



UNIVERSITEIT  
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STELLENBOSCH  
UNIVERSITY

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**IMPACT REPORT ON PHILANTHROPY  
AND INTERNATIONALISATION  
ACTIVITIES AT STELLENBOSCH  
UNIVERSITY  
(2015–2021)**

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**FORWARD  
TOGETHER**

**SAAM  
VORENTOE**

**MASIYE  
PHAMBILI**

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## INTRODUCTION

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Globally, universities are experiencing severe challenges to ensure sustainability. Universities' financial sustainability is typically maintained by three income streams, i.e. government subsidy, student fees and research grant funding. It is, however, evident that philanthropic, corporate and social responsibility contributions, and estate bequeathing have become equally important. Most leading universities, among those Harvard, Oxford, Cambridge and Columbia, set fundraising goals as part of their ongoing capital campaign. Central to enabling giving, is building relationships. The building of relationships with various donors, foundations, corporations and alumni is primarily the responsibility of the Rector and Vice-Chancellor as the chief fundraiser of the University.

Prof Wim de Villiers took office as Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University (SU) on 1 April 2015. As part of his vision, he highlighted two areas for growth, i.e. internationalisation and increasing the investment portfolio of the University through fundraising. Increased internationalisation builds and expands the reputation of the institution, while the increased investment allows for improved access to higher education and the support of students who need financial aid. As part of his vision, Prof De Villiers established the portfolio Strategy and Internationalisation, and strengthened the Division for Development and Alumni Relations with the intent to grow these areas.

The purpose of this impact report is to provide the detail on how these two areas have grown between 2015 and 2021.

## FUNDRAISING

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As chief ambassador and chief fundraiser, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor of SU plays a pivotal role in consistently elevating the University's standing among the ranks of leading universities globally and in augmenting the financial sustainability of the institution. This naturally requires of Prof De Villiers to travel extensively – locally, regionally and abroad. This is, however, not unique to SU, and it would be interesting to see comparative studies with other South African universities in terms of VC travel and the funds raised. Bruns (in *Mail & Guardian*, 23 July 2021) refers to a 2012 study in the USA that showed university presidents spend 3.85 days on average away from campus each month, travelling and performing fundraising duties, but as many as 20 days a month when time allows it. The author also states that fundraising is one of the most demanding and visible roles of university leaders, and they should expect to spend an inordinate amount of time raising private funds.

Prof De Villiers' travel programmes aim to promote three salient institutional goals:

- Augment institutional resources through philanthropic fundraising
- Strengthen alumni relations with a view to cultivate future investment in the University
- Advance SU's international reputation and standing via extensive partnerships with leading research-intensive universities and representing SU at global network meetings

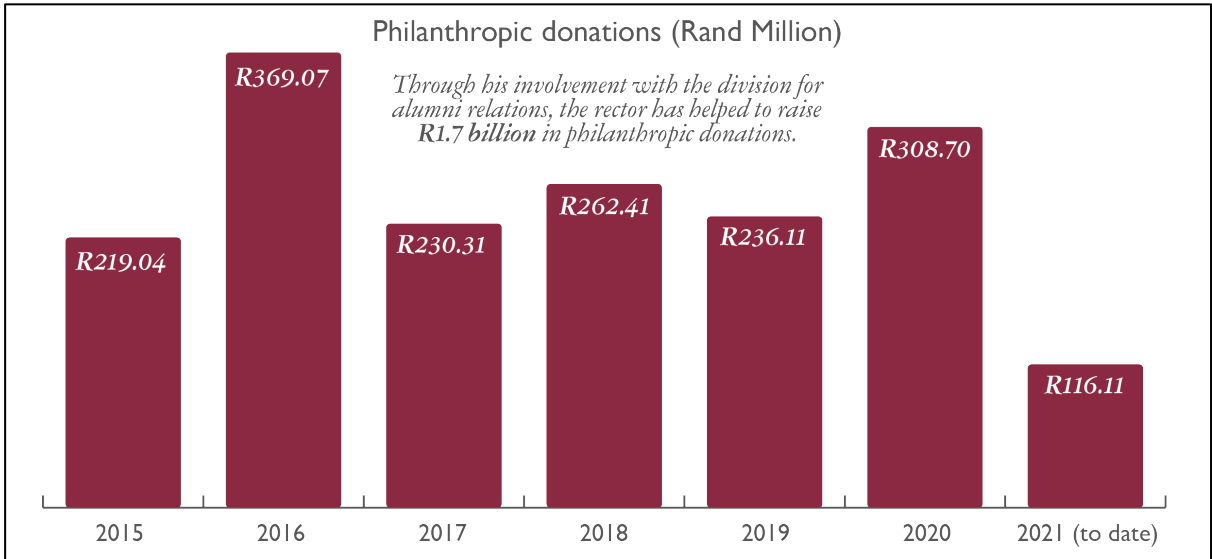
This document outlines the principal activities relating to the aforementioned institutional goals since the appointment of Prof De Villiers as Rector and Vice-Chancellor of SU, and it provides an analysis of the return on investment that the University has seen in relation to the incurred travel and related expenses.

