



Stellenbosch

UNIVERSITY
IYUNIVESITHI
UNIVERSITEIT

forward together
sonke siya phambili
saam vorentoe

HIGHLIGHTS
from the
RECTOR'S MANAGEMENT REPORT
to
COUNCIL

Monday 24 June 2024

Prof Wim de Villiers,
Rector and Vice-Chancellor

Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE RECTOR'S MANAGEMENT REPORT	6
1. Election of a new Council vice-chair	6
2. Autumn graduation series 2024	6
3. Overview of undergraduate enrolments in 2024	7
4. Undergraduate student recruitment for 2025 in full swing	7
5. Maties Sport quick off the mark	8
6. SU home to Africa's first Policy Innovation Lab	9
7. Public Squares to promote transdisciplinary innovation	10
8. SUNRISE a new dawn for excellence at SU	10
9. Celebrating teaching, learning and assessment, together	11
10. Heightened interest in our brand identity	11
11. Wellbeing ambassadors in training	12
12. SU Health and Wellbeing Symposium explores institutional culture of care	12
13. Keeping a watchful eye over campus crime trends	12
14. Tracking our 'foodprint'	13
CONCLUSION	13
CONTRIBUTORS	13

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Developing joint solutions to some of the intractable challenges of our time. This has been a driving force of our research and internationalisation agenda over the first six months of the 2024 academic year.

At the previous Council meeting, I reported on the formidable partnership between Stellenbosch University (SU) and Groningen University. This partnership was further strengthened with bilateral talks in April. Core elements of collaboration include joint PhD programmes, joint postdoctoral fellows, undergraduate student mobility, enhancing opportunities for external funding, academic matchmaking, and sharing best practice in terms of educational innovation and partnership visibility.

In addition, we continued building on SU's partnership network in May by further exploring our participation in the South Africa–Sweden University Forum (SASUF), which brings together 40 universities from across Sweden and South Africa. This transformative research

project sees researchers, teachers, students and university leadership pooling their expertise and resources to develop joint solutions for:

- climate change, the conservation of natural resources, and sustainability;
- education for a sustainable society;
- the burden of disease in Sweden and South Africa;
- sustainable urbanisation; and
- cybersecurity and the innovative use of digital technologies and big data.

In this regard, the groundbreaking work of our School for Climate Studies and our School for Data Science and Computational Thinking, as well as our extensive research programmes on medicine and health, positions SU at the forefront of research that can change lives, both locally and abroad.

SASUF is funded by the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT) and the 40 partner universities themselves, with financial support from the South African National Research Foundation.

Expanding our African footprint

We co-hosted the inaugural THE Pan-African Universities Summit with the University of Pretoria on 17 and 18 April. The summit focused on sustainability, equitable research and employability – all critical factors in the greater discourse on the future of higher education in Africa. The event brought together experts from the region's tertiary education, industry and policy sectors.

African universities have a multifaceted role to play in global higher education, including knowledge production and exchange, capacity-building and student mobility. By being active participants in the global higher education sector, African institutions help advance knowledge, human capital and sustainable development on the continent as well as in the rest of the world.

Equitable research partnerships for African universities

Universities worldwide are placing greater emphasis on research that is aligned with the United Nations' 17 sustainable development goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063. Moreover, universities are increasingly seeking to enhance their research and societal impact through international collaborations, participation in global university networks, and membership of university consortia.

As previously reported, we are an active participant and established leader in the Africa–Europe Clusters of Research Excellence (CoREs), spearheaded by the African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) and The Guild of European Research-Intensive Universities (The Guild). This means SU is well positioned not only to contribute significantly to Africa's research output via our transcontinental research networks, but also to further enhance sustainability, innovation and employability in our region.

