee to include representatives of the academic staff of other faculties as well.

g) Emergency concessions

This year, we received numerous emergency concession applications after the closing date. Students presented with hand injuries, medical conditions, assaults and some were in recovery from operations that affected their academic performance. They therefore required emergency concessions.

h) Concessions and SunStudent

The new SunStudent exam concession capability, which was developed by the Disability Unit in liaison with the SunStudent team, should see the testing and training of all role players during 2024.

In conclusion, we are revising our existing documentation, protocols and role clarification regarding concessions. Due to the challenges with sourcing and training readers, scribes and prompters, a Concessions Task Team was established to review the processes. The first meeting will take place in January 2024.

We wish to thank all the committee members who deliberated on the concessions applications and made recommendations that were implemented by the departments for Assessment 1 and AARGO for Assessments 2 & 3. Faculties and the AARGO office are also thanked for all their efforts.

Staff of the Centre

Please also refer to the attached organogram (Addendum A)

Director	Mr CI Davids
Secretary: Director: CSCD	Ms HZ Kotzé
Financial Administrative Officer	Ms S van Zyl
CPD WELL Administrative Officer (until 30 September)	Ms AA Magerman
Temporary CPD Well Administrative Officer (from 1 October)	Ms LS Jansen

Unit for Academic Counselling and Development

Head	Dr E Sinclair
Educational Psychologist	Ms C Koch
Educational Psychologist	Dr EW Gerryts
Educational Psychologist	Ms L Kloppe
Registered Counsellor (from 1 March)	Ms L Schilder
Psychometrist	Dr CP Saunderson
Intern Educational Psychologist	Ms J van Aarde
Intern Educational Psychologist	Ms R van Schalkwyk

Central Reception: Senior Secretary	Ms A Welgemoed
Central Reception: Secretary	Ms MC Denyssen
Consultant Educational Psychologist	Ms A van der Vyver
Consultant Educational Psychologist	Ms C Bosman-Vosloo
Consultant Educational Psychologist	Ms S Silber
Consultant Educational Psychologist	Ms F Osman
Consultant Educational Psychologist	Ms L Cloete

Unit for Graduand Career Services

Head	Mr MA Timmey
Project Co-ordinator: Graduate Recruitment	Ms W Naudé
Part-time Administrative Officer 5/8	Ms A Joubert
Co-ordinator: Virtual Career Information	Ms ST Msi
Administrative Officer: Receptionist (<i>1 March – 31 August</i>)	Mr J Roman

Disability Unit

Head	Dr MM Lyner-Cleophas
Co-ordinator: Disability Support	Ms ME Willems
Resource Officer	Ms PH Louw

Resource Officer	Ms MM Minnaar
Resource Officer	Ms EMS Erasmus
Inclusivity and Access Support Officer 5/8	Ms JL Apollis
Administrative Assistant	Ms I Pool-Le Roux
Diversity, Inclusion and Student Success Life Coach	Dr CP Saunderson
Coordinator: Marketing and Training	Ms L Nicholas

Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services

Acting Head (until 30 September)	Ms E Kruger
Deputy Director and Head (from 1 October)	Ms L April
Senior Secretary	Ms LV Milford Smit
Temporary Administrative Officer (Tygerberg Campus)	Ms BE Fredericks (née Sheldon)
Administrative Officer	Ms I Pool-Le Roux
Clinical Psychologist	Mr M Strydom
Clinical Psychologist (from 1 May)	Mr E Booyesen
Clinical Psychologist	Mr JH Meyer
Counselling Psychologist	Ms NC Fouché
Registered Counsellor	Ms DC Kamalie
Registered Counsellor	Ms VE Gilbert

Dell Young Leaders: Psychologist	Vacant
Senior Clinical Psychologist (Tygerberg Campus)	Ms AM Nel
Counselling Psychologist (Tygerberg Campus) (from 1 May)	Ms N Tsetse
Counselling Psychologist (Tygerberg Campus)	Ms C Balie
Social Worker	Ms LG Witbooi
Social Worker (Tygerberg Campus)	Ms S Nyembezi
PSYE Intern (1 March-31 August)	Ms J Makkink
PSYE Intern (1 September-31 December)	Ms E Buys
Assistant	Ms MM Vlok
Assistant	Ms JL Moffat
Consultants: Please note these consultants only provide the UPSS with limited hours per month:	
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Ms W Arnolds
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Dr A Grundling
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Ms J Petersen
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Mr JP Theron
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Ms L Joubert
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Ms T Manuel

Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Mr A Ngantweni
Consultant Counselling Psychologist	Ms M O'Reilly
Consultant Counselling Psychologist	Ms M Barnes
Consultant Counselling Psychologist	Mr A Freeman
Consultant Registered Counsellor	Mr H Gericke
Consultant Registered Counsellor	Ms L Abrahams Allie
Consultant Registered Counsellor	Ms C Thomas
Consultant Registered Counsellor	Ms A Smith
Consultant Wellness Counsellor	Mr D Bailey
Consultant Wellness Counsellor	Dr E Horn
Consultant Wellness Counsellor	Ms H Frattaroli
Consultant Wellness Counsellor (1 September–30 November)	Ms J Makkink

Budget

The Director ensures our budget expenditure is in line with the objectives of the Centre. Our operational budget is supplemented by third-stream income through the Psychology CPD WELL programme. However, we have seen a decline in participation due to competitive and similar offerings in the market. To diversify our streams of income, we offer Insights Discovery Training to faculties and departments and will explore more possibilities for training in the private sector in 2024.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to share the most important parts of the past year's journey of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development. We remain true to our vision to deliver an approachable, inclusive, and client-centred service. This year

challenged us on a number of levels, but true to its nature the CSCD managed these challenges to the best of its ability. My sincere gratitude to each staff member and all our partners within and outside the University for making this year memorable.



CSCD Oranogram

ORGANOGRAM: CENTRE FOR STUDENT COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT (CSCD)

OCTOBER 2023

