



Stellenbosch

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**HIGHLIGHTS
from the
RECTOR'S MANAGEMENT REPORT
to COUNCIL**

Monday 28 November 2022

Prof Wim de Villiers,
Rector and Vice-Chancellor

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Council meets for the last time this year as the final examinations of the 2022 academic year draw to a close, marking the successful completion of a year that saw Stellenbosch University (SU) gladly return to face-to-face teaching and resume all in-person facets of a residential university. Although online teaching and learning still formed a significant part of our academic offering this year, it too has mostly shed its “emergency” character of the Covid years and now rather serves to enhance our students’ learning experience.

With this shift, we are now ready to take the next step to expand the scope of learning and teaching at our institution. As alluded to previously with reference to SU’s gamechangers for the future, online and virtual learning are key pillars of academic renewal. It will enable us to reshape our academic offering, not only to penetrate new and non-traditional markets, but also to facilitate innovative delivery platforms, models and partnerships for our sought-after academic programmes.

In this regard, we are in step with global thinking. I have recently returned from the Times Higher Education World Academic Summit in New York, where some of the world’s most influential leaders and researchers critically examined how, as higher education institutions, we could contribute to improved student success, research excellence and relevance. Delegates also deliberated on how, at a sectoral level, higher education could help meet the needs of society as a crucial player in a post-pandemic world.

The discussions at the summit have affirmed the decisions of our own Executive Planning Forum earlier this year to embark on a future-focused metaproject to implement our gamechangers that will enable SU to continue meeting the needs of our students, the communities we serve and society at large, and doing so ever more sustainably. In addition, the deliberations at the summit have reaffirmed my belief that we are well on our way to attain our vision of becoming the leading research-intensive university on the continent by 2040.

This was further endorsed by the release of the 2023 Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE WUR) on 12 October. According to this latest edition of the rankings, SU remains among the top three universities in South Africa (sharing the second spot with Wits) and among the world’s top 300 universities.

The University has improved its performance on the citations, research and teaching indicators. The most significant improvement was in the citation score, which has increased by 4,4% from 78,7 to 82,2. This bodes well for our intentions of being a valued global creator of knowledge. According to the THE WUR, “[c]itations help to show how much each university is contributing to the sum of human knowledge. It is an indicator of whose research has stood out, has been picked up and built on by other scholars and, most importantly, has been shared around the global scholarly community to expand the boundaries of our understanding, irrespective of discipline”. Our research and teaching scores, in turn, have improved from 35,7 to 36,9 and from 30,3 to 30,5 respectively.

The table below illustrates SU’s performance on all five indicators used to assess the 1 800 universities participating in the rankings over the past three years. It also shows the impact of Covid-19 on international activities and on business and industry.

Indicators	2021	2022	2023
Citations	77,90	78,7	82,2
Industry income	73,10	79,5	71
International outlook	54,10	54,3	54
Research	35,70	35,7	36,9
Teaching	28,70	30,3	30,5
Overall score	48,6	49,5	50,7

Update on processes regarding campus incidents

Notwithstanding the institutional and strategic progress mentioned above, this year will also be remembered for the unfortunate incidents that occurred in some of our residences in May. I am, of course, referring to the urination incident in Huis Marais and the rape incident in Majuba, both of which had the SU community reeling with disgust and saw an outpouring of rage.

As you know, the accused in the Huis Marais incident was expelled from SU following a hearing of the Central Disciplinary Committee (CDC). He lodged an appeal against the CDC ruling. The appeal hearing took place on 18 and 20 October, and the findings of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee (DAC) were still outstanding at the time of writing this report.

With regard to the rape case, the CDC conducted an investigation and hearing in accordance with our Student Disciplinary Code and found the accused guilty as charged. He was expelled from the University, but has also appealed the CDC ruling. The appeal process is now under way and will hopefully be finalised before the University officially concludes the 2022 academic year.

Report of the Khampepe commission

As previously reported, following the urination incident at Huis Marais, I appointed retired Justice Sisi Khampepe to head up a commission to conduct an independent inquiry into allegations of racism at SU. The commission commenced with their work on 13 June and the report was delivered in October. Justice Khampepe made recommendations to help SU improve its culture where required, with specific reference to racism, so that the dignity and self-worth of all students and staff can be safeguarded and promoted.

