

## Reflecting on the process of developing the DSAf Transformation Charter

*Khairoonisa Foflonker - DSAf Transformation Charter Sub-Committee Chairperson*



The transformation and decolonisation of our institution and division are crucial processes that should include building bridges between all stakeholders internally as well as externally. In order to develop and support our students, staff at the Division Student Affairs (DSAf) need to be reflective, intentional and mindful in how we engage with our students and colleagues. Our approach is one that should take cognizance of social justice at the core of all we do.

In August 2020, I was approached to chair the DSAf Transformation Charter sub-committee which reports to the DSAf Transformation Forum. It is an honour to lead and collaborate with a diverse sub-committee constituting staff and students from the Tygerberg and Stellenbosch campuses. Last year, we focused on gaining a diversity of viewpoints and airing frustrations around creating a transformative space for staff and students. The first draft of the DSAf Transformation Charter was developed through a series of robust discussions focused on how to ensure that our stakeholders feel welcomed, valued, included and heard. We unpacked, disentangled and sought definitions of key terms such as 'transformation' and 'decolonisation' in the SU context.

The first draft of the Charter was completed prior to the annual DSAf Transformation Summit which took place on the 15th of April 2021. At the Summit, staff and students were engaged in discussions facilitated by charter sub-committee members with the aim of gaining their feedback on the draft Charter.

## Reflecting on the process of developing the DSAf Transformation Charter

*Khairounisa Foflonker - DSAf Transformation Charter Sub-Committee Chairperson*



Thereafter, student leadership groups and the Institutional Transformation Committee were also invited to comment on the Charter. In June 2021, all the feedback was collated and a thematic analysis of the data informed the changes made to the second draft of the Charter. This draft was presented to the DSAf Management Committee and then to all staff at the DSAf staff meeting on 27 October 2021. Now, our DSAf Senior Director and DVC: Learning and Teaching will provide their feedback and finalise the document.

The sub-committee has completed drafting an addendum to the Charter which will provide definitions of important terms as well as recommendations for practical steps on how to implement the Charter. It is important to hold ourselves accountable for creating transformative and equitable experiences for all students. However, we should also remember to ensure that we understand what collegiality looks like and that respect means different things to different people.

Furthermore, the DSAf Transformation Forum chairperson is constituting an organising committee to plan the launch of the Charter which will take place during the annual DSAf Transformation Summit next year.

DSAf colleagues are invited to share ideas on how we should incorporate the Charter into our spaces as well as ways of doing transformational work. How will you ensure that the Division: Student Affairs is safe, welcoming, and inclusive for all?