



Stellenbosch
UNIVERSITY
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forward together
sonke siya phambili
saam vorentoe

PEOPLE & CULTURE IMPACT

Prof Nico Koopman | 2025

***Annual Report of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor:
Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel***

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Dear chair and members

I am privileged and pleased to report to Senate and Council on the work of the Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel responsibility centre (SITP RC) during the period June 2024 to May 2025.

As our name suggests, the SITP RC is concerned with social impact as a core academic imperative, transformation as a crucial institutional imperative, and all the University's people, being our staff, our students and our societal stakeholders. In collaboration with all other Stellenbosch University (SU) environments, the RC is an enabler of transformation, wellbeing and impact.

The RC's divisions work collaboratively on a number of key institutional priorities, including performance advancement, wellbeing and training and development. Led by chief director Miriam Hoosain,

the Division of Human Resources (HR) is in an exciting phase of strengthening capabilities within and through HR. The Division of Social Impact and Transformation, headed by Dr Leslie van Rooi, is settling into the strategic changes that were made in the previous cycle to enhance its role and impact.

Our Campus Health Service, in turn, is moving forward under the new leadership of Dr Kathryn Grammer to strengthen and enhance health and wellbeing on all our campuses.

This report highlights the multidimensional work of our RC, our approach to people and culture, and our holistic, multifaceted way of work. As is customary, the report is structured according to SU's six strategic themes.

Introduction

In terms of its value proposition, the SITP RC is people-centred, and advances social impact, holistic transformation, wellbeing and human flourishing at and through Stellenbosch University (SU).

This is done through our interdependent divisions, namely:

- a) Human Resources (HR);
- b) the Campus Health Service; and
- c) Social Impact and Transformation, which includes the Centre for the Advancement of Social Impact and Transformation (CASIT), the SU Museum, WOW (Words Open Worlds), the Technology Research Activity Centre (TRAC), and the SU Choir.

Our five priorities for the current reporting period are:

- 1. performance advancement;
- 2. staff health and wellbeing;

- 3. qualitative and quantitative transformation;
- 4. SU as anchor institution in society; and
- 5. working towards an HR Division of strategic partnerships and operational excellence.

This report is structured around the six core strategic themes of SU's Strategic Framework 2019–2024, namely:

- a) a thriving Stellenbosch University;
- b) a transformative student experience;
- c) purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks;
- d) networked and collaborative teaching and learning;
- e) research for impact; and
- f) employer of choice.

As such, the report consistently outlines the SITP RC's contribution to achieving SU's core strategic themes as well as transformation as an institutional gamechanger.



**A thriving
Stellenbosch University**

Social Impact, Transformation and Sustainability

The institutional goals for this theme are to:

- cultivate an SU characterised by inclusivity, deep and intentional transformation, and diversity;
- create opportunities for the advancement of multilingualism in academic, administrative, professional and social contexts, whilst recognising the intellectual wealth inherent in linguistic diversity;
- change the size, shape and mix of our student population and of our academic programmes to mirror the strategic direction of our vision;
- create a financially sustainable organisation;
- raise the standard of the University's facilities and infrastructure to that of a world-class research-intensive university, while embracing visual redress;
- bring about profound and sustainable change and regeneration in all facets and functions of SU to be agile, adaptive and responsive;
- aspire to be a leading, research-intensive university ranked among the top world universities by 2024; and
- create an entrepreneurial culture that advances innovation institutionally.

Getting our governing transformation documents in place

Council approved our **Transformation Policy** on 2 December 2024. The policy, which is available [online](#), has since also been translated into isiXhosa and Afrikaans.

The envisaged completion date of the **Transformation Plan** is November 2025. Discussions on the transformation key performance area (KPA) to be included in the Plan have taken place with the relevant RC heads and chief/senior directors with a view to identifying what the five transformation themes would look like in the respective environments.



Left: Our Transformation Policy, as approved in December 2024.

Enhancing our B-BBEE rating

SU again obtained a level-8 broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE) rating for the 2023 financial year. While we are already engaging all aspects of B-BBEE in the spirit and practice of transformation, we continue to strive for higher levels of B-BBEE compliance in particular areas.

To this end, we embarked on:

- a request for proposals (RFP) for the provision of enterprise and supplier development services and a consultancy service; and
- a tender process for a service provider to verify the B-BBEE credentials of all suppliers on the University's database to support preferential procurement practices.

The Rectorate subsequently approved the appointment of a service provider with a proven track record to deliver these services in a university context. This will occur holistically over the next five years. Additionally, the Rectorate has given the go-ahead for a new position of B-BBEE coordinator.

Transformation committees guide bold discussion

Transformation committees (TCs) have now been established in eight of our ten faculties and in all RCs. Newly established committees are assisted through training workshops. Feedback from the workshops is largely positive, even where staff find conversations challenging.

TCs take the lead in initiatives to address inequalities and inequities at SU. Importantly, all TCs in student-facing environments have committed to student inclusion. Student members feed information from students to the TCs and are included in all decision-making to resolve transformation-related challenges. This means that more students are engaged, and benefit from a greater awareness among staff of the constraints affecting student learning. For instance, more faculties have placed food pantries on their TC agendas to help manage student food insecurity. Some faculty TCs have also initiated dedicated lecturer and student lunch-hour talks regarding academic matters.

Examples of TC initiatives undertaken in faculties and RCs in the reporting period include:

- the visual redress of Room 1031 in the Faculty of Law;
- the Division of Student Affairs Transformation Summit;
- the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences' tree-planting ceremony in memory of Prof Elmarie Costandius;
- transformation workshops hosted by Operations and Finance;
- a special screening by the Faculty of Law of the award-winning documentary *Mother City*, which features the struggle for affordable, well-located land and housing in Cape Town; and
- a Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences transformation engagement.

Moreover, the newly established Transformation Chairs' Forum has taken off, providing a space for the mutual exchange of ideas among TC chairs.



This means that more students are engaged, and benefit from a greater awareness among staff of the constraints affecting student learning.

Deepening transformation through ongoing engagement

Highlights of our Transformation Learning Network over the past year included:

- a presentation on the history of racial and spatial segregation, and the impact of spatial dynamics on how the coloured community experience their heritage, hosted by Ms Leza Soldaat, a PhD candidate in Sociology at SU;
- an information session on the transformation KPA and SU's values, and how this will affect staff in their 2026 performance cycle, facilitated by Dr Leslie van Rooi, Dr Zethu Mkhize and Dr Jean Farmer; and
- a session on universal access and what it looks

like at SU, hosted by Disability Unit head Dr Marcia Lyner-Cleophas.

The Transformation Indaba was held on 23 October 2024. Themed "Accountability matters", the event aimed to stimulate action that would deepen transformation at SU and sustain the gains achieved thus far. Conversations centred on the implications of accountability for social justice, SU's transformation journey, and academic freedom. The keynote address was delivered by Prof Saleem Badat, research professor in the Department of History at the University of the Free State, and former Vice-Chancellor of Rhodes University.

Foregrounding and funding social impact

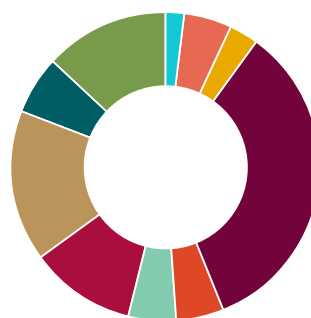
On 3 April 2025, the Centre for the Advancement of Social Impact and Transformation (CASIT) hosted a **social impact orientation session** (pictured alongside). Staff, students and community leaders were introduced to social impact as a key SU strategy, as well as to the concepts and practices of engaged scholarship, engaged citizenship, and democratic corporate citizenship. Participants gained a clear understanding of the University's vision of advancing knowledge in service of society, and the enabling role that CASIT plays in helping staff and students connect with stakeholders in society to achieve this vision. Going forward, an orientation session will be held annually in the first quarter.



To highlight CASIT's social impact functions even further, the Centre's **new website** is a central hub with dedicated sections for social impact initiatives, volunteering opportunities and student projects. This allows both internal and external stakeholders to view and learn from current and past initiatives across our faculties and environments.

Of course, **social impact funding** is essential to support the implementation and scaling up of impactful initiatives, enabling staff and students to drive sustainable change in collaboration with communities. One major round of funding to the value of R4,2 million has been made available for 2025. In 2024, an amount of R3,2 million was distributed as shown alongside.

Fund distribution per faculty – Round 1 & 2 (R3.24 million)



- 2% Maties Sports (R71 400)
- 5% AgriSciences (R220 000)
- 3% Science (R120 000)
- 34% Military Science (R1 411 000)
- 5% Law (R200 000)
- 5% Engineering (R200 000)
- 11% Education (R464 015)
- 16% Arts and Social Sciences (R691 250)
- 6% Publications (R271 848)
- 13% Medicine and Health Sciences (R560 627)

Striving for a healthy campus community

In 2024, the Campus Health Service saw a total of 14822 patients. **Monthly patient counts** are indicated in the chart alongside, with dips mostly associated with holiday periods on campus.