### Philanthropic fundraising

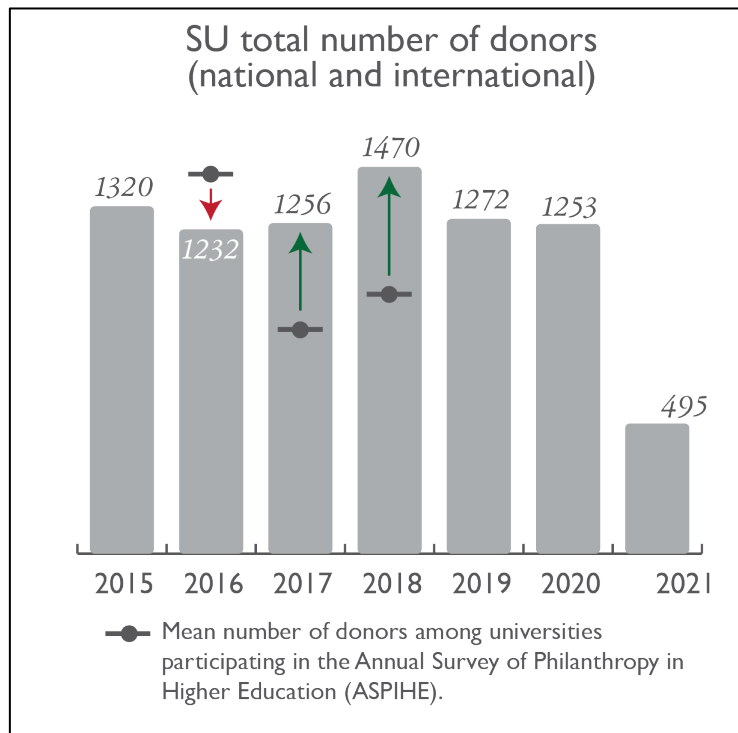
The aim of philanthropic fundraising is to ensure the future financial sustainability of SU in the face of shrinking government funding. As the chief fundraiser of SU, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor is closely involved in the activities of the Division for Development and Alumni Relations, which reports directly to him. This division undertakes fundraising worldwide in support of the University’s priority projects and continuously engages with alumni to advance their relationship with their *alma mater*. Primarily, the division focuses on partnership development and ‘friend-raising’ for the University in the local and international corporate sector, among local and international foundations and trusts, across the full spectrum of SU alumni, and among strategically positioned individuals.

Through Prof De Villiers’ committed involvement in the division’s engagement with a wide spectrum of the University’s stakeholders, the division was able to raise more than **R1.7 billion from philanthropic donations** during the period 2015–2021 (from international and national foundations, trusts, corporates, private donors and endowments). Of the R1.7 billion, R402 million was raised from individual donors (i.e., *not* corporates, foundations, trusts, etc.), and of this 89.6% came from alumni of SU. In comparison, between 2000 and 2014, SU raised R157 million from individual donors. Therefore, SU raised more than double the amount of donor funding from individual donors over the past six years (2015–2021) than in the previous 15 years. These donations have been directed to a wide range of initiatives, including research chairs and bursaries.

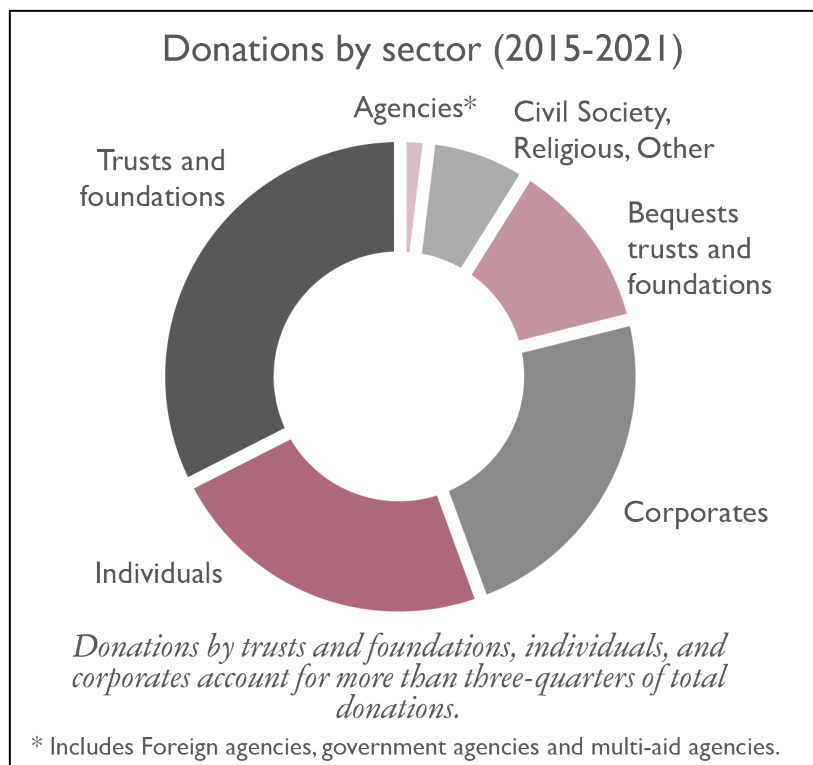
Figure 1 to 6 below outlines the monetary value of the philanthropic donations for the period of Prof De Villiers’ tenure (2015 to date), the number of donors, the donors by sector, international donors as a share of the total number of donors, the average donation per donor, and how SU spends its donor funds.



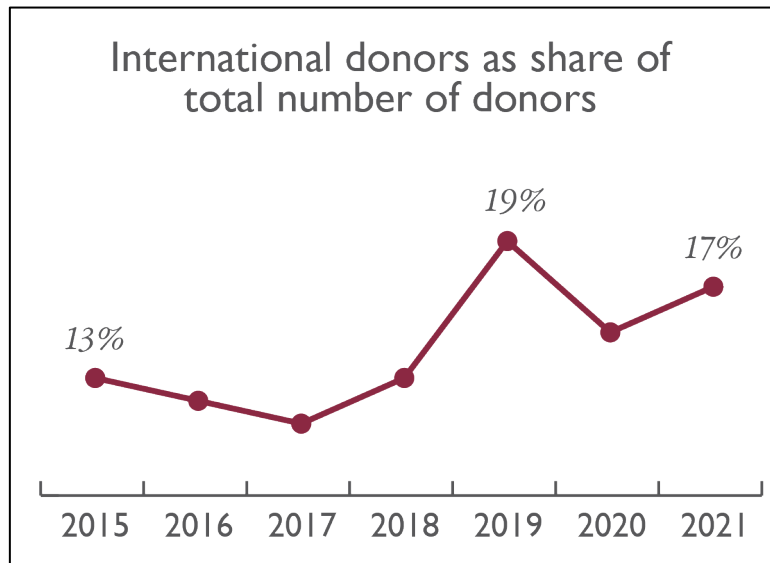
**Figure 1: Total philanthropic donations (2015–2021)**