SAHRC report on so-called ban on Afrikaans at certain residences during the 2021 welcoming period

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) has provided the University with a confidential draft report on the matter. They have requested us to correct any potential factual errors and inconsistencies to allow them to finalise the report for dissemination. We are currently drafting our response for their further consideration.

Full steam ahead with 2023 academic year

Study applications from newcomer first-years have increased significantly across most of our academic programmes. Once the 2022 matric results are released on 19 January 2023, our new student information system, SUNStudent, will enable SU to be swift and more agile in making final enrolment offers to top achievers. All indications are that SU is well on its way to achieve its enrolment targets for 2023 as set in the enrolment management guidelines of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

As is customary, members of the Rectorate will again be afforded the opportunity to submit their annual report to Council. This time, it is the turn of Prof Deresh Ramjugernath, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Learning and Teaching, to report on activities in his responsibility centre over the past year.

This report covers the period 19 August to 10 November 2022, unless stated otherwise. My fellow members of management and I welcome this opportunity to engage with members of Council.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RECTOR'S MANAGEMENT REPORT

In the following paragraphs, I provide highlights from my management report. For an in-depth look at contributions from the various responsibility centres, please turn to the addendum.

1. Report of the Khampepe commission

I have received the report of the independent Khampepe commission of Inquiry into alleged racism at SU. The Report of the Khampepe commission, with its findings and recommendations, is a tipping

point for SU. In appointing the commission and requesting the inquiry, SU made itself vulnerable and exposed itself to possible criticism. However, with a view to the future, we regard this commission as an important investment in the wellness of our University.

We are in a process of studying the report and we fully engage with the findings and recommendations. This is a top priority for the University.

To read the full report, click [here](#).

2. Institutional audit

SU received a visit from the Council on Higher Education's (CHE) Quality Committee in November. This follows the self-evaluation report on our quality assurance practices that SU submitted to the CHE earlier this year. The outcomes will be communicated in due course.

3. New restitution short course

The Transformation Office and the Centre for the Study of the Afterlife of Violence and the Reparative Quest (AVReQ) are collaborating to develop a short course aimed at realising SU's restitution statement. The purpose of the course is to guide participants to internalise the restitution statement and sustainably implement it. Nineteen members of the SU community (three students and 16 staff members) responded to the call for participation and committed to six engagement sessions to co-create and develop the course. To date, sessions have covered restitution as 'deep-water territory' and the importance of preparation, the need for sincerity and specificity in SU's acknowledgement, and reimagining the Centenary exhibit in the SU Museum.

4. Staff survey recommendations

The 2021 SU Wellbeing, Culture and Climate at Work Survey highlighted the following as areas for improvement:

- The wellbeing development of staff
- The transformation of the institution
- Recognition and appreciation for all staff
- Promotion opportunities for staff
- Equal treatment of staff (especially women and black, coloured, Indian and Asian staff), including addressing the issue of bullying in the workplace

These findings have been communicated in detail to all University environments, who are now expected – each within their own specific context – to put in place interventions for improvement. In February 2023, environments will report to the Staff Culture and Climate Survey Steering Committee about the interventions they have initiated, followed by progress reports in October 2023. The steering committee, in turn, will provide feedback to the Institutional Committee on Staff Health and Wellbeing and the Rectorate.

The next survey will be conducted in November 2023.

5. Quality review of the Library and Information Service

In accordance with the University's quality assurance policy and cycle, a quality review of the Library and Information Service was conducted recently. In preparation for the review, the Library prepared a self-evaluation report, which Prof Sibusiso Moyo, our Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies, approved in August. This was followed by a face-to-face site visit by a peer review panel from 12 to 15 September. The panel comprised Dr Reggie Raju (Research and Learning director, University of Cape Town Libraries), Dr Lorraine Haricombe (vice-provost and director of the University of Texas at Austin Libraries, United States) and panel chair Ms Kate Robinson (university librarian at the University of Bath, United Kingdom).

The panel interviewed various stakeholders, including students and academic, library and other professional support services staff. They also visited three of our campus libraries, namely the SU Library, the Medicine and Health Sciences library and the Theology library. Stakeholders were invited to a verbal feedback session where the review panel shared their preliminary findings. At the time of writing, the Library was still awaiting the peer reviewers' final written report.

6. Research chairs

Research chairs make a significant contribution to SU's research outputs, impact and income as a thriving research-intensive institution. We currently host 45 chairs – 23 associated with the South African Research Chair Initiative (SARChI) of the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) and the National Research Foundation (NRF), and 22 endowed or industry-funded.

