



Stellenbosch

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**RECTOR'S MANAGEMENT REPORT
TO COUNCIL**

Monday 20 June 2022

Prof Wim de Villiers,
Rector and Vice-Chancellor

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the second Stellenbosch University (SU) Council meeting for 2022. This report covers the period **4 March to 20 May 2022**, unless stated otherwise.

A highlight in this timeframe was the installation of Justice Edwin Cameron, former Constitutional Court judge, as our **15th Chancellor** on 18 May. (His formal investiture had been delayed because of the coronavirus pandemic that broke out shortly after he assumed office in January 2020.)

Long before he joined us in this capacity, Justice Cameron proved himself not just an extraordinary South African leader, but above all, a relentless proponent of the protection and promotion of human dignity for all, regardless of colour, race or creed. We are truly blessed to have a Chancellor that is the embodiment of both *gravitas* and *dignitas*. ([Click here](#) for more on his installation.)

Sadly, though, the celebration was overshadowed by a ghastly **incident at Huis Marais** the preceding weekend, causing our university much shame and pain. Shocking footage purporting to show a drunken student urinating on the study materials of a fellow student soon went viral on social media, creating a public outcry. The fact that the alleged perpetrator was white and his victim black invoked the repugnant oppressive practices of a bygone era.

We acted swiftly and took appropriate action within the stipulations of the [Disciplinary Code for Students of SU](#) to deal with the matter decisively. An investigation was launched, the alleged perpetrator suspended, and the victim supported to ensure that his academic progress would not be affected by the incident. The matter was referred for a disciplinary hearing, and the affected student laid criminal charges.

In addition, I announced that we would be setting up an **independent commission of enquiry** – headed by retired Constitutional Court judge **Justice Sisi Khampepe** – to investigate racism and related harassment at the University ([click here](#) for more, including the terms of reference of the investigation.) We will also be creating a hotline where students and staff can report acts of discrimination or the violation of rights. This will be in addition to the existing online, email and walk-in reporting mechanisms of our Equality Unit (*see 1.8 below*).

In the same week, we were also deeply distressed to learn of an **alleged case of rape** at another of our Stellenbosch residences. We again took immediate action in terms of supporting the victim and initiating the investigation and disciplinary processes. This is in line with our strict zero-tolerance approach to gender-based violence (*also see 1.7 below*). The affected female student opened a case of rape with the South African Police Service, and the alleged perpetrator, a student at SU, was arrested. We suspended him from his residence, pending further investigation.

Considering the impact of these events on our students' mental and emotional state, the Rectorate **postponed the first-semester examinations** by a week. This decision was not taken lightly. More than a hundred student leaders – including prims, chairs of societies and the Students' Representative Council (SRC) – as well as the leadership of faculties were united in their request for this postponement in the best interests of our students. We also approved some mechanisms to assist students affected by the postponement.

Before these incidents, the first semester had some semblance of a normal academic year with the **return, for the most part, to face-to-face classes**, enhanced by our online platforms. The national state of disaster was lifted on 5 April, but specific transitional provisions were retained for 30 days, including restrictions on the number of persons allowed in lecture halls and other venues. Learning and teaching this year have so far continued in hybrid mode, but we intend returning to full face-to-face mode as soon as possible.

A marked increase in **Covid**-related infections in South Africa in the reporting period was driven by the Omicron variant, known for its high levels of infections but fewer severe health manifestations that require hospitalisation or result in mortality. SU's Medical Advisory Committee indicated that

SU staff and students appear to have built substantial immunity against Covid-19, either from vaccination or natural infection.

It is against this backdrop that Council concurred with the recommendation that the process of developing a **vaccination rule** for the University be suspended for now, with the proviso that it could be restarted swiftly if required.

Our **Institutional Committee for Business Continuity (ICBC)** has also suspended its activities, including the work of its respective workstreams. Only the Medical Advisory Committee will continue its efforts monitoring developments relating to Covid-19. However, all ICBC structures can be rapidly reactivated should this become necessary.

Looking at our core business, I am pleased to report that SU continues on its purposeful course of academic and research excellence, with world-leading research and new discoveries regarding Covid-19 still featuring prominently.

For instance, **Prof Tulio de Oliveira and his team** at our Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation (CERI) discovered the **BA.4** and **BA.5 subvariants** of the growing Omicron family of SARS-CoV-2 coronaviruses. The discovery follows on the recent listing of Prof De Oliveira's work in identifying and tracking Covid-19 variants as one of the top ten technological breakthroughs of 2022 by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's *MIT Technology Review*.

In addition, Prof De Oliveira was selected for *TIME* magazine's 100 Most Influential People list this year, along with **Dr Sikhulile Moyo**. Dr Moyo is an SU alumnus who obtained his PhD in Medical Virology at the University in 2016, and currently serves as laboratory director at the Botswana Harvard AIDS Institute Partnership. The two of them led the multidisciplinary team who discovered the Omicron variant of SARS-CoV-2 ([click here](#) for more).

I am also happy to report that we keep attracting top talent. Internationally esteemed quantum scientist **Prof Francesco Petruccione**, former Pro Vice-Chancellor: Big Data and Informatics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, has joined our School for Data Science and Computational Thinking in the capacity of professor of Quantum Computing. At the same time, he has been appointed interim director of the National Institute for Theoretical and Computational Sciences (NITheCS) and will serve as extraordinary professor in our Department of Physics ([click here](#) for more).

I recently returned from a visit to the **United States** and **Europe**, accompanied by colleagues. We experienced **enormous interest in the research SU is conducting** at CERI and elsewhere. The Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) in Los Angeles has expressed keen interest in cooperating with Prof De Oliveira and his team. GISAID promotes the rapid sharing of data on all influenza viruses, as well as the coronavirus causing Covid-19. This includes genetic sequencing and related epidemiological data associated with human viruses, and geographic as well as species-specific data associated with avian and other animal viruses, to help researchers understand how viruses evolve and spread during epidemics and pandemics.

We encountered the same amount of positivity for research cooperation with SU at the Global Health Institute at Northwestern University in Illinois, Chicago, as well as the Institute for Advanced Biomedical Research at George Mason University. And in Brussels, the Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities was most receptive to the idea of facilitating transcontinental cooperation and possible partnerships with SU across our various key research focus areas. These networks will have a large impact on our research programmes going forward.

On another front, SU signed an agreement with the **United States Military Academy at Westpoint** (USMA) on 20 April to establish programmes of exchange and collaboration primarily, though not exclusively, in the field of Military Science.

Our world-class academics keep excelling. In the recent National Research Foundation (NRF) ratings round, SU researchers secured a record number of **A-ratings** (*see 5.1 for more*).

Another noteworthy achievement is the relaunch of the **Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR)** spectroscopy facility at our Central Analytical Facilities (CAF) on 13 April. We have added two unique NMR instruments valued at nearly R30 million to the facility. With no equal in the Western Cape or the rest of the country, these instruments put SU at the cutting edge of chemistry and science research. I would like to repeat here what I said at the launch: We invest a lot of our resources in attracting the best people, but even the best people cannot do the work if we do not also have the equipment and infrastructure to support them. ([Click here](#) for more.)

As is customary, a member of the Rectorate is afforded the opportunity to report to Council on activities in their responsibility centre over the past year. This time, our Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): **Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel, Prof Nico Koopman**, will table his report. This overall management report therefore contains only selected highlights from his portfolio; please consult his separate report for more details.

My fellow members of management and I welcome this opportunity to engage with Council.

THEME 1: A THRIVING STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

In our [Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024](#) (click on the link for the complete document), we state the following in relation to this theme: “To make SU **a thriving organisation**, we envisage a **vibrant, prosperous and systemically sustainable** university”, with ‘thriving’ defined as “being successful or making steady progress; prospering; flourishing”.

We then go on to say: “SU recognises the major challenges associated with developing into a thriving university. We acknowledge that we need to be both responsive and proactive in shaping the future of the University. We are committed to systemic sustainability, which includes people, place (social), prosperity (economic) and the environment and compels responsible corporate governance.”

1.1 Institutional audit

During the reporting period, the institutional audit self-evaluation committee completed a second draft of SU’s self-evaluation report, which is to be considered by the Institutional Forum and Senate, for approval by Council. The report is based on the four focus areas and 16 standards prescribed by the Council on Higher Education and will be followed by a peer review site visit from 31 October to 4 November 2022.

1.2 Systems renewal

SUNFin

Work continues in the various SUNFin workstreams, and there are currently no threats to the **go-live date of June 2023**. The training workstream has made good progress using Oracle Guided Learning to update and enhance documents with SU-specific details. The team will finalise this after testing. SUNFin will introduce new functionalities in the projects and grants modules as well as in procurement and supply.

In March, Chief Operating Officer (COO) **Prof Stan du Plessis**, Finance chief director **Manie Lombard** and SUNFin business owner **Brendon Grindlay-Whieldon** visited Baylor University (Waco, Texas) and Vanderbilt University (Nashville, Tennessee) in the United States to learn from their experience implementing Oracle Cloud Financials. They also attended the Higher Education User Group’s annual Alliance conference in Seattle from 13 to 16 March and will share their insights with the SUNFin team.

SUNStudent

Undergraduate **applications for 2023** opened on 4 April 2022, and postgraduate applications on 11 April. This is the second application and admissions cycle administered on SUNStudent. Most of the items that were identified for refinement have been configured, tested and made available on the system, with the remainder to follow in the normal course of business.

SUNStudent is being activated in stages. Having started in April 2021, go-live of the entire system is estimated to be **completed by August 2023**. Integration requirements between SUNStudent and other internal SU systems are being built for delivery as these become necessary.

A related system that is being developed, **SUNSuccess**, has been included as a separate workstream of the SUNStudent project, as it depends on SUNStudent information to track student performance. Both SUNStudent and SUNSuccess use Serosoft software. The SUNSuccess workstream has completed and achieved its design and blueprinting milestones.

1.3 SU in the news (17 Feb–4 May 2022)

(All items in [red](#) and [blue](#) below are hyperlinked; please click to access.)

SU again managed a good showing **in the media** in the period in review. For February, SU generated the fifth-highest number of general news clips of all South African universities, the highest in March, and second-highest in April. This is according to the dataset of media monitoring agency PEAR.

With regard to the subset “**Research and innovation**”, we ended third in terms of coverage generated for February, and first in both March and April. Coverage mainly related to “Research for impact”, although “A thriving Stellenbosch University” also featured strongly.

According to PEAR’s media tracking of individuals at SU, our **human capital** was referred to in 203 media clippings in February, 86 in March and 113 in April. This is seen as a key contributor to media coverage, especially in the “Research and innovation” subset.

Looking at the **sentiment** towards our institution as reflected in the coverage we received, 59% was **positive** in February (39% neutral), 55% in March (43% neutral), and 62% in April (37% neutral).