Our Maties Risk of Non-Communicable Disease (MaRooN) health passport continues to serve as a valuable barometer of health and wellbeing on campus. Of the 231 staff members who completed the survey, 140 had **flagged conditions**; among students, the 5197 completed surveys pointed to 1 510 with flagged conditions. In 2024, high cholesterol, joint pain and depression were the major conditions identified among staff (see *first graph below*), while students struggled with anxiety disorders, anxiety attacks, and depression (*second graph below*).

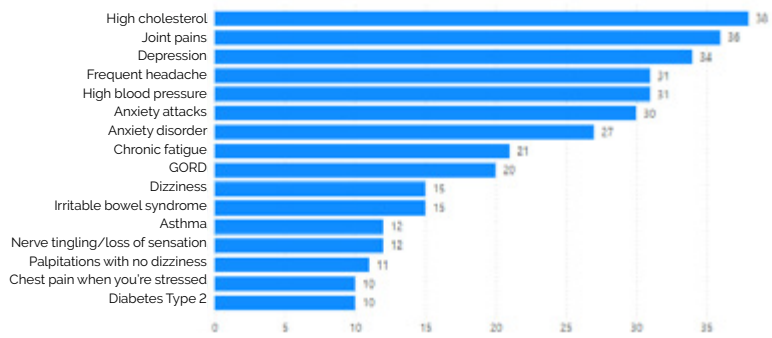
Doctors/CNP Patient count: 2024



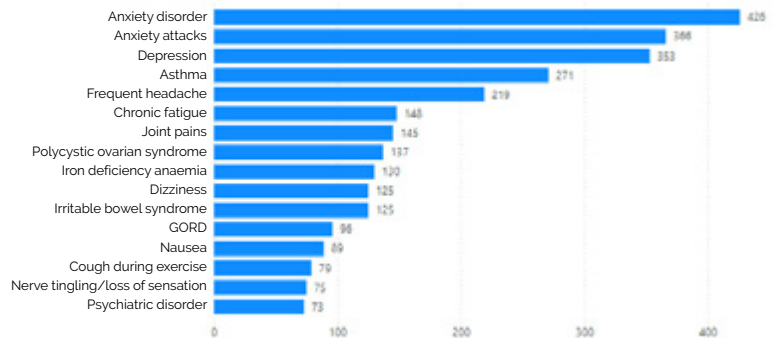
In terms of **lifestyle**, low scores for nutrition and mental health among both staff (*first set of graphs below*) and students (*second set of graphs*) are cause for concern. Physical activity among students is generally good, but shows room for improvement among staff. Overall, sleep scores are satisfactory for both groups.

Moreover, library staff on both our Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses received refresher training in **using automated external defibrillators to resuscitate persons suffering cardiac arrest**. The Heart and Stroke Foundation of South Africa had donated the defibrillators to our university a while back. The refresher training was necessary, considering the number of new staff who had joined our libraries in recent years, and the long opening hours of SU's libraries.

Count of Current Flags

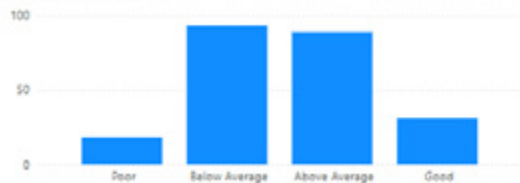


Count of Current Flags

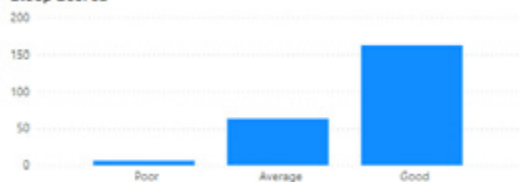


STAFF

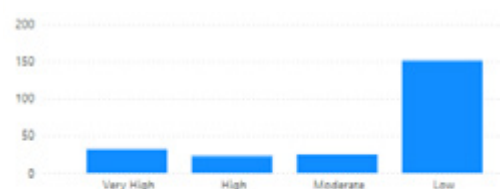
Nutrition Scores



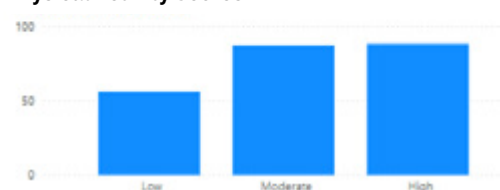
Sleep Scores



Mental Health Scores

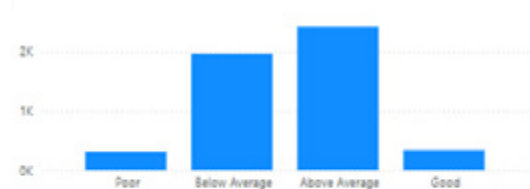


Physical Activity Scores



STUDENTS

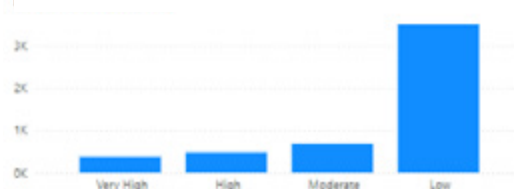
Nutrition Scores



Sleep Scores



Mental Health Scores



Physical Activity Scores





Woordfees offers chance to 'play'

SU and the Toyota Stellenbosch Woordfees celebrated the arts together from 28 September to 6 October 2024. The event, themed "Play", offered over 400 unique productions in 12 genres. Some 200 of our alumni, students and staff participated in more than 120 presentations. As founding sponsor, we have been proudly involved with the festival since its inception.

WOW celebrates 21 years of impact

We were pleased to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the Woordfees-associated social impact project WOW (Words Open Words) in the past year.

The **2024 Sanlam WOW Spelling Festival** attracted 751 schools in the Afrikaans category, 630 in the English category, and 130 for isiXhosa. Other WOW activities included the Counting Festival, which developed the mathematical skills of learners in 15 schools, and the annual WOW festival, where 21 productions were staged. WOW also visited over 50 schools to assist learners with applying to SU.

At the **WOW Gala** on 3 December 2024, 211 learners and 73 educators from 27 schools, predominantly from Stellenbosch and surrounds, gathered to celebrate the programme's top achievers and the milestone of 21 years of impact (*pictured below*). Two WOW top-up bursaries were also awarded to a prospective Drama student from Eersterivier Secondary and a registered Education student from Lückhoff High in Stellenbosch respectively.

On 6 March 2025, the **WOW Schools Media Gala** saw 80 learners and 20 educators from ten

schools being honoured for their participation in the programme's workshops and master classes in the production of school newspapers and annual media plans. Overall winner Klein Nederburg Secondary was awarded a laptop for editing and producing their school newspaper.

WOW was also represented at our university's Open Day on 15 March 2025 in the form of the **WOW Make-a-Plan Project**. Learners from seven high schools in the Stellenbosch areas of Cloet-essville, Groendal, Kayamandi, Kylemore, Lückhoff, Makaphula and Stellenzicht were shown around campus by senior SU students, who themselves are part of WOW. School groups from George and Mossel Bay also participated. WOW followed up with these learners in May and will be assisting them with applying to study at SU.

Finally, at our March 2025 graduation series, the **WOW programme delivered five graduates**, who have now joined the growing group of WOW alumni.



SU Museum events spark dialogue

The exhibitions and events hosted at the SU Museum continue to stimulate critical thinking and engagement. **In the reporting period, these included:**

- the student exhibition *Where are we now*, through which student leaders selected works from the Museum's permanent collection to reflect on South Africa's 30 years of democracy;
- the exhibition *The person is in the people – Nelson Mandela is dead* in collaboration with the Nelson Mandela Foundation;
- a screening of the film *Letters to Zohra* in collaboration with the Ahmed Kathrada Foundation;
- the *Talking in Dakar* exhibition, which depicted the historic pre-democracy talks between a group of progressive Afrikaners and the then exiled African National Congress in Dakar; and
- the launch of a book on academic xenophobia co-edited by Prof Jonathan Jansen and Dr Precious Simba, a fellow of the Ubuntu Dialogues project.

SU Choir still hitting all the right notes

Our award-winning choir put on stellar performances at their first four concerts of the year between 2 and 16 May 2025. A definite highlight was the gala concert on 2 and 3 May, which formed part of the prestigious Endler concert series in Stellenbosch. Meanwhile, preparations for the choir's international tour to Denmark in June and July are progressing well.



Educating ourselves through the airwaves

The weekly talk show *Siyakhula Live* on MFM 92.6 helps the SU community grow through topical and informative conversations.

In the reporting period, some of the topics covered included:

- the role of neuroethics in brain research, emphasising diversity, inclusion and culturally relevant approaches (featuring Dr Olivia Matshabane);
- the right to education, discussing inclusive teaching strategies for diverse learning needs (featuring academic support officer Ntombifuthi Maduna);
- the right to health, exploring the notion of inclusive health and its societal impact (featuring Dr Munya Saruchera);
- the effects of a VAT increase on food security (featuring dietitian Dr Chantell Witten);
- the National Health Insurance (NHI) scheme (featuring policy expert Dr Khwezi Mabasa); and
- financial freedom as a social justice issue, and equitable access to financial opportunities (featuring chartered accountant Tshedimoso Maleka).