Yet a key question regarding African universities' participation in research collaborations is the matter of equitable partnerships. This issue has surfaced on various occasions, and on

24 May, I addressed it as an invited speaker at The Guild's General Assembly in Groningen. In my presentation, I emphasised the following critical requirements for removing the historical imbalances and power dynamics that have often characterised research partnerships between Africa and Europe:

- **Equal access to funding:** In securing funding, African researchers still face significantly more barriers than their European counterparts. The CoREs aim to address this unequal access to research funding by advocating for a more integrated funding approach that prioritises the equitable distribution of resources. This ensures that African institutions can participate fully in, and benefit equally from, research projects.
- **Capacity-building:** Historically, European institutions have generally had better infrastructure and resources than their African peers. Again, the CoRE clusters seek to remedy this by building African research capacity and providing training, infrastructure and support to young researchers, including master's and PhD students. This effort is crucial for developing a sustainable and self-sufficient research environment on our continent.
- **Inclusion and representation:** Ensuring that African researchers are equal partners in research collaborations means involving them as not just contributors, but co-leaders and decision-makers. The CoREs emphasise the importance of inclusion, bringing together researchers from a wide range of institutions in both Europe and Africa to ensure diverse and representative participation.
- **Long-term commitment:** Meaningful collaboration requires trusting, sustainable and long-term partnerships, long-lasting institutional support, and a steady commitment from researchers. The CoRE approach helps establish this, ensuring that collaborative efforts are not just one-off projects, but are built on enduring relationships that can adapt and grow over time.

Autumn graduation ceremonies

We conferred 3 066 qualifications at our March 2024 graduations, which brought the total qualifications awarded for the 2023 academic year to 8 875, representing a 2.4% increase over 2022 (8 666). A total of 319 doctoral degrees were awarded – the highest number since 2020.

In March, SU also awarded [honorary doctorates](#) to Profs James Robinson and Leonard Wantchekon for their respective contributions to science for society.

Fundraising performance for the first quarter of 2024

Thanks to the purposeful fundraising efforts of our Development and Alumni Relations Division, we have once again bettered our own philanthropic fundraising record for the first quarter of the year compared to 2023. The table below provides a quick comparison:

Quarter 1, 2023	Quarter 1, 2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philanthropic income: R121 m • Non-philanthropic income:* R3,8 m 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philanthropic income: R124,5 m • Non-philanthropic income:* R1,6 m

TOTAL R124,8 m	TOTAL R126,1 m
-----------------------	-----------------------

*Sectoral education and training authorities (SETAs) and black economic empowerment (BEE).

The highest proportion of donation income (44%) was received from the trusts and foundations sector, followed by corporates (22%) and bequests (21%). For this period, individual giving accounted for 7% of donation income.

Open Day with a view to intake 2025

SU's annual Open Day, hosted on both the Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses on 20 April, confirmed that the University remains a study destination of choice. The 40 000 bookings made for the faculty information sessions attested to this. As demand for the information sessions exceeds our current capacity, our teams will be rethinking the programme format for next year. Nearly 6 000 spots were booked for sessions on Tygerberg campus, while the Faculty of Engineering alone recorded more than 8 000 bookings.

First list of CIRCoRe recommendations

Since the implementation of the Committee for the Institutional Response to the (Khampepe) Commission's Recommendations (CIRCoRe), the respective workstreams have done extensive work pertaining to key areas of concern highlighted in the Khampepe report. The joint steering committee consolidated a [first list of recommendations](#) proposed by the individual workstreams, which was submitted to the Rectorate for further consideration and approval.

The list of recommendations includes the following:

- That the newly updated and integrated policy on unfair discrimination, gender-based violence and HIV/Aids be expeditiously activated for consultation, recommendation and approval.
- That the regulations associated with case management operations and procedures be finalised in a separate document or plan rather than in the policy, and be signed off by the relevant deputy vice-chancellor.
- That the aforesaid regulations be reviewed or tested at the CIRCoRE workstream tasked with simplifying and aligning SU structures, policies and regulations, as well as by the Institutional Transformation Committee.

Dealing with our challenges

Notwithstanding some tough challenges with the implementation and roll-out of our **SUNStudent** system, the latest reports indicate that data rehabilitation is under way and that while the data is being corrected, many of the other glitches would be resolved as well. New capabilities are also being tested against tight deadlines. Naturally, the aim is to iron out all current issues in time for the 2025 intake and registrations.

In terms of the implementation of **SUNFin**, a firm focus on the projects and grants module, and more specifically also the onboarding of the research community, should address the outstanding issues raised by members of Senate.

