

# ANNUAL REPORT EQUALITY UNIT

2021 OVERVIEW

## Jaco Greeff Brink, Head of the Equality Unit Reflecting on 2021

2021 was an exciting year for us. One of our most significant moments was the decision to move the Equality Unit, part of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development for several years, to report directly to the DVC: Learning and Teaching, Prof Deresh Ramjugernath. This meant that we could further enhance our support to Stellenbosch University staff and students and increase our efforts to fight gender-based violence (GBV) on campus.

We continued to review the institutional Policy on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment and the HIV/Aids Policy for Staff and Students. The review aims to amalgamate the two policies. It will also specifically emphasise recourse for victims of GBV and discrimination against members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

Our staff complement was strengthened after the positions of Gender Non-Violence (GNV) Coordinator and Case Investigations Support Officer were filled. The GNV coordinator enhances the institutional response to GBV. The Case Investigations Support Officer provides legal support to our case officers who receive unfair discrimination and harassment complaints.

**In 2021, the creation of an online reporting tool gathered momentum, and this vital tool will officially be launched in the first semester of 2022.** The reporting and monitoring tool assists in our efforts to create a streamlined approach to reporting incidents of unfair discrimination and harassment.

We continued to focus on building partnerships – internal and external – to extend what we do to the campus community and organisations that subscribe to the same ethos of social justice as we do. Read more about our campaigns and partnerships in the rest of our 2021 Annual Report.



The Equality Unit team: (l-r) Qaqamba Mlaka, Jaco Greeff Brink, Laron Matee, Kaylon Weppelman, Nadine Christians, Werner van Kerwel, Jill Ryan, Michelle Munro, Adrian Paulse

# HIGHLIGHTS

## Equality Unit shift from CSCD to the Vice-rector: L&T

In June, the Equality Unit officially moved from the Centre for Student Counselling and Development at the Division for Student Affairs and now reports directly to the DVC: Learning and Teaching.

## Students appointed to Unfair Discrimination and Harassment Advisory Panel

Four SU students were appointed to the Unfair Discrimination and Harassment Panel of Inquiry for two years. The students will play an active role in matters reported by students.

A call was sent out to the student body to apply to the Unfair Discrimination and Harassment panel

**Calling SU Students**

Want to make a difference? Be part of the SU Unfair Discrimination and Harassment Panel of Inquiry.

Stellenbosch University (SU) has two advisory panels - one dedicated to staff and the other dedicated to students. Both focus on complaints of discrimination, harassment and victimisation. The Panel of Inquiry is responsible for conducting investigations after the advisors have filed official complaints and have referred the matter to an advisory panel.

As a panel member, your functions will include:

- Conducting preliminary investigations into matters of unfair discrimination and harassment which have been reported to the Equality Unit.
- Provide recommendations to SU, complainants and respondents on a way forward.
- Communicate that mediation be a strong component to conflict resolution.
- Report writing on the outcomes of the investigation.
- Provide recommendations to the Equality Unit on how to eliminate unfair discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and gender-based violence at SU.

Third year and postgraduate students are welcome to apply.  
The successful applicant will have to commit to being a panel member for two years.

For more information and if you are interested in applying, prospective applicants are asked to send a letter of motivation to Cheema Moko at [cmoko@sun.ac.za](mailto:cmoko@sun.ac.za) by Friday, 30 April 2021.

## Higher Health grant – R500 000

The HIV portfolio was awarded a R500 000 grant from one of its longstanding partners, Higher Health. After submitting the successful funding proposal, the grant addendum was approved by the Higher Health board and signed by SU Rector, Prof Wim de Villiers. The funding will be utilised for the Equality Unit's work in the following areas: HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STI), GBV, LGBTQIA+, disabilities, substance abuse, mental health and Covid-19.

## Constitutions and Disciplinary Code Task Team

The Constitutions and Disciplinary Code Task Team, which includes two Equality Unit staff members, concluded its work and submitted its report to the Senior Director, Division Student Affairs. The terms of reference for the task team were to align the communities' constitutions and to develop a template to be used across communities while also aligning their constitutions. The task team fulfilled all the requirements.

## Equality Unit representation on the Institutional Committee for Staff Health and Wellness

The Equality Unit was represented on the Institutional Committee for Staff Health and Wellbeing (ICSHW). The committee plays a crucial role in promoting staff health and wellbeing at SU. The Unit provided input and expertise on social justice issues, including gender and HIV/Aids.

