



STUDENT AFFAIRS

Strategic plan for the period 2017-2022

*Inspiring excellence. Transforming lives.
Inspireer uitnemendheid. Verander lewens.*

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VR-STAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA



UFS·UV
STUDENT AFFAIRS
STUDENTESAKE
DITABA TSA BAIHUTHI



FOREWORD BY THE DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Student Affairs Humanising Strategy 2022 (HS 2022) echoes the spirit of the University of the Free State (UFS) Strategy 2015-2020, which identifies three key pillars upon which it rests: the Academic Project, the Human Project and Support Services. HS 2022 will assist Student Affairs in reimagining its role, aims and objectives, and the intersectionality framework has been chosen to articulate and address the reality that the Academic Project and the Human Project cannot be separated. We believe that with HS 2022 as our foundation, the holistic development of students will be enhanced and their lived experiences humanised.

The Student Affairs Division will contribute or add value to the UFS through:

- Co-curricular programmes and activities (Academic Project). These programmes and activities will be presented through the College of Student Affairs.
- The two pedagogies (i.e. the humanising pedagogy and the pedagogy of discomfort). These pedagogies, in our view, will advance the aspirations of the Human Project.
- The intersectionality framework. This framework recognises the intersectionality of lived experiences. Our students do not live single lives; therefore, we cannot use single strategies to address multiple issues. The intersectionality framework allows us to address the multiple identities embodied by our students.

This strategic plan articulates the commitment of all Student Affairs departments, captures the vision of the team, and aligns itself with the larger strategy of the University of the Free State (UFS) for the next five years. The spirit of commitment and enthusiasm evident in the team, the positive energy characterising our interactions, the emphasis on appreciative inquiry and the abovementioned two pedagogies permeate the four key areas that will become the cornerstone and focal point of the Strategic Plan, namely:

- Professionalisation
- High-impact practices
- Student communities and structures
- Intersectionality, partnerships and collaboration

The departments will pursue their particular mandates in order to translate them into service deliverables within the context of their specific work areas, taking account of the aforementioned four key areas. This plan is the direct result of the discussions conducted at the Strategic Planning Workshop held from 24 to 26 October 2016, and it seeks to facilitate the implementation of the four key areas. Student Affairs will continue to receive inputs from our three campuses to make our strategy of humanising the student lived experience a reality.

Mr Pura Mgolombane

DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

Date:

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1. VISION AND MISSION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

1.1 VISION

Student Affairs will strive to create opportunities for and enhance and facilitate students' skills of critical thinking and modes of being in a way that is consistent with human rights and the principles of social justice.

1.2 MISSION

Student Affairs will develop and implement co-curricular programmes and activities and services that provide truly humanising daily lived experiences, which are essential for student academic success, prosocial behaviour, student engagement and an inclusive institutional culture.

2. VALUES OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The DSA values will build on the five core institutional values, namely:

- Setting high standards to achieve superior academic performance.
- Embracing humanity by promoting a culture of tolerance and mutual respect.
- Pursuing competitiveness through embracing institutional distinctiveness.
- Providing a university experience that nurtures emergent leaders.
- Synergising academic excellence with the quest for effective public service and giving back to the community.

The value proposition of Student Affairs is to create a socially just student-life experience that is conducive to student academic success, student engagement and critical thinking. Accordingly, the DSA's thoughts, intentions, actions and reflections will be based on the following values:

2.1 HUMANITY

The DSA places the highest value on the humanity of its students and staff. This means that we treat all students and staff with dignity and respect, irrespective of their sexual orientation, (dis)ability, gender, race, class, language, ethnicity, place of origin, religion and spirituality, and irrespective of other multiple identities that our students and staff may embody.

2.2 ETHICS

The DSA regards it as critically important that students and staff be guided by ethical principles. That means that their daily lived experiences should focus on one fundamental question: How can I live an ethically good life? Thus, a student or staff member should always strive to do what is ethically good for himself/herself, other people, the UFS and society in general.