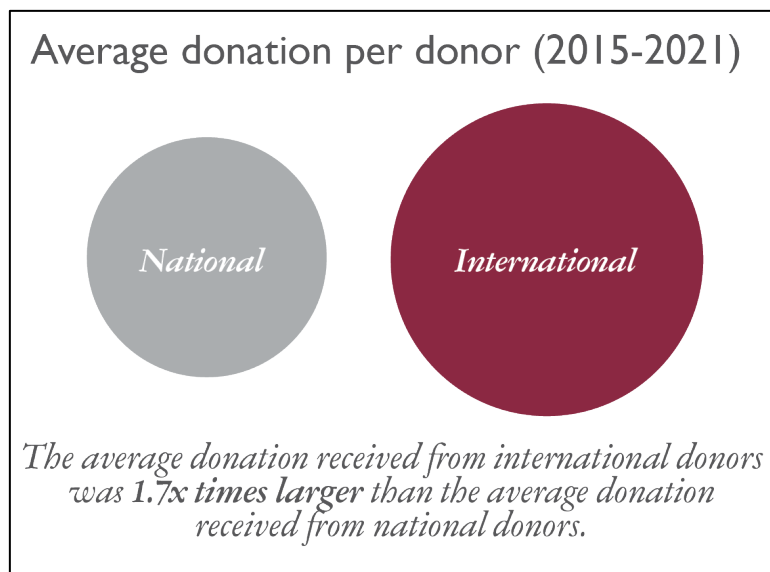
**Figure 2: Total number of donors (2015–2021)**



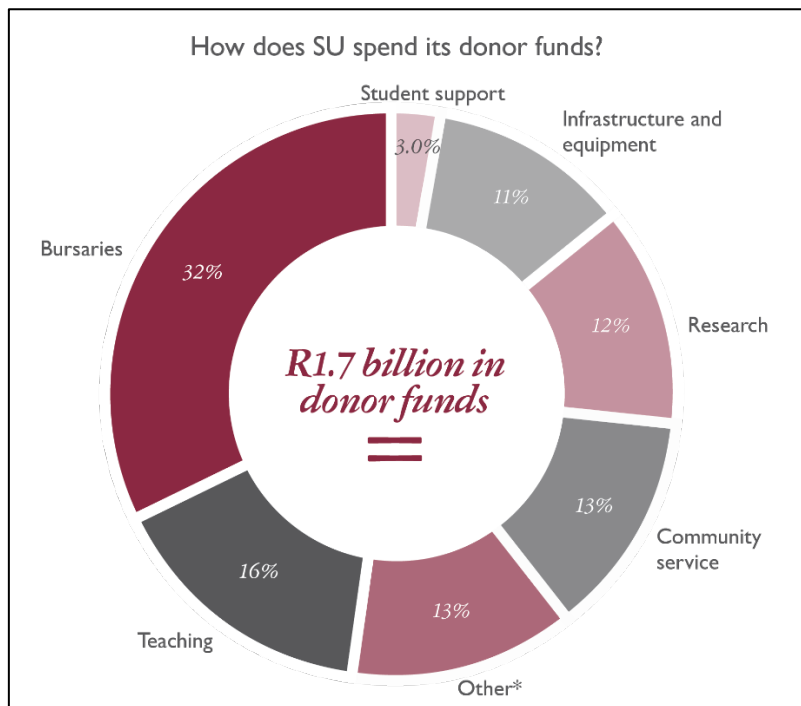
**Figure 3: Donations by sector (2015–2021)**



**Figure 4: International donors as share of total number of donors (2015–2021)**

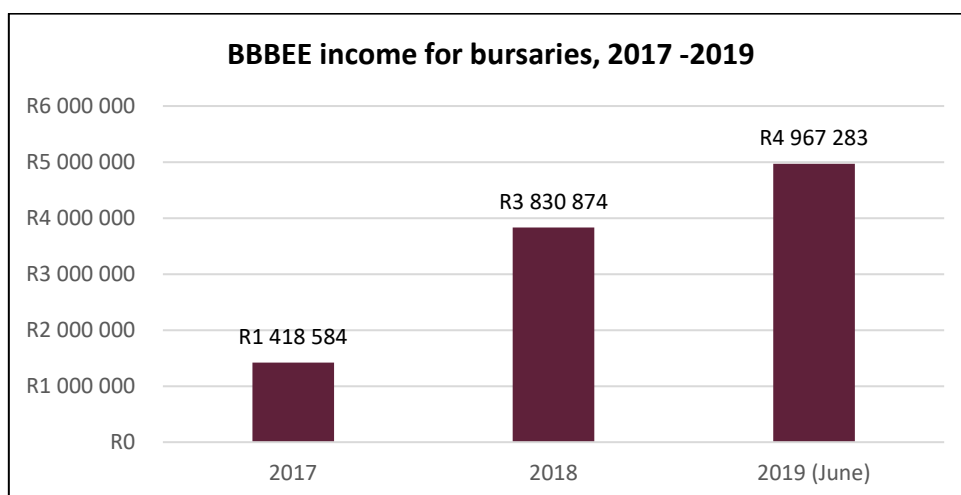


**Figure 5: Average donation per donor (2015–2021)**



**Figure 6:** Spending of donor funding

Although SU has built up a loyal circle of donors who contribute generously to the University's priority projects and bursary funds for students in need, the University has increasingly identified donor fatigue, which has forced the division to also investigate other sources for fundraising. Shortly after Prof De Villiers' appointment, the division's unit for fundraising actively started raising funds for further bursary income through contributions by corporates who aim to advance broad-based black economic empowerment (B-BBEE). The below graph is an indication of the trend in this regard.