## Unfair Discrimination and Harassment Policy and HIV/Aids Policy integration and review

The process to incorporate and review the Policy on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment and the Policy on HIV/Aids was initiated in 2021 and is currently underway. A task team was formed to integrate and strengthen the two policies, adding GBV as a critical focal point.

## Writing collaboration with the Transformation Office

### WRITING FOR CHANGE

#### CALL FOR APPLICATIONS



The Stellenbosch University Transformation Office in partnership with the SU Writing Lab is offering selected students the chance to learn how to write for impact, change and transformation in a new interactive and fully funded writing programme spanning twelve sessions in the upcoming semester.

**Who should apply:** Postgraduate and Undergraduate students from any discipline interested in developing their writing for social media, print media, blogs, and editorials.

**What do you need to apply:** Please write an article, or reflective essay, no longer than 500 words, on why writing on issues of social justice matters.

Applications open 15 March 2021 and close 27 April 2021.

The collaboration between the Equality Unit, the Transformation Office and the SU Writing Lab came to a successful completion. The Writing for Change project equipped students with the necessary skills to write about social justice topics. Seven SU students wrote on various issues including exploring who owns knowledge, writing for an audience and their specific needs, understanding the purpose of a writing task and the stages of writing. The students' work was published on the SU website and various social media platforms.

Writing for Change was a collaboration between the Transformation Office, SU Writing Lab and the Equality Unit.

## GEP welcomes back international students

The Unit welcomed international students attending SUI's Global Education Programme (GEP) to our semester course, "Understanding HIV in South Africa: A Health and Social Justice Perspective". This course and two other co-curricular semester courses are presented and facilitated by the Unit's HIV and Sexualities Portfolio. The courses aim to nurture and develop the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes in students as leaders and future professionals; to question, analyse and debate; to change mindsets when thinking and to deal correctly with GBV, sexual health and sexual diversity; and to unlearn misconceptions and become aware of the impact of stigma and discrimination. The other courses are specifically developed for third-year Practical Theology and Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) students that have Education Psychology and Life Orientation as subjects.

## Anti-GBV institutional strategy

The review of the institutional anti-GBV strategy got underway in 2021. The strategy will provide clear guidelines on the institution's approach. SU's implementation plan includes reporting, training, awareness and advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation.

## Anti-GBV monitoring committee

Following the disbanding of the Rape Culture Committee, a new Anti-GBV Monitoring Committee was established to examine and execute ways to expand and strengthen the University's response to GBV. The Head of the Transformation Office, Dr Zethu Mkhize, was nominated to chair the committee. The Equality Unit's Gender Non-Violence Coordinator, Dr Jill Ryan, was assigned to the position of secretariat. This committee is highlighted in the institutional anti-GBV plan. It will be included in an addendum to the updated Policy on Unfair Discrimination, Gender-Based Violence, Harassment and HIV/Aids.

### SU online tool for reporting unfair discrimination and harassment

An external service provider has developed an online tool to report and monitor unfair discrimination and harassment and to streamline the reporting of incidents by staff and students. The launch of this app is expected to take place in the first semester of the 2022 academic year.

### Series of gender workshops for staff

In partnership with the Transformation Office (Siyakhula programme), the Equality Unit hosted webinars on rethinking gender during Women's Month. Topics included patriarchy and power, music and gender perception, GBV, and gender in the workplace (gender sensitivity and unconscious bias).

## Senior student leadership development training 2021

In October, the Equality Unit provided anti-GBV and awareness training to the newly inaugurated Students' Representative Council (SRC) and Tygerberg Student Council (TSC). The purpose of this session was to:

- Raise awareness of GBV and unfair discrimination;
- Briefly describe GBV in higher education institutions (HEIs);
- Describe the role of the Gender Non-violence Portfolio at the Equality Unit; and
- Briefly outline some of the policies/guidelines that guide the institutional response to GBV, namely:
  - National Strategic Plan on GBV and Femicide (2020)
  - Policy Framework to Address Gender-based Violence in the Post-School Education and Training System
  - Implementation of Procedural Guidelines on Sexual and Gender-Related Misconduct in Post-School Education and Training (PSET) Sector
  - Stellenbosch University Policy on Unfair Discrimination, Gender-Based Violence, Harassment and HIV/Aids
  - SU GBV Strategic Plan

## Workplace bullying – time to take a stand – joint statement?

Workplace bullying became a concern for the Equality Unit and the Human Resources Department (HR). To this end, the Unit provided valuable input on the seriousness of workplace bullying in a joint communique to staff based on the number of cases reported in 2021.