These are some of the **institutional matters** that featured in the media in the reporting period:

- [Passion for social justice inspires law graduate](#) ([Cape Argus](#), [Die Burger](#), [Eikestadnuus](#), [IOL](#), [News24](#), [EWN](#))
- [Brain tumours couldn’t hold this PhD graduate back](#) ([Cape Argus](#), [The Star](#), [Tygerburger](#), [SABC3](#), [RSG](#), [kykNET](#))
- [SU engages community on ‘lost memories’ of historic Hardekraaltjie cemetery](#) ([Die Burger](#), [Cape Argus](#), [Tygerburger](#))
- [SU’s future CAs beat Covid disruptions to excel in ITC exam](#) ([Business Day](#), [IOL](#))
- [Another top honour for Matie choir](#) ([Die Burger](#))

The University’s **media releases** remain a major source of publicity for the institution. Key releases in the past few months included the following:

- [Study shows that women attorneys still experience inequality in SA](#) ([Pretoria News](#), [Volksblad](#), [News24](#), [IOL](#), [Yiba](#))
- [PhD maps genome of critical endangered African wild dog](#) ([Pretoria News](#), [The Star](#), [Beeld](#), [Volksblad](#), [Die Burger](#), [Cape Talk](#), [IOL](#))
- [Research into elephants’ sense of smell reveals a ‘group odour’ among herd members](#) ([Cape Argus](#), [Beeld](#), [The Star](#), [Volksblad](#), [Mail & Guardian](#), [Cape Talk](#), [RSG](#))
- [Disability studies could help end discrimination against people who stutter](#) ([Cape Times](#), [The Star](#), [The Witness](#), [Cape Talk](#), [702](#))
- [Africa’s adaptation to climate change hampered by skewed funding and lack of data](#) ([Beeld](#), [Die Burger](#), [Volksblad](#), [Landbouweekblad](#))
- [Methamphetamine \(Tik\) addiction negatively impacts rural social workers](#) ([RSG](#))
- [Research on collision avoidance can help boost the use of drones](#) ([Cape Times](#), [The Witness](#), [RSG](#), [ITWeb](#))
- [PhD researcher explores producers’ plans to exit farming over the next decade](#) ([Cape Argus](#), [Die Burger](#), [Volksblad](#), [Beeld](#), [Cape Talk](#), [702](#), [kykNET](#), [IOL](#))

Our experts again provided the media with valuable content and comment on **Covid-19**, further cementing the University's reputation as an innovative and socially responsible institution. Among others, Prof Tulio de Oliveira's research continued to make headlines, while Dr Jo Barnes was also quoted extensively on various coronavirus-related matters.

SU's **Language Policy** received media attention in the reporting period. Items included the following:

- [Hier is die drie Afrikaanse mans wat Stellenbosch verengels het](#) (*Rapport*)
- [US is vir Afrikaans, en ook vir verander](#) (*Rapport*)
- [Universiteit Stellenbosch kap skerp terug oor Afrikaans](#) (*Eikestadnuus*)
- [Taalgemeenskap, eerder as owerheid, moet Afrikaans dra](#) (*Die Burger*)
- [Afrikaans by US 'is 'n non-issue'](#) (*Die Burger & Beeld*)
- [DAK, US vat hande om bruin kinders te help](#) (*Die Burger*)
- Dr Leslie van Rooi's resignation from the Convocation management ([RSG](#)), including the response by Adv Jan Heunis, the president of the Convocation ([RSG](#)), and various letters (such as in [Die Burger](#))

Thought leadership: Our academic staff continue to make SU research accessible to external audiences by writing thought leadership pieces for The Conversation Africa. In the reporting period, 14 of our contributors produced 17 articles, which collectively yielded more than 411 000 reads.

In addition, SU staff and students again produced a large number of **op-eds, features and columns** in the reporting period ([click here](#) for our list). The Media Office furnished the press with **lists of experts** to comment on International Mother Language Day, Human Rights Day, International Women's Day, World Engineering Day, Creativity and Innovation Day, and Freedom Day. We also distributed expert lists on the [School for Data Science and Computational Thinking](#) as well as various sport-related themes.

1.4 Rebranding project

Our [Corporate Communication and Marketing Division](#) (CCMD) is making steady progress with the phased roll-out of our new brand identity across the University. The focus over the past months was to equip entities with the tools and templates for on-brand communication and marketing. The following actions were initiated and/or completed:

- The design of a coherent brand architecture to promote multilingualism. With the assistance of the SU Language Centre, entity names are being translated into English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans. CCMD's Branding Unit has come up with an appropriate solution that allows entity names to appear in all three languages along with the SU logo.
- Ongoing engagement with entities across the University to inform, monitor and assess the implementation of the new brand
- Following further testing of our standardised email signature in collaboration with our Information Technology Division, the roll-out of the signature recommenced in May.
- CCMD collaborated closely with the Matie Shop to apply the new visual identity to (both on-field and off-field) Maties Sport clothing and establish mechanisms for optimal brand alignment and visibility across Maties Sport codes.
- With a view to the exposure to be gained from the televised Varsity Cup, Premier Soccer League and United Rugby Championship matches at the Danie Craven stadium, our Branding Unit in collaboration with Facilities Management and Maties Sport rebranded the venue (*also see 1.11*).
- The Branding Unit designed and implemented new branding for our April graduation ceremonies at the Coetzenburg centre.
- The SU website (www.sun.ac.za) has been refreshed in line with our new brand.

1.5 Communication Policy

Strategically implemented, cohesive and purposeful communication with stakeholders is vital in the increasingly competitive higher education environment. As a public institution, we must meet our institutional communication responsibilities, as well as the communication needs of our diverse internal and external stakeholders.

To this end, and flowing from Council discussions in 2020, the Rectorate appointed a representative task team in 2021 to develop a comprehensive SU Communication Policy. The policy should serve as a framework of principles and provisions to govern, integrate and align **institutional communication** across multiple SU entities. This will be achieved by defining roles and responsibilities and guiding operational and other modes of communication.

The policy will lay the foundation for the development of related protocols, guidelines and best-practice guides for activities such as media liaison and social media engagement. Against the backdrop of an ever-changing communication environment, this approach will enable a rapid and flexible SU response to evolving circumstances.

The institutional 'owner' of the policy will be the DVC: Strategy, Global and Corporate Affairs, while the institutional 'curator' (the functionary responsible for implementing the policy) will be the senior director of Corporate Communication and Marketing.

The task team formulated a first draft, which was released for internal consultation in March 2022. An online consultation process followed, after which the team embarked on presentations to key stakeholders. The second draft was shared with faculty boards, the Rectorate, SRC and General Managers' Meeting. This will be followed by formal submissions to statutory bodies in the run-up to seeking Council's approval in September.

1.6 Information management

Between April 2021 and March 2022, SU received **16 requests** in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act (**PAIA**). Information Governance (IG) handles these requests with the assistance of Legal Services, with annual reporting to the South African Information Regulator. Our standard operating procedures for the handling of PAIA requests are now being redesigned.

At the same time, we are developing a framework for the governance of personal information in line with the Protection of Personal Information Act (**POPIA**).

Lastly, our new **Information Management Framework**, which sets out various information curatorship roles, responsibilities and competencies, is at an advanced stage of development. Once successfully implemented, this framework will strengthen SU's response to both POPIA and PAIA.

1.7 Institutional GBV monitoring committee

Our gender-based violence (GBV) monitoring committee has had its first meeting, where it unpacked its function and role in monitoring and reporting on SU's GBV response, and in assisting SU's institutional environments to respond to challenges. The committee's members include both management members and representatives from student leadership structures.

1.8 Online platform for reporting discrimination and harassment

Our students and staff can now report unfair discrimination and harassment confidentially on a new online platform. The initiative was spearheaded by our Equality Unit (EqU).

The platform creates a safe environment to report incidents, make informed decisions and access support services. At the same time, it provides the University with greater insight into cases and trends so that we can act more effectively against sexual assault, GBV and victimisation.

Incidents can still be reported through the Equality Unit walk-in service or at unfair@sun.ac.za. Yet complainants are strongly encouraged to make use of the web-based platform by visiting <https://ciims.sun.ac.za/ReportingPage> (only accessible on campus or via SU's [VPN](#)).

1.9 Campus renewal

Biomedical Research Institute (BMRI)

Total project budget: R1 053 597 266

The construction of the new parking areas located at the entrance to our Tygerberg campus started on 8 March 2022. The planned completion date is 16 August. The new central campus refuse room was completed towards the end of April. All other works on BMRI South are progressing well and according to plan.



South and east elevations of the BMRI complex

Library refurbishment

Total estimated project budget: R23 276 234

The refurbishment of the SU Library has been completed. Existing facilities and infrastructure have been upgraded to provide clients with comfortable and effective working spaces, and to make the Library more user-friendly. The circulation area with self-check-in/check-out machines, the study areas and the student ablutions have been completed and are being used. Books and journals that had been in temporary storage have been reshelfed. And renovations to the entrance area, the areas for newspapers and leisure reading, the printing and photocopying spaces as well as the e-information kiosk have been completed.



Refurbished study area in the SU Library

Residences

Wilgenhof

Total approved budget: R14 700 000

The project comprises upgrades to ensure electrical installation compliance, the replacement of beds, internal room refurbishments, the application of new floor finishes, bathroom and communal-area upgrades, and facilities for mobility-impaired students on the ground floor.

All stakeholders have been properly consulted. Staged decanting is taking place to open up nine rooms at a time for the contractor to perform the work in phases. No work took place during test week (21–25 March), and no work is scheduled for the mid-year exams either (30 May to 24 June).

Sonop

A report by a consulting electrical engineer listed a number of residences that required upgrades to their low-voltage installations to ensure compliance and mitigate risk. The first residence in line was Sonop, where work was recently completed. The team who performed the work at Sonop will now be moving on to other residences listed as priorities in the engineer's report.

Hippokrates

During installation of the heat pump at the Hippokrates residence on Tygerberg campus, it was discovered that the entire roof of the building required maintenance. Work that needed to be done included the removal of asbestos, new waterproofing and roof sheet replacement.

Mariendahl experimental farm

The University owns two experimental farms (Welgevallen and Mariendahl), which are mainly used for the training of undergraduate students, and for the research projects of postgraduate students and academic staff of the Faculty of AgriSciences. Mariendahl (375 ha) adjoins the Elsenburg research farm about 14 km outside Stellenbosch and is mostly used by our Department of Animal Sciences, as AgriSciences' facilities for poultry and pig research are located there.

As the asbestos roof at the piggery at Mariendahl showed signs of severe deterioration, it had to be replaced. A project was approved and a specialist contractor appointed to install a new sheet metal roof. This is one of many asbestos roofs and materials registered in our buildings portfolio, so the work at Mariendahl brings us another step closer to mitigating the risk of asbestos to SU.

STIAS refurbishment

The Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) is an autonomous research organisation established by an SU Council decision in 1999. It was registered as a section-21 (not-for-profit) company with its own board of directors in 2007. In terms of an agreement between our university and STIAS, we are responsible for maintaining their buildings.

