



DIENSBILLIKHEID EN DIVERSITEITSBEVORDERING
EMPLOYMENT EQUITY AND THE PROMOTION OF DIVERSITY
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Siyakhula Diversity and Transformation Capacity Development Programme

Framework Document

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1. The need for Institutional Culture Change and Capacity Development

The Education White Paper 3: A Programme for Higher Education Transformation (1997) demands that the higher education system must be transformed to redress past inequalities, to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities. It notes with concern that the present system of higher education is characterised by an inequitable distribution of access and opportunity for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class and geography. There are indefensible imbalances in the ratios of black and female staff compared to whites and males.

The Ministry's vision is of a transformed, democratic, non-racial and non-sexist system of higher education that will, amongst others

- Promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities;
- Support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights by educational programmes and practices conducive to critical discourse and creative thinking, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, non-racist and non-sexist social order;
- Contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship and in particular address the diverse problems and demands of the local, national, southern African and African contexts, and uphold rigorous standards of academic quality.

The Ministry has proposed that all institutions of higher education should develop mechanisms which will (3.42) –

- create a secure and safe campus environment that discourages harassment or any other hostile behaviour directed towards persons or groups on any grounds whatsoever, but particularly on grounds of age, colour, creed, disability, gender, marital status, national origin, race, language, or sexual orientation;
- set standards of expected behaviour for the entire campus community, including but not limited to administrators, faculty, staff, students, security personnel and contractors.
- promote a campus environment that is sensitive to racial and cultural diversity, through extracurricular activities that expose students (and staff) to cultures and traditions other than their own, and scholarly activities that work towards this goal

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC), in its 2018 report to the Portfolio Committee on Higher Education on Transformation at Public University offers the following definition of transformation:

“the creation of a system of higher education which is free from all forms of unfair discrimination and artificial barriers to access and success, as well as one that is built on the principles of social inclusivity, mutual respect and acceptance”.

As a member of the South African community, Stellenbosch University is acutely aware of the deep and multi-layered social ramifications of apartheid that continues to plague our society post democracy. The University plays an integral part of shaping communities and bringing about social, cultural, environmental, economic development and sustainable change in South Africa, the rest of Africa and beyond the continent. The University has to play a part in healing and transforming injustices of the past in order to build a future that we can all be proud of.

The university has already identified the need for the fundamental transformation of the higher education system, specifically with regards to ‘the slow pace of transformation, racism, access to higher education, the need for a decolonised curriculum’ (CHE, 2016 cited in SU Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024, p.11). It has recognised that ‘diversity’ is a fundamental issue for 21st century universities to address constructively (SU Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024). According to Vision 2040:

This includes diversity in terms of gender, class and ethnicity, as well as age and abilities. The traditional view of students being middle and upper-class recent school leavers is being challenged. Older persons, females, members of the working class and previously disadvantaged individuals have a growing presence in student bodies globally. (SU Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024, p.12).

The capacity to make sense of and respond to the contemporary challenge of increasing human complexity, is a key characteristic of the university that SU wants to be.

2. Siyakhula Diversity Capacity Development Programme

Siyakhula (means “we grow” in isiXhosa). The original programme was launched in 2017 as the *Siyakhula Staff: Transformation Leadership and Competencies Programme*. It was relaunched in 2019 under the new nomenclature, *Siyakhula Transformation, Diversity and Employment Equity Capacity Development Programme*.

This programme is one of the university’s many levers in driving towards being specifically an ‘impeccable’ African knowledge hub that serves the continent’ through building capacity with regards to decolonisation; ‘a transformed and integrated academic community that celebrates critical thinking, promotes debate and is committed to democracy, human rights and social justice’; and ‘a national asset that serves the diverse needs of our communities’ (SU Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024, p. 15). The programme was created in recognition of the need for the University to advance transformation as an embedded, systemic, inclusive and integrated process and practice (SU Transformation Plan, p. 1). The programme specifically addresses indicator 6.2.1. ‘Transformation competencies and skills’ (SU Transformation Plan, p. 13) through providing programming that advances:

- Institutional training that include the advancement, development and strengthening of the transformation competencies of staff through relevant courses for staff members (SU Transformation Plan, p. 8).
- Engagement and leadership development that prioritise key transformation and change management competencies in students and staff.

So far, Siyakhula, working across multiple arms of the university, such as the Human Resources Division, Equality Unit, Transformation Office and Disability Unit, has provided training, facilitation and support to staff to enable them to model, guide and capacitate equity strategies, inclusion and staff well-being and agency.