In addition, our institution is facing the challenge of **placing more female newcomer students in SU residences**, given the increase in the number of female applicants compared to the available residence spots. A 60/40 ratio in favour of female applicants was proposed. To ensure that all relevant factors are considered, the Rectorate took a decision to hold off on engaging relevant stakeholders in this regard until it has received the recommendations of the CIRCoRe workstream on student life and the report by the Wilgenhof panel of investigation.

Finally, a special meeting of Senate was held on 30 April to further debate the **proposed resolution on the Israel-Gaza conflict** that was tabled by members at the previous Senate meeting. For the outcome of the vote at the special meeting, [click here](#).

In addition to my report to Council, it is customary for members of the Rectorate to take turns to table a report at Council meetings. This time, Prof Nico Koopman, our Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel, will be reporting on activities in his portfolio over the past year.

My report covers the period March to May 2024, unless stated otherwise.

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. Election of a new Council vice-chair

Council elected Nadine Moodie as its new vice-chair at the Council meeting on 15 April. This is the first time in our university's more than 105-year history that both the chair and vice-chair of Council are women.

2. Autumn graduation series 2024

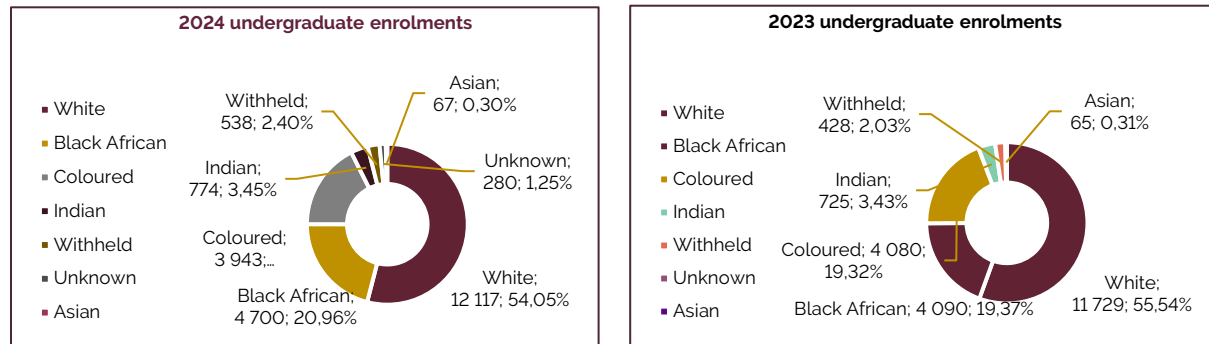
SU conferred 3 066 qualifications during the graduation ceremonies from 25 to 28 March. This brings the total qualifications awarded for the 2023 academic year to 8 875, which represents a 2,4% increase over 2022.

We are particularly pleased with the 319 doctorates awarded, which is the highest number since 2020. We also awarded [honorary doctorates](#) to Profs James Robinson and Leonard Wantchekon for their respective contributions to science for society.

(More information about our March 2024 graduation series is available in the Addendum to the Rector's Management Report and in the [full graduation report](#).)

3. Overview of undergraduate enrolments in 2024

The charts below compare South African undergraduate enrolments at SU by population group at the end of the 2024 and 2023 registration periods respectively:



Note: In 2022 and 2023, "Unknown" values were converted to "Withheld"; hence the lack of "Unknown" values in the 2023 chart. In addition, the population group of more than half of Military Science's students is unknown.

Enrolments across most population groups increased. More specifically:

- black African enrolments increased by 14,90% from 4 090 to 4 700;
- Indian enrolments increased by 6,8% from 725 to 774; and
- white enrolments increased by 3,3% from 11 729 to 12 117.

For more information, please view the [full undergraduate enrolment report](#) prepared by our Division of Strategic Initiatives and Information Governance.

4. Undergraduate student recruitment for 2025 in full swing

We recognise the importance of diversity recruitment to attract academically strong students from diverse backgrounds. This is why SU utilises data-driven recruitment planning, school engagements, digital marketing, a comprehensive prospective student website (www.maties.com) and participation in career exhibitions to reach as broad an audience as possible.