The Wallenberg Research Centre at STIAS is often used for national and international events. After nearly two decades, however, the conference facilities were starting to pose some maintenance challenges. Refurbishments have thus been undertaken, including waterproofing of the roof, the repair of plaster cracks, the resealing of joints and tiles, the servicing of doors, the treatment of all timber and fixing of joinery and the wooden ramp, and interior and exterior redecoration.

Security upgrades

CCTV

Security is an ongoing challenge for SU because, unlike most other higher education institutions, our Stellenbosch campus is unfenced. Innovative means are used to address this challenge in light of limited resources to patrol the campus. Property Services in Facilities Management recently drafted a new closed-circuit television (CCTV) master plan in collaboration with Campus Security and Information Technology. Phase 1 is being rolled out.

Alarms

In 2021, Property Services concluded the first phase of an alarm master plan by installing new software and equipment in the Campus Security building on Merriman Avenue. This included transitioning from landlines to a cellphone network.

As part of phase 2 of the plan, the alarm systems of buildings such as CGW Schumann, JC Smuts, Russel Botman and Dagbreek were replaced. A standard operating procedure for control-room operators was also generated.

The next phase, which is currently being executed, includes a further upgrade to equipment in the control room, including monitors and servers on our Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses.

THINK Bench

Our Stellenbosch campus now boasts a 10-ton piece of functional art – our very own THINK Bench. The 13 m public sculpture, designed to celebrate and encourage innovation and collaboration, is a permanent installation on the lawn in front of the Engineering precinct in Banhoek Road.

The bench spells out the word ‘THINK’ when viewed from one angle, while from another, it reveals life-sized human silhouettes in different thinking



poses (*see images above*). This serves to remind passers-by that one sometimes needs to change your perspective to come up with the right solution.

Designed by renowned artist Louis Olivier and his team from the Workhorse Bronze Foundry in Johannesburg, the bench was donated to the University by **Mr GT Ferreira**, a Rand Merchant Bank (RMB) founder and SU alumnus. It is a replica of a larger edition installed at the RMB headquarters in Sandton. Ferreira hopes the bench will inspire Maties to “think instead of just absorbing information in class and regurgitating it in exams”.

1.10 Environmental sustainability

Building management system

SU’s building management system (BMS) is being upgraded incrementally in pursuit of our goal of greater environmental sustainability. (A BMS is a computer-based system that monitors and controls a building’s mechanical and electrical equipment, such as ventilation, lighting, electricity, security and fire prevention systems.) The project recently reached the Krotoa and GG Cillie buildings as well as Admin A and the Neelsie. The first phase of the upgrades required the replacement of outdated controls software with new versions. This will improve the management of HVAC systems in these buildings, which typically account for 50–70% of total electricity consumption.

Water and electricity usage

We received renewed water licences for all our campuses from the Department of Water and Sanitation on 23 February. In addition, our weekly utility reports of water and electricity usage in student communities reflect an improvement.

Engagement initiatives

Property Services initiated several engagement initiatives over the past months to promote greater awareness of environmental sustainability at SU. These include the following:

Students are involved in managing our **food garden** initiative, which helps create greater food security for our student community (*see picture right*).

In addition, Facilities Management conducted several tours of our materials **recycling facility** at Welgevallen farm to raise awareness. This facility forms part of our efforts to reduce waste sent to landfill to zero.



Ongoing video and social media campaigns are also run to create awareness and promote sustainability.



Recently enacted e-waste legislation now requires institutions to separate e-waste from paper and other general waste. SU has introduced a **yellow-bin** system to facilitate this (*see left*).

Moreover, to mark Earth Week (19–22 April), Facilities Management hosted a tour of

the **solar photovoltaic panels** on the roof of the Neelsie (*see right*). These panels supply a third of the student centre’s power needs and help shrink SU’s carbon footprint, combating climate change in the process.



1.11 Maties Sport off to a running start

Having endured a challenging two years due to Covid-19 restrictions, Maties Sport got off to a running start in the first semester.

Our **cricket** team were crowned Boland club champions in the reporting period, and our second **football** team won their league and got promoted.

Our senior **rugby** team made it all the way to the final of the Varsity Cup tournament, which was hosted at the Danie Craven stadium on 25 April, but narrowly lost out to UP-Tuks (29–23).

Our **recreational programmes** too are going from strength to strength. These include cluster netball, volleyball, action frisbee, tag rugby and running. A recent fitness bootcamp was very successful.



Major **events** hosted by Maties Sport in the reporting period included:

- school athletics at the Coetzenburg athletics stadium;
- a United Rugby Championship match (Stormers vs Zebre) at the Danie Craven stadium, which was broadcast on 16 television channels globally (*also see 1.4 above*); and
- five senior and two Young Guns games during the Varsity Cup tournament, also at the Danie Craven stadium.

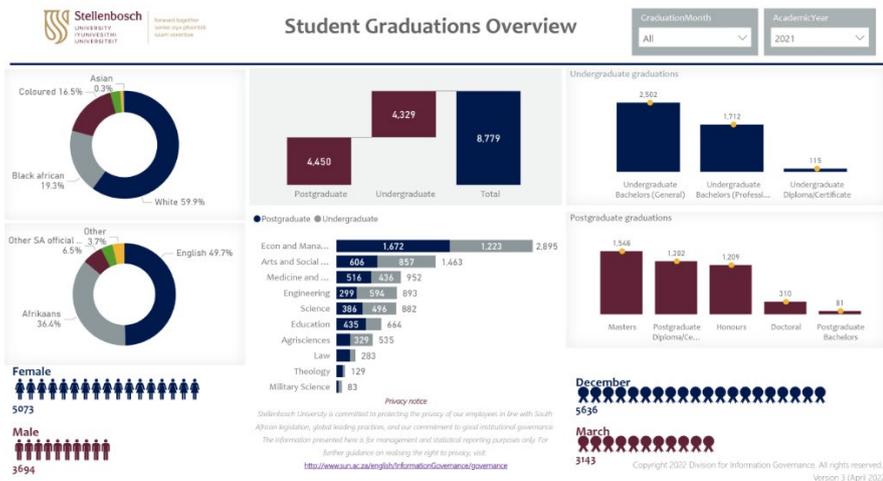
THEME 2: A TRANSFORMATIVE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

[Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024](#) states the following in relation to this theme: “[W]e want to ensure that SU is accessible to qualifying students from all backgrounds, including to students who face barriers to participation in university education. We regard it as a journey – from our first contact with prospective students until they graduate and embrace the role of alumni.” Delivering a transformative student experience also entails “the provision of opportunities for growth to all undergraduate and postgraduate students, including guidance, support and services from SU to enable their success”.

2.1 April 2022 graduations

In an update to my presentation at the previous Council meeting, I can now report that **3 143** qualifications were awarded at our 11 graduation ceremonies hosted at the Coetzenburg centre

from **4 to 7 April**. Along with the **5 636** qualifications awarded in **December 2021**, this brings the **total** for the 2021 academic year to **8 779**. (See infographic below for more graduation data.)



Of course, our graduation ceremonies always produce a wealth of inspiring stories. Let me highlight the success of just two of our **initiatives aimed at opening the doors of learning** even wider.

Nineteen of the graduates who crossed the stage in April joined the growing ranks of students who managed to reach this point thanks to our university preparation programme, **SciMathUS** (an acronym for “Science and Mathematics at the University of Stellenbosch”). Coming from a disadvantaged education background, they might have failed to get into university initially, but, because of their high academic potential, were selected for SciMathUS. The programme offered them a second chance to improve their matric marks in key subjects such as Science, Maths and Accounting, along with valuable life skills to help them on their academic journey. They clearly seized the opportunity and made the most of it. Through the years, more than 1 800 students have completed the SciMathUS programme – many of them first-generation students carrying the hopes and dreams of their families with them.

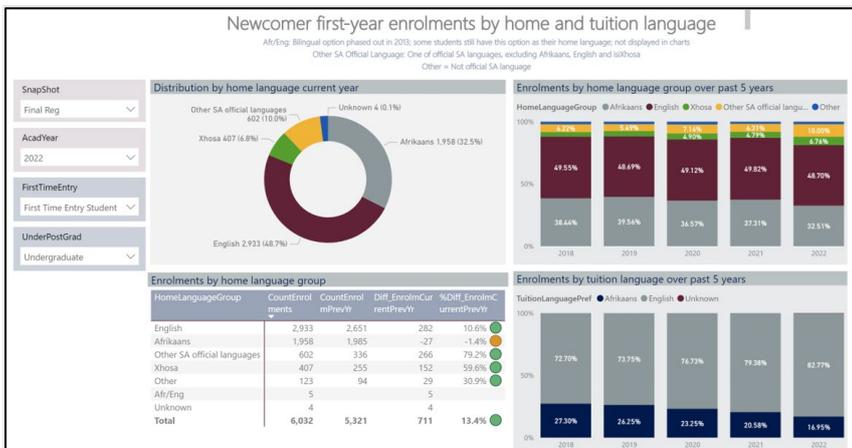
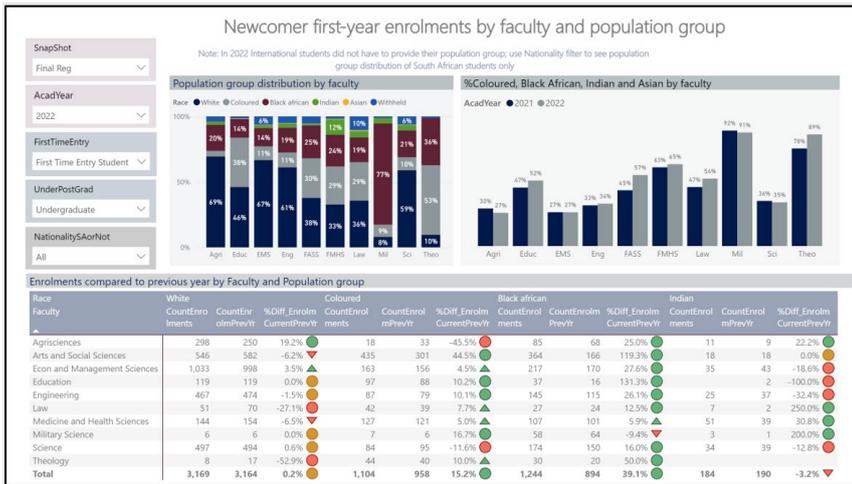
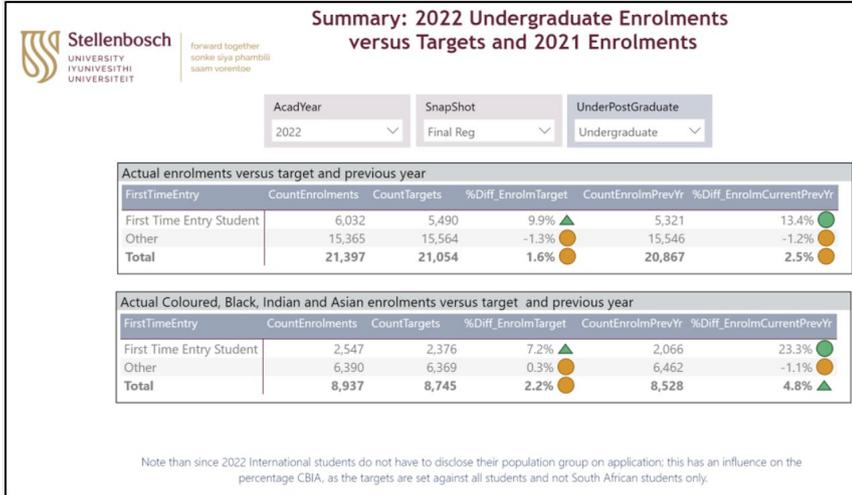


We also celebrated the success of our **Extended Degree Programme (EDP)**, a university-wide higher education restitution programme. Let me use the EDP in our Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences as an example. Annually, around 20% of the Faculty’s first-years are enrolled in the programme, which means they get to spread their first year over two years, and receive enriching learning material to boot – in all three institutional languages. These efforts are clearly worthwhile. Since 2018, Arts and Social Sciences has had 226 graduates who got their first break in the EDP, including 64 postgraduates.