2.3 CRITICAL DIVERSITY LITERACY

The DSA's programmes and activities will foreground the concept of critical diversity literacy (CDL). This way of thinking seeks to identify, deconstruct and disrupt power structures in order to create possibilities for social justice. In this regard, the DSA will study how power and privilege produces and reproduces itself, because we believe that relevant knowledge and deep understanding facilitate the ability of all students and staff members to play a truly meaningful role in the transformation of the UFS and make its institutional culture genuinely inclusive. So, the vital source/origin of the DSA's modes of being and ways of perceiving is located in the notion of CDL.

2.4 SOCIAL JUSTICE

The DSA undertakes to facilitate just student lived experiences. All students and staff members will be guided by the intersectionality framework towards a deeper understanding of the value of critical diversity. Critical diversity transcends observable differences in order to investigate how power, privilege, dominance and oppression operate to unfairly advantage certain groups of people whilst unfairly disadvantaging other groups.

2.5 INTEGRITY

The DSA believes that integrity is a value of the highest importance. Although we accept that rules, regulations, policies and procedures are necessary to enforce minimum standards of human behaviour, we also believe that all these efforts will come to nothing without personal integrity. Therefore, integrity is the value we wish to inculcate among our students and staff. It is only through this fundamental value that a socially just society will be possible. This conviction is based on the knowledge that a person of integrity is, among other things, honest, truthful, trustworthy, reliable and virtuous – all personal traits without which a just society could not exist.