The scheduled termination of a number of SARChI chair awards has, however, resulted in a reduction in income from this source over the past while (from R94 million in 2020 to R71 million in 2022), with more awards scheduled to end in the next few years. Therefore, in early October, the Rectorate authorised the environment of the DVC: RIPS to embark on a strategic assessment and planning exercise aimed at establishing, and proposing measures to counter, any associated negative impact on SU's research success.

7. Research excellence awards



The research excellence awards were hosted at the SU Museum on 29 August 2022. The awards were presented to SU researchers who had made the biggest contribution to accredited publications (based on 2020 audited publication statistics submitted to the DHET in 2021) and doctoral graduates (in the December 2021/April 2022 graduation cycle). For more, go to <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=9427>.

8. Campus signage

Signage is a key component of SU's visual identity, as the logo, typography and other visual elements help create a sense of place. It also provides a way to differentiate the University from the town and other surrounding areas, and to clearly identify specific buildings, spaces and environments.

It was initially assumed that the rebranding process would entail simply reskinning all existing signage to align with the new brand. However, an audit revealed that a significant number of the signs had weathered over time to the extent that they needed either replacement or refurbishment. This provided the University with the opportunity to implement a coordinated, best-practice state-of-the-art system to finally align all signage on all our campuses.

Following in-principle Rectorate approval in September, the SU Language Centre initiated the creation of a database for the translation of institutional content (such as building, faculty, department and division names) into English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. This will help formalise the translation process and ensure consistent application.

Due to the scope of the project, a phased approach will be followed. This will allow the team to adapt and improve the system as lessons are learnt and more information becomes available.

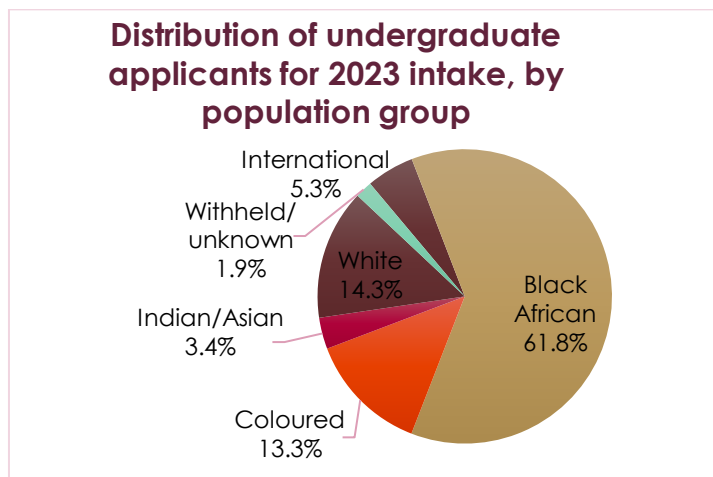
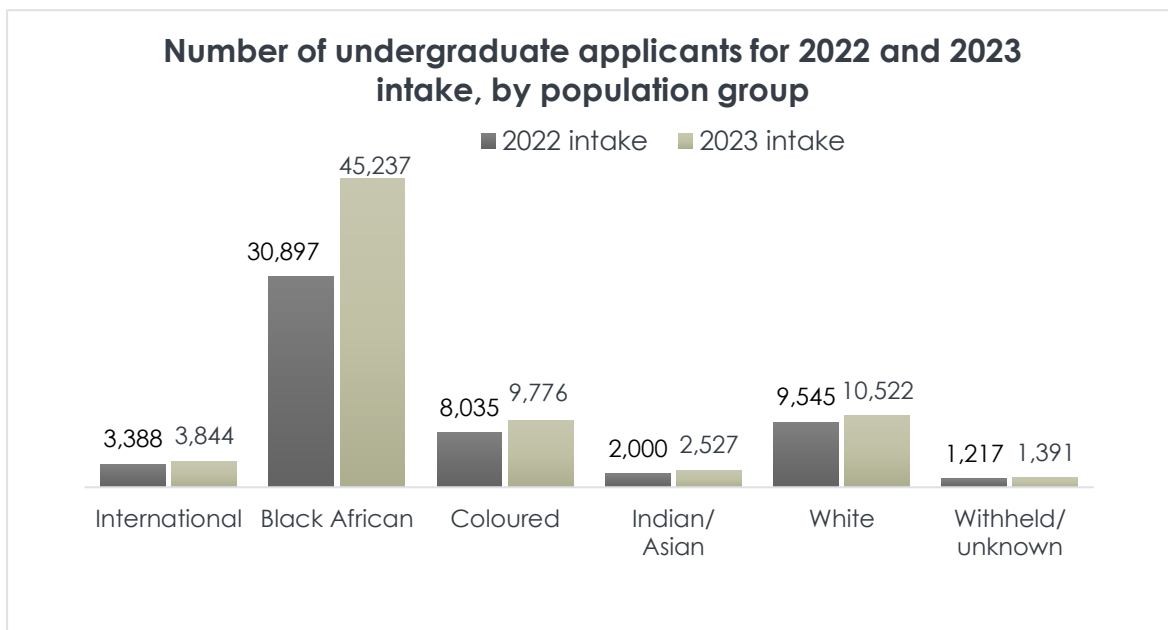
9. Survey of undergraduate recruitment