University's heart for SA and social justice on full display on Mandela Day

Our institution hosted a walking dialogue to commemorate Mandela Day 2024 (*event poster depicted alongside*). By following a designated route around our Stellenbosch campus, the dialogue focused on institutional landmarks that symbolise the late statesman's long walk to freedom in pursuit of equality and social justice. With a focus on the theme "It is in your hands", participants reflected on how each one of us can harness our strengths to bring about positive change.

On Tygerberg campus, SU people spent Mandela Day providing focused support to new mothers at Tygerberg hospital and organised a knitting circle to create blankets for local children's shelters.



Engagement calendar ensures year-round meaningful conversations



Designed around key national days, our Imbizo 365 calendar is a valuable tool to reflect on important themes (*see alongside*).

In commemoration of **Women's Day 2024**, the Transformation Office, the Students' Representative Council (SRC) and SU Museum invited Liberty Matthyse, executive director of Gender DynamiX, to share her lived experience as a transgender woman in higher education with an audience of 60 staff members and students (*pictured alongside*).

For **Heritage Day 2024**, the departments of African Languages, Music, the Faculty of Theology and the SU Museum co-hosted a celebration of isiXhosa culture. Attended by representatives of the Afrikaner Traditional Clan and the AmaXhosa Royal Family Council, the event reflected SU's commitment to engagement with its publics.

In April 2025, the Faculty of Law's annual **Human Rights Day** lecture featured Prof Cathi Albertyn (*first picture on next page*), who holds the Chair in Equality, Law and Social Justice at the University of Witwatersrand. She presented a profound paper on substantive equality and its jurisprudence, highlighting that substantive justice is both a right and a value.

In commemorating **Freedom Day** this year, SU reflected on the impact of the Trump administration on South Africa (*see event poster on next page*). Since his re-election as United States president, Donald





Trump has at a number of occasions remarked on supposed human rights violations occurring in our country. This has fuelled debate about South Africa both nationally and internationally, including about issues such as land expropriation, our country's International Court of Justice action against the genocide in Palestine, and Trump's trade tariffs.

Our **2025 Worker's Day** celebration supported not only a thriving SU, but also tied in with our strategic theme of "Employer of choice". Through a fun and interactive lunch-hour quiz (*see event poster above*), we raised awareness of the socio-historical significance of Worker's Day in the South African context.

Strategy shift to enhance TRAC's impact

Part of being a thriving institution is knowing when to adjust our tactic to be even more efficient.

The extensive experience of TRAC – SU's national Mathematics and Physical Science intervention programme – has shown that students, particularly those from distant and marginalised communities, tend to exhibit **higher success rates when placed in university accommodation**. However, in 2025, only 31 TRAC-supported applicants to SU secured place in residence, with limited access to accommodation accredited by the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS). To address this challenge in future, TRAC will only assist beneficiaries in applying to SU if they meet criteria that would reasonably ensure access to a residence. Learners who do not meet these criteria will be supported in applying to other tertiary institutions that might have accommodation available.

In addition, TRAC will host **online SU open days** for the Grade 12 beneficiaries identified to apply to SU with a view to studies in 2026. These sessions will give learners valuable insight into the university environment, academic expectations and available support structures, leaving them better prepared to transition to tertiary education.



Students, particularly those from distant and marginalised communities, tend to exhibit higher success rates when placed in university accommodation.



A transformative student experience

The institutional goals for this theme are to:

- provide a unique, personalised student experience that serves as a catalyst for transformational change amidst opportunities for engagement and development through a first-class academic offering, which prepares graduates to lead and excel in a diverse world;
- develop our students' graduate attributes so that they can be 21st-century citizens and achieve their full potential;
- strengthen strategic enrolment management to enhance access and inclusivity;
- enhance our student success rate through educational innovation;
- deliver comprehensive, premium-quality support services to our student community;
- enhance and expand engagement opportunities for our substantial alumni community; and
- create relevant opportunities for work-integrated learning towards a successful career and positive societal impact.

Ensuring that SU students are engaged citizens

Our Activating Engaged Citizenship co-curricular programme for 2024 attracted 90 enrolments by student leaders in residences, societies and faculty committees. The experiential course empowers student leaders in diverse leadership roles to be truly tuned in to society's needs. Those who complete the course successfully also earn formal transcript recognition.

Students' hands-on project activities included a career day at Tygerberg campus, where some 120 Grade 9s from Scottsdale High received guidance on subject choices with a view to tertiary studies. Minerva residence hosted a cultural evening

74

students have enrolled for the 2025 edition of the programme

where learners from the Glenelly Aftercare Centre showcased their music, dancing and singing skills. A group of Engineering students devoted their Saturdays to Mathematics tutoring for Grade 12s from Kayamandi High. Their engagement efforts earned five students on the Activating Engaged Citizenship programme a Rector's Award for Social Impact.

New course to cultivate socially conscious graduates

CASIT has received formal approval for the experiential learning course Impact through Community Engagement. The programme will be offered in two distinct annual cycles in February and July, allowing flexibility for students to participate. It will afford students an opportunity to have the competencies they have developed through

community engagement recorded on their academic transcripts. The aim is to equip socially conscious graduates who are prepared to contribute effectively to real-world challenges.

The first cohort commenced their training in February 2025.

Instilling a culture of volunteerism

Volunteerism continues to be a vital component of student life at our institution.

Our **Volunteerism Practice portfolio** continued to transform students into purposeful partners of the communities around SU. For instance, seven African Languages students contributed to classroom learning at Paul Roos Primary and helped facilitate the Masithethe isiXhosa competition, promoting linguistic diversity and cultural appreciation.

The **Volunteerism Practice short course** attracted 52 international and 48 local students, who volunteered individually in various community projects. These initiatives have not only strengthened ties with local schools and organisations, but have also equipped students with valuable life skills, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding.

Moreover, the new experiential **Impacting Communities through Volunteerism course** (see *alongside*) started with an intake of 92 students. Having completed their theoretical training, the students were placed at community projects to complete their prescribed contact hours. Students also received guidance to create e-portfolios, which they would use when applying for a job.

Since we started uploading volunteering opportunities to our **Social Impact Knowledge Platform**, uptake has grown steadily, with over 45 individuals already expressing interest in volunteering.



Above: The Impacting Communities through Volunteerism course started with an intake of 92 students.

Immersing Social Work students in real-world contexts

As part of SU's commitment to delivering graduates with skills relevant to the world we live in, CASIT's Transformative Social Work short course (see *course marketing alongside*) offers first-year Social Work students a co-curricular experience that integrates theoretical learning with a practical, community-based component at organisations such as the Pebbles Project and the AF Louw and Idas Valley primary schools. Currently, 89 students are enrolled for this course.

Developing students both academically and as practitioners, the course fosters early exposure to the values and ethics underpinning the social work profession. As such, it is yet another way in which SU delivers socially responsive, ethically grounded and critically engaged graduates.



Right: Currently, 89 students are enrolled for CASIT's Transformative Social Work short course.



Student leaders learn to tackle thorny issues

In preparation for Welcoming 2025, House Committee (HC) members responsible for critical engagement in their respective residences received facilitation training to present Let's Talk conversations to newcomer students (*see one such training session pictured above*). Commuter students, too, were involved in the training. Themes covered included understanding consent, how to

create a thinking environment, understanding gender-based violence, universal access and disability awareness, as well as drinking culture and campus life. Each HC member presented at least three of these workshop topics to their newcomers. Those HC members who were new to the portfolio were paired with experienced co-facilitators.

Showing newcomers that SU cares about our communities

In February 2025, over 5 000 newcomer first-years participated in our annual Social Impact Community Morning. A collaboration between CASIT and the Division of Student Affairs, the event introduces newcomers to active citizenship and community engagement at our institution. Students were able to apply their skills to real-world challenges by engaging with community organisations in and around our Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses. In this way, they gained first-hand experience of the importance of sound university–community relationships.



Students taught to have "write" impact

The Writing for Change programme develops students into young public commentators, able to write from the student perspective on transformation and social justice issues. For their final experiential learning engagement, the 2024 cohort went on guided tours of the Slave Lodge (*pictured above*) and the District Six Museum in Cape Town in September. This was followed by facilitated conversations on the influence of past injustices on writing.

From the 36 applications received for the 2025 edition of the programme, 20 students received offers to participate. Training for the 16 students who ultimately accepted the offer started in April.



TRAC a vital vehicle for prospective student support

TRAC continues to play a pivotal role in engaging with schools in underserved regions to elevate academic proficiency in Mathematics and Physical Science (*pictures above show TRAC beneficiaries conducting experiments*). At the same time, the initiative helps learners navigate university application processes, including funding applications.

During the 2024 National Senior Certificate examinations, **TRAC-supported learners significantly outperformed national averages**, underscoring the programme's success in ensuring that learners meet minimum pass requirements. TRAC participants achieved a Mathematics pass rate of 85,31% compared to a 69,10% national pass rate, and a Physical Science pass rate of 83,36% compared to the 75,60% recorded nationally.