Partnerships with stakeholders such as the Department of Basic Education and educational non-profit entities further enhance recruitment efforts, particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). For instance, the Student Recruitment team collaborates with the Kutlwanong Centre for Maths, Science and Technology to engage with promising learners from township and rural schools.

We managed to exceed our targets for undergraduate first-year enrolments in 2024, with significant growth in our black African intake specifically. Faculties such as AgriSciences, Engineering, Science and Education surpassed their targets considerably.

During the reporting period, Student Recruitment engaged with over 80 000 high-school learners, participated in numerous career exhibitions and conducted campaigns such as #whoyoubecome with a view to recruiting top-performers to enrol at SU 2025.



in



SU recruiter Bongji Mdingi in action at St David's Marist College in Sandton (left) and Cambridge High School in East London (above).

5. Maties Sport quick off the mark

Maties Sport had a busy start to 2024, engaging in various events and tournaments. The Maroon Machine competed in the Varsity Cup and proudly hosted the University Sports South Africa (USSA) athletics championships at the Coetzenburg athletics track from 4 to 6 April.

[Student athletes who graduated in March](#) were also [celebrated](#) on both Maties Sport's webpage and [social media](#).

Team SA placed third at the **13th African Games** in Ghana from 8 to 23 March, with Maties Sport athletes achieving remarkable feats. Mire Reinstorf (*far left below*) set a new pole vault record, George van Heerden (*middle*) scored the first cricket century in African Games history, and swimmer Petrus Truter (*far right, posing second from left*) won gold in the 4 x 100 m medley.



Maties Cricket won the inaugural **Goldrush Boland Super League**, defeating Paarl Cricket Club in the final on 23 March by six wickets (*see picture alongside*). Three Maties players – Jason Muirhead, Gysbert Wege and Boago Gaoraelwe – were also included in the 'Team of the Tournament'.

Netballers Syntiche Kabuya, Lisa Ingwersen and Renezia Andrews (*pictured from left to right below*) put in exceptional performances at the **Netball World Youth Cup 2025 African qualifiers**. Both Syntiche and Renezia won Player of the Match awards.



6. SU home to Africa's first Policy Innovation Lab

In early April, we officially launched [Africa's first Policy Innovation Lab](#). Established at our School for Data Science and Computational Thinking in partnership with the South African presidency, the German government and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Lab explores how data science and artificial intelligence tools can be deployed to address policymaking challenges. Through dialogue with experts at universities across South Africa as well as stakeholders from the public sector and civil organisations, the Lab will support policy innovation to accelerate the achievement of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The epitome of research for impact, the Lab is also actively supporting the drafting of South Africa's second SDG report, or 'voluntary national review' (VNR). The VNR is already in its final stages and will be presented at the United Nations' high-level political forum in July.



Above: SU colleagues with representatives from the South African presidency, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the German Agency for International Cooperation at the launch of the Policy Innovation Lab.

At the launch, Matshidiso Masire from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation praised SU's commitment to collaboration, echoing the sentiments of Thulani Mahlangu from the German Agency for International Cooperation on the Lab's role in fostering inclusivity and innovation. Lawrence Matemba, a chief policy analyst in the South African presidency, highlighted the Lab's importance in South Africa's digital transformation and efforts to improve quality of life for all.

7. Public Squares to promote transdisciplinary innovation

We proudly launched our Public Squares initiative in March – a groundbreaking programme aimed at advancing transdisciplinary research and fostering innovation in SU's academic community. Managed by the Division of Research Development (DRD), the initiative represents a significant step forward in our commitment to research excellence and societal impact.

Public Squares represent dynamic open spaces in SU's research 'cityscape' where researchers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds can gather and interact. The intention is to promote new interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary conversations and collaborations to ensure that our research has a lasting positive impact.

As part of our broader institutional strategic theme "Research for impact", our Public Squares address complex environmental, health and sustainability challenges, emphasising solutions-oriented, collaborative and actionable research. Through the initiative, researchers will brainstorm, develop novel focus areas and be trained in engaged research methodologies, public engagement tools, budgeting and grant writing – all aimed at positioning them to make a meaningful impact on society.