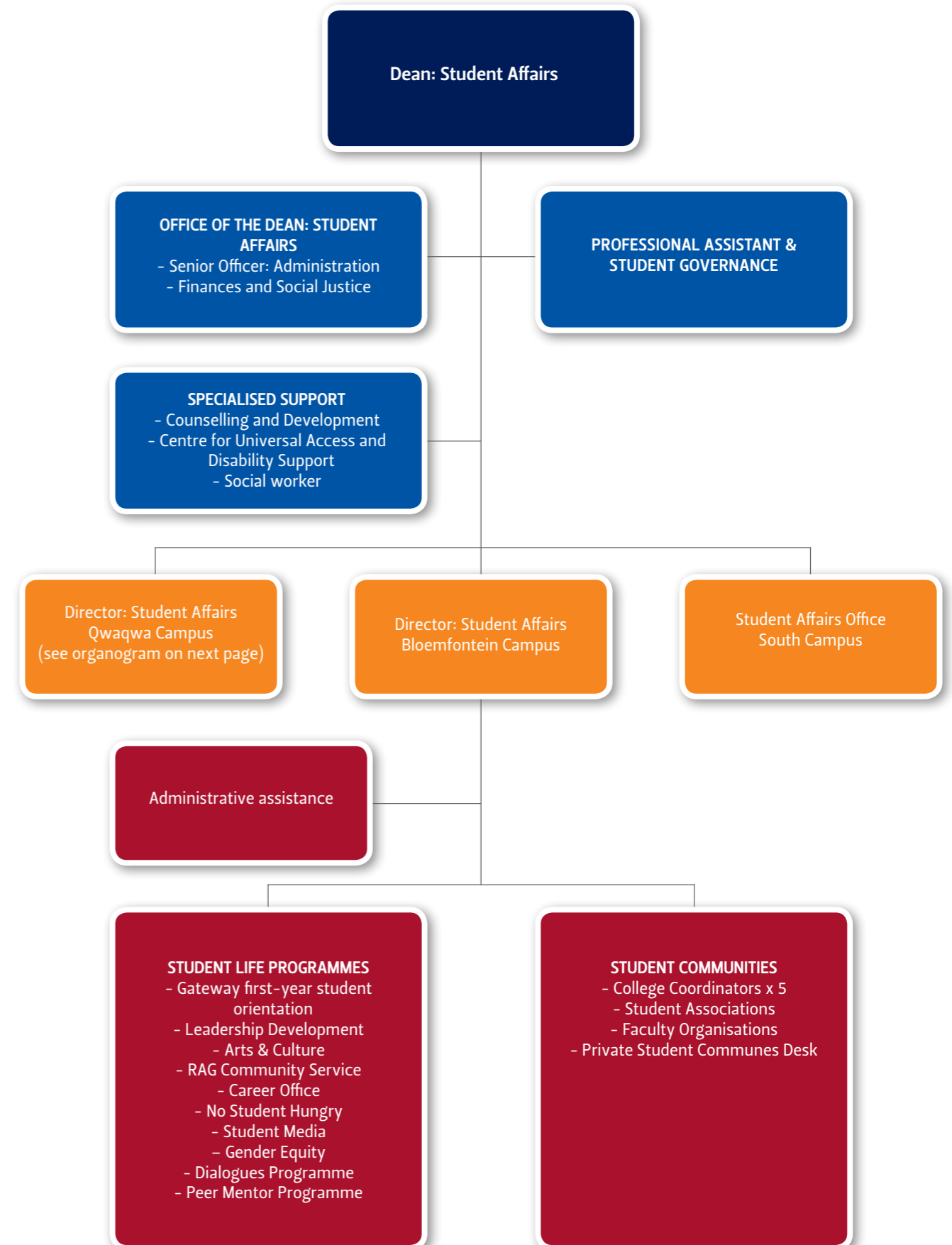
3. REFLECTING ON PROGRESS

Although note is taken of the work already done by Student Affairs towards formalising its operations and planning, the adoption of the HS 2022 represents a new strategy. This strategy will concentrate the operations and efforts of Student Affairs to enable it to achieve its stated goals. The progress made in this regard will be reported on a quarterly and annual basis.