## Community of practice forum – Wits University

The Unit accepted an open call to university professionals to join a community of practice forum initiated by Wits University. The platform created an opportunity for like-minded professionals in the equality and social justice spaces, especially for those dealing directly with GBV and sexual harassment and abuse complaints, to share ideas, solutions and challenges.

## Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) questionnaire submission on behalf of Stellenbosch University

The Equality Unit submitted the University's progress and implementation of projects and work on GBV as it relates to the National Policy Framework to Address Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the Post-School Education and Training System (2020) to the national Department of Higher Education and Training on behalf of SU. The purpose of the framework is to create an enabling environment for the eradication of GBV; to instill respect, protection, promotion and fulfilment of human rights as enshrined in the South Africa Bill of Rights and Constitution; to assist Post-School Education and Training institutions in addressing the occurrences of GBV; and to provide a monitoring instrument to the DHET to assess the implementation of the policy framework. The Unit provided the DHET with information including SU's GBV policy, the institution's reporting guidelines and procedures, and preventative measures.

## Defining "violence prevention"

The Unit was included in a gathering of stakeholders to define the term "violence prevention". The Institute for Security Studies and the Violence Prevention Forum met with 16 role players to flesh out a definition for the term. The multi-sectoral meeting brainstormed, debated and developed a working definition. The idea behind gathering this group of people, including representatives from the non-governmental sector, the government and the private sector, was to develop a definition that all sectors could agree on. This will also create connectedness and a shared responsibility across all sectors. Once the term had been defined, an agreement on a way forward was developed amongst stakeholders. The findings of the meeting will be presented to the South African Parliament.

## Unconscious bias in the workplace

The Equality Unit facilitated a session on "Unconscious Bias and Gender at Work" which formed part of HR's Employment Equity Training. The training aimed to provide a platform for SU staff to understand the importance of employment equity, diversity and inclusive practices. About 160 staff attended the session. The session explored unconscious bias in the workplace and how this influences how we engage with others. In addition, it provided practical ways to disrupt unconscious patterns and introduced existing frameworks to assess holistic, inclusive approaches to gender equality. The session's outcome was to encourage staff to reflect on unconscious

bias in their engagements with others and evaluate whether the workplace is inclusive.

## Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences' 16 Days of Activism panel discussion

The Unit participated in a panel discussion organised by the Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) project partners – Frankfurt University of Applied Sciences (UAS), University of the Western Cape, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia – on the first day of the 16 Days of Activism. An international panel comprising academics and activists from South Africa, Germany, India, Afghanistan and Malaysia engaged with students from Frankfurt UAS, and discussed how they found themselves in the field of anti-GBV research and advocacy, described GBV in their respective countries and contextualised factors impacting their work. This engagement facilitated intersectional perspectives on GBV from the global south and global north.

## Social Justice Chair round table

The Equality Unit participated in the GBV Bills Parliamentary Submission Round Table hosted by Prof Thuli Madonsela. This round table hosted various sectors, including organisations that work on GBV issues, legal experts, academics and interested parties that provided feedback on the Criminal and Related Matters Amendment Bill, the Domestic Violence Act Amendment Bill, and the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act Amendment Bill.

# CAMPAIGNS

## Cyberbullying campaign

In partnership with the Division Student Affairs at Tygerberg campus, the Equality Unit embarked on an ambitious campaign to highlight cyberbullying. The campaign included an online presentation, "Cyberbullying and the Law", presented by social media law expert, Emma Sadlier, and attended by more than 100 staff, students and external partners. This was followed by live Instagram discussions on cyberbullying, sexual harassment, queerphobia, and how to report incidents to the Equality Unit. The campaign aimed to create awareness and highlight accountability and responsibility among student users of online platforms with the hope that they may think twice about what they share and post. The campaign featured on the Unit's social media platforms, as well as the social media platforms of SU official accounts, Division Student Affairs, and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (FMHS). The campaign had a total online reach of 172 871.



Artwork from the Cyberbullying campaign.