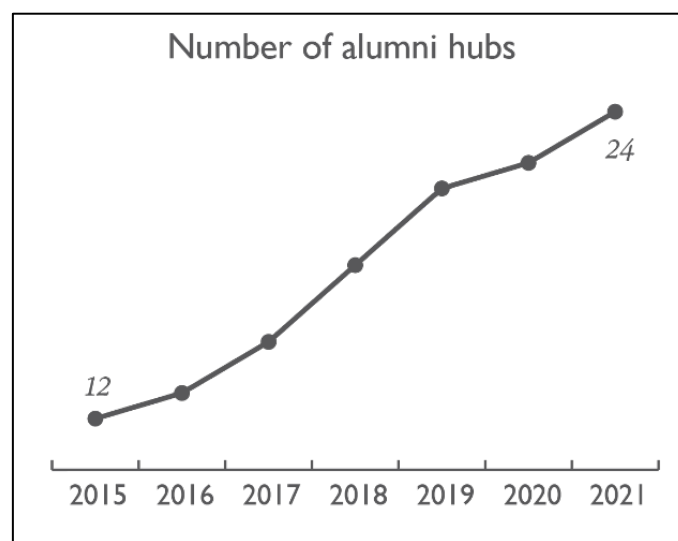


**Graph I:** B-BBEE income for bursaries

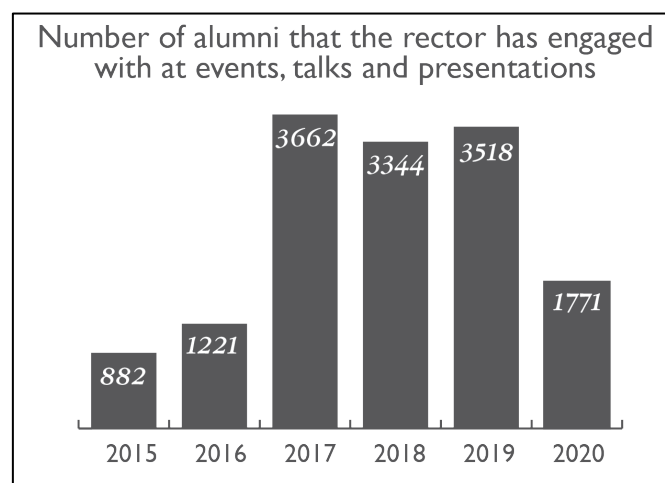
## Alumni relations

The Alumni Relations Office, within the Division for Development and Alumni Relations, believes the success of a university depends greatly on the participation of its alumni, and therefore strives to keep SU's alumni connected to their *alma mater* long after the euphoria of obtaining their qualifications has disappeared. Prof De Villiers has been instrumental in growing the number of national and international alumni hubs and new regional chapters (run by volunteer committees from the regions) from 12 to 24 around the globe. This has had a significant impact on the number of alumni with whom the University could engage with directly on an annual basis in order to effectively engage SU's alumni donor base for the future sustainability of the University.

The below graphs (Figures 7 and 8) show the increase in the number of alumni hubs and the number of alumni the Rector and Vice-Chancellor has engaged with at various events.



**Figure 7:** Number of alumni hubs



**Figure 8:** Number of alumni engaged with



The national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic began in March 2020 before the travel itinerary for that year could be implemented, and all in-person alumni events and in-person speaking opportunities for Prof De Villiers to alumni, donors and friends of SU were subsequently cancelled in compliance with SU directives. The COVID-19 regulations remain restrictive and any in-person travel activities for Prof De Villiers in the first half of 2021, and therefore engagements to meet with him and for him to address alumni, donors and friends of SU in person, have accordingly been severely restricted.

A major fundraising project encouraging donations by alumni from all walks of life and in all parts of the world, and spearheaded by Prof De Villiers, has been the **Move4Food campaign**, aimed at ensuring food security for SU students. Food insecurity at South African universities seem to get little attention due to the erroneous perception that those attending university are privileged and have their basic needs met. The bleak reality is that a lack of access to affordable and nutritious food on South African campuses is rife and SU is no exception.

Food insecurity encompasses much more than skipping a meal, it involves a myriad of factors that include malnutrition, obesity, and the lack of a varied diet. Being hungry affects our students' ability to perform at their best, interrupting their concentration and distracting their energies away from their studies and onto the issue of where they will get their next meal. A significant number of SU's student community has a very high socio-economic disadvantage and is at risk of repeated food insecurity. Even if a student receives a bursary, in some cases these only cover study fees and accommodation costs, leaving students with minimal funds for necessities that their families just cannot assist with.

The results of a national study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) (published in June 2021) on the impact of COVID-19 on students in the post-school education and training sector showed that over the lockdown period 41% of surveyed students were unable to purchase their own food during lockdown, of which 10% relied on food donations and 15% went hungry on some days. To address this, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor, through his personal participation in the London-to-Brighton Cycle Tour, the Cape Town Cycle Tour, and the Cape Town Marathon, has helped to raise significant funds for this Move4Food initiative. Prof De Villiers raised R176 700 for Move4Food through his participation in the 2020 Cape Town Cycle Tour (R17 140) and the 2019 Cape Town Marathon (R159 560). Furthermore, he raised £4 264 (or about R86 700) by participating in the London-to-Brighton Cycle Race, as well as R14 200 for his 2019 60<sup>th</sup> birthday appeal. Through this and other efforts by the division, in collaboration with the student leadership structures, more than **R1.4 million** was raised for Move4Food.

## **ADVANCING SU'S INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY**

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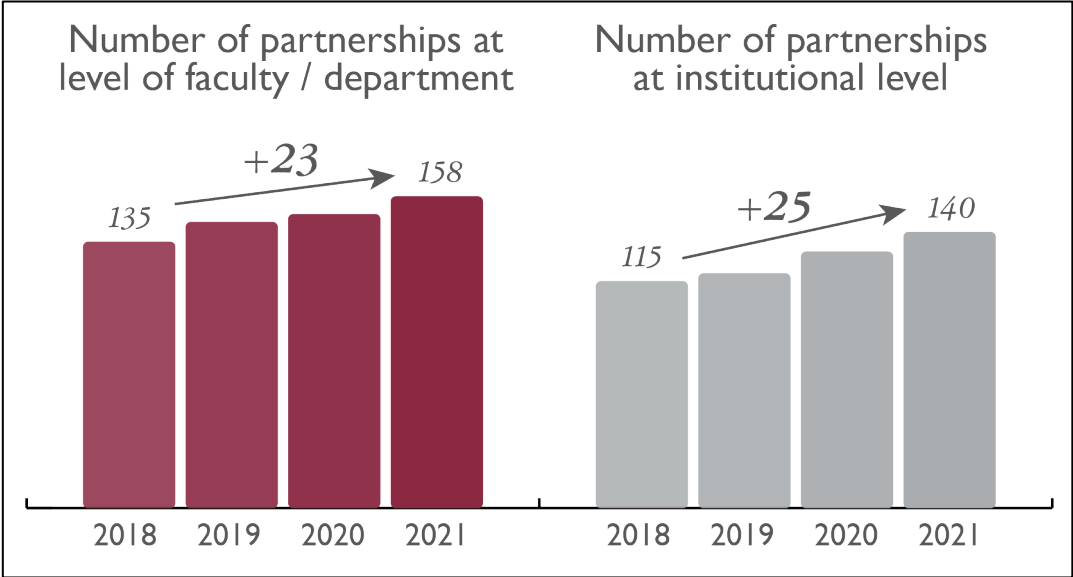
SU's internationalisation strategy aims to set the institution on its path towards the University's vision of being a leading research-intensive institution globally, thereby also increasing its position on the foremost world university rankings. This requires purposeful long-term planning and investment in academic and research activities that make a global impact. SU's internationalisation strategy provides a framework for incorporating an international dimension into all relevant

institutional processes. It also adds greater focus to the existing range of internationalisation activities at SU, and guides how the University harnesses new and emerging opportunities. The focus is on (1) expanding its network of partnerships and agreements with leading research-focused higher education institutions across the globe; (2) increasing its international profile through membership of international networks and consortia; and (3) exploring new knowledge markets across the world through various academic programmes to create opportunities for in- and outbound student mobility.