8. SUNRISE a new dawn for excellence at SU

March also saw the launch of SUNRISE (Stellenbosch University Research and Innovation Strategic Excellence), which aims to support top SU academics on their journey to becoming professors. The intention is to establish a vibrant pool of high-performing peers who can become the nucleus of a rejuvenated, inclusive and supportive SU academic community, characterised by excellence and scholarly collaboration.

The first cohort comprises 35 fellows from across the University. The target group is mid-career academics who have demonstrated intellectual and research excellence and are committed to a career trajectory that can lead to the professoriate.

SUNRISE was inspired by the highly successful national Future Professors Programme (FPP), for which ten of our academic staff have been selected to date. It was the success and obvious benefits of the FPP, funded by the Department of Higher Education and Training, that led to SU's strategic decision to create a similar programme targeted specifically at our own academics.

Over the next three years, SUNRISE will enrol up to 120 fellows, taking in a new cohort of around 40 annually.

9. Celebrating teaching, learning and assessment, together



Our university's teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) celebration on 5 March recognised academics' exceptional work to advance TLA in their faculties and across SU.

The DVC: Learning and Teaching thanked our TLA champions for their dedication and stressed the

crucial role of exemplary TLA practices in turning our institution into Africa's premier research-intensive university. He also highlighted SU's consistently high undergraduate success rates and reiterated our institution's commitment to sustaining this reputation through ongoing TLA support and enhancement.

The event further provided a platform to commend staff who had participated in various TLA-related opportunities offered by the Division of Learning and Teaching Enhancement. These included the winners of SU's Teaching Awards, our teaching fellows, TAU (Teaching Advancement at University) fellows, scholarship recipients, and those who completed the Scholarship of Educational Leadership (SoEL) and assessment short courses.

10. Heightened interest in our brand identity

We are pleased to report increased engagement with our brand identity initiatives among the SU community. The implementation of our brand identity continues to unfold, with the Corporate Communication and Marketing Division (CCMD) regularly updating the brand identity webpage. Data from Google Analytics shows a significant increase in user traffic to the brand identity webpage, indicating heightened interest.

A recent addition to the webpage has been the new SU Style Guide, which serves as a valuable resource for English language use at our institution. It is intended to be used alongside the existing brand toolkit and the forthcoming content style guide. Together,

these resources aim to ensure consistent and impactful communication. Similar guides for Afrikaans and isiXhosa are being developed.

In addition, efforts continue to train staff, students and partners on effective branded communication, including through targeted workshops with faculty staff to address their specific needs and provide practical tips for brand implementation.

In the reporting period, the second welcoming event (*see the Addendum to the Rector's Management Report for more*), the Varsity Cup matches and the March graduations served as a platform for the further promotion of SU's brand identity among internal and external stakeholders.

11. Wellbeing ambassadors in training

Our SU Wellbeing Ambassadors programme was launched in May. A total of 45 staff members from academic and support services environments have already volunteered to serve as ambassadors. Their main role will be to champion the University's wellbeing offering, lend an understanding ear to their peers, and refer co-workers to the appropriate resources and services. At the same time, they will also be able to help us identify areas of concern.

Our prospective wellbeing ambassadors will complete the online co-curricular offering of Higher Health, while internal SU staff active in the wellness space will also provide training in the course of the year.

The volunteers are diverse in terms of gender and age.

12. SU Health and Wellbeing Symposium explores institutional culture of care

On 19 April, we hosted our first Health and Wellbeing Symposium. Themed "Advancing an institutional culture of care", the event attracted some 120 delegates, who reflected on the journey towards embedded staff health and wellbeing at SU. The keynote speaker was Prof Soraya Seedat, a distinguished professor of Psychiatry at SU and executive head of our Department of Psychiatry. Her expertise in the field of posttraumatic stress and anxiety disorders as well as risk and resilience in adolescents and adults made for an engaging talk. Other topics discussed included existing wellness initiatives at SU, the work of the CIRCoRe workstream on institutional culture, the health and wellbeing responsibilities of individuals and organisations, physical health, the MaRoON Passport, and coaching circles.