In total, TRAC **facilitated 3 618 tertiary applications** for Grade 12s nationwide with a view to

1 345

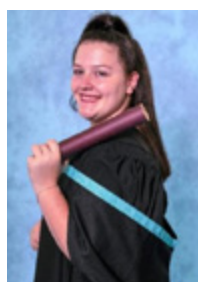
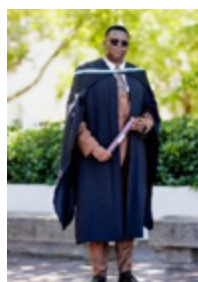
Grade 12s have engaged with TRAC in 2025 to date

1 487

Grade 11s have engaged with TRAC in 2025 to date

studies in 2025, and assisted with 1 172 NSFAS applications, of which 996 had been approved by the time of drafting this report.

With regard to our institution specifically, the programme identified 292 Grade 12s who qualified to apply to SU for first-year studies in 2025. A total of 245 applications were completed, and 107 applicants received a conditional offer. **The top three TRAC Grade 12s of 2024 ultimately decided to apply to our university.**



At our graduation ceremonies for the 2024 academic year, a total of **17 TRAC alumni proudly received their SU qualifications** in fields such as chemical, civil and electrical engineering, management accounting, computer science, theoretical physics, and plant and soil science (*see collage left*).

Moving mountains to see students gain access

Most TRAC beneficiaries come from economically disadvantaged households and rely on NSFAS funding for tertiary education. However, ongoing administrative challenges with the timely disbursement of NSFAS funds, and the fact that the funding is insufficient to cover all costs, often cause financial uncertainty and stress for students, which affects their academic performance. To help overcome this,

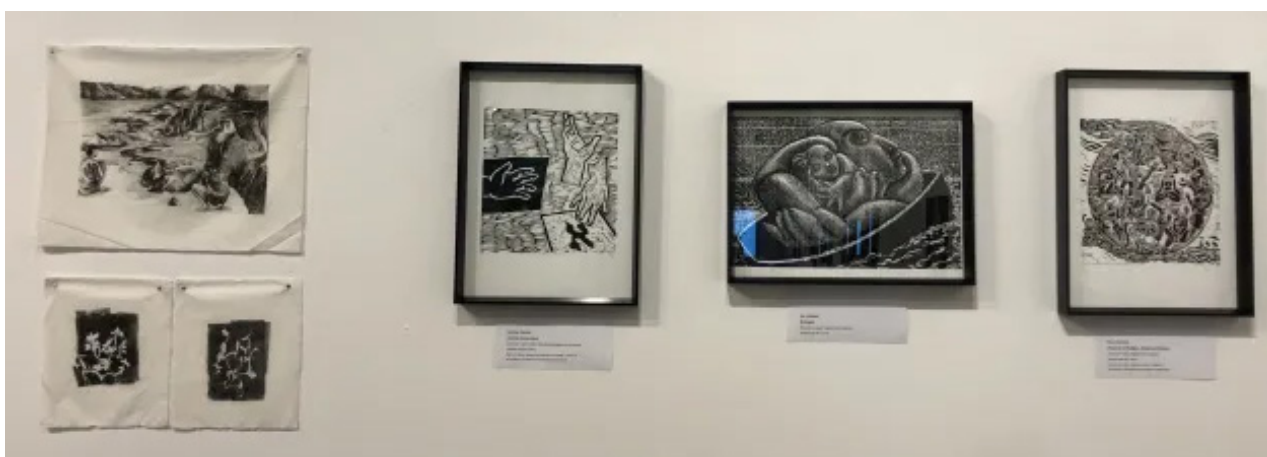
TRAC managed to negotiate bursaries with Manitou – a provider of materials-handling solutions for the mining and other industries – for seven TRAC alumni currently studying at SU. The bursaries, intended for studies in 2025, range between R140 000 and R190 000 each. They provide much-needed financial relief and stability for the recipients, enabling them to focus more fully on their studies.

Providing for students' health needs

As reported last year, the Campus Health Service (CHS) and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS) collaborated to implement a session-based psychiatry service for FMHS students. Since September 2024, Dr Sibongile Mpongwa-

na-Ncetani has been taking charge of these duties.

Additionally, clinical staff at CHS addressed the parents of newcomer first-years about the health and wellbeing support services at students' disposal.



New generation reflects on Bill of Rights

In the SU Museum exhibition *Freedom, life and dignity re-imagined*, Visual Arts students in the third-year printmaking course were asked to produce works that responded to clauses in South Africa's Bill of Rights from the perspective of a new generation liv-

ing with the promise of the Bill of Rights. Their work was viewed in conversation with that of South African artists featured in the *Images of Human Rights* print portfolio published in 1996, shortly after the Constitution and the Bill of Rights came into effect.



Purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks

The institutional goals for this theme are to:

- develop a framework of principles to ensure local relevance, regional impact and a global reach to enable transactional partnerships and promote transformative partnerships;
- promote a deep connectedness and interaction with business, industry and government to leverage our strengths, which will include work-integrated learning, continuing professional development, collaborative research, consulting, licensing, spin-out companies and commercial ventures;
- embrace the communities we serve to bring about social, cultural, environmental and economic development and change;
- enhance and expand engagement opportunities for, and foster our relationship with, our substantial alumni community;
- build effective collaborations through partnerships, alliances and networks with other universities, institutions and organisations, where such collaboration contributes to excellence in teaching and learning, outstanding research and social engagement and impact;
- foster distributed, networked and reciprocal partnerships that are nurtured by both institutional structuring and personal relations; and
- establish appropriate partnerships with institutions in all societal sectors, including the spheres of civil society, public discourse, public opinion-formation and public policy-making.

Symposium a platform for impact partners to shine

The aim of the Social Impact Symposium held in August 2024 was to afford our partners the opportunity to showcase their impactful initiatives. The various contributors who showcased their social

impact projects included students, community-based organisations, academics and corporates, truly embodying the quadruple helix model.

Memorial lecture re-enters story of Vlakte community into SU's history

The inaugural Walter Parry Memorial Lecture was hosted on 22 May 2024 in collaboration with the Lückhoff Alumni and our Department of Physics, as part of the Lückhoff Living Museum visual redress and restitution initiative. Parry (1913–1966), a physicist and mathematics teacher, is the first historical figure associated with Lückhoff High School in Stellenbosch to have his remarkable life story and legacy re-entered into the history of the school, town and our university. The lecture coincided with what would have been Parry's 111th birthday.

The Walter Parry Memorial Lecture is of immense historical significance to SU's commitment to restitution. Parry, a brilliant mathematics teacher and pillar of the Stellenbosch community, faced tremendous adversity during apartheid. Although he dreamed of becoming a scientist, the doors to a life in academia were not open to him. Through the lecture, and acknowledging the University's responsibility towards present and future generations, our institution honours Parry's contributions and recognises their enduring relevance. The



lecture drew a large audience of community members (*pictured above*).

The establishment of the memorial lecture is part of a larger effort to help correct historical omissions and distortions of the contributions and experiences of those connected to the Vlakte, and especially the old Lückhoff school. Along with the rest of the community of the Vlakte, staff and learners from the school were forced to leave the area and move to designated areas under the Group Areas Act of 1950.

Lückhoff Living Museum an exemplar of 'restitution in partnership'

The work of the Lückhoff Living Museum is supported by a **Strategic and Creative Advisory Body** chaired by Lückhoff alumnus Prof André Keet, Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Nelson Mandela University.

The advisory body includes:

- Mr Calvyn Gilfellan, chief executive of the Castle of Good Hope;
- SU Theology dean Prof Reggie Nel;
- representatives from Standard Bank;
- the Lückhoff Alumni executive;
- Lückhoff school representatives;
- artists affiliated with Soil Remembers;
- representatives from SU's Centre for the Study of the Afterlife of Violence and the Reparative Quest (AVReQ);
- representatives from the SU Museum;
- the prim of House Walter Parry, a new SU residence; and
- local community leaders.

Together, this diverse collective is shaping the Lückhoff Living Museum into a dynamic archive and a critical pedagogical space that honours the memory of the Vlake community, while envisioning new futures rooted in justice and belonging.

Giving further direction to the Lückhoff Living Museum's efforts are **two working groups on memorialisation and education respectively**. In its focus on community engagement, the memorialisation group explored partnerships with institutions such as the Castle of Good Hope, the District Six Museum and Iziko Museums to learn about decolonial memory preservation. These interactions emphasised the importance of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural representation, providing inspiration for future projects to honour those displaced from the Vlake. The education group, in its focus on historical restitution, worked closely with Prof Jonathan Jansen, our Faculty of Education and Department of Physics to enhance science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education at underresourced schools. In September 2024, the group engaged with 30 teachers from Lückhoff, focusing on support for educators and students to succeed in maths and science.

A special screening of the internationally acclaimed documentary ***What the Soil Remembers*** at the Old Lückhoff building on Heritage Day 2024 was well attended by both community members and faculty (*pictured alongside*). The film delves into the profound impact of forced removals and explores the complex historical relationship between SU and the communities affected by the displacements. The screening, supported by CASIT, sparked meaningful dialogue among participants about the ongoing work of restitution and healing.