2.2 Student enrolments

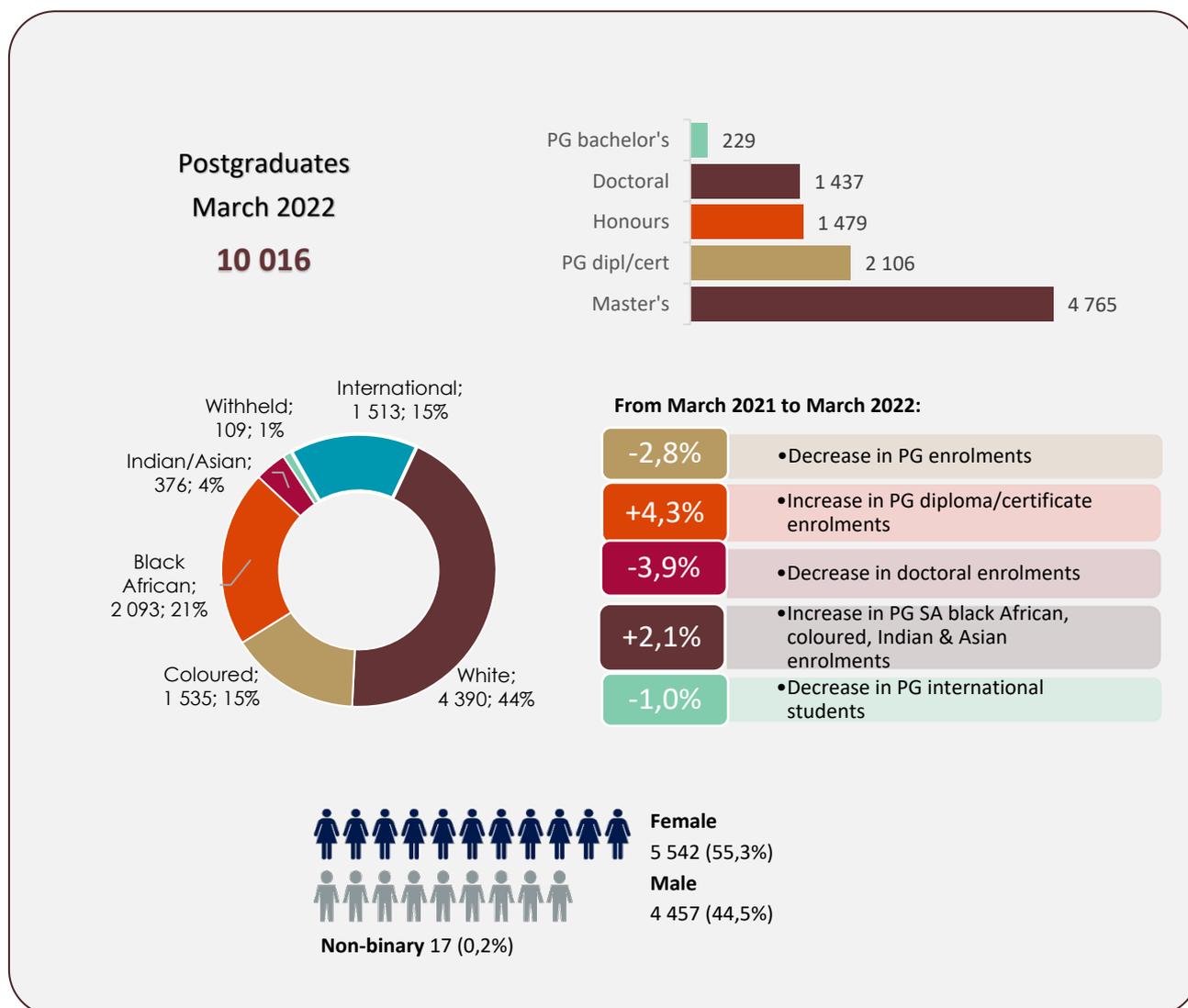
Undergraduates

Undergraduate registration for 2022 concluded on 4 March. Key trends are summarised in the following slides from the [final undergraduate enrolment report](#), which is available on the website of [Information Governance](#).



Postgraduates

Information Governance also released its annual overview of postgraduate **enrolments** on 4 April. Key highlights are presented below. [Click here](#) to view the full report.



Stellenbosch Business School enrolments

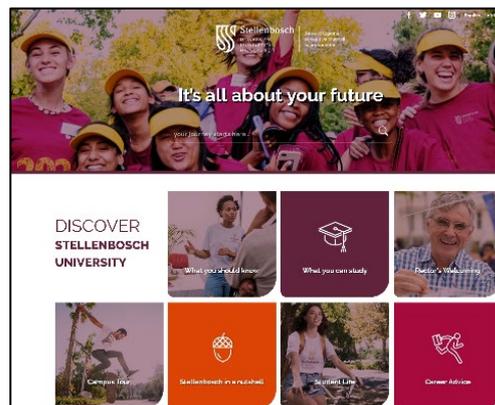
The Stellenbosch Business School (as the University of Stellenbosch Business School, USB, is now known) experienced an increase in enrolments for specific academic programmes. These include the MBA and the postgraduate diplomas in Business Management and Administration, Futures Studies, Project Management, and Financial Planning.

2.3 Student recruitment

When Covid-19 struck two years ago, SU went **online** with its annual **Open Day** recruitment event. The first virtual event held in 2021 managed to reach triple the number of participants recorded at the once-off face-to-face event in previous years. Based on the success of the virtual offering, it was repeated this year – on Saturday 9 April.

This year, we were also able to add three, smaller **on-campus Open Day events**, clustering together faculties in related fields of study. This hybrid approach offered us the best of both worlds – the reach and convenience of an online offering, and the intimacy and focus of in-person engagements.

SU is one of only a few universities in South Africa with a dedicated [Open Day website](#) (screenshot right). The site contains a wealth of information in the form of videos, brochures and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) to help Grade 12s make informed decisions about furthering their studies after school. Although it is still called “Open Day”, the pre-prepared online content means that prospective students can still consult it for the duration of the application period (until 31 July 2022).



A campaign to promote our online Open Day 2022 and three subsequent on-campus events (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics on 23 April, Social Sciences on 7 May, and Business and Law on 14 May) was launched on SU’s social media channels in mid-March. It featured the hashtag #whoyoubecome, #wiejyword and #umntu_onokuba_nguye from our advertisement produced for Woordfees TV last year, which is available in [English](#), [Afrikaans](#) and [isiXhosa](#).

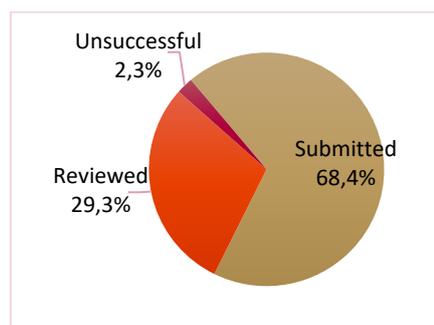
The success of any on-campus open day depends on the engagement that occurs between SU staff/students and prospective students/parents. Because this year’s in-person events were relatively small, engagements were of a high quality. Feedback suggests that guests prepared for the on-campus events by visiting the Open Day website beforehand. Across the three events, 3 500 individuals booked 14 000 tickets for the various sessions. (A maximum of two tickets were allowed per family, which were typically taken up by a prospective student plus one parent.)

Besides open days, our Centre for Student Recruitment and Career Advice also conducts **school engagements** throughout the year. In the reporting period, the Centre reached close to **15 000 learners** at nearly 150 schools in six of our country’s provinces. The engagements include expos, information drops, teacher meetings, parent evenings and face-to-face school visits.

2.4 Undergraduate applications for 2023

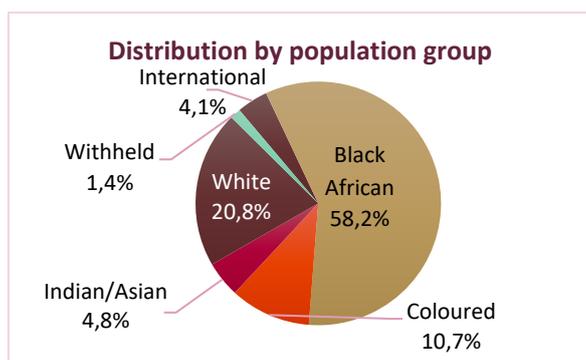
Undergraduate applications to study at SU next year officially opened on SUNStudent on 4 April 2022. By the end of April, a total of 24 741 applications had been initiated on the system:

Application status	Number of applicants
Cancelled	2
Submitted	16 929
Submitted (not yet reviewed)	16 187
Submitted (incomplete)*	742
Reviewed	7 242
Unsuccessful	568
Total	24 741



*“Submitted (incomplete)” refers to applications that have been partially reviewed, but involve outstanding, incorrect or illegible documents.

The figure for the corresponding period last year (for the 2022 intake) was 13 942, which means applications have increased by 77%. The **figure below** shows the distribution of the 2023 applicants by population group. (International applicants are not required to state their population group and, therefore, are reported as a separate group.)



Key trends noted when comparing the April 2022 applications (2023 intake) to those of April 2021 (2022 intake) (as reflected in the **table below**) are that the number of black African applicants doubled (an increase of 106%), while white applicants showed the smallest increase (41%).

Nationality and population group	30 April 2021 (2022 intake)	30 April 2022 (2023 intake)	Percentage increase
International	704	1 020	45%
South African	13 238	23 721	79%
Asian	29	51	76%
Black African	7 007	14 404	106%
Coloured	1 603	2 639	65%
Indian	600	1 126	88%
White	3 644	5 152	41%
Withheld (prefer not to say)	185	316	71%
Unknown	170	33	-81%
Total	13 942	24 741	77%

For the full report on undergraduate applications, consult the website of [Information Governance](#).

2.5 Recruitment bursaries

Recruitment bursaries at SU support our **strategic goals**, including achieving **greater diversity** in our student body. Allocated by faculty based on academic merit, these bursaries are available to students from the black African, coloured, Indian and Asian population groups. The allocation of recruitment bursaries to faculties is proportional to their respective targets for newcomer first-year enrolments. The total number of bursaries that can be awarded is determined by available funds. For the 2022 intake, **130 bursaries** were made available.