To promote access, inclusivity and equity, the diversity and excellence of SU's student body are key considerations in our student recruitment efforts. To achieve diversification, however, requires going beyond mere engagement and recruitment activities.

The Division of Information Governance conducts an annual survey on the reasons why undergraduate applicants who had received a final programme offer from SU eventually decided against enrolling. The latest survey relating to the 2022 intake revealed the significant impact of insufficient financial support, distance from home and a lack of affordable accommodation on applicants' final decision.

At the same time, among those who had enrolled at SU, the survey reaffirmed the University's academic reputation, the quality of our study programmes and our stable and safe campus environment as major drawcards.

SU remains one of the top study destinations for the undergraduate market. The number of applications received by the end of September 2022 with a view to the 2023 intake (a total of 73 293) was 33% higher than for the 2022 intake. The figure below illustrates the number of applicants by the end of September 2021 (2022 intake) and September 2022 (2023 intake) respectively, by population group. It is followed by a depiction of applicants' distribution by population group for the 2023 intake.



10. Applications for 2023

Our applicants and their parents continue to experience the SUNStudent application process as user-friendly and client-centric. This is reflected in the year-on-year increase in both undergraduate and postgraduate applicants.

Undergraduate applications and offers

As indicated in the previous section, SU received a record 73 293 undergraduate applications for the 2023 intake (against 55 082 for the 2022 intake). The trends by population group points to an increase in applications across all groups, with the largest increase noted among black African applicants (46,4%) and the smallest among white applicants (10,2%).

One or more offers were made to 19 084 undergraduate applicants, of whom 12 158 (63,7%) accepted at least one offer (*see table below*). Against the 15 069 offers made and the 9 657 offers accepted last year, this represents an increase of 26% in offer acceptances.

Nationality	Applicants	Received offer(s)	Received an offer (%)	Accepted an offer	Offer acceptance rate (%)
International	3 844	1 130	29,4%	766	67,8%
South African	69 453	17 954	25,9%	11 392	63,5%
Total	73 297	19 084	26,0%	12 158	63,7%

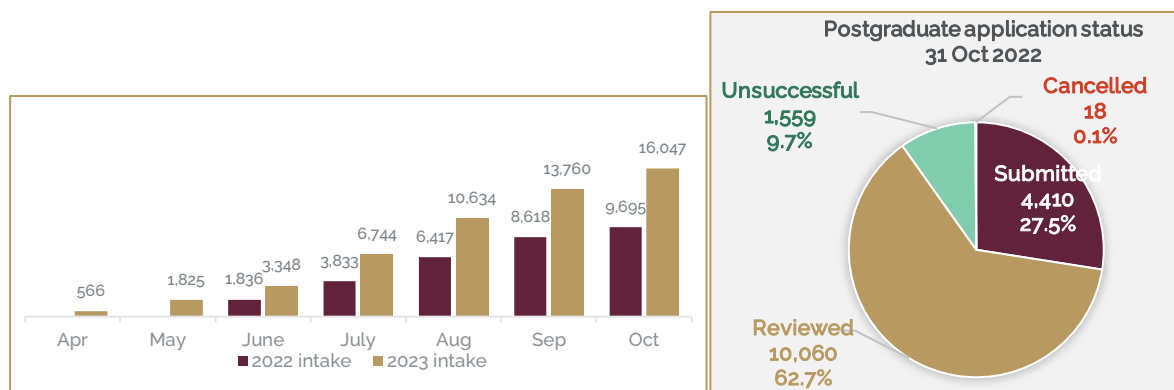
In terms of accepted offers by faculty (*summarised in the table below*):

- the highest increases were seen in Education (121,8%) and Medicine and Health Sciences (89,3%); and
- Engineering and Theology both recorded increases of 50% or more.