Finally, a key milestone for the Lückhoff Living Museum in the reporting period was the **installation of Walter Parry artwork** at the Old Lückhoff building. Conceptualised by the Lückhoff Alumni (*members pictured alongside in front of the installation*) and endorsed by the Parry family, the artwork honours the memory and legacy of this respected community icon. The installation has elicited overwhelmingly positive responses from the community.



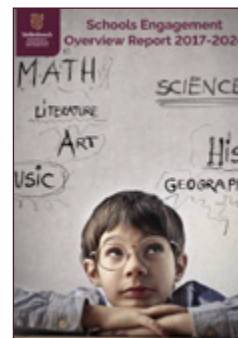
Working side by side with civil society

Over the past year, CASIT was approached by various **civil society organisations with requests to collaborate with SU** on various topics of interest. These included the leadership councils of the Afrikaner Traditional Clan and the AmaXhosa Kingdom. Both these groups have memorandums of understanding with our institution and sought our assistance with setting up their websites to be able to engage with their communities and showcase their activities.

Other organisations that reached out to CASIT were L'Roi, E'Bosch and MiDO Academy, all Stellenbosch-based entities with a focus on afterschool programmes, heritage and cybersecurity respectively. After meeting with their representatives, CASIT logged their interests on SU's online platform for marketing community engagement opportunities to the University's staff and students, and targeted specific SU units and colleagues who may be interested in collaborations.

The Engaged Citizenship portfolio continues to **nurture impactful community partnerships** to ensure meaningful placements for our student volunteers. CASIT maintains strong ties with the Pebbles Project, Aitsa Aftercare Centre in Kylemore, Glenelly Aftercare Centre in Idas Valley, and Stellenbosch community-based arts collective CraftsALive.

In addition, CASIT actively participates in the **Stellenbosch Civil Advocacy Network (SCAN)**. In collaboration with Visit Stellenbosch, CASIT is conceptualising SCAN's NGO leadership working group, which aims to enhance coordination and sustainability in the regional non-profit sector.



Showcasing schools engagement

A key part of our university's broader social impact and transformation agenda is engagement with schools. To provide an overview of this work for the period 2017 to 2024, a report and presentation have been prepared. The report (*top right*), which is available on request, highlights key initiatives aimed at strengthening relationships with primary and secondary schools, particularly in underresourced and marginalised communities. It also includes examples of impactful school partnerships driven by SU's faculties and students. The presentation (*top left*), which has been delivered to the SU Schools Forum and the Social Impact Committee of Senate, emphasises the importance of early engagement in promoting access to higher education, nurturing a culture of social responsiveness, and aligning social impact efforts with the University's commitment to equity and transformation.

Partnering to honour history and better preserve heritage

The building housing the **SU Museum was once used as Bloemhof High**, and we continue to honour this connection. During its centenary celebrations, Bloemhof hosted some events at the Museum. The Museum also has a permanent exhibition on the history of the building, including when it served as a school, which Bloemhof's learners and teachers have been able to view.

Moreover, through Museum director's Bongani Mgijima's fellowship at the Yale Directors Forum, SU Museum staff were able to receive **training in collections management** from Mr Anupam Sah, a renowned conservation specialist from India. The lessons learnt will inform how the Museum deploys its resources in future towards better care and conservation of its rich collections.



Solid partnerships fuel TRAC's work

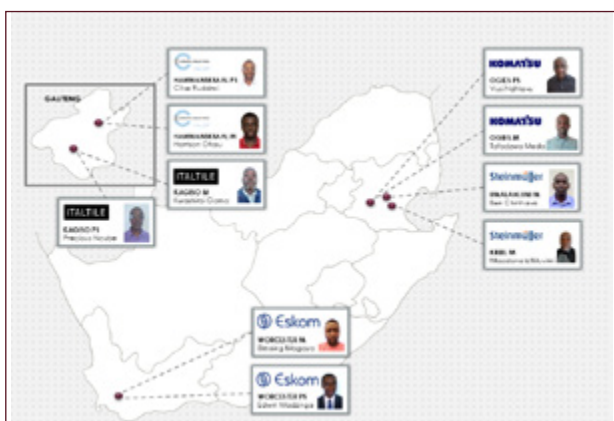
In June 2024, the **Italtile Foundation** – a loyal TRAC donor – hosted a successful roadshow to introduce itself to beneficiaries of the programme. Five schools in the Kagiso area participated in the event, which was well attended by learners and educators alike (*see pictures above*). Such engagements are crucial to strengthen ties with donors, ensuring their sustained support and a deeper understanding of how their contributions feed into TRAC's initiatives.

Steinmüller Africa, TRAC's long-standing and valued financial partner, hosted an awards function in February 2025 to recognise the top-performing Grade 12s of 2024 in Mathematics and Physical Science from the ten TRAC-supported schools in the Kriel and Emalahleni regions. The top achiever in Physical Science, Siphesihle Zikalala from Alpheus D Nkosi High (*below*), achieved 98% in the NSC exam, and Maths whiz Gugu Libambo from Mphanama High (*below*) scored a remarkable 100%. Both these students are currently studying at the University of Cape Town.

TRAC alumna Mbalenhle Masibikela delivered an inspiring address, reflecting on her journey with TRAC (*see below*). A former learner at Kriel High, she went on to graduate with a BCom Management Accounting from SU in 2021 and then completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Education (FET) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Having come full circle, she currently teaches at her alma mater.

The **Eskom Foundation** recently approved support for a TRAC point in the Worcester area in the Western Cape, while potential exists for additional Eskom-funded TRAC points in the Northern Cape and North West.

For 2025, several **key funders have confirmed their continued commitment** to TRAC initiatives (*as indicated on the map of TRAC operational areas below*). Ceramic Industries will fund a Mathematics and Physical Science programme in Hammanskraal, while Steinmüller has committed to supporting two Mathematics programmes in Kriel and Emalahleni. The Komatsu Foundation has renewed its support for the Ogies Mathematics and Physical



Science programme, and the Italtile Foundation has reaffirmed its commitment to funding the Kagi-so Mathematics and Physical Science programme.

To ensure the **long-term sustainability of TRAC** and expand its reach, a strategic decision has been made to prioritise securing new funding partners across various sectors. As TRAC relies solely on external funding, diversifying and expanding our funding base is essential for continued growth and impact. The immediate focus is ongoing negotiations with Eskom to expand TRAC to the West Coast, Malmesbury and Garies areas, establishing three new Mathematics and Physical Science points. Once these discussions progress, TRAC will engage with its existing funding partners to explore potential new partnerships in their respective industries.

Contributing skills at a national and international scale

SU people are valued knowledge partners, happy to share our expertise with others, including in the field of sports medicine and campus health.

Dr Craig Thompson from our Campus Health Service (CHS) served as Team South Africa's chief medical officer at the **Paralympic Games** in Paris in September 2024. CHS also provided medical support services for all the **Varsity Cup** rugby teams, as well as medical emergency services at matches. This included pre-participation medical screening for all Matie competitors in the tournament to ensure safe participation.

CHS's Valdene Southon, in turn, was invited to serve on the Healthy Campus Leadership Committee of the **American College Health Association (ACHA)** for the 2025–2027 term. The committee is a valuable team of professionals who assist ACHA member institutions on their journey to become health-promoting universities.

Additionally, then CHS senior director Dr Pierre Viviers was elected to serve on the Clinical Leadership Committee of the **American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)** for a three-year term. As the largest global network in the field of sport and exercise medicine, the ACSM is highly regarded. The **South African Society of Occupational Medicine (SASOM)** invited Dr Jo Ann Kirby to share how CHS sports medicine practitioners monitor athletes in high-performance sport. In this first collaboration between the two specialities of sports and occupational medicine, the methods employed for high-performance sport monitoring were proposed as a potential avenue for occupational health specialists to explore in screening individuals for vocational fitness.

In recognition of their contributions to the field of sports and exercise medicine in South Africa, both Drs Viviers and Kirby were admitted as associates of the **College of Medicine of South Africa**.



Networked and collaborative teaching and learning

Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel

The institutional goals for this theme are to:

- focus on a learning-centred approach to teaching, whilst promoting a holistic understanding of teaching and learning;
- foster interdisciplinary and inter-professional teaching and learning by empowering students to participate in a learning community where staff and students work together to learn, solve problems, research and innovate;
- create an institution of continuous learning that is skilled at co-creating and sharing knowledge and insights;
- promote the professionalisation of academics in their teaching role, and the scholarship of teaching and learning;
- develop a digital strategy to provide the basis for digital fluency and the meaningful integration of learning technologies towards a networked University that engages and inspires students, staff and alumni;
- expand on SU's knowledge offering to serve new student markets; and
- promote the continuous renewal of the University's academic programmes by means of a systemic process with clearly assigned roles and responsibilities for the various role-players.