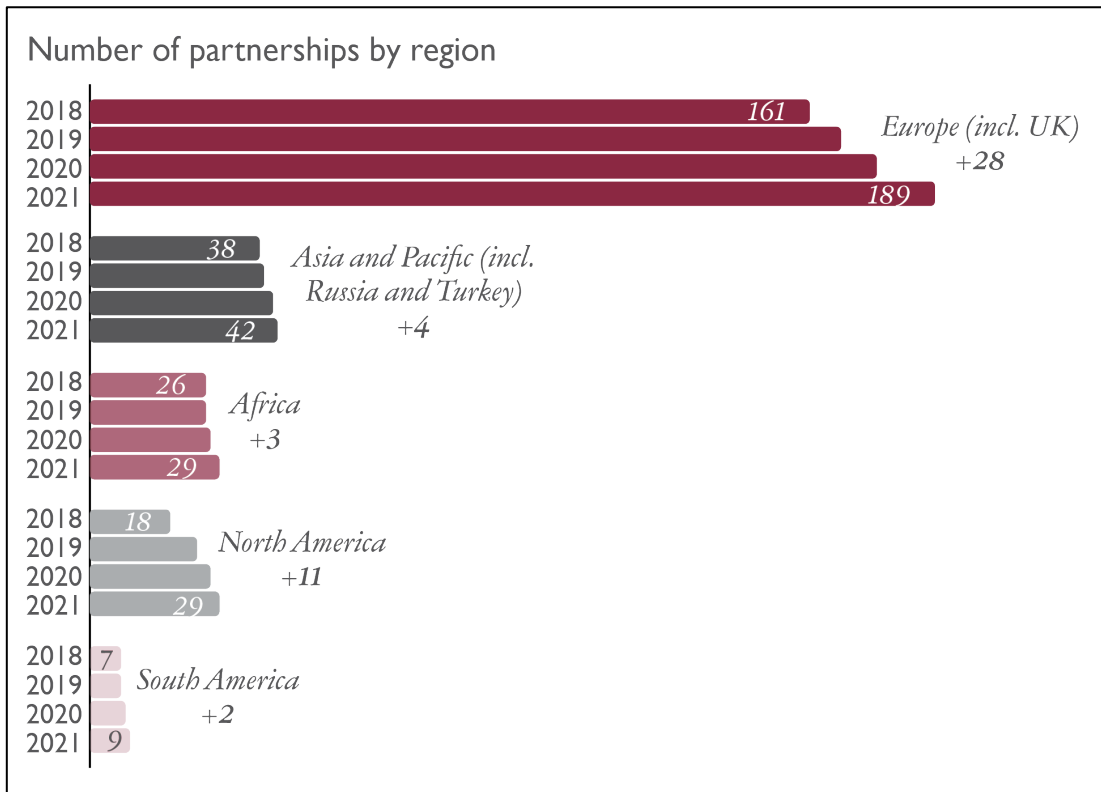
The Rector and Vice-Chancellor provides strong strategic leadership and works in close collaboration with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Strategy and Internationalisation. Prof De Villiers plays an active role by visiting international partners, attending conferences of higher education institutions abroad, as well as participating in meetings and conferences of various international networks and consortia. The focus throughout is to forge relations through agreements that would add value to SU, strengthen the University’s internationalisation agenda, and provide opportunities for our staff and students through mobility or joint research projects.

**Expanding SU’s network of partners**

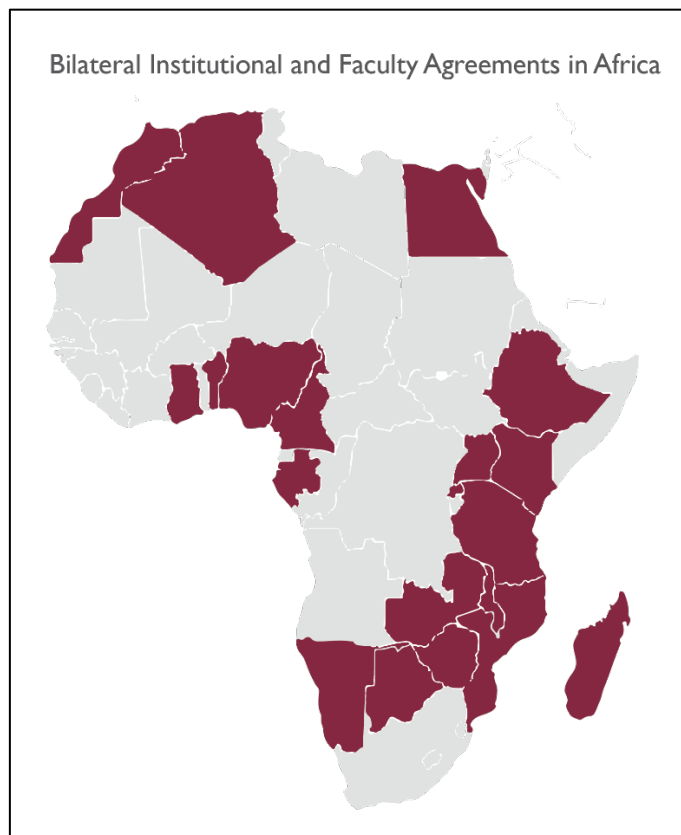
Since Prof De Villiers’ appointment, there has been an increase in the number of partnerships at institutional, faculty and departmental level. This increase can be seen in Europe, Asia, the Americas, but especially across Africa, where SU has particularly focused in expanding its footprint in line with Vision 2040 (to be a leading research-intensive institution *on the African continent*). The below infographics (Figures 9 to 11) details the increase in different territories.