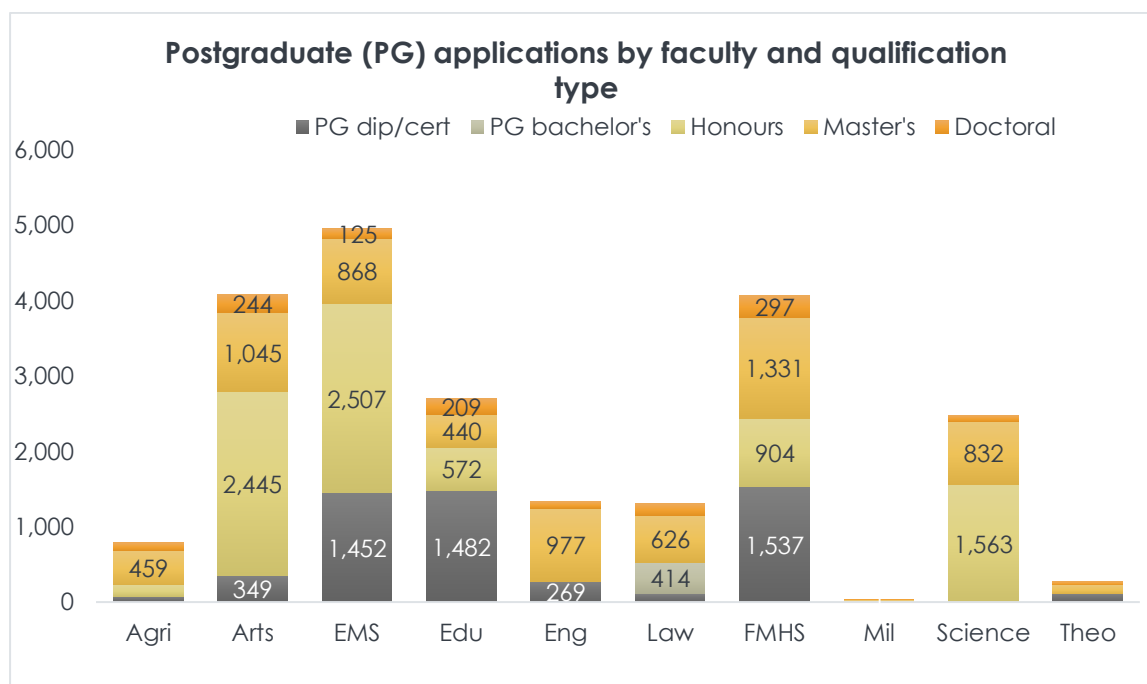
Faculty	2023 intake							2022 intake	
	Offer pending	Offer issued	Offer accepted	Offer declined	Offer expired	Total offers	Offer accepted (%)	Offer accepted	Total offers
AgriSciences	1	39	735	286	827	1 888	38,9%	717	1 728
Arts and Social Sciences	23	84	2 157	653	2 203	5 120	42,1%	2 188	5 576
Economic and Management Sciences	636	23	3 485	1 191	4 212	9 547	36,5%	2 543	7 550
Education	3	163	1 081	250	1 145	2 642	40,9%	449	1 191
Engineering	3	185	1 850	535	2 145	4 718	39,2%	1 204	3 452
Law	8	1	144	68	229	450	32,0%	148	459
Medicine and Health Sciences	4	34	482	71	488	1 079	44,7%	367	570
Military Science					1	1	0,0%		38
Science	90	4	2 101	908	3 883	6 986	30,1%	1 958	6 086
Theology	1		144	41	207	393	36,6%	96	287
Total	769	533	12 179	4 003	15 340	32 824	37,1%	9 670	26 937

Postgraduate applications

By the end of October 2022, the number of postgraduate applicants with submitted applications with a view to 2023 was 65,5% higher than the previous year (see comparative figures in graph below left). The central Applications Office has already evaluated approximately 72,4% of these (comprising the “Reviewed” and “Unsuccessful” segments in the pie chart below right). There are also a significant number of incomplete applications remaining in the submitted pool.



The following figure shows the number of submitted postgraduate applications by faculty and qualification type.