## STI/Condom Week campaign

A campaign of the SU Equality Unit  
**HIV Testing & Wellness Campaign**

Free condoms, lube and pregnancy test kits will be available.

Where: Tygerberg Campus Student Centre (TSS)  
When: 15 – 18 March 2021  
Time: 10am – 6pm



The annual STI/Condom Week campaign took place at the Tygerberg campus over four days. The campaign was done in partnership with Higher Health and Sonke Gender Justice. More than 160 Tygerberg students were screened for blood pressure (BP), diabetes, syphilis, HIV and tuberculosis (TB). Free condoms, lube, pregnancy kits and information pamphlets were distributed to students.

Students were encouraged via social media to get HIV and STI tested.


## Staff wellness online events

In partnership with HR and the Siyakhula programme, we hosted three webinars that focused on staff wellbeing and equality.

- The first webinar, “Intergenerational trauma affecting the wellbeing of men and impact on GBV”, provided insight into toxic masculinity. HR Head of Staff Wellness, Shibu Mamabola, was in conversation with one of the Unit’s external partners, Given Sigauqwe, the Communications and Strategic Information Unit Manager at Sonke Gender Justice. The pair unpacked the topic to provide insight into toxic masculinity.
- The second webinar focused on women and allyship. Katlego Letlonkane, Programme Manager: Capacity Development at SU, was in conversation with Bonita Maboeta, Senior Wellness Specialist: People and Culture at North-West University. They unpacked toxic femininity and women as allies in higher education.
- “Workplace boundaries: The miscommunication and misinterpretation of messaging across cultures, ages and genders” was the focus of the final session in our collaboration with HR. Qaqamba Mdaka, Case Coordinator at the Equality Unit, was in conversation with Clinical Psychologists, Kevashini Govender-Naidoo and Ayesha Booley-Schreuder. The trio unpacked boundaries in the workplace and focused on communication across ages and cultures, the misinterpretation of language and subtext, mental health and subtle messaging, unconscious use of flirtatious language, and how emojis can be misinterpreted.

## Post Office to Parliament campaign

To highlight GBV, the Unit partnered with the Uyinene Mrwetyana Foundation to raise awareness of the Foundation's Post Office to Parliament (P2P) campaign. The campaign focused on sexual abuse and GBV. The initiative aimed to create a platform for individuals to write and submit, either digitally through the foundation's website or via a physical postcard, detailed experiences of and reflections on GBV. The digital and physical postcards formed part of a petition that the foundation handed to Parliament's Portfolio Committee on Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities and the Portfolio Committee on Justice and Correctional Services to not only intervene but ensure that a National Council on Gender-Based Violence and Femicide is established in line with the commitments outlined in the National Strategic Plan on GBV and femicide.



**Pick up your pens,  
we're going to Parliament.**

submit your digital letter

Post Office to Parliament campaign highlights gender-based violence.



## Roadshows

The Unit embarked on virtual training sessions with various faculties, departments and units at SU. Since putting the word out to the SU community, the Equality Unit has presented to several faculties and departments on the support services provided to staff and students. Several departments and faculties including the Faculties Management, the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, the Office of the Registrar and the Arts and the Transformation Committee of the Faculty of Social Sciences, requested the Unit to present to their staff. The Unit plans to continue this service in 2022.

## 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children: Campaign 2021



Artwork for the 16 Days of Activism campaign.

For 16 Days of Activism, which begins on 25 November and ends on 10 December, the Equality Unit presented a campaign focused on two pertinent issues vastly underrepresented in GBV discourse: GBV and persons with disabilities, and GBV and the LGBTQIA+ community. The campaign addressed these issues through a series of social media posts, online articles, and two lunchtime webinars. The webinars focused on the importance of inclusion when creating solidarity between the GBV sector and marginalised groups. The 2021 campaign aimed to advocate for human rights and create a strengthened, focused response that is accessible and relevant, but one which also equips and provides justice to those who seek intervention.