3. Siyakhula Theoretical Underpinnings and Framework - Critical Diversity Literacy

The ability to read, articulate and engage with the complexity of our rapidly changing social and organisational environment is an important capacity for all staff at SU if we are to realise transformation as embedded, systemic, inclusive and integrated process and practice. Steyn (2015)¹ refers to this analytic ability as a ‘literacy’ - a need to be literate in reading the complexity of the

¹ Steyn, M. (2015). Critical diversity literacy: Essentials for the twenty-first century. In S. Vertovec, *Routledge International Handbook of Diversity Studies* (pp. 379-389). New York: Routledge

twenty first century world, and in this case twenty first century organisations. She refers to this as ‘critical diversity literacy’ (CDL):

‘an informed analytical orientation that enables a person to ‘read prevailing social relations as one would a text, recognising the ways in which possibilities are being opened up or closed down for those differently positioned within the unfolding dynamics of specific social contexts’ (p. 381).

Siyakhula is underpinned by critical diversity literacy, providing an important theoretical framework to inform and shape the training offered. It also provides an important framework for monitoring and evaluation.²

4. Aligning to Vision 2040 and Strategic Framework 2019–2024 and SU Transformation Plan

The Siyakhula programme is closely guided by SU’s Vision 2040, Strategic Framework 2019–2024 and Transformation Plan.

4.1. Vision 2040

| SU Aspirations toward 2040 | How Siyakhula helps us realise this |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An impeccable reputation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SU prides itself in its drive to expand their research footprint into diverse and innovative spaces. Fostering a decolonial praxis and culture of inclusive teaching, learning and leadership will make us Africa’s best. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A transformed and integrated academic community | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SU faculties all contribute to the shared mission of celebrating critical thinking and finding meaningful and integrated solutions to our society’s needs. Critically evaluating our attitudes and behaviours sets us on a positive path of change into a human-centred and thriving institution. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A systemically sustainable institution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to serve the diverse needs of our communities, our university needs to embrace the values of diversity and nurture these characteristics for systemic transformation. Through Siyakhula, we learn how to embrace and leverage our rich diversity. |

4.2. Strategic Themes 2019 - 2024

| SU Strategic Themes | How Siyakhula helps us realise this |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer of Choice <p><i>In support of SU’s vision, mission, values and aspirations, it is imperative to support the health and well-being of our people. In SU’s pursuit to be the employer of choice, we</i></p> | <p>Siyakhula is aimed at maximizing every employee’s potential to contribute towards the realisation of the goals of the strategic theme of employer of choice, namely:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embracing diversity and equity, leveraging unique talents and strengths, promoting life-long learning and celebrating achievements. Creating and promoting an enabling, inclusive, equitable, healthy and safe working and learning |

² Steyn (2105) identifies ten criteria for CDL, which provide important theoretical benchmarks and a useful framework for monitoring and evaluation.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p><i>envisage an enabling environment that includes the principles of co-creation and appropriate participation, and embodies the characteristics of an inclusive campus culture.</i></p> | <p>environment that encourages our diverse staff to maximise their productivity, and where they feel valued and contribute to SU's excellence.</p> <p>Siyakhula is a key instrument for the realisation of SU's pursuit of being an employer of choice. It provides staff in the basic competencies required to create an inclusive institutional culture, thereby advancing the recruitment and retention of staff (especially of under-represented groups), and ultimately staff wellness.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Transformative Student Experience <p><i>At SU, we value our students and are committed to delivering a transformative student experience to each one of them. With this intention, we 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. A transformative student experience is predicated on the provision of opportunities for growth to all undergraduate and postgraduate students, including guidance, support and services from SU to enable their success.</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Siyakhula contributes to the capacity of all SU staff, academic and support, to provide a fully inclusive and enabling environment for all students, from diverse backgrounds - so that staff themselves do not become barriers to participation of some students, and in fact become enablers and supporters of student success at SU. |

5. Siyakhula Transformation, Diversity and Employment Equity Capacity Development Programme - Content and Format

5.1 Functional Training

The functional training opportunities recognise and respond to the understanding basic policy and procedure and managing diversity is an essential competence required for effective implementation of employment equity (redress) and the realisation of its intended outcomes, i.e. equality, diversity

and inclusiveness. The training focuses on compliance with legal obligations of the Employment Equity Act and other policy and procedural frameworks, and on the socio-cultural dynamics common in the implementation of these.