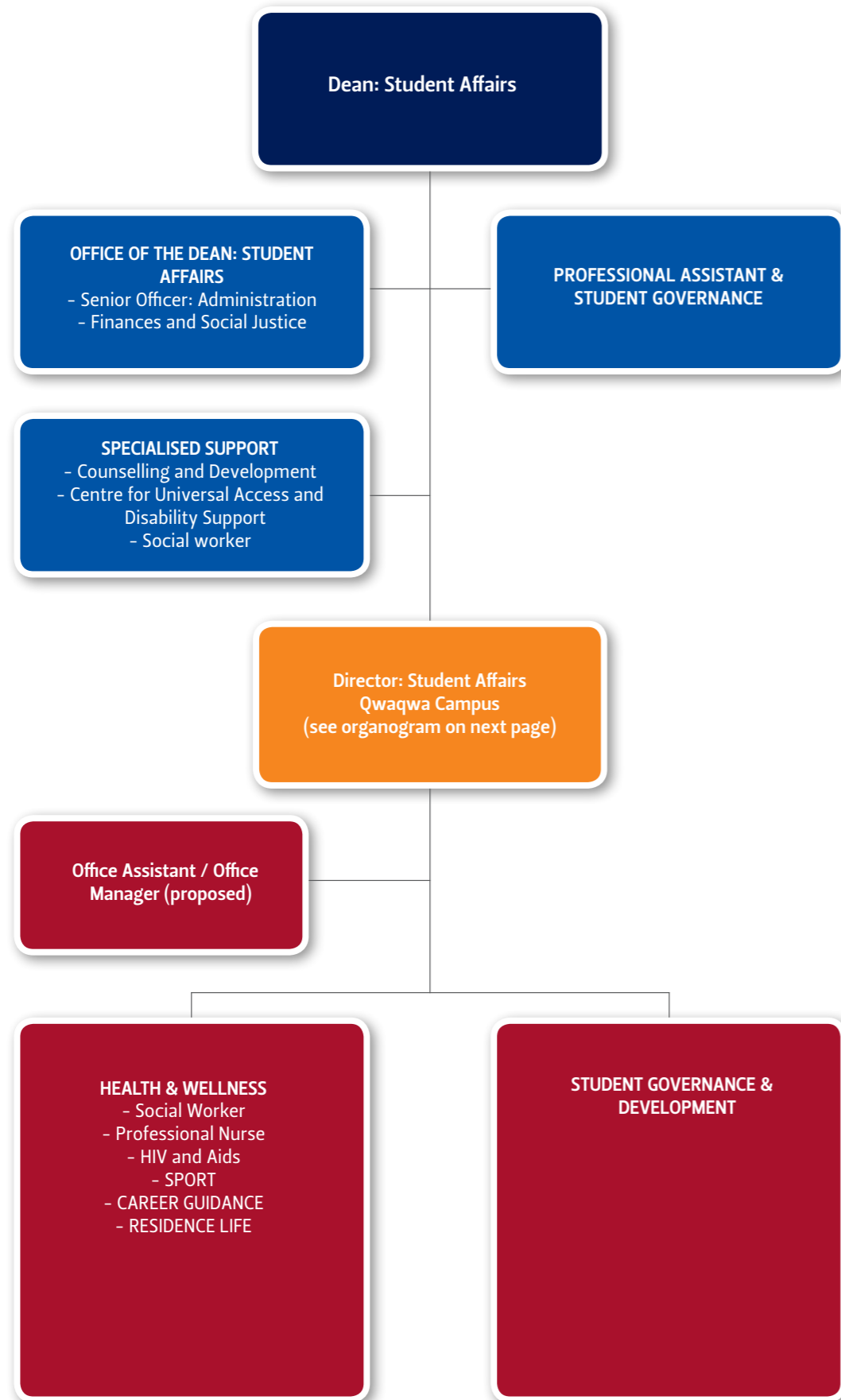


4. STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFILE

4.1 ORGANOGRAM



Student Affairs Qwaqwa



4.2 OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs provides strategic direction and leadership to Student Affairs divisions. These divisions are: Student Communities; Student Counselling and Development; the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support; and Student Wellness and Student Social Support.

This office acts as a conduit between the student leadership and students in general on the one hand, and management and other university stakeholders on the other hand. In this role, the DSA provides high-level advice to all stakeholders and acts as an advocate for student interests in the context of the academic and human project as well as the support services. The DSA provides general assistance, facilitates financial and social support for students, and mediates student academic issues. The DSA serves as a point of contact for students who encounter and/or experience discrimination and/or any form of social injustice. The DSA is also responsible for reviewing and developing student-related policies and contributing to the creation/amendment of all other university policies that have a direct impact on students. The DSA is a last resort when conflict arises within the student affairs environment. The DSA makes representations to and participates in different management and governance structures, such as the Council, Senate, Institutional Forum, University Management Committee and the Dean's Forum, among others.

The senior officer in the Office of the Dean is responsible for the effective management and administration of this office.

4.3 STUDENT GOVERNANCE

The Office of the Dean facilitates student governance activities, such as elections, training and strategic planning. These activities promote the active participation of the student leadership in institutional governance. This is done to ensure that the objectives of section 35 of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 as amended are achieved.

This office focuses on the following:

- Ensuring that the institutional SRC through its composition represents the SRC members on all three campuses.
- Development of a structured training programme.
- Development of a registration system and process to ensure the effective functioning of student associations. The registration process will evolve into a continuous capacity building programme.
- Development of functional governance structures, involving:
 - class representatives, school representatives and faculty representatives;
 - first-year committees, residence subcommittees and residence committees;
 - association executives and an associations council;
 - SRC executive councils, SRC portfolios, and SRC executive committee, and an institutional SRC;
 - SRC Student Parliament.

The Office of the Dean is responsible for the proper functioning of student governance. Therefore, special attention should be paid to the following:

- effective policies and systems;
- free and fair elections;
- development and implementation of standard operating procedures for structures.