* Agri = AgriSciences; Arts = Arts and Social Sciences; EMS = Economic and Management Sciences; Edu = Education; Eng = Engineering; FMHS = Medicine and Health Sciences; Mil = Military Science; Theo = Theology.

11. Bursary support programmes

Wrap-around support contributes to bursary student success

From 1 September 2022, we have a new function dedicated to delivering support to donor-funded students. The bursary support programme manager fulfils an oversight, management and coordination role for the Dell Young Leaders programme, the Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP) and the CEFF–Chancellor’s Bursary programme.

The manager collaborates with various stakeholders across the student success value chain, including Development and Alumni Relations (DAR), the responsibility centre of the Registrar, Student Affairs, faculties and the various programmes and foundations, to ensure that targets are reached. The functionary reports to the Registrar and also has a reporting line to the DAR senior director.

Dell Young Leaders

The Dell Young Leaders programme is housed in the responsibility centre of the Registrar and partners with all relevant SU offices to form an effective ecosystem that supports student access, persistence and success. The programme, which includes wrap-around support and a top-up scholarship, is funded by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation. With SU committed to allocating increased scholarship funds of its own to grow the number of students who will benefit as Dell Young Leaders, the programme has been able to double up on student success at SU.

The programme is certainly having a positive impact on student success, as was evident from a presentation by the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation to the Rector and SU leadership team on 2 September. Key programme outcomes were analysed using SU's academic performance data for the 2021 academic year. Dell Young Leaders student outcomes were compared to benchmark groups at SU, including National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) beneficiaries and non-NSFAS students enrolled for degrees eligible for Dell Young Leaders selection.

Key outcomes include the following:

- Since 2020, the programme has achieved a 99% retention rate of students staying on track to earn their degrees. The first graduates from the 2020 cohort are expected this December.
- In the 2021 academic year, 99% of active Dell Young Leaders students were retained at SU. This outcome showed an 11% gain on retention of NSFAS students, and a 6% gain on non-NSFAS students.
- In the 2021 academic year, Dell Young Leaders students passed 93% of all modules enrolled for at SU. This outcome showed a 28% gain on NSFAS students, and a 14% gain on non-NSFAS students.
- Reviewing performance data split by faculty, Dell Young Leaders students outperformed benchmark groups at SU in terms of retention and module pass rates across all faculties.

Selection of the 2022 cohort of 200 students brings the total number of active Dell Young Leaders at SU to 448, making it the largest foundation-led bursary programme at the University. The 2022 cohort includes students from all eight target faculties. A total of 477 applications were received. After assessing applications for resilience, grit, academic potential as well as adversity, the top 250 applicants were invited for interviews. Interviews were conducted in person from 15 to 19 August, and the panel also included various SU stakeholders. In conjunction with the responsibility centre of the Registrar, the top 200 applicants were selected against standardised selection criteria. The cohort was announced and celebrated on 3 September (*pictured below*).



Prof Wim de Villiers (Rector and Vice-Chancellor), Dr Ronel Retief (Registrar) and Anne Havemann-Serfontein (bursary support programme manager) pictured with the new cohort of Dell Young Leaders. Picture: André Engelbrecht.

Ikusasa Student Financial Aid Programme (ISFAP)

In 2020, a tailored graduate programme for ISFAP students was developed in collaboration with the Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership Development. The short course complements participants' field-specific knowledge to prepare them as professionals and increase their employability nationally and globally.

Following the success of the first two years, this year's programme was opened to participants from other bursary programmes as well. A total of 39 final-year and pre-final-year students – 23 ISFAP and 16 CEFF–Chancellor's Bursary students – participated. The programme was presented by SU departments as well as external collaborators.

In other ISFAP news, the end-of-year event for ISFAP students was hosted at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study (STIAS) on 8 October (*see collage below*). Most students attended in person, while livestreaming was available for MBChB students who were busy with their clinical rotations elsewhere. In addition to socialising, students listened to talks on investing in their professional identity as well as the importance of professional communication.



Pictures: André Engelbrecht.

CEFF–Chancellor’s Bursary programme

Students benefiting from the CEFF–Chancellor’s Bursary programme also attended their end-of-year event at The Silo & Shed in Stellenbosch on 15 October (*see collage below*). The first session on the programme was facilitated by Dr Riaan Els, chief executive of the Carl and Emily Fuchs Foundation (CEFF), and set the tone for meaningful reflection and engagement. Keynote speaker Justice Edwin Cameron, SU’s Chancellor, then inspired with his talk entitled “On being left-handed in a (mostly) right-handed society – sharing a personal journey”. Finally, Lamese Chetty, educational psychologist and academic advisor in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, presented a valuable hands-on session on examination preparation.



