

Winners of the SUBSIFY (Stellenbosch University Baseline Survey for Incoming First Years) competition and lucky draw.

The SUBSIFY is administered at the beginning of each academic year. It was previously known as the Alpha Baseline survey (since 2002) but was revised at the end of 2020 by a working group, which included staff from the Centres for Business Intelligence, Student Counselling and -Development and Student Communities.

The aim of the SUBSIFY is to capture important profiling data from each new cohort of incoming first-year students. Data gathered include, amongst others, their time utilisation, involvement in social activities, technology preferences and experience, their values and aspirations, reasons for choosing SU, success expectations, wellness / well-being habits and their overall flourishing levels.

The survey is run and its responses analysed by the Centre for Business Intelligence within the Division of Information Governance (contact persons are Dr Alten du Plessis and Ms Carla Kroon).

This year we (the SUBSIFY team) faced several challenges in running the survey. In the past we had a captured audience in the sense that all our newcomers were in one place (in big groups) during the welcoming period, and it was compulsory for them to complete the survey. We therefore consistently had more than 3500 students per cohort who completed the survey. Because of COVID, we had to make some innovative plans to persuade our 2021 first-year students to take part.

We used a mass email campaign (emailing all newcomers on a few occasions) and made the survey an integral part of the BeWell mentoring system and the newly launched "Grow a Gritty HERO's Mindset" programme in residences and PSO's.

Incentives were also offered to encourage first-years to participate. We are very grateful for the R8000 that was made available by Prof Deresh Ramjugernath, Vice-Rector: Learning and Teaching, so that we could also offer prizes as incentives to motivate our first-year students to take part. Because mentors play such an important role during the welcoming period, we also utilized this avenue to market the survey.

All the efforts paid off resulting in a 2021 participation rate that is on par (slightly better) with previous years.

Three R1000 cash prizes were offered to first-years who submitted complete questionnaires - the three winners were determined by a lucky draw. Congratulations to Ms Visser, Ms Muzofa and Mr Niese!

The balance of the R8000 (R5000) was offered to the residence/PSO whose mentoring team had the most success in motivating their first years to take part. They played an important role in creating opportunities for newcomers to be involved and for this they were rewarded. For each residence and PSO the percentage of mentees that completed the survey was calculated. Surprisingly to the SUBSIFY team, a men's residence won: Helderberg, where 84% of their first years completed the survey. Their residence head, Dr Robert Kotze, indicated they indeed have a special group of mentors in 2021 and that they will invest their prize money into more mentoring programmes to further support the 2021 group of first-year students– what a fantastic initiative! Well done, Helderberg!

The three prize winners and the mentoring team from Helderberg are in the picture below, together with Prof Deresh Ramjugernath, Ms Carla Kroon and Dr Alten du Plessis.



Back from left to right: Josh Niese, Marietjie Visser, Kudzie Muzofa, Ms Carla Kroon and Dr Alten du Plessis

Middle from left to right: Willem Viljoen, Lohan Visser, Scott Andersone, Wisa Solo, Ryleigh Adams, William Villet and Prof Deresh Ramjugernath

Front left to right: Juan van der Westhuizen (Head Mentor of Helderberg), Lincoln Mabelane, Likhanyo Mgobozi (President of Helderberg), Rios Pillay, Aobakwe Ditlhokwa