



# THE DISABILITY UNIT

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## Casual Day 2021

This year we celebrated and participated in the 27th Casual Day on 3 September 2021. This year's theme for Casual Day was Courage and Kindness, a theme relevant to the times and circumstances in which we find ourselves while navigating Covid-19. The Covid-19 pandemic has created many challenges for people in general, with particular reference to poor people and people living with disabilities. Suddenly we were all universally vulnerable and huge shows of courage and kindness was evident throughout the world. Micro-kindnesses surpassed micro-aggressions for many. Stickers cost R20 each and part of the proceeds from Stellenbosch University sticker sales went towards the Stellenbosch Work Centre. The Stellenbosch Work Centre indicated a need for curtains. The money that Stellenbosch University budgets for Casual Day initiatives went towards the purchase of the curtains, seeing that no gatherings were permitted to celebrate Casual Day as we usually do. The Stellenbosch Work Centre is very grateful for this act of kindness. see photo attached of Luigia Nicholas handing over the sticker money to the Stellenbosch Work Centre).

## Disability Indaba

On 1 September 2021 the SRC in collaboration with the Disability Unit hosted a Disability Indaba, the first of its kind in this format at SU. Staff and students had the courage to be part of courageous conversations about disability and included persons with disabilities. It is envisaged that the Disability Indaba will become an annual event.



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## **Siyakhula: parenting for change series**

The Disability Unit facilitated a session on “Making sense of disability with your child”, which was hosted by the Transformation Office as part of the Siyakhula Series. The following participants formed part of the panel: A parent (sharing their experiences from a social, emotional, educational and economic perspective in relation to their daughter); a SU staff member with a disability who reflected on her growing up experiences; Dr Lyner-Cleophas (who had a disabled sibling sharing family growing up experiences); Lizelle Apollis (professional with Occupational Therapy background) gave input and guidance).

## **Sign Language for beginners**

The Disability Unit had four Sign Language for beginning offerings for the year that were held online via MS Teams. Students from both the Stellenbosch campus and Tygerberg Campuses attended the sessions.

## **Lead with disability**

The Lead with disability programme took place on MS Teams and was offered to the 2021 SRC and TSR members.

## **Paralympians**

A campaign was launched with the 2020/2021 Paralympics in Tokyo that highlighted the large numbers of people with disabilities throughout the world. This campaign is called #WeThe15. The main aim is to highlight the fact that an estimated 15% of people worldwide has a disability (estimated 1.2 billion people). This will run for 10 years and is aimed at the inclusion of people with disabilities in sports, human rights, policy, communications, business, arts and entertainment.



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Some students from the Maties Parasport club achieved as follows: Dyan Buis (left) participated in the Men's 100m (T38 classification), Men's 400m and came 5th. He also participated in the Men's long jump and came 10th. Anika Pretorius (middle) participated in the Women's 100m sprint and came 5th place. Kerwin Noemdo (right) broke the African record in the shot put (F46 classification), with a throwing distance of 15.65 metres.

## **Peer to peer facilitation: Universal access**

A peer-to-peer facilitation programme is being piloted with the view to supporting students with disabilities but also with a universal access lens. This means that students who would like to be part of a programme that looks at disability, culture, language, race, gender and other intersectionalities will be free to join such a peer-to-peer support group. This is entering its pilot phase at this stage and will take place mid-way through 2022, once the pilot is completed.

## **Res life and campus review (Universal Access)**

This review as commissioned by the Senior Director: Division for Student Affairs. We were tasked with getting a sense of the campus climate with reference to universal access. We took a broad approach and engaged staff and students, utilizing universal access as defined in the Disability Access Policy of 2018. Some of the gaps identified are the continued lack of physical access found in some areas on campus; some students still feeling excluded with reference to race, gender and disability, where environments are not fully aware of what inclusion means in those spaces and how possibly they are being excluded. What is clear is that more needs to be done regarding staff and student training. The DU is applying for more staff to assist with training, admin and social media/marketing and we are hoping to get more hands-on board to address the gaps identified in this review.