WOW and SUNCOI collaborate to support science teaching at school

To help enhance primary school science teaching, WOW and the Stellenbosch University Chemistry Outreach Initiative (SUNCOI) are collaborating with 14 of the primary schools that participate in the WOW Numeracy Festival. Since February 2025, science educators at these schools have been attending Wednesday workshops, showing them ways in which to present simple science experiments. The workshops are scheduled to continue until August. Negotiations are also under way to organise a visit to a mobile laboratory in collaboration with our Department of Chemistry as part of the WOW festival programme later this year. Moreover, SUNCOI has undertaken to donate a Grade 4–7 chemistry kit to each of the participating schools, with the kind support of Kimix.

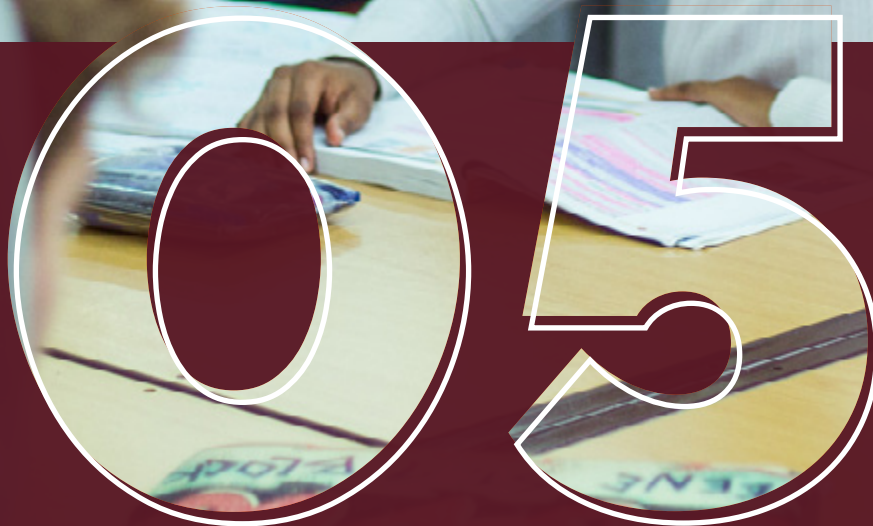
Supporting return-to-learn after sport-related concussion

Dr Pierre Viviers delivered a breakfast talk to some 40 principals and senior teachers from schools in the Bolland area on how schools can play a major role in return-to-learn efforts for learners who sustained sport-related head injuries, including concussion.

Harnessing SU Museum collections to enhance teaching and learning

As part of the Stellenbosch Triennale from February to April 2025, the SU Museum hosted the *From the Vault* exhibition, which showcased the Museum's anthropology collections for the first time in ten years. The exhibition received rave reviews as a blueprint for the decolonisation of museum exhibitions. As a result, the Museum and our Department of Social Anthropology and Sociology are discussing ways to make **greater use of these collections in the Department's teaching and learning**. The intention is to have postgraduates conduct research on the collections as part of their coursework, and then produce a research paper and curate an exhibition to go along with it.

The Museum's current focus on the **digitisation of its collections**, largely through its new Conservation Lab, will also ensure that valuable yet delicate preserved material can be used safely for research and teaching purposes.



Research for impact

The institutional goals for this theme are to:

- develop a research agenda derived from SU's values, societal needs and the sustainability imperative;
- conduct research of significance based on selected, focused strategic research areas;
- inform the future research agenda and strategically involve our stakeholders;
- conduct collaborative and interdisciplinary research that addresses the grand challenges of society; and
- create an embedded culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in our research.



Museum staff help write book on ubuntu

In the period in review, the edited volume *Ubuntu: Interdisciplinary Conversations across Continents* was launched. The publication was the culmination of the five-year Ubuntu Dialogues collaboration between SU and Michigan State University, supported by the Mellon Foundation, and was co-edited by staff from SU Museum. It features contributions from 17 emerging scholars who participated in the Ubuntu Dialogues seminar exchange programme, and highlights the programme's success in fostering global scholarly engagement around the concept of ubuntu.

CASIT key contributor to SU restitution book project

Significant progress has been achieved with our restitution book project – a scholarly initiative aimed at advancing dialogue and action on racial repair at SU. The forthcoming publication, *Deepening racial repair at Stellenbosch University: Our quest to realise the restitution statement*, emerges from a series of workshops where stakeholders from across our university critically engaged with our restitution statement. During a second writing retreat in April 2025, authors such as CASIT's Renee Hector-Kannemeyer and Drs Jean Farmer and Katlego Letlonkane presented their second drafts for review and refinement. The book is co-edited by SU's Transformation director Dr Zethu Mkhize.



6

Employer of choice

The institutional goals for this theme are to:

- develop a comprehensive people strategy for SU that embraces diversity and equity, leverages unique talents and strengths, promotes life-long learning and celebrates achievements;
- enhance the wellbeing of our people by creating and promoting an enabling, inclusive, equitable, healthy and safe working and learning environment that encourages our diverse staff to maximise their productivity, and where they feel valued and contribute to SU's excellence;
- improve human resource processes through the application of technology and digitalisation;
- develop and execute a game-changing talent acquisition and talent management plan, which includes equitable remuneration, the management and rewarding of performance, the identification of competencies and the development of talent and leadership throughout the career cycle of each SU employee; and
- support the development of SU as a learning organisation that is responsive to both individual and organisational needs.



Well-deserved recognition for impactful staff

Our social impact awards for staff serve to recognise employees, teams and initiatives that go above and beyond, fostering a culture of meaningful and purposeful engagement.

By showcasing and rewarding our staff's social impact efforts, SU not only celebrates those who are driving meaningful change, but also highlights the significance of being a socially responsive institution. This is one of the ways in which we attract, retain and inspire those who value working for an institution that prioritises both personal and societal wellbeing.

Towards the end of 2024, we honoured the following staff members with social impact awards (*pictured above*):

- Dr Armand Bam, Maria Olivier, Prof Ronnie Donaldson, Tembela Boyana and Dr Mary Nel in the **category for individuals**
- Prof Shahida Moosa (Rare Disease Genomics Research Group), Dorette du Plessis (Imbovane Outreach Project), Dr Therese Fish and Prof Karin Baatjes (InReach Central Karoo) and Pieter Conradie (Rail Safety Campaign) in the **category for team projects**

Interim action group's work advances respectful, safe and inclusive workplace

One of the key findings of the SU Wellbeing, Culture and Climate at Work survey 2023 was the need to advance a respectful, safe and inclusive workplace. To this end, an interim action group was established. Led by Deputy Vice-Chancellor: SITP Prof Nico Koopman, group members represent the broader SITP RC, the Equality Unit, HR, and Student Affairs.

Key deliverables have been the development of a draft SU framework to foster a respectful, safe and inclusive workplace, as well as a draft action plan. Ultimately, the aim is to advance a workplace culture that is informed by and reflects our core values of excellence, compassion, accountability, respect and equity.

Refining processes and mandate for academic appointments and promotions

Council approved a review of the **delegations granted to the Rector** by the Academic Appointments and Promotions Committee (AAPC) as well as the Appointments and Promotions Committee of Senate in June 2024. The delegations now align with statutory requirements.

In March 2025, Council also approved **revised versions of the mandate and procedure documents** for the appointment and promotion of academic staff. This followed extensive consultation with the AAPCs of faculties and schools as well as the Deans' Forum.

Senior staff appointments to take SU forward

Since June 2024, we have appointed:

- **Prof Vasti Roodt** as dean of Arts and Social Sciences, having commenced duties on 1 January 2025;
- **Prof Chris van der Hoven** as senior director of the Stellenbosch Business School, having commenced duties on 1 January 2025;
- **Dr Kathryn Grammer** as senior director of the Campus Health Service, having commenced duties on 1 February 2025; and
- **Prof Deresh Ramjugernath** as Rector and Vice-Chancellor, having commenced duties on 1 April 2025.
- **Prof Reza Daniels** as dean of Economics and Management Sciences, to commence duties on 1 November 2025.

In the same period, the University has reappointed:

- **Prof Mbulungeni Madiba** as dean of Education until 31 December 2026, when he will have reached retirement age;
- **Ms Nicolette van den Eijkel** as chief director of Facilities Management for a five-year term until 31 December 2029; and
- **Prof Kanshukan Rajaratnam** as director of the School for Data Science and Computational Thinking for a five-year term until 31 December 2029.

The appointment of a dean for the Faculty of AgriSciences is in process, with various other senior appointments also to come in the new reporting year.

Academic staff capacity augmented with more nGAP positions

For the tenth phase of the Department of Higher Education and Training's New Generation of Academics Programme (nGAP), our university has been awarded all five positions that we applied for. This brings our total number of nGAP positions

received since the inception of the programme to 47. We are grateful for nGAP's contribution to staff transformation and academic revitalisation at SU over the past decade.

Determined to keep skills development for staff going

In 2024, we paid a skills development levy of over R30 million to the South African Revenue Service (SARS). Our institution also complied with the Skills Development Act by having a registered skills development facilitator and a training forum.