Pictures: André Engelbrecht.

12. SU in the news (3 August to 19 October 2022)

SU again managed a good showing in the media in the period in review, although the numbers could have been influenced by the urination incident in Helshoogte (September).

Compared to other universities, we generated the highest number of clips in September and the second highest the month before. This is according to the dataset of media monitoring agency PEAR.

With regard to the subset “Research and innovation”, we also generated the most coverage for September and second for August. This is attributed to significant mainstream-media exposure for our thought leaders, who have been key in positioning the University as a research leader in the industry in recent months.

As was the case earlier this year, the strategic theme “A thriving Stellenbosch University” dominated in both August and September.

Thought leadership: Our academic staff continue to make SU research accessible to external audiences by writing thought leadership pieces for The Conversation Africa (TCA). In the reporting period, 20 of our contributors produced 19 articles, which collectively yielded just over 221 000 reads.

Human capital: According to PEAR’s media tracking of individuals at SU, the University’s human capital was referred to in 527 media clippings in the months in review. This is seen as a key contributor to media coverage, especially in the “Research and innovation” subset.

In addition, SU staff and students again produced a large number of **op-eds, features and columns (see addendum)**. The Media Office also furnished the media with a **list of experts** to comment on Women’s Day (9 August), while a good number of op-eds were facilitated for targeted national and

international days, including [Women's Day](#), [World Mental Health Day](#) (10 October) and [World Food Day](#) (16 October).

For more on SU in the news, turn to the addendum.

13. SUNFin and SUNStudent

The SUNFin project recently achieved two very significant milestones. First, the team completed the development of the required integration. Secondly, they identified, configured and applied additional required features, documented the processes, determined the appropriate roles and responsibilities, established the training requirements, formulated the test cases, and defined the reporting requirements.

The focus for the rest of the year will be to continue preparing the training material and testing the solution.

In 2023, the SUNFin team will focus on:

- finalising testing of the solution;
- conducting end user training;
- deploying the solution by the agreed target date of June 2023; and
- following deployment, providing initial support and handover to the operations team.

Over at SUNStudent, the configuration of gap capabilities concluded by mid-October 2022. At the time of writing, an official four-week trial of these capabilities was about to commence. The testing was based on scenarios identified by end users themselves – so-called user acceptance testing (UAT) – and was scheduled to end in the second week of November.

At the same time, work continued on all the integration requirements for systems that need to interact with SUNStudent. These requirements will also be tested during or soon after the UAT period.

Other SUNStudent activities included preparing training material to be used for end user training after the conclusion of the UAT. The training will follow a staggered approach as the registration module goes live from December 2022 for specific entities, and will continue until our final undergraduate mass registration has been concluded before the start of classes in 2023.

Ongoing change management activities include the introduction of 'change huddles' for each capability. Here, end users can ask questions, resolve misunderstandings, find out where they fit into the process, clarify what to expect, get a preview of the new look and feel of the system, and learn more about support after the system has gone live.

One deviation from the project plan is that the financial aid function will still be run on the legacy system until the SUNStudent financial aid functionality has been duly configured, tested and implemented in 2023. This capability is critical from a business point of view, and the existing functionality on SUNStudent is not yet adequate to cater for SU's needs in time for the start of the 2023 academic year.

14. Infrastructure project management

The table below provides a summary of the infrastructure projects overseen by Facilities Management in the past year:

Project description	Number of projects	Project value
Projects in the planning phase	87	R655 856 212
Projects in construction	24	R1 735 346 040
Projects completed	57	R637 525 412

For details of specific projects, please consult the addendum.