4.4 SPECIALISED SUPPORT

4.4.1 Student Counselling and Development (SCD)

The vision of SCD is to promote, enable and optimise students' self-actualisation and sense of community. Our mission is to acknowledge and foster the holistic development of UFS students. We aim to support students in the resolution of challenges that impede the fulfilment of their potential by creating an environment conducive to the development and achievement of individual, academic and career goals. The SCD Department continues to provide both academic and psychological support to current and prospective students.

To achieve the abovementioned objectives, SCD provides the following:

Operations and services:

- Individual and group therapy.
- Career counselling for prospective and registered students.
- Psychological crisis response and After Hours On Call service.
- The presentation of developmental workshops, such as Stress & Time Management, Emotional Intelligence and Self-esteem. The workshops offered to students are reviewed annually and improvements or adjustments made. New workshops are developed regularly to address specific needs.
- The six-week Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy Programme (REBT) is offered to students seeking counselling. The REBT Programme is a practical, action-oriented approach to assisting individuals in overcoming and coping with adversity, achieving goals and enhancing personal growth by addressing attitudes, unhealthy emotions and maladaptive behaviours.

Collaborations with other departments:

- SCD collaborates with Health and Wellness to present regular student wellness workshops to promote student wellness and expand its reach to more students.
- SCD collaborates with Housing and Residence Affairs (HRA) on workshop presentations to residence students. Every psychologist is assigned to a college to render support when required.
- SCD is involved in selection courses for Architecture and Social Work Departments via psychometric assessments.
- SCD administers psychometric evaluations to provide recommendations for the admission of prospective students who do not meet the prescribed admission requirements of the university. This is done on a referral basis (from the UFS Admissions Office).
- SCD collaborates with Unit for Professional Training and Behavioural Sciences (UNIBS) on the training and rotation of intern psychologists.
- SCD collaborates with the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS) on assessments, evaluations and recommendations relating to extra time dispensations.
- SCD collaborates with the Theology Developmental Programme to ensure that selected students are suited to this field of studies and that they are provided with the skills needed for specific careers.

Other projects:

- Gateway Programme for first-year students, which provides information on our services.
- Increased collaboration and programme alignment with the SCD Office at the Qwaqwa Campus.
- The development of a Student Toolkit which will be made available in both hard copy and electronic copy format. This toolkit will provide students with basic therapeutic tools and strategies for self-help application.
- Mental Health Day to create awareness of the mental health challenges that some students face.

4.4.2 Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS)

The CUADS wants the University of the Free State to become a higher education institution recognised for its efforts towards human reconciliation by creating and providing opportunities for students with disabilities. The ultimate aim is to create a welcoming institutional culture on all three UFS campuses that embraces students with disabilities and helps them to achieve academically.



The activities of the CUADS are rendered, facilitated and coordinated through the implementation of the following programmes and collaborative partnerships:

- Disability Support Programme, which provides both a specialist and coordinated holistic approach towards student support. The programme also makes available information for data collection and reporting purposes. The aim of the programme is to create enabling environments to empower students with disabilities to participate on an equal footing.
- Accessible Transport Programme, which provides accessible transport to students with disabilities between the Bloemfontein and South Campuses.
- Liaison, Awareness and Advocacy Programme for the development of awareness and advocacy for persons with disabilities across all three campuses. Partnerships here are the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Student Life and Communities.
- Staff with Disabilities Programme in partnership with Human Resources to provide optimal support to staff members with disabilities.
- Staff Development and Training Programme in partnership with Human Resources to develop an institutional, knowledge-based culture of mindfulness regarding the diverse student population of the UFS.
- Accessibility Programme in partnership with University Grounds & Estates to ensure access to all building and facilities for all users, in accordance with the principles of universal access and universal design.
- Accessible Study Material Production Programme in partnership with academic departments and lecturers for the provision of academic support through the coordination and production of accessible learning material and lectures.
- Communication Access Programme in partnership with Interpreter Services for the provision of academic support through the facilitation and coordination of communication access.
- Alternative Assessment Programme in partnership with the Exam Division and Student Development and Counselling for facilitating and coordinating alternative assessments options.
- Student Academic Support Programme to move away from all academic support services to persons with disabilities predominantly the responsibility of the CUADS in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