Moreover, SU submitted its prescribed 2024/25 workplace skills plan and annual training report to the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP

SETA) by 30 April 2025, and we are now awaiting the SETA's approval. Obtaining approval is key, as it allows us to recover up to 20% of our skills levies through mandatory grants, as well as to apply for discretionary grants. Together, these grants may then be used for the skills development of our staff. Additionally, 25% of our B-BBEE score is linked to skills development, making the approval of our workplace skills plan and annual training report even more important.

Another successful cycle for PASS staff mobility programme

The Lund University-SU blended staff mobility programme is dedicated to the professional talent development and continuing education of our professional administrative support services (PASS) staff. Comprising both online and face-to-face components, the programme allows staff from both institutions to learn new skills and gain international experience. For the face-to-face portion of the 2024/25 programme, eight PASS staff from Lund visited their peers at SU in November 2024, and our eight participating staff reciprocated with a visit to the Swedish institution in May 2025. HR's Skills Development team and SU International coordinated the SU contingent's participation.



The programme allows staff from both institutions to learn new skills and gain international experience

SU leaders join the call for more females in senior higher education roles

Eight senior SU leaders took part in the 22nd Academy for Women Leaders in Higher Education hosted by Higher Education Resource Services South Africa (HERS-SA) in August 2024. The SU cohort included Political Science's Prof Amanda Gouws, who was a guest speaker, as well as Registrar Dr

Ronel Retief and Transformation director Zethu Mkhize, who both served as panellists. HERS works to address the critical shortage of women in senior positions in higher education by offering professional and leadership development opportunities.

Key employment equity documents revised

The SU Employment Equity Plan is our measurable action plan to achieve equitable representation and fair treatment of the designated groups in the workplace across all occupational levels, and promote excellence through diversity. It points out barriers to employment equity, and provides remedial steps. As a result of the legislative amendments introduced by the Employment Equity Amendment Act 4 of 2022, SU had to **revise its Employment Equity Plan (EEP)** to align it with Department of Higher Education (DHET) sector targets promulgated by the Department of Employment and Labour (DoEL). This work was done, and the Rectorate has subsequently approved the revised EEP for the period up until 30 September 2029. The sector targets for higher education will be applied to all SU environments.

As the **sector targets** seem to be set too high, Universities South Africa (USAf) did make representations to DoEL. The DoEL indicated that there would

be no changes to the proposed targets, and that USAf's recommendations would not be considered. Yet the Employment Equity Act does include provisions that acknowledge the importance of progression towards targets. Therefore, our university's approach is to remain fully committed to meeting the legislative requirements, but to do so in a manner that is both sustainable and reasonable. The 2025 employment equity reporting period will run from 1 September 2025 to 15 January 2026. The first assessment of SU's annual goals in relation to the five-year sector targets will commence in the 2026 reporting period (i.e. from 1 September 2026 to 15 January 2027).

In January 2025, the Rectorate also approved SU's **revised Code for Employment Equity and Diversity**. The code is a critical tool for eliminating the barriers identified in the EEP, and sets guidelines to help SU environments implement the Employment Equity Policy and Plan.

Integrating equity into PASS promotions and advancement

During the abovementioned review of the Code for Employment Equity and Diversity, HR noted that more work needed to be done to develop core policies and procedures for strategic recruitment,

as well as for the career progression of PASS staff. Therefore, work is being done to ensure that employment equity is integrated into the criteria for PASS staff promotion and career advancement.

Reconstituted Employment Equity Committee puts shoulder to the wheel

To enhance our institution's employment equity processes, a number of transformation structures, including the Committee for the Institutional Response to the (Khampepe) Commission's Recommendations (CIRCoRe), recommended that the composition of the Employment Equity Committee be revisited.

We subsequently embarked on a process to reconstitute the committee, and by August 2024, the new members – appointed through a nomination and election process – had been orientated about

their role. The newly constituted committee now includes representation of all our RCs.

The Employment Equity Committee has since contributed to the revision of our EEP and Code for Employment Equity and Diversity (reported on above), and assists the director of Employment Equity with monitoring and oversight.

The committee's terms of reference have also been revised to ensure alignment with the principles of representativity required by the Employment Equity Act.

Preparing for the dawn of our new performance advancement regime

Work on SU's Performance Advancement Framework (PAF) is driven by **three key objectives**, namely:

1. to implement a standard and consistent process for performance advancement across the University;
2. to mandate that all staff adhere to a transformation key performance area (KPA) of at least 20%, as directed by Council; and
3. to recognise and reward top performers.

The new **Process for Performance Advancement will be launched in January 2026**. For the rest of 2025, a thorough change management process is being rolled out across all SU environments. The automation framework for the system is currently being tested by HR and other key stakeholders, after which staff volunteers will be engaged for broader testing. Support materials have been uploaded to the HR website, with further documents to follow. The team is also refining training processes to ensure that a comprehensive rollout plan accompanies the system launch.

The **transformation KPA** will be mandatory for all staff. Council's mandate is that it should constitute at least 20% of staff's performance areas. The Human Resources and Remuneration Committee of Council has agreed to an organic implementation process, which will see the percentage for job levels 1 to 4 raised to at least 20% as from 2026, and to at least 10% for other levels, which should also gradually increase to at least 20%. Engagement has been fundamental to the process. CASIT is working with multiple stakeholders to build 'libraries' (sets) of transformation indicators, which will be discussed with all our faculties and PASS environments. During these discussions, environments will be able to add to and amend the indicators to customise them to their specific environments and job clusters.

It has also been agreed that the five **SU values and value-related behaviours** will form part of the performance advancement process. To this end, the Institutional Strategy, Research and Analytics Unit is developing workshop content to guide line managers in having values integration discussions with staff.

Staff encouraged to take action for better heart health

For Heart Awareness Month (September), the Campus Health Service collaborated with Maties Sport, HR and Facilities Management on the Heart and Soul campaign, which offered free weekly on-line lunchtime talks for the campus community and those living close to campus (*see marketing material alongside*). Topics included work-life integration, heart-healthy aging, and the impact of a healthy heart on community work. The activities culminated in the annual 5 km fun walk/run for staff and community members on 25 October to coincide with Mental Health Awareness Month.



Heart & Soul

FREE lunchtime talks

Friday, 20 September 2024
12:00 - 13:00

Community and Heart

Speaker: Lizzie Witbooi

[Register here](#)

Employee Assistance Programme continues to support wellbeing

The Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) focuses on prevention, treatment, management and measurement.

Proactive **prevention** efforts comprise awareness, thematic discussions and workshops. Highlights over the past year included EAP information sessions for new appointees, engagement with senior leadership and management on employee wellbeing services, guidance to managers on how to identify a troubled employee, a session on navigating single parenting and its effects on relationships at work, and an awareness session on how to support employees with mental health challenges.

In terms of **treatment**, utilisation of the Life Health Solution services peaked in November 2024, surpassing the benchmark for the education sector. The most common issue that staff members presented with was mental health concerns, particularly work stress, anxiety, and financial worries.

A total of 93 clinical cases were **managed** with internal and external stakeholders in the period in review. Twelve managerial and work environment consultancies were conducted on matters relating to sickness absence, performance, group debriefings, and referral systems.

Needs analyses were also performed to tailor programmes to environments' specific needs. The divisions of Clinical Anatomy, Medical Ethics and Law, the Desmond Tutu TB Centre, the clinical team of the Biomedical Research Institute, the Registrar's Division, the Department of Nursing and Midwifery, the Stellenbosch Business School, the SU Woordfees team, the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences as well as the Language Centre all requested needs analyses and wellbeing screenings for their teams.

In service satisfaction surveys, staff users of Life Health Solution provided overall **favourable feedback**.

Supporting staff to get active

On 6 September 2024, our staff hosted their peers from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, the University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town for **friendly games in preparation for the University Sports South Africa (USSA) staff tournament**. SU was victorious in all three sporting codes, namely football, netball and chess.

Our **institutional Staff Sports and Recreation Day** on 27 November, in turn, attracted 157 team registrations and 425 participants in the various competitive and recreational codes. See picture below.

The University's staff football and netball teams also took part in **Varsity Cup friendlies** with our students.



Working together to be well

Our Desmond Tutu TB Centre hosted a wellbeing day on 28 February 2025. Various SU stakeholders pulled together for the event. Activities included health screening such as blood pressure, body mass index, cholesterol, blood sugar and mental health checks, which were performed by an occupational health nurse from the Campus Health Service. The Division of Human Nutrition educat-

ed staff on healthy nutrition, while Maties Sport's Recreation and Active Lifestyle Unit and the Maties Gym facilitated a physical fitness activation and team-building activity. The Employee Wellbeing office concluded the session by sharing details about their services, their contact details, and the role of SU's wellbeing ambassadors.

Wellbeing ambassadors looking out for their colleagues

SU's wellbeing ambassadors are staff members who volunteer to assist colleagues in need to find the appropriate resources and services seamlessly.

In the reporting year, these staff members received comprehensive training on aspects such as unfair discrimination and bullying, mental health, diversity, and disability inclusion. They also had the opportunity to complete a Higher Health NQF5-accredited course. Further training and mentorship will be provided to the wellbeing ambassadors on an ongoing basis, while a community of practice will also be established to strengthen their work.