Together with intuitional partners such as Transformation Office, HR, Equality Unit, Disability Unit, Siyakhula facilitates the following training to staff:

- Awareness training on the Employment Equity Act, SU EE Policy and Plan
- Code for Employment Equity and Diversity
- Leadership and staff development on managing diversity
- Understanding the Transformation Plan and KPA Indicators
- Understanding and responding to unfair discrimination
- Understanding and responding to sexual harassment
- Biases in selection processes, management, performance, promotion
- Engaging disability frameworks

5.2 Understanding diversity and difference

Two of the key indicators for critical diversity literacy' is the 'possession of a diversity grammar and vocabulary that facilitates a discussion of privilege and oppression' and the 'analytic skills which identify diversity hierarchies and institutionalised oppressions' (para Steyn, 2015). The understanding diversity and difference training contributes to the development of these capacities, providing both stimulating but accessible material and a space to engage the content in critical and thoughtful ways with fellow staff.

Some of the training opportunities offered here are -

- Diversity and difference
- Race, Racism, Racism at work
- Workplace Bullying
- Human Rights
- Decoloniality Dialogues
- Gender and Gender Violence
- Institutional culture and SU Values
- Stereotype threat and unconscious bias
- Visual redress
- Religious and cultural inclusion
- Harassment
- Rape culture
- Ableism

The trainings take the form of group workshops (online and in-person) with all staff across departments and various levels. This is an important characteristic of the programme in that it fosters intergroup engagement and socio/cross cultural awareness.

5.3 SiyakhulaLive on MFM 92.6: Having Conversations that inform and transform

The culture of diversity is fostered at the broader Maties community through a weekly engagement on #SiyakhulaLive on MFM 92.6. This talk radio show on Wednesdays (6-7pm) allows the Transformation Office and HR (Employment Equity and the Promotion of Diversity) to have conversations that inform and transform the Maties communities thus growing our humanity. The show falls under the Siyakhula Capacity Development Portfolio and is hosted by the manager of the portfolio as a way to promote awareness and advocacy of social justice issues, diversity and transformation. The show has become a significant part of the Siyakhula portfolio and vision in that it taps into the power of radio to create meaningful dialogue, change perspectives and mobilize engagement and commitment of issues that not only affect SU, but issues that are of national importance. The show is designed centrally along the themes of Imbizo365, thereby ensuring synergised institutional engagement. Since its inception in 2020 the show has hosted key thinkers, academics; social justice and community development practitioners who contribute insight and perspective for a changing society rooted in social justice and respect for human diversity and dignity.

5.4 Responsive engagements

The University produces a number of reports, surveys and other documents that provide important insight into transformation at SU. These various instruments of engagement are useful to ensure ongoing conscientisation of members of the University with regards to where the university is with regards to various transformation benchmarks and that in many cases is indeed changing behaviours. Through these ongoing surveys and engagement reports, Siyakhula will also be able to track its progress across the University. Examples of these instruments of engagement are, for example:

- Culture Climate Surveys
- Employment Equity Reports
- Transformation Indicator Reports
- The Rape Culture Report
- The upcoming residence review report
- The upcoming rape culture survey reports

2022 Siyakhula workshops calendar:

These are the upcoming engagement opportunities for staff –
Siyakhula Series (online workshops for all staff, once a month)

Date: Friday 27 May 2022

Time: 10h30 – 12h30

Topic: An engagement on Visual Redress and our SU Institutional Culture

Facilitators: Profs Elmarie Constandius and Aslam Fataar

Date: Thursday 23 June 2022

Time: 10h30 – 12h30

Topic: Reflecting on religion and cultural inclusion

Facilitators: Dr Wilhelm Verwoerd and Ayanda Nyoka

Date: Friday 29 July 2022

Time: 10h30 – 12h30

Topic: Parenting for Change : Teaching children about consent and bodily autonomy

Facilitators: Qaqamba Mdaka

Date: Friday 26 August 2022

Time: 10h30 – 12h30

Topic: Reflecting on Gender and Gender Violence

Facilitators: Dr Jill Ryan (Equality Unit)

Date: Thursday 22 September 2022

Time: 10h30 – 12h30

Topic: Disability @ Home: Staff support network

Facilitators: Disability Unit (Dr Marcia Lyner-Cleophas)

Date: Friday 28 October 2022

Time: 10h30 – 12h30

Topic: Decolonial Dialogues with Prof Kopano Ratele