The CUADS provides a support service to the following categories of students with disabilities:

- Specific learning difficulties (e.g. dyslexia, ADD/ADHD, hyperactivity).
- Mobility impaired (e.g. wheelchair users, amputees, cerebral palsy, muscle dystrophy, spina bifida, and multiple sclerosis).
- Visually impaired (e.g. blind, partially sighted). Students receive all their study material and textbooks according to the format of their choices, which includes braille, audio (material is read on a digital recorder), enlarged material and E-text.
- Hearing impaired (deaf, hard of hearing and deafened).
 - Debilitating psychological and other chronic conditions (e.g. schizophrenia, epilepsy, panic disorder).
 - Temporary impairments (e.g. a broken hand).

Currently, the CUADS has 217 students on its database. The enrolment of blind and deaf students has doubled for 2017.

Special arrangements made for students include:

- Amanuensis for some students during tests/exams.
- Application for extra time during tests/exams according to a student's specific impairment. (This is done via a formal process of testing and interviewing by a panel from Student Counselling and Development.)
 - Upon request, tutors are arranged for students in cooperation with the NATP (existing tutor programme) on campus.

The Centre assists students in gaining access to study courses, buildings on campus, (including lecture venues),

learning material, residences, sporting activities, South African Sign Language interpreter services (for deaf, hard-of-hearing and deafened students), computer facilities (the CUADS computer lab houses the latest assistive technology and software, which include alternative furniture and adapted hardware for physically impaired and blind students), and specialised exam and test venues for alternative test and exam procedures.

4.5 STUDENT LIFE COLLEGES AND COMMUNITIES

The concept student communities assumes that the notion communities provides a context that is most conducive to the learning, development and success of students. This means that Student Life Colleges provide the communal structure for Student Life Programme delivery. Thus, the mere existence of student communities will not necessarily result in student development, but the functioning of each respective community has to be based on a developmental purpose. This means that specific developmental outcomes must be developed in order to enhance the employability of graduates. Furthermore, what is important to optimally develop students is the seamless integration between the social context and the academic context of the student experience, i.e. the in-class and out-of-class experience.

The fostering of communities at the UFS has two distinct foci, namely, nurturing a sense of belonging among all individuals (through Student Life Colleges), and facilitating active student engagement (in Student Life Programmes). This is done through different groups, nested into one another, starting from the smallest group consecutively to the largest entity. These groups are as follows:

- Small groups of ±50 students (e.g. corridors in residences; small associations; interest groups);
- Middle-sized groups of ±150-250 students (e.g. residence communities; larger associations);
- Large groups of >1000 students (Student Life Colleges; Bloemfontein Campus x 5; Qwaqwa Campus x 3; South Campus x 1); and
- Macro groups (the Kovie community).

It is important to note that all members of the university community (not only students) could function as active members of these communities. It is important to keep in mind that student communities can function as either an extension of the intellectual estate of the institution, or as a disconnected entity that has little developmental impact.



The building of powerful partnerships is therefore considered an important strategic goal. In this regard, the following partners have been identified:

- Faculties and academic centres.
- Centre for Teaching and Learning.
- All Student Affairs departments and divisions (e.g. the Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support; Student Counselling and Development; No Student Hungry Programme; etc.).
- Health and Wellness Centre.
- Housing and Residence Affairs.
- Protection Services.
- Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice.
- UFS Law Clinic.
- Human Rights Centre.
- Student governance structures.
- Parents and alumni.