15. Information technology

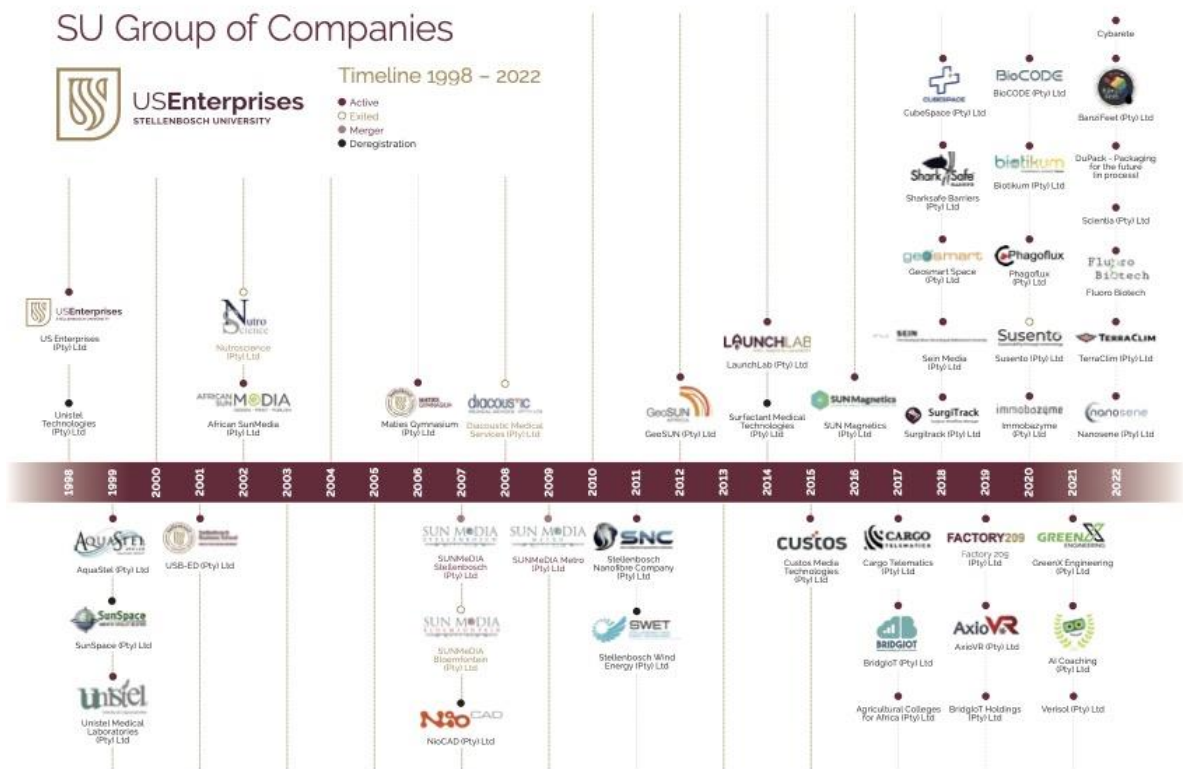
The Information Technology (IT) Division has had a busy few months, working on SU's digital strategy as well as the cybersecurity report, while also supporting both the SUNFin and SUNStudent projects. Following its quarterly staff meeting in September, the Division is now gearing up for the following stages of the digital strategy.

16. Maties Sport

Maties Sport has had a successful year. Following Covid, we hit the ground running as we returned to competitive sport, scooping six University Sports South Africa (USSA) gold medals. Our student athletes also travelled to Pretoria to represent us in the Varsity Sport Festival (cricket, hockey and rugby sevens) from 3 to 8 October. In addition, Maties Sport continued to promote recreational and social impact activities among our students and the wider community over the past quarter.

17. Innovus

In 2022, six new spinout companies were approved to join the SU group of companies. They are Fluoro Biotech, Nonosene, BanziFeet, Cybarete, Scientia and TerraClim. One company is in process (DuPack Packaging), another is in the pre-incubation phase (Plant Disease Clinic), and yet another is in the pipeline for 2023 (SU Advantage (SUNCOM)). The following figure shows the spinout timeline since 1998:



CONCLUSION

The 2022 academic year certainly posed its own share of challenges. However, thanks to the dedication, commitment and agility of our staff and students, we have not only successfully completed the academic year, but also put in place the scaffolding to reach ever higher in the year ahead. Together, we shall turn our troubles into triumphs and keep moving forward.



Prof Wim de Villiers
Rector and Vice-Chancellor

CONTRIBUTORS

*The Rector's Management Report was compiled by the Executive Communication support team in collaboration with **Prof Wim de Villiers**, Rector and Vice-Chancellor, and **Mohamed Shaikh**, executive manager in the Rectorate. Editing and translation services were facilitated by the **SU Language Centre** and provided by their collaborator **Hendrien Swanepoel**. We also acknowledge the following contributors, listed by **SU responsibility centre**:*

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