# COLLABORATIONS

**Collaborating with internal and external partners has become increasingly important to the work of the Equality Unit. In 2021, the Unit solidified and sought out collaborators to provide better services and information to the community of SU. In 2021, we solidified our partnership with Sonke Gender Justice, Higher Health, Gender Dynamix, the Uyinene Mrwetyana Foundation, the Department of Higher Education and Training's Health, Wellness and Development Centre, Cape Peninsula University of Technology's HIV/Aids Unit, the Inclusivity and Change Centre at the University of Cape Town (UCT), the HIV Centre at the University of the Western Cape, the Desmond Tutu TB Centre, Ukwanda Rural Clinic, Youth Against Aids (YAA) Higher Education Partnership, Marie Stopes South Africa, the Organisation for Human Health and Happiness, Landa Mabenge Consulting, Faghmeda Miller of Positive Muslims, and strengthened our internal partnerships with Human Resources, the Transformation Office and Division Student Affairs, SU SRC, the Centre for Student Communities, the Siyakhula Staff Series, Division Learning and Teaching, and the Centre for Student Leadership, Experiential Education and Citizenship.**

## Campus Rape Culture exhibition launch collaboration

The Equality Unit was fortunate to partner in the launch of the Campus Rape Culture online exhibition and website. The exhibition delves deeper into campus rape culture at Stellenbosch University. The website and exhibition were the brainchildren of researchers at the Unit for Religion and Development Research who collaborated with five female Stellenbosch University research students. These students examined campus rape culture through the lens of the woman student. They used photography and voice notes to document and understand women's experiences on campus.

## Stellenbosch University Centre for Pedagogy (SUNCEP)

This year the Equality Unit started internal cooperation with SUNCEP to conduct sessions on how to report unfair discrimination, harassment and GBV to their new yearly cohort of students.

## Unfair discrimination, sexual harassment, GBV and diversity work sessions

More than 240 students were reached when the Unit hosted dedicated work sessions on unfair discrimination, sexual harassment, GBV and diversity. Some of the students reached included first-year students at the FMHS, HK training for the 2021 cohorts, accounting honours students and Physiotherapy class representatives. In addition to this, more than 60 staff members were reached through work sessions conducted at the Transformation Learning Network, Siyakhula and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences' Transformation Committee.

## SETA-funded staff training in HIV counselling and testing skills

Twenty-five staff members from the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences (at both Tygerberg and Worcester campuses) were trained in HIV testing, counselling and interpersonal communication skills, which provided them with the necessary skills and knowledge for two separate research projects.

# REACH & STATISTICS

Condoms distribution	External condoms		Internal condoms	Lube
	EqU	CHS	Only CHS	Only EqU
January	0	400	0	0
February	3 800	1 200	200	0
March	1 650	1 400	80	825
April	4 000	2 000	200	0
May	4 400	800	0	0
June	4 400	400	0	100
July	0	0	0	0
August	2 600	400	0	0
September	6 800	400	0	100
October	5 600	400	40	100
November				
December				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>33 250</b>	<b>7 400</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>1 125</b>

**Campus Health Services (CHS) statistics**

<b>HIV testing 2021</b>	
EqU	169
CHS	598
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>767</b>

## HIV Testing

<b>Case Management</b>	<b>#</b>
Official cases completed	16
Official cases pending	7

## Case Management

<b>Type of complaint</b>	<b>#</b>
Sexual harassment	6
Harassment	4
Racial discrimination	2
Sexual assault	3
Assault	2
Advice	2
Workplace relations	18
Social media related complaints	1
Mediation	2

## Complaints

<b>Social media statistics 2021</b>	
<b>Month</b>	<b>Followers reached</b>
January	2 936
February	4 734
March	7 663
April	3 948
May	4 369
June	2 836
July	8 627
August	35 713
September	17 089
October	1 635
November	1 610
December	3 667
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>87 157</b>

## Social media statistics

<b>Referrals</b>	<b>#</b>
Line function	2
Office of Student Discipline	5
HR (Labour Relations)	1
Central Disciplinary Committee	3
Panels of Enquiry	3
Mediation	2

## Referrals

Month	Staff and Students reached through training
January	0
February	422
March	165
April	149
May	75
June	137
July	106
August	80
September	51
October	51
November	51
December	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1 287</b>

### Staff and student training

## STAFF OVERVIEW

The Equality Unit appointed two staff members in the 2021 financial year. Dr Jill Ryan filled the position of Gender Non-Violence Coordinator, and Werner van Kerwel completed the staff complement in the newly-created position of Case Investigations Support Officer. The Unit bid farewell to Kaylon Weppelman, who filled the position of Coordinator: HIV and Sexualities.

## LOOKING AHEAD

It has become increasingly important to look at ways to extend our reach to our constituency. In 2022, we hope to further cement the work that has already taken place and build a transformative university experience for all.