**Figure 9:** Increased international partnerships



**Figure 10:** Number of partnerships by region



**Figure 11:** Bilateral institutional and faculty agreements in Africa

This has a direct bearing on the international research done at SU. Despite economic pressures and a noticeable decline in NRF research funding, SU’s income through research contracts (both national and international) has remained stable. The below table (Table I) shows the income through research contracts from 2015 to 2020.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Research contracts (excluding NRF)</b>	<b>National Research Foundation (NRF)</b>
<b>2015</b>	R637.2m	R224.1m
<b>2016</b>	R1.78bn	R367m
<b>2017</b>	R885.8m	R364.2m
<b>2018</b>	R783.2m	R235.2m
<b>2019</b>	R806.03m (Of which: International: R429.4m; National: R376.63m)	R209.92m
<b>2020</b>	R828.77m (Of which: International: R454.8m; National: R344.52)	R164.324m

**Table I:** Research contract and National Research Foundation income (2015–2020)

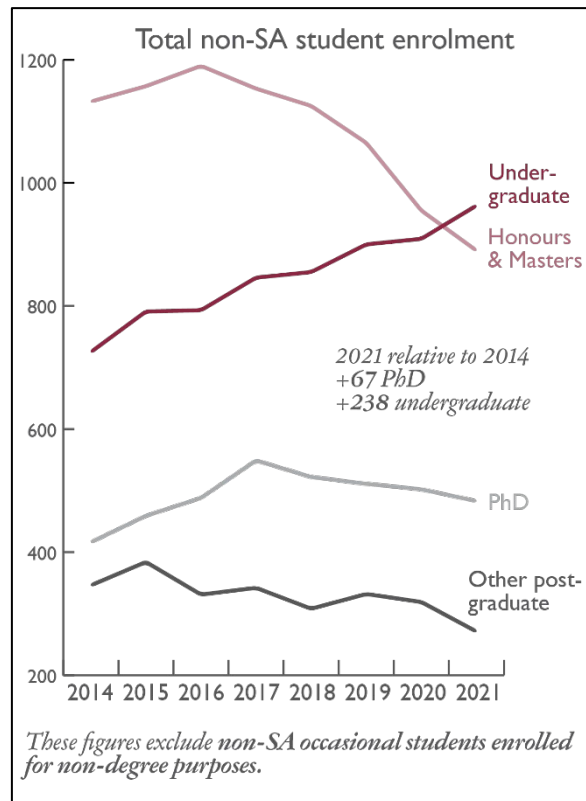
**Increasing SU’s international profile through membership of international networks and consortia**

Since his appointment, Prof De Villiers has been actively involved in higher education organisations on the African continent and beyond, such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) of which he is a council member, and the Association of African Universities (AAU). In addition, he is a board member of the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and played an instrumental role in SU being awarded the ARUA Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Energy. Since 2019, SU has joined the ranks of the Global Alliance of Universities on Climate (GAUC), the consortia of Venice International University (VIU), and is now a full member of the Global Universities Leadership Forum (GULF) that meets annually as part of the body of thought leadership on higher education at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland.

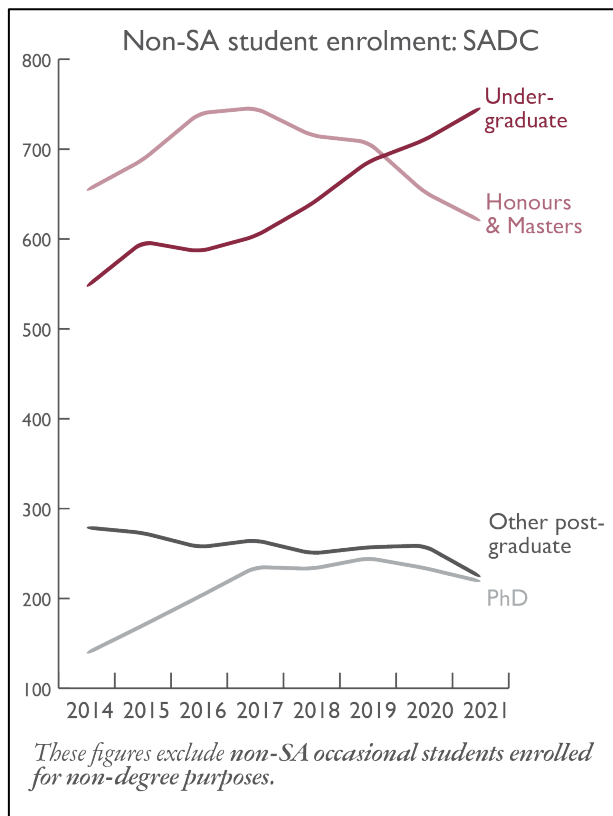
Through Prof De Villiers’ commitment to mutually beneficial internationalisation, SU has also become a member of the European University Alliance EUTOPIA, flowing from SU’s partnership with the University of Gothenburg, the South Africa Sweden Universities Forum (SASUF), as well as currently focusing on specific programmes with the following institutions to expand international partnerships: University of Leipzig, Hamburg University, University of Groningen, VU Amsterdam, Northwestern University (Chicago), and KU Leuven.