2.6 Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP)

[ISFAP](#) was established by the government to assist poor and missing-middle students in selected fields of study by providing financial aid, provided the candidate meets the prescribed requirements.

Extended to our university in 2018, ISFAP delivered its second cohort of SU graduates in December 2021 and April 2022 in the form of 24 recipients of BEng and BAcc degrees. This brings **our total number of ISFAP graduates to 35**.

This year, 12 new students qualified for the programme, which means that we currently have 81 ISFAP students registered at SU. On 12 March, our entire ISFAP contingent got the opportunity to meet and mingle in person for the first time in two years.

A group of 42 senior ISFAP students also completed an online graduate programme developed especially for ISFAP by our Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert (FVZS) Institute for Student

Leadership Development. The programme, which is also accredited as a short course, aims to



*New first-year ISFAP students
PICTURE: ANDRÉ ENGELBRECHT*

prepare participants for the world of work, with a specific focus on the development of graduate attributes.

Moreover, two workshops were presented in the first term this year to prepare our ISFAP mentors for supporting their mentees. This kind of support is an indispensable element of the ISFAP wrap-around offering at SU.

2.7 CEFF-Chancellor’s Bursary Programme at SU

On 6 April 2022, SU launched a new flagship bursary programme to the value of R9 million sponsored by the Carl and Emily Fuchs Foundation (CEFF). The first cohort of 30 bursary recipients were also introduced.

The bursary is targeted at missing-middle students, who will each be supported for a maximum of three years, provided they meet the academic progression requirements. In addition to offering financial



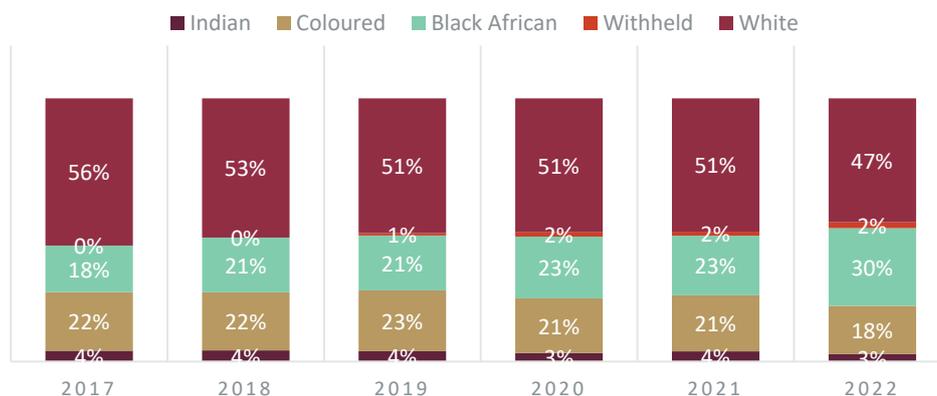
The inaugural CEFF-Chancellor’s Bursary Programme cohort, pictured with SU and CEFF officials
PICTURE: ANDRÉ ENGELBRECHT

assistance, the programme includes wrap-around support, which entails various academic and psychosocial initiatives to develop a range of graduate attributes, competencies and skills. This is offered in synergy with existing SU programmes.

2.8 Residence placements

The **diversity** of our student body in SU residences has changed considerably over the past six years (see graph below). Black African first-years have increased from approximately 18% to 30%.

FIRST-YEARS IN RESIDENCE BY POPULATION GROUP



Annual residence placement targets are set in five categories and have mostly been met over the past two years, as shown below. The increase in first-generation students coincides with an increase in students from socioeconomically disadvantaged circumstances placed in residence. The decline in international undergraduate placements is in line with a decrease in international enrolments.

Criteria	Target 2021 and 2022	Placements 2021	Placements 2022
Academic performance (80%+)	50%	61,0%	52,4%
Black African, coloured, Indian and Asian students (SA only)	50%	47,8%	50,7%
First-generation	40%	43,5%	48,5%
International students	5%	6,7%	3,6%
Financial need (NSFAS)	30%	27%	27%

With regard to the residence placement of our National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) students by the end of March 2022, almost half secured place in residence.

	In SU residences	In Private Student Organisations	Total	% in SU residences
First-year NSFAS students at SU	738	821	1 559	47%
Other undergraduate NSFAS students at SU	1 452	1 729	3 181	46%
Total	2 190	2 550	4 740	46%

2.9 Working group on private student accommodation

The Student Communities Advisory Committee established a working group to investigate the availability of student accommodation in Stellenbosch and its impact on our student body. The working group is currently collecting information about existing accommodation and projects being planned and constructed, and how to integrate this with data from the SU system.

2.10 Rector's breakfast with students

The first Rector's breakfast with students took place at Die Stal, Coetzenburg, on 29 March 2022. Students had earlier been asked to nominate candidates to attend the engagement opportunity. Out of 138 nominations, 20 students were selected by a committee. After I gave a presentation, students could ask questions, and then we mingled over breakfast.



This afforded me a valuable opportunity to **listen to students** in person and obtain their opinions on pertinent matters. Even though the Rectorate engages with the SRC and other student leaders on a regular basis, events like this, where management reaches out to the **general student body**, are critical.

Students spoke freely about various issues and asked questions on topics ranging from career advice and psychosocial wellbeing to inequality on campus, and efforts towards social justice.

The event was organised by CCMD, in collaboration with the Division of Student Affairs and my office. Next up will be a similar engagement opportunity with staff members.

2.11 Transformation Summit and Transformation Charter

The Division of Student Affairs hosted its Transformation Summit at STIAS on 11 March. The summit, which has become a signature annual event, brought together staff, student leaders and management, including the DVC: Learning and Teaching,

Prof Deresh Ramjugernath, to reflect on our transformation journey over the past three years. Student Affairs' Transformation Charter was also launched at the event.



The charter was read in the three languages of our university (English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans) as well as conveyed in South African Sign Language (*pictured above*).

2.12 Siyakhula ResEd programme

The Siyakhula ResEd programme, a Transformation Office initiative co-hosted with Student Affairs, includes the Critical Engagement Forum (CEF). The CEF's experiential learning activities are aligned with the Transformation Office's Imbizo 365 calendar of engagement.

For **Human Rights Day**, the CEF visited the Slave Lodge in Cape Town. Topics covered included slavery, colonialism, apartheid, and understanding human rights in the context of an unjust past.

The programme for **Freedom Day** included a visit to the Drakenstein correctional centre (formerly Victor Verster prison) between Paarl and Franschhoek, where late president Nelson Mandela served the last part of his 27-year sentence.

2.13 Shared Humanity module

Shared Humanity is an interdisciplinary module facilitated by our Co-Curriculum Office. The overarching themes are social justice, design thinking and social entrepreneurship. Led by renowned experts in various academic disciplines, students are challenged to critically examine their points of view on a range of topics. This year's programme is as follows:

Anthropology	Prof Tshepo Madlingozi	Who are we really?
Science and Technology	Dr Mpho Tshivhase	Where do humans fit into artificial intelligence?
Economics	Prof JP Landman	What is the future of the South African economy?
Medicine	Prof Salim Abdool Karim	Are the coronavirus and its mutations here to stay?
Visual Arts	Prof Elmarie Costandius	How do I find my space and place in a changing world?
Law	Prof Thuli Madonsela	Can the law deliver on social justice?
Sociology	Dr Imtiaz Sooliman and Prof Jonathan Jansen	To what extent can civil society fill the gap left by dysfunctional governance?

2.14 Engaged citizenship

Advancing Engaged Citizenship, a short course facilitated by **Matie Community Service** (known by its Afrikaans acronym MGD), has been incorporated into our curricular offering for Social Work students. A total of **208 first-years** have enrolled for the seven-module course this year.

A related MGD course offered in the second term is Activating Engaged Citizenship, an experiential training opportunity for **40 SU house committee members** working in the Social Impact portfolio.

And in April, also as part of its work on citizenship, MGD trained **12 leaders** linked to Stellenbosch's **e'Bosch** heritage programme.

For its Volunteerism Practice short course, MGD this year placed **64 second-year Social Work students** at Pebbles, a long-standing partner in the NGO sector. This marks MGD's return to in-person community engagement, having operated fully online in 2020 and 2021 due to Covid-19.

2.15 Multilingualism and language support

For current students

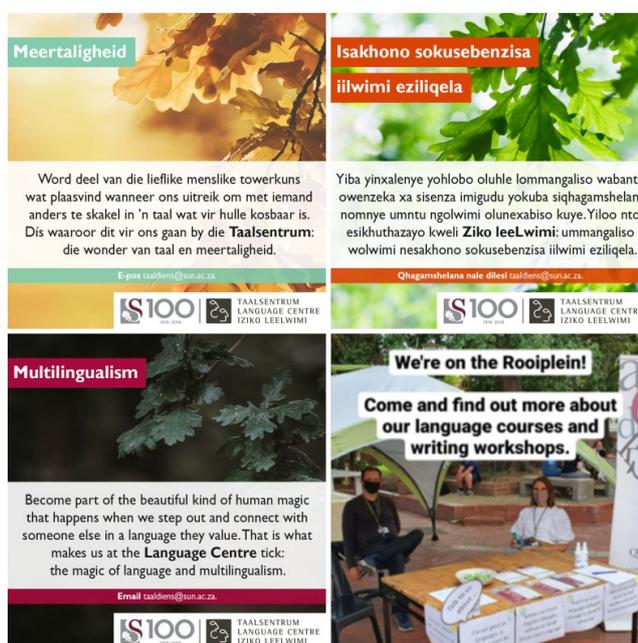
The Language Centre harnessed the opportunity presented by the SRC Leadership and Development Showcase to connect with our students, promote multilingualism, and raise awareness of the language support opportunities available to them. The showcase took place on 22 March on the Rooiplein on Stellenbosch campus and on 12 April at the Tygerberg student centre. Students were particularly interested in information on academic skills interventions, learning South African Sign Language and isiXhosa, tandem learning, and improving their spoken English.

For prospective students

The Language Centre contributed a multilingual offering in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa for the online SU Open Day on 9 April to fill prospective students with excitement about multilingualism and inform them of the language support that they would enjoy as enrolled Maties. The [Language Centre's virtual stall](#) on the [Open Day website](#) will still be open to visitors until the end of July. Videos available in the virtual stall and on LinkedIn have been produced in [Afrikaans](#), [English](#) and [isiXhosa](#).

For student leaders

In support of the revised [SU Language Policy \(2021\)](#), which took effect on 1 January 2022, our DVC: Learning and Teaching, **Prof Deresh Ramjugernath**, and senior director of Learning and Teaching Enhancement, **Dr Antoinette van der Merwe**, engaged with student leaders on the implications of the revised policy for their environments. The policy states: "All official internal institutional communication will be conveyed in Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa." And the glossary then defines "official internal institutional communication" as "communication from the Chancellor, Council, Senate, the Rector, a Deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Chief Operating Officer or the Registrar to the entire University", in effect excluding student leaders. However, in the spirit of multilingualism, and as a way forward, it was decided that student leaders too would use all three our institutional languages when communicating with their constituencies. English will be used for urgent matters, though, with communication in Afrikaans and isiXhosa to follow as soon as possible.