13. Keeping a watchful eye over campus crime trends

Over the past years, Campus Security reported a welcome downward trend in criminal incidents, especially during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Sadly, however, this seems to have changed in recent months with a concerning increase in criminal incidents, particularly petty crime and theft from vehicles. Despite Campus Security's comprehensive crime awareness and vigilance drive supported by our Students' Representative Council, theft of cellular phones, handbags and laptop bags is on the rise. The incidents often occur while students are gathered in groups during breaks in between classes.

According to security camera footage, perpetrators appear to disguise themselves as students. While the footage provides insights into their tactics, however, challenges remain in apprehending suspects and pursuing criminal cases. Campus Security continues to collaborate with residence committees, the police and student unions to enhance security measures and communication.

14. Tracking our 'foodprint'

We have started rolling out the Klimato software that will enable us to report the carbon footprint of all our meal options on campus. Demonstration sessions are being conducted. Users have been registered, and the ingredients for the various menus are being documented on the system.

CONCLUSION

A key message that came out of the THE Pan-African Universities Summit, which we co-hosted in the period in review, was that education, innovation and equity are critical in creating a sustainable knowledge economy in African higher education, and that this necessarily includes multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research. I am pleased to report that SU is rock solid on this path, purposefully pursuing knowledge and innovation that transcends disciplinary boundaries.

CONTRIBUTORS

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

Learning and Teaching: Prof Deresh Ramjugernath, Dr Choice Makhetha, Dr Karin Cattell-Holden, Dr Anthea Jacobs, Claudia Swart-Jansen van Vuuren, Charmaine van der Merwe, Dr Noline Herman, Dr Gert Young, Renelle Terblanche, Jan Petrus Bosman, Arné Binneman, Sanet de Jager, Angela Govender, Fatima Halday, Stembele Johnson, Susan Lotz, Michelle Pieters, Rose Richards, Selene Delpont, Helga Sykstus, Juanli Theron, Marguerite van der Waal, Dr Kim Wallmach, André Müller, Khairoonisa Foflonker, Lynne Rippenaar-Moses, Jethro Georgiades, Dr Ruth Andrews, Anele Mdepa, Jaco Greeff-Brink, Qaqamba Mdaka, Michelle Munro, Dr Jill Ryan

Operations and Finance: Finance (Manie Lombard & team), Facilities Management (Nicolette van den Eijkel & team), Information Technology (Antoinette van der Merwe & team), Maties Sport (Ilhaam Groenewald & team), and Innovus (Anita Nel & team)

Registrar: Dr Ronel Retief, Dr Celeste Nel, Bruce Banda, Ashmind Daniels, Farah Fredericks, Anne Havemann-Serfontein, Freek Truter, Beire Kramer, Salot Hanekom, Penny van der Bank, Charmaine Wing, Che Bermosky, Felecia van Rooi, Robert Young, Jonathan-Dale Blanckenberg

Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies: Prof Sibusiso Moyo, Prof Johann Mouton, Maryke Hunter-Hüselmann, Sibusiso Lukhele

Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel: Prof Nico Koopman, Dr Jo-Anne Kirby, Dr Lynne Julie, Sue Crumpton, Dr Haidee Williams, Dr Ryno Botha, Sr Anneke van Heerden, Dr Craig Thompson, Dr Pierre Viviers, Shibu Mamabolo, Ulrich Wolff, Ricky Brecht, Johannes Adams, Elvandre Galant, Dr Marietjie Oelofsen, Natasha Coltman, Renee Hector-Kannemeyer, Chevaan Peters, Jubelian Korkie, Katlego Letlonkane, Shanté Neff, Dr Zethu Mkhize, Dr Leslie van Rooi, Joanne Williams

Strategy, Global and Corporate Affairs: Prof Hester Klopper, Dr Wayne Muller, Christelle Feyt, Tertia Kruger, Cristal Peterson, Naudé van der Merwe, Amira Brown, Marguerite Cloete, Marick Hornsveld, Candes Keating, Michelle Swart, Martin Viljoen, Dr Alec Basson, Magdel Pretorius, Leon Eygelaar, Jerall Toi, Dr Barbara Pool, Lidia du Plessis, Dr Nico Elema, Prof Sarah Howie, Sarah van der Westhuizen