## Exploring new global knowledge markets to support student mobility

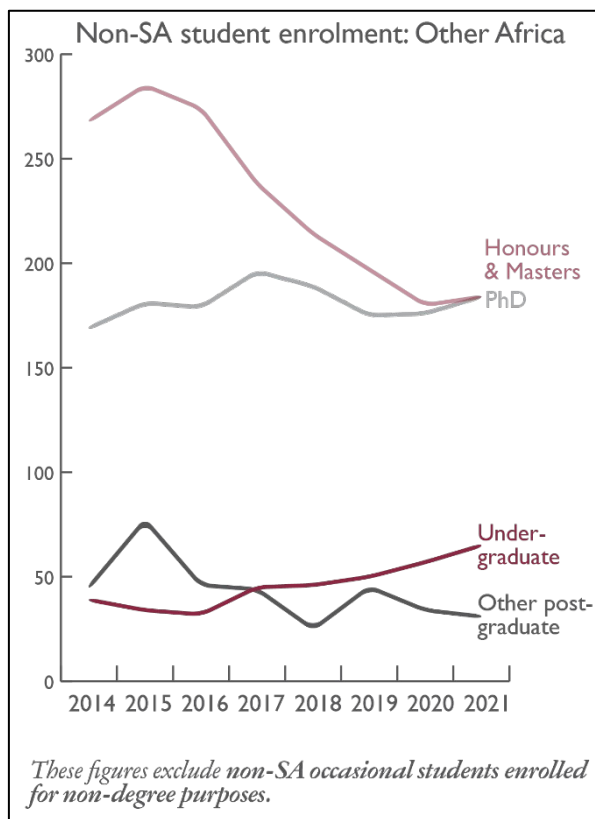
Through various academic programmes, SU creates opportunities for in- and outbound student mobility. The Rector and Vice-Chancellor's engagement with potential and current partners aims to confirm SU as a reliable knowledge partner and a safe and quality destination for exchange and study-abroad students. The below graphs (Figures 12 to 15) outline the statistics regarding non-SA student enrolment at SU, with a decline since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



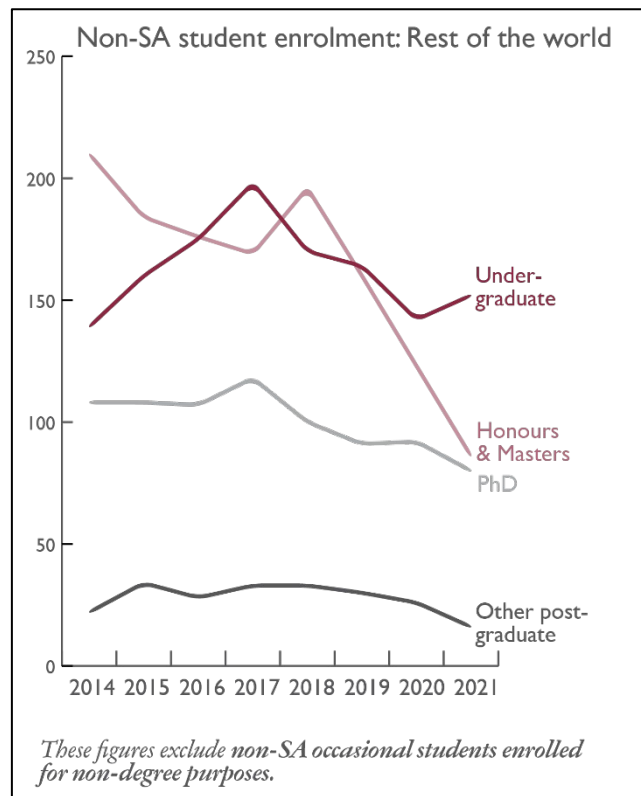
**Figure 12:** Total non-SA student enrolment



**Figure I3:** SADC non-SA student enrolment



**Figure I4:** Non-SA student enrolment (other Africa)



**Figure 15:** Non-SA student enrolment (rest of the world)

Student mobility generates income through two avenues: international registration fees and income for travel bursaries (used to fund outgoing student mobility, without putting strain on the SU main budget). Table 2 below shows the increase in generated income, with a decline since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Year	International registration fee	Income for travel bursaries
2015	R8.9 million	R5.9 million
2016	R10.9 million	R8.6 million
2017	R12.5 million	R9.8 million
2018	R13.1 million	R8 million
2019	R13.1 million	R7.6 million
2020	R10.3 million	R6.6 million
2021 (June)	R11.8 million	R4 million

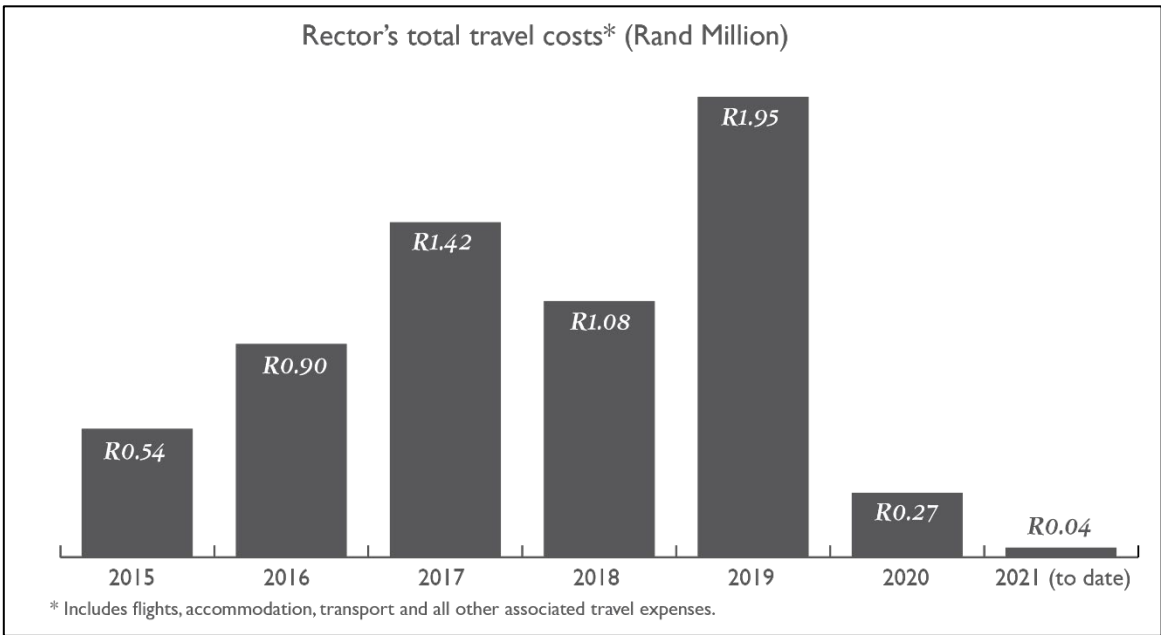
**Table 2:** Income generated through international students

The success of efforts to increase opportunities for student mobility is evident from, among others, the number of joint doctoral degrees and double master’s degrees developed and offered by SU and international partners over the past few years. In this regard, SU is currently the frontrunner among South African universities, with **41 joint PhD and 63 double master’s degrees** awarded since 2016. These degrees have made a major contribution to SU’s global reputation

through the retention of PhD students and the addition of a meaningful international component that is formally acknowledged in the certification of these degrees.