In line with the stipulation that the “language(s) used during internal meetings must be aimed at ensuring that everybody is included and able to participate”, Student Governance encouraged student leaders to follow this practice in their peer-to-peer learning sessions.

2.16 Online campaign against bullying

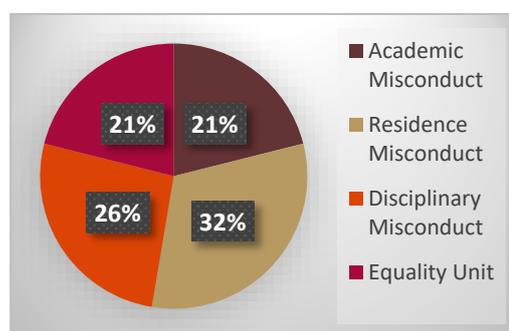
Our Equality Unit, in partnership with Student Affairs on Tygerberg campus, embarked on an online campaign against bullying on 25 April. Aimed at all SU students, the campaign includes pop culture-inspired answers to FAQs on bullying, and a short video on how to report bullying incidents.

2.17 Student discipline

The introduction of the alcohol ban in residences in 2020 and the implementation of Covid-19 regulations resulted in an increase in student misconduct cases, with residence parties being a major culprit. Another contributor to the heavier disciplinary case load has been online learning and teaching, with collusion during assessments resulting in an increase in academic misconduct cases. This has put Student Discipline staff under severe strain.

While online platforms have helped work away the case load, loadshedding continues to pose a challenge, as stakeholders in different locations experience power outages at different times. Hearings have often had to be postponed to ensure procedural fairness.

The *chart alongside* reflects a breakdown of the **15 complaints of misconduct** referred to Student Discipline in the first four months of 2022. These incidents involved 26 students in total.



2.18 New alcohol rules for residences

New rules for the regulation of alcohol consumption in our student residences were approved in February 2022. These rules allow each student community to determine their **own house rules** on the use of alcohol. The house rules lapse every year, which implies that the conversation about responsible alcohol consumption is guaranteed to take place regularly. The house rules must be approved by our Centre for Student Communities before taking effect in a residence. In the absence of approved house rules, the default rule of no alcohol shall apply.

2.19 International student mobility

Covid-related travel bans severely affected our students’ **outgoing** semester mobility, particularly in 2020. Mobility recovered well in 2021, however, and returned to levels similar to pre-pandemic years (*see table below*). **Incoming** semester mobility too suffered a blow in 2020. While a normal intake was possible in the first semester, most incoming semester students returned home after the initial hard lockdown was imposed. The incoming semester contingent increased significantly in 2021 (*as reflected below*), partly due to the strategic partnership between SU and French business school SKEMA.

Mobility direction	2018	2019	2020	2021
Outgoing semester students	100	114	49	110
Incoming semester students	552	499	246	661

This year, SU International welcomed more than 420 non-degree international students on campus for the first semester – the highest number for any semester to date.

2.20 SU alumni tops in SA Akademie prizes

Our students certainly do not stop excelling once they graduate. Seven of this year's 15 prizes awarded by the Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns (excluding those awarded to school learners) went to SU alumni:

- **SJ Naudé**, a master's student in Creative Writing from 2010 to 2012, received the Hertzog prize for his short story collection *Dol heuning*.
- **Ashwin Arendse**, who studied Drama at SU from 2016 to 2018, scooped the Eugène Marais prize for poetry for his volume *Swatland*.
- **Frederik de Jager**, first a Theology and later Philosophy student at SU (1978–1983), won the Eugène Marais prize for prose for his anthology of short stories titled *Man op 'n fiets êrens heen*.
- **Prof André Coetzee**, an emeritus professor and former chair of our Department of Anaesthesiology and Critical Care at Tygerberg, received the medal of honour from the SA Akademie's Faculty of Science and Technology. Prof Coetzee obtained various qualifications at SU from 1974 to 1994.
- **Hendrik du Toit**, who graduated with the degrees BCom Law, BComHons and MCom from SU in the period 1982–1988, was honoured with the Christo Wiese medal for industry leadership, which is only awarded every three years. Du Toit is the founder and chief executive of the company Ninety One.
- **Carel van der Merwe**, who obtained the degree BAcc in 1986 and a doctorate in History in 2018, both from SU, won the Protea Boekhuis prize for *Kansvatter: Die rustelose lewe van Ben Viljoen*.
- **Amoré Malan**, one of our April 2022 graduates, received the Junior Captain Scott memorial medal for best MSc zoology thesis in South Africa. Her thesis examined the Cape fur seal.

We are proud of every one of them.

THEME 3: PURPOSEFUL PARTNERSHIPS AND INCLUSIVE NETWORKS

This theme is described as follows in [Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024](#): “As part of our mission, we at SU have declared our willingness to influence and change the world around us through collaboration, as well as to be responsive and embrace change ourselves. Central to the mission is the notion that what happens in the world shapes our research, teaching and learning as well as our engagement, and that what happens at our university matters to the world. As a university, we are committed to South Africa and Africa. At the same time, we are intensely aware of our role in and relation to the international arena. In order to inspire and be inspired, SU will **engage and collaborate with stakeholders, the communities we serve, industry, government and our university partners at a local, regional, continental and global level**. Our collaboration and engagement approach is congruent with our values, with specific reference to respect, compassion and equity.”

3.1 The Imbizo 365 calendar of engagement

Our Transformation Office and Faculty of Law co-hosted the 16th annual **Human Rights Day** lecture on 24 March. The lecture themed “Transformative social change and the role of the judge in post-apartheid South Africa” was delivered by **Judge President Dunstan Mlambo** of the Gauteng division of the high court. [Click here](#) for more.

The Transformation Office also ran a campaign in remembrance of those who lost their lives in the **Sharpeville** massacre on 21 March 1960. Posters were put up across campus, and messages posted on social media.

For **Freedom Day**, the Transformation Office partnered with our Department of Political Science to host the lecture “Building a participatory democratic culture in South Africa” by **Dr Collette Schulz-Herzenberg**, a senior lecturer.

Finally, a lecture to mark **Worker's Day** focused on the high levels of unemployment in South Africa. This event was another Transformation Office collaboration, with Sociology and Social Anthropology.

3.2 Transformation Learning Network (TLN)

The Transformation Learning Network (TLN) is a new series of online engagement opportunities for SU staff who hold some form of transformation portfolio. It provides a space for staff members to deepen their understanding of pertinent transformation issues and affords them a chance to grow.

In this reporting cycle, the following TLN sessions took place:

- **Prof Christi van der Westhuizen** of Nelson Mandela University led a discussion on the new *Routledge Handbook of Critical Studies in Whiteness*, which she co-edited.
- **Dr Lwando Scott** of the University of the Western Cape discussed “Paradoxes of racism: Whiteness in *Gay Pages* magazine”, the chapter he had contributed to the Routledge publication above.
- **Prof Zsa-Zsa Boggenpoel** of our Faculty of Law presented a session on the opening chapter of the forthcoming publication *Law, justice and transformation: Looking back to move forward*, which she co-edited.

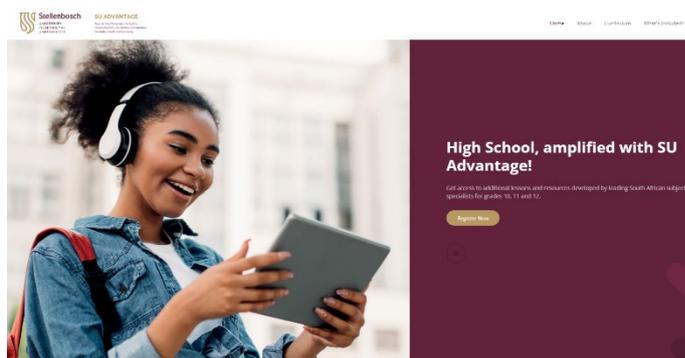
3.3 Annual Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert honorary lecture

The annual lecture to honour the legacy of the late Dr Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert, a former Chancellor of SU, took place on 11 April, with more than 300 participants from over 10 countries joining online.

Guest speaker **Adv Shamila Batohi**, director of the National Prosecuting Authority, shared her reflections on the importance of accountable leadership and citizenship. She was in conversation with **Prof William Gumede** of the School of Governance at Wits and **Ms Cynthia Stimpel**, former group treasurer of South African Airways and author of *Hijackers on Board*.

The event was organised by Student Affairs' Centre for Student Leadership, Experiential Education and Citizenship, where the FVZS Institute for Student Leadership Development is based. It was made possible through the financial support of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

3.4 Online learning and teaching solution for high schools



In light of the challenges our country's education system is facing and the impact of Covid-19 on many families, we launched an imaginative online learning and teaching solution for high schools nationwide on 17 March.

Called [SU Advantage](#), the platform is accessible from any smart device and aims to support Grade 10, 11 and 12 learners and teachers. It combines

effective learning content with live, interactive educational support, paying particular attention to key topics that learners need to understand to improve their comprehension of crucial school lessons.

Dr Benedict Khoboli, director of SU's Centre for Pedagogy (SUNCEP) based in our Faculty of Education, pioneered the initiative. To him, SU Advantage is not an online school, but a supplementary educational tool meant to enhance what learners are exposed to in classrooms.

Ultimately, the aim is to widen the pipeline to tertiary education for South African youth. By providing foundational support to high-school learners in the senior phases of their educational journey, SU Advantage can help them improve their chance of getting accepted into higher education institutions, including our university.

3.5 Virtual School

Our Telematic Schools Project (TSP) is going from strength to strength with the roll-out of the TSP Virtual School. The school guides learners through the curriculum, week by week, with curriculum-specific lesson plans focusing on difficult concepts.

Learners receive free resources, including video lessons, workbooks, exam support and revision programmes, all on a zero-rated website.

In April, Broadband Infraco sponsored the extension of the TSP Virtual School to Mhlanganisweni Commercial and Technical Senior Secondary in the Eastern Cape as well as Ohlange High in KwaZulu-Natal. The project aims to use broadband for quality education in rural areas.



3.6 SU to quality-assure new international school-leaving qualification

We are proud to be the quality assurer of the International Secondary Certificate (ISC), a new school-leaving qualification developed and offered as an **affordable, Africa-centred alternative** by the international arm of South Africa's Independent Examinations Board (IEB).

UK Eccdis (previously UK NARIC), which represents the United Kingdom in all matters relating to international qualifications, has confirmed IEB-ISC to be equivalent to the United Kingdom's A-Levels. And Universities South Africa (USAf) has concluded that international candidates who obtain the qualification with merit or at an advanced level, and are offered a place at a South African higher education institution, will have met the minimum requirements for admission to degree programmes.