Initiatives by our wellbeing ambassadors in their respective environments included wellbeing newsletters, lunch-time creative activities, and food drives for students (*see picture alongside*). A single parenting support group was also launched on Tygerberg campus in April 2025.



Further training and mentorship will be provided to the wellbeing ambassadors on an ongoing basis, while a community of practice will also be established.

Workshop addresses 'working across difference'

A workshop in May 2025 explored the theme "Strengthening relational capacities to work across difference", acknowledging that working in circumstances of diversity is often fraught with mistrust and challenges, shaped by our deeply ingrained beliefs and attitudes. This hinders our ability to form productive human connections and foster a sense of genuine inclusion and belonging.

Participants were invited to reflect on how relational capacities such as historical (positional) awareness, compassion and curiosity can strengthen our ability to relate across difference and build meaningful connections. Part of our Siyakhula workshop series for staff, the session was facilitated by Ayan-da Nyoka and Wilhelm Verwoerd from AVReQ.

Now staff, too, can learn to 'Lead with Disability'

Flowing from the Lead with Disability programme for students, the new, staff-oriented workshop series Lead with Disability@Work offers our staff an opportunity to learn more about disability-related issues, create awareness around disability among their colleagues, and gain the tools and knowledge to make our immediate environments inclusive of people with disabilities. The series of six workshops is coordinated by the Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee. The first edition started in April 2025 and runs until the end of June.

Sessions focus on staff and student experiences, disclosure, universal access, medical conditions and workplace management, and assistive devices and service dogs.

Fostering a diversity-savvy staff corps

The manager of Diversity Capacity Development continued to advance diversity and inclusion through facilitated engagements with faculties and PASS environments over the past year. The workshops equipped staff with a better understanding of the concepts of diversity, equity and inclusion in education, and of the benefits of diversity in different disciplines. Participants were also invited to reflect on their personal experiences relating to diversity, and to share what they viewed as challenges and opportunities.

Diversity trends

Diversity shifts in **Council** since 2020 have been as follows:

Council	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Indian male	0	0	0	0	1
Indian female	1	0	0	0	0
Coloured male	5	5	5	3	2
Coloured female	2	1	3	4	4
Black male	1	0	0	0	2
Black female	4	7	5	5	3
White male	9	10	8	6	8
White female	2	2	4	7	5
Total male	15	15	13	9	13
Total female	9	10	12	16	12

Senate's diversity changes over the same period are tabulated below:

Senate	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Indian male	11	11	10	11	8
Indian female	3	3	6	4	5
Coloured male	20	22	22	20	20
Coloured female	17	17	19	21	24
Black male	20	21	22	27	26
Black female	10	9	9	10	11
White male	190	197	200	183	189
White female	92	91	89	102	104
Female, race unknown	0	0	1	0	0
Male, race unknown	0	0	0	0	0
Gender and race unknown	0	0	0	0	0
Foreigner, female	0	0	0	0	2
Foreigner, male	0	0	0	0	7
Total Male	241	251	255	240	250
Total Female	122	120	124	137	146
Total members	363	371	378	377	396

The **Institutional Forum** has undergone the following shifts:

Institutional Forum	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Indian male	0	0	0	0	1
Indian female	0	0	1	1	1
Coloured male	5	5	3	3	3
Coloured female	1	3	4	3	4
Black male	4	2	3	4	4
Black female	2	2	2	3	3
White male	5	6	5	4	1
White female	6	3	5	5	5
Total male	14	13	11	11	9
Total female	9	8	12	12	13
Total members	23	21	23	23	22

The diversity breakdown of the **SRC** over the five-year period is as follows:

Students' Representative Council	2020 /21	2021 /22	2022 /23	2023 /24	2024 /25
Male	10	13	11	11	12
Female	13	12	13	13	12
Gender non- conforming/non-binary	0	0	0	1	0
Black	10	7	10	15	15
Coloured	4	6	3	4	3
Indian	0	0	2	0	1
White	6	9	8	6	4
Foreign	3	2	1	1	1
Total	23	25	24	25	24

Diversity trends among **academic staff** for the period April 2020 to April 2025 may be summarised as follows:

- Black academic staff **increased** from **6% to 8%**.
- Coloured academic staff **increased** from **14% to 15%**.
- Indian and Asian academic staff **increased** from **3% to 4%**.
- In total, academic staff from the groups above **increased** from **23% to 27%**.
- Female academic staff **increased** from **52% to 55%**.

An overview of diversity trends among **staff in our PASS environments** for the same period reveals the following:

- Black PASS staff numbers **increased** from **12% to 17%**.
- Coloured PASS staff **increased** from **44% to 45%**.
- Indian and Asian PASS staff numbers **increased** from **2% to 3%**.
- In total, PASS staff from the groups above **increased** from **58% to 64%**.
- Female PASS staff **increased** from **63% to 65%**.

Finally, diversity among SU's **senior staff members** has seen the following shifts since 2020 (see also two tables below):

- Black senior staff members **increased** from **4% to 5%**.
- Coloured senior staff members **increased** from **11% to 13%**.
- Indian and Asian senior staff members **increased** from **3.2% to 3.8%**.
- In total, senior staff members from the above groups **increased** from **18% to 22%**.
- Female senior staff members **increased** from **39% to 43%**.

Race distribution of top management by grade as at April 2025

Position	Grade	African	Coloured	Indian	White	Foreigner	Total
Rector and Vice-Chancellor	1	0	0	1	0	0	1
Vice-Rector and Chief Operating Officer	2	1	2	0	1	0	4
Academic Deans, Chief Directors and Registrar	3	2	3	2	12	0	19
Senior Directors and Full Professors	4	1	4	0	10	1	16
Directors and Full Professors	5	13	40	10	251	52	366
Associate Professors, Deputy Directors, Head of Departments	6	22	58	16	225	20	341
Total		39	107	29	499	73	747

Gender distribution of top management by grade as at April 2025

Position	Grade	Female	Male	Total
Rector and Vice-Chancellor	1	0	1	1
Vice-Rector and Chief Operating Officer	2	1	3	4
Academic Deans, Chief Directors and Registrar	3	9	10	19
Senior Directors and Full Professors	4	7	9	16
Directors and Full Professors	5	132	234	366
Associate Professors, Deputy Directors, Head of Departments	6	171	170	341
Total		320	427	747

Sustained staff excellence rewarded

SU's Chancellor's Awards recognise staff members whose careers attest to sustained excellence in research, innovation, learning and teaching, social impact and professional services. The following thirteen staff members received this prestigious accolade during our December 2024 graduation series:

- **Adv Hein Swanepoel**, SUNCOM
- **Dr Barbara Pool**, Strategic Initiatives
- **Dr Celeste Nel**, Applications, Student Accommodation & Client Services
- **Prof Debra Shepherd**, Department of Economics
- **Ms Karen Bruns**, Development and Alumni Relations
- **Mr John Morris**, AgriSciences
- **Mr Remé du Plessis**, FHARGA – Economic and Management Sciences
- **Prof Guy Midgley**, School for Climate Studies/Department of Botany and Zoology
- **Prof Louise Warnich**, Department of Genetics, Former Dean – Science Faculty
- **Prof Pieter Gouws**, Department of Food Science
- **Prof Renée Blaauw**, Division of Human Nutrition
- **Prof Theo Broodryk**, Law Clinic
- **Mrs Jennifer Saunders**, School of Public Leadership

Conclusion

Through our focus on transformation, wellbeing and social impact, the SITP RC continues to champion a holistic approach to advancing people and culture.

As reflected in this report, the collaboration between our divisions – HR, the Campus Health Service and Social Impact and Transformation – has been instrumental in driving meaningful change. By strengthening our capabilities, embracing strategic partnerships, and remaining committed to social impact and transformation, a satisfying employee experience and staff wellbeing, we are positioning SU as a beacon of excellence and societal leadership.

Moving forward, our RC will continue to engage with SU's strategic themes, ensuring that our mandate contributes to the University's mission. Through ongoing collaboration and innovation, we will carry on cultivating an institution that is not only academically distinguished, but also deeply connected to its people and communities.

The RC will also take its cue from the focuses of the new Rector and Vice-Chancellor, Prof Deresh Ramjugernath. We look forward to responding appropriately to his emphasis on academic excellence, people, culture and processes, partnerships, and sustainability – all within the framework of holistic transformation. In fact, we are already contemplating a new name for the RC that would resonate with the Rector's focuses, especially those relating to people and culture. His call on the University to move forward better and bolder is surely heeded.

I thank the leadership and staff in the SITP RC, as well as all colleagues, students and partners, both in and outside the University, with whom we continue to collaborate. I also highly appreciate the support and guidance of the Rector, together with members of the Rectorate and the General Managers' Meeting.

Finally, a special word of thanks to Senate and Council for supporting the SITP RC's work.

It remains a joy to serve SU and society by pursuing our institutional mandates in general, and the mandates of social impact, transformation as well as staff and student health and wellbeing in particular.

Let's go forward in solidarity.

Nico Koopman





Stellenbosch
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UNIVERSITEIT

forward together
sonke siya phambili
saam vorentoe