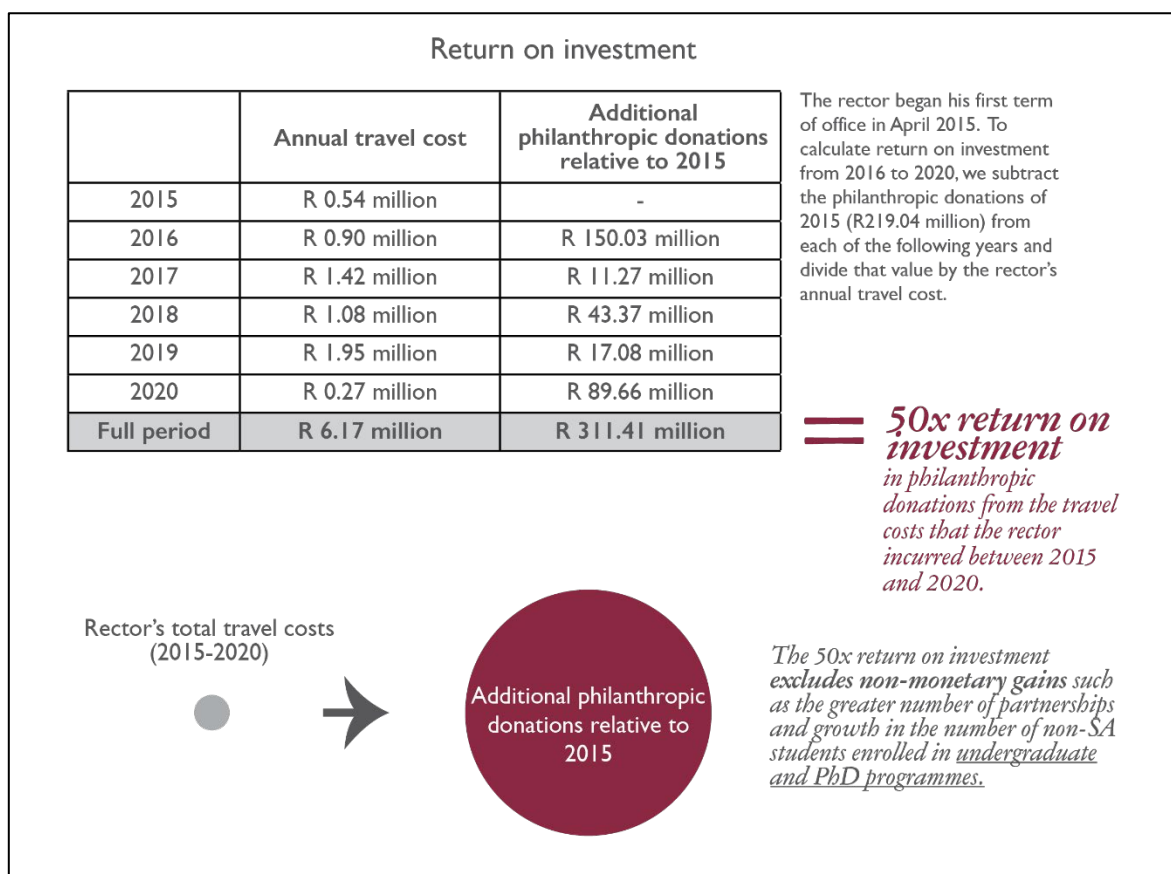
## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

As indicated in the introduction of this document, the Rector and Vice-Chancellor is required to regularly travel internationally to fulfil his mandate as chief fundraiser in philanthropic fundraising, alumni relations, and the advancement of SU’s internationalisation strategy. He represents SU in partnership development, on various networks and consortia, and in support of exploring new international academic markets for student mobility. The cost of international travel and other related expenses by SU for the Rector and Vice-Chancellor can therefore be offset against the measurable income created by him representing SU. Furthermore, a national Inyathelo benchmarking study shows that SU’s budget expenditure for fundraising accounts for at most 11c on every Rand raised. While it is more difficult to quantify in monetary terms aspects of partnership development, academic mobility, and reputational advancement through SU’s membership of networks and consortia (although these do generate income), the income earned through philanthropic fundraising can simplistically be used to calculate the return on investment with regard to the travel and related cost. Between 2015 and 2020, the international travel and related costs for the Rector and Vice-Chancellor amount to R6.17 million. Over the same period, if using 2015 (R219.04m) as a benchmark for the *annual* value of donations prior to the Rector and Vice-Chancellor’s term, total *additional* philanthropic donations generated over and above this annual amount equalled **R311.41 million**. There was therefore a **50x return on investment** from the travel and related costs incurred by SU between 2016 and 2020 for the Rector and Vice-Chancellor. The below infographics (Figure 16 and 17) outlines the details on the return on investment.



**Figure 16:** Summary of travel costs





**Figure 17:** Summary of return on investment

In total, between 2015 and 2021, SU has raised R1.7 billion in philanthropic donations, of which three-quarters are from trusts and foundations, individuals, and companies. More than a third of the R1.7 billion goes towards bursaries to support students, while the rest goes towards teaching, infrastructure, research, and social impact projects. Since 2015, SU's international donor base has significantly grown from 13% of all donors to 17% of all donors at present. To note is that this was 17% prior to the pandemic impact.

## CONCLUSION

Under the leadership of Prof De Villiers, SU is set on its course towards realising its Vision 2040 to be the leading research-intensive university on the African continent. Since 2015, the University's internationalisation strategy and global fundraising initiatives have become the cornerstones of its ambition to be a sustainable, thriving higher education institution. Even amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, it has enabled SU to successfully deliver its academic and research programmes and lay the foundation for the successes SU will strive towards in the post-COVID era.

SU will continue to invest in various ways – to increase its philanthropic fundraising, develop alumni relations to increase alumni contributions through time, talent and finances, and advance SU's

internationalisation strategy and agenda. This is imperative for a globally recognised university such as SU, and particularly in attaining SU’s Vision 2040 and maintaining not only its position in world university rankings, but also its international reputation as a research-intensive university that is excellent, inclusive and innovative, and advances knowledge in service of society.

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