Our Unit for International Credentialing, located in SU International's Africa Centre for Scholarship, is hard at work putting all the necessary systems and procedures in place to quality-assure the first IEB-ISC examinations in November 2022. This means that the first cohort of ISC-qualified students will be eligible for university enrolment next year.

To read more, [click here](#) or visit www.sun.ac.za/SU-UIC and www.iebiq.com/pages/aboutus.

3.7 Language Centre presents training in Rwanda

The Language Centre's Writing Lab and Comms Lab further extended the Centre's footprint on our continent with their visit to Rwanda from 7 to 16 March. In collaboration with the Africa Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), the two labs presented sessions at a training workshop for AIMS master's and doctoral students, postdoctoral fellows, researchers and research fellows in Kigali. Comms Lab facilitator **Willemien Theron's** sessions honed participants' communication and presentation skills, while sessions by **Selene Delpoit** of the Writing Lab explored the writing and publishing of research findings, with a specific focus on the art of writing academic articles. The sessions were well received and the organisers have indicated that they intend to involve the Language Centre in next year's event as well.



Comms Lab facilitator Willemien Theron in Kigali, Rwanda, with AIMS students and staff

3.8 Capacity building at Walter Sisulu University

A Language Centre team travelled to East London during the March recess to present a workshop for lecturers of the Engineering faculty at Walter Sisulu University (WSU). This initiative formed part of a larger project under the DHET's University Capacity Development Programme.

In this case, Coventry University (United Kingdom) partnered with SU and WSU to capacitate WSU staff through targeted workshops that address pertinent industry needs. The project leader for SU was **Prof Anton Basson** of our Faculty of Engineering.

Language Centre lecturers **Erina Basson**, **Faika Haroun** and **Erica George** shared the experience they had gained in presenting the Intercultural Communication module for first-year Engineering students at SU. An important focus was the use of a marking grid as a formative tool that also facilitates feedback for students to improve their report writing skills.



3.9 Language Centre staff on Taalkommissie panel

Two Language Centre staff members have recently been co-opted onto the language advisory committee of the Taalkommissie of the SA Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns. For the next three years, **Drs Alta van Rensburg** and **Carmen Brewis** will advise the Taalkommissie on matters pertaining to updating the *Afrikaanse woordelys en spelreëls*, the most authoritative resource on the usage of Afrikaans.

3.10 Access to Visual Arts

Access to Visual Arts, a flagship project of the SU Museum, brings disadvantaged learners to the museum to broaden access and introduce them to visual arts. They are also given a tour of the rest of our Stellenbosch campus. **Bruckner De Villiers Primary** and **Lindelani Place of Safety** visited the SU Museum as part of this project in the reporting period.

3.11 ICGEB signs MoU with SU

On 28 March, the director-general of the **International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB)**, **Dr Lawrence Banks**, signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with SU. The ICGEB is a unique, autonomous intergovernmental organisation with biotech labs in Italy, India and South Africa. The MoU aims to strengthen partnerships and collaboration, and develop synergy in areas of mutual interest, for the benefit of South Africa and the rest of our continent.

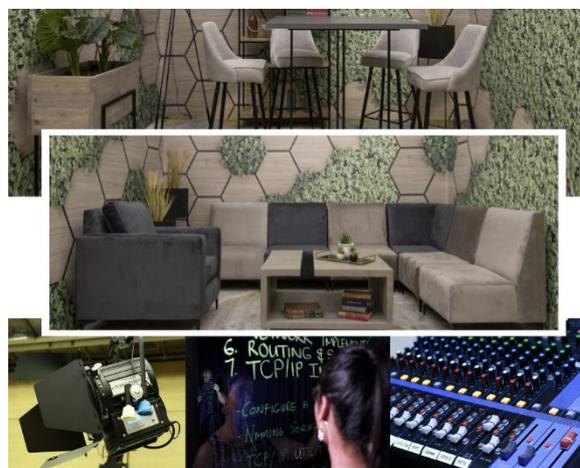
THEME 4: NETWORKED AND COLLABORATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

According to [Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024](#), this theme entails the following: “SU is embarking on a journey of **networked and collaborative teaching and learning** through the creation of learning communities where students, staff and alumni can experience meaningful learning. The University promotes a learning-centred approach to teaching that focuses on learning as a partnership, where students are seen as co-creators of knowledge and learning environments. Within a learning-centred approach, teaching activities facilitate knowledge-building and actively engage students in their own learning.

“In addition, the University has a holistic understanding of teaching and learning, which includes both individual and social benefits. SU’s teaching practices are deeply embedded in, shaped by and responsive to the contexts in which they take place. These approaches shape the University as a learning organisation, enabling the emergence of learning communities among students, staff and alumni in various configurations. Networked and collaborative learning creates an environment that encourages intellectual inquisitiveness, being an essential skill for sustained critical and creative thinking.”

4.1 Upgraded Telematic Services studio

[Telematic Services](#) are expanding the offering in their interactive studio in Admin A on our Stellenbosch campus (*see pictures alongside*). The studio, fitted with high-definition cameras and state-of-the-art lighting, can be configured either as a formal learning environment with overhead camera, PowerPoint and live WhatsApp interaction facilities, or as an informal set for panel discussions or interviews. Clients also have access to a ‘green screen’ (chroma keying) and lightboard so that videos can be customised to clients’ needs. Telematic Services’ goal is to become the go-to recording and streaming service provider for both internal and external clients in the greater Stellenbosch area.



4.2 Auxin academic development sessions

In the [Auxin](#) lunch-hour session of 29 March, **Dr Carmen Brewis** of the Language Centre highlighted the role of educational interpreting as part of teaching and learning practices in a multilingual university lecture, as prescribed in the revised [SU Language Policy \(2021\)](#). Brewis provided insight into the nature of the interpreter-mediated lecture, and how interpreters facilitate access.

4.3 Learning and teaching enhancement seminars

Two [SU teaching fellows](#) presented learning and teaching enhancement seminars in the reporting period. **Prof Debby Blaine** of Mechanical Engineering spoke on “Curriculum renewal for holistic learning” on 11 March. She proposed that curriculum renewal provided a space to co-create innovative and inclusive learning environments, where both students and staff can live SU’s values.

On 12 May, **Prof Ingrid Rewitzky**, Science’s Learning and Teaching vice-dean, explored the use of complexity theory to guide programme evaluation. She argued that an effective evaluation framework for programme renewal at SU should take cognisance of the dynamic nature of learning.

4.4 Fourth round of hybrid-learning funding nominations

Since June 2020, there have been three opportunities for SU faculties to nominate selected offerings for hybrid-learning (HL) funding, which resulted in the development of [various HL programmes](#).

[modules and learning units](#). A fourth opportunity opened in the first week of May 2022. The latest nomination round will focus on **postgraduate programmes** such as diplomas and master's degrees specifically intended for **underserved markets** (including for the learn-and-earn market, i.e. students who have already entered the job market and, thus, prefer flexible offerings with sustained periods of online learning). [Click here](#) for an update on the offerings nominated in the previous round.

4.5 Partnership with edX

Our partnership with the global online university-level course provider [edX](#), which commenced in January, will be publicly announced in mid-2022. This will be accompanied by an enrolment call for the first online courses we will be offering internationally. To prepare for this milestone, SU representatives are collaborating closely with the edX team to conduct in-depth market research, drawing on data of the more than 40 million edX learners in 196 countries. This will inform the so-called StellenboschX portfolio strategy. Our offering will include both massive open online courses (MOOCs) and [professional certificates](#) (online courses imparting in-demand skills to working professionals, resulting in a co-branded digital certificate).



In addition, our Hybrid Learning instructional design team have completed training in edX course development. This provides us with the internal capacity to continually broaden and expand our international online course portfolio.

Meeting between edX representatives and members of SU's Hybrid Learning team at the Centre for Learning Technologies' studio on Stellenbosch campus

4.6 African Doctoral Academy

The African Doctoral Academy (ADA) **autumn school** took place from 28 March to 2 April. The 81 participants were mainly from South Africa (82%), followed by Nigeria (7%) and Zimbabwe (6%). A third of the delegates were in the early stages of their doctorates (37%), while a quarter had already obtained a doctorate, and some 15% were nearly ready to submit their dissertations (15%).

A total of 20 universities were represented, with the largest contingents originating from the Tshwane University of Technology (31%), followed by Unisa (15%) and SU (13%). Only 10% were full-time students; 71% were employed full-time.

ADA's monthly **Webinar Wednesdays** are very popular, and attendance figures increased to over 200 in the past quarter. The webinars are an opportunity to showcase SU, its staff and expertise, and to maintain the ADA's profile throughout the year.

4.7 Emerging Scholars Initiative

The Emerging Scholars Initiative (ESI) of our Africa Centre for Scholarship is a collaborative project comprising several multidisciplinary joint schools with SU partner universities elsewhere on our continent. In the reporting period, talks were initiated with the **universities of Ghana and Namibia** as well as **Makerere University** (Uganda) to plan research capacity development schools for 2022, with the first school set to be hosted with the University of Namibia in June. SU's Writing Lab and Centre for Higher and Adult Education will present courses in academic writing and postgraduate supervision respectively.

4.8 Programme renewal for graduates of the future

On 20 April 2022, our Division of Learning and Teaching Enhancement (DLTE) hosted an institution-wide workshop, "Programme renewal as gamechanger – imagining graduates of the futures".

It had two aims. The first was to showcase faculty programme renewal projects completed during the first cycle of University Capacity Development Grant (UCDG) funding (2018–2020). The second was to position programme renewal as an institution-wide strategic gamechanger with a view to the second UCDG funding cycle (2021–2023).

4.9 Training students to facilitate learning among their peers

Our Centre for Teaching and Learning offers a [peer facilitation short course](#) as a way of empowering dedicated and successful Maties to share their experiences with fellow students, thereby facilitating learning among their peers. It is an accredited co-curricular course, so students receive recognition on their academic transcript for completing it. Enrolment is open until the end of the third term. To date, **98 students from six faculties** have enrolled.

4.10 Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert Institute masterclass series

The online FVZS Institute masterclass series is open to all registered students in South Africa, covering **key student leadership themes at a local, national and global level**. It is being offered in collaboration with local and international subject-matter experts and internal partners (including SU International and the Stellenbosch Business School).

This innovative new offering expands our student engagement to other higher education partners as well. In fact, more than 50% of enrolments for the first masterclass were non-SU students. It is anticipated that 600–750 students will utilise these learning opportunities this year.

THEME 5: RESEARCH FOR IMPACT

According to [Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024](#), “[r]esearch for impact at SU implies **optimising the scientific, economic, social, scholarly and cultural impact of our research**. Our focus is on interdisciplinary research that benefits society on a national, continental and global scale. At the same time, we are committed to basic and disciplinary research excellence, as it forms the basis for applied and translational research”.

5.1 SU’s cohort of A-rated researchers increases

The National Research Foundation (NRF) has released most of the outcomes of its latest round of ratings. Although we are still awaiting more results, I am pleased to note that our researchers have secured a record number of A-ratings so far. SU now has **493 NRF-rated researchers**, of whom **20 are A-rated**. Click [here](#) for a full list of all our NRF-rated researchers.

Researchers who received an A-rating in this latest round are:

- **Prof Sandy Liebenberg** (Public Law & HF Oppenheimer Chair in Human Rights Law);
- **Prof André Weideman** (Applied Mathematics);
- **Prof Johan Cilliers** (Practical Theology and Missiology);
- **Prof Len Barbour** (Chemistry & Polymer Science);
- **Prof Willem Visser** (Computer Science);
- **Prof Mark Cotton** (Paediatrics & Child Health);
- **Prof Rob Warren** (Molecular Biology and Human Genetics); and
- Prof Jonathan Jansen (Education Policy Studies)
- Prof Leslie Swartz (Psychology).

Profs Liebenberg, Weideman, Cilliers, Warren and Swartz received their first A-rating, Profs Visser, Cotton and Jansen their second, and Prof Barbour his fourth.

5.2 Research outputs

As a public university, SU adheres to the DHET’s [Research Outputs Policy \(2015\)](#), which aims to “encourage research productivity by rewarding quality research outputs at public higher education institutions”. We benchmark our performance against the output units of all other institutions in the

sector, as contained in the DHET's annual reports in this regard. The most recent of these is the [Report on the Evaluation of the 2020 Universities Research Output](#), which appeared in March 2022.

A comparison of our performance in **2020** to that of other institutions reveals that we were:

- **first in terms of book publication units** (444,5 in total, or 16,92% of the total output of all universities in the country);
- **second in terms of conference proceedings** (74,6, which falls between the University of Johannesburg's 173,7 and the University of Cape Town's 63);
- **third in terms of per-capita research output** (1,82, after the University of KwaZulu-Natal's 2 and the University of Johannesburg's 1,83); and
- **third in terms of total research output** (2 188,5, after KwaZulu-Natal's 2 402,4 and Johannesburg's 2 305,6).

The DHET report states that the six most productive universities (KwaZulu-Natal, Johannesburg, Stellenbosch, Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Cape Town) contributed nearly 59% to the sector's total research publication outputs in 2020.

It also notes that there is a very strong linear relationship between the percentage of staff members with doctorates and universities' per-capita publication outputs. In 2020, 49% of academics at South Africa's 26 public universities had doctorates. At **SU, 63,3% of academics had doctorates (the third-highest** in the sector), after Pretoria's 70,8% and Wits's 66,1%. The University of KwaZulu-Natal came in fourth, with 61,6%.

Lastly, for **research outputs in the creative arts** (fine and visual arts, music, theatre, performance and dance, design, film and television, and the literary arts), the DHET has published two reports to date, the most recent being its [Creative Outputs Evaluation Report 2021](#). SU came out **tops in 2019** (53,6 units, followed by the University of Cape Town with 24,29) and **ended second in 2020** (34,45 units, after the University of Pretoria with 35,37).

5.3 Latest research grants

Our Faculty of Science reported in March that **Prof Bert Klumperman** of Chemistry and Polymer Science had been awarded a **Wellcome Trust** grant of R18 million to develop next-generation polymers for the successful isolation of membrane proteins. The project kicked off on 1 March and will run over five years.

In the meantime, the **South African Medical Research Council** issued a call for proposals of Covid-related research in May. SU submitted 20 applications, of which 18 were approved. These projects all kicked off in 2022 and will run for two to three years. A full list is [available here](#), but the following two projects were highlighted on our website.

Dr Lieketseng Ned, a senior lecturer at the Centre for Disability and Rehabilitation Studies in our Department of Global Health, was awarded an early-career research grant to the value of R600 000 over three years for her project "Health-system Covid-19 responses and experiences of people with disabilities, and of disability and rehabilitation practitioners in the Eastern Cape".

Her colleague in the same centre, **Dr Chioma Ohajunwa**, has been awarded R300 000 over three years for her research "*Ukulungisa* (finding balance) in the times of the Covid-19 pandemic: Experiences of culture, resilience and wellbeing in an indigenous Xhosa community in South Africa". She will focus on the community of Thamarha on the outskirts of King William's Town (or Qonce). Dr Ohajunwa has also received a two-year grant of R610 000 from the **NRF Postdoctoral Innovation Fund**.

5.4 Accolades for SU researchers

Prof Wolfgang Preiser, head of Medical Virology in our Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS), was profiled in the prestigious journal *The Lancet Infectious Diseases* in March. The article ([click here](#)) traces his involvement in the discovery of SARS coronavirus in a German patient in 2003, as well as his contributions to the discovery of the Beta and Omicron variants of SARS-CoV-2 in South Africa in 2021. Prof Preiser also heads up the medical virology portfolio of the National Health Laboratory Service, and his laboratory has made invaluable contributions to the mammoth national Covid-19 testing effort in our country.

In addition, the **South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)** honoured the following four FMHS researchers at its [8th Scientific Merit Awards](#) ceremony in Cape Town on 10 March:

- **Prof Andre Kengne**, extraordinary professor of Global Health and an internationally renowned non-communicable diseases epidemiologist, received a platinum award for his outstanding lifetime scientific achievements in the field of health, raising the profile of South African science and helping to build the foundations of health research in our country for future generations. ([Click here](#) for a video about his research and nomination.)
- **Prof Tulio de Oliveira**, professor of Bioinformatics in our School for Data Science and Computational Thinking and director of our Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation, received a gold award, which goes to established senior scientists for an internationally acknowledged contribution to research. ([Click here](#) for a video.)
- **Prof Grant Theron** of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics received a gold award for his work in the field of tuberculosis. He is a member of the DSI/NRF Centre for Excellence in Tuberculosis Research and the SAMRC's Centre for Tuberculosis Research, both of which are embedded in the FMHS. ([Click here](#) for a video.)
- **Prof Marlo Möller**, head of Molecular Biology and Human Genetics' TB Host Genetics Research Group, received a silver award, which goes to emerging scientists and those committed to capacity development. Criteria include research contributions with a positive impact on health, especially in developing countries. ([Click here](#) for a video.)

In Theology, distinguished professor **Louis Jonker** was awarded the Andrew Murray prize for general Christian books in Afrikaans in recognition of the 2020 re-issue of *Die Bybel in fokus: Hoe om gelowig én denkend te lees* (published by Lux Verbi), which he co-authored in 1997. In 2018, Prof Jonker's *Defining all-Israel in Chronicles* (published by Mohr Siebeck) also earned him the Andrew Murray-Desmond Tutu prize for Christian and theological books.

And in our Department of Afrikaans and Dutch, **Prof Rufus Gouws** has been awarded the Jan H Marais prize for outstanding contributions to Afrikaans as an academic language. He is widely regarded as one of South Africa's leading lexicographers. SU, Het Jan Marais Nasionale Fonds and Naspers established the annual Jan H Marais prize in 2015. At the time of writing, a formal handover of the R750 000 prize money was due to be hosted in Stellenbosch on 3 June.

5.5 New Centre for Research on Democracy

Political Science is now home to the Centre for Research on Democracy (Credo), a newly established entity. Headed by **Prof Ursula van Beek**, Credo stems from the work of the former Transformation Research Unit, which built up a team of cross-disciplinary collaborators from across the world. The new centre aims to become a leader in the study of the major challenges facing democracy in South Africa, the rest of the region and the world. Its first research project is already under way, focusing on rising societal and political polarisation in a number of countries.

5.6 SU researchers awarded UNESCO chair

The UNESCO Chair in Complex Systems and Transformative African Futures has been awarded to **Prof Rika Preiser** and **Ms Tanja Hichert**, both from our [Centre for Sustainability Transitions](#).

This chair is unique in that it promotes transdisciplinarity and the integration of theory and practice by appointing co-incumbents – one specialising in theories of complex systems (Preiser), and the other in the practice of futures and foresight (Hichert). It has been awarded for four years (March 2022 to 2026). ([Click here](#) for more.)

THEME 6: EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

[Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024](#) describes our people as our first “enabler”, and one of the elements “that make everything possible”, and then states: “In support of SU’s vision, mission, values and aspirations, it is imperative to support the health and wellbeing of our people. In SU’s pursuit to be the **employer of choice**, we envisage an enabling environment that includes the principles of co-creation, co-ownership and appropriate participation, and embodies the characteristics of an inclusive campus culture.”

6.1 Staff assembly

The first staff assembly of 2022 took place on 9 March in online mode, as has become the practice in Covid times. Staff received updates from management on important developments at SU, including feedback from the Institutional Planning Forum that took place at the start of the year. Attendees were able to access interpreting services in Afrikaans and isiXhosa. Overall, **551 staff members** tuned in, with 413 participating in English, 128 in Afrikaans and 10 in isiXhosa. The assembly was organised by CCMD in collaboration with the Rectorate.

6.2 Early-career academic development

Our Division of Research Development has been running the Early-Career Academic Development (ECAD) programme for a number of years. Feedback from this mentorship initiative shows just how valuable mentorship can be for the development of a successful research career. As of April 2022, the programme is assisting 107 mentees.

6.3 Professorial inaugural lectures

An inaugural lecture is a formal event for newly appointed professors or those promoted to full professor, and has to be delivered within a year of appointment or promotion. The Registrar’s responsibility centre coordinates the production and publishing of inaugural lectures, as well as the content management of our [inaugural lectures website](#). CCMD collaborates with the different faculties regarding logistics and handles the livestreaming and video recording of the lectures.

The following inaugural lectures had taken place by 20 May:

- **Prof Bill Tucker**, Computer Science: “Forward together, sonke siya phambili, saam vorentoe”
- **Prof Thinus Booyesen**, Engineering: “Engineering for Africa: Our Internet of Things”
- **Prof Annie Bekker**, Engineering: “What we can learn from the way a ship shudders on an icy wreck hunt”
- **Prof Richard Walls**, Engineering: “Fire safety engineering – where physics and disasters meet”
- **Prof Johan Fourie**, Economics: “South Africa’s long walk to economic freedom: A personal journey”

6.4 Appointments Committee of Senate

Work on the decentralisation of academic appointments and promotions, an oversight mechanism for academic promotions as well as the finalisation of a mandate for the Appointments Committee of Senate (ACS) is in progress. In addition to accelerating recruitment and promotions, and allowing

for all academic appointments and promotions to be handled at faculty level, these measures will advance our employment equity mandate with regard to academic staff. The ACS will play a strong guiding, monitoring and oversight role.

CONCLUSION

Having endured significant disruption of our academic programme over the past two years due to Covid-19, we are now focused anew on our strategic priorities and staying the course in delivering on the key tenets of our [Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024](#). Judging by the activities reported here, it is evident that, halfway through the current academic year, SU is on point in our quest to deliver academic and research excellence with continental impact and global competitiveness.

At the same time, we need to restore trust in the University as a place of *inclusive* excellence. Let us join hands to combat racism, discrimination and gender-based violence.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wim de Villiers', with a stylized, flowing script.

Prof Wim de Villiers
Rector and Vice-Chancellor

CONTRIBUTORS

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