4.6 STUDENT AFFAIRS: QWAQWA CAMPUS

The Director: Student Affairs, Qwaqwa Campus, manages the Student Affairs Department for Student Life, Student Governance and Development, Career Guidance, Student Counselling and Development, Health and Wellness, Orientation and Learning Communities, Volunteers, Rag Community Services, Sports, Arts and Culture. The responsibilities, amongst other things, are general administration, training and development of student leaders, project management, strategy, risk management, budgeting and control, research and marketing, policy development and review, and community engagement. The key responsibilities are weighted differently, and strategy and risk management are considered to be very important.

The office provides strategic support to all Qwaqwa Student Affairs departments:

- The office responds to a full range of student issues and works with SDOs and the student population to ensure that their views are listened and responded to at an appropriate level within the institution.
- It approves student developmental projects.
- It serve as a link between the Office of the Dean of Students, the Campus Vice-Principal and student leadership in general
- It supports and facilitates the planning and coordination of the Gateway Orientation Programme for first-time entering first-year students.
- It ensures the coordination and management of SRC programmes and activities, and approves sourced technical expertise.

Student Counselling and Development:

Student Counselling and Development (SCD) focuses on helping students overcome daily life and academic challenges. In addition, we implement preventative mental health projects and initiatives and assist students in developing their full potential. The aim is to provide them with the necessary skills, knowledge, support, and competencies to be successful in their personal lives and occupations.

- Advocacy programmes aimed at the broader student population with regard to mental health projects.
- One-on-one interviews with referred students to provide support, if needed.
- Partnerships with various departments to support healthy living.

Career Office

The everyday responsibilities of the Career Development Officer include consultations on CV writing skills and mock interviews. Students can make an appointment with the Career Development Office to set up a mock interview. It is the responsibility of the officer to do research on the potential employer and make the interview as realistic as possible. We also assist with motivational letters for bursary applications and the accompanying CVs.



Services and programmes

- Equip students for the world of work through various interventions.
- Assist students with CV and cover letter writing.
- Equip students with negotiations and networking techniques.
- Help students with interview skills.
- Support students with their career development path.

The Clinic

The Campus Clinic Service offers a comprehensive outpatient health service. Dedicated medical practitioners and professional nurses assist students with health issues and life choices while they (the students) are pursuing their academic goals. Students are encouraged to seek assistance and guidance as early as possible.

- Prescribe and administer medication to students.
- Emphasise the importance of good nutrition for good health.
- Liaise with the broader community with regard to all health-related matters.
- Provide sexual and reproductive education to students.
- Infection control.

HIV/AIDS

The HIV/AIDS units promote healthy living among students living with the virus. They do this through various campaigns, e.g. HTC campaigns, condom issuing, STI awareness campaigns and the provision of information on HIV/AIDS.

- Liaise with various stakeholders internally, and creating awareness about HIV/AIDS externally.
- Advocacy programmes focused on voluntary testing, abstinence and usage of condoms.
- Provide support to students living with the virus.

Social work

The office provides support to vulnerable students and is responsible for assessing students referred to the office for means testing and gathering information about students' socioeconomic conditions. Based on assessment findings, the office makes recommendations on funding allocations and academic inclusions in cases where students failed to meet requirements as a direct result of distress caused by various factors. It also fights drug abuse and related problems.

Services rendered:

- The office provides support to hungry students.
- It makes assessments and recommendations for bursary allocations and academic inclusion for needy students.
- It refers vulnerable students for counselling and clinic assistance.
- It collaborates with external stakeholders to enhance service provision to students

Student Life

Based on the premise that university residences are home away from home, we strive to create a happy, productive and secure environment for students.

Students are encouraged to participate in various activities to bring vibrancy, social cohesion and a sense of belonging to their lives.

Programmes:

- Mandela Day community outreach project to create responsible citizens.
- Residence leagues and annual social sports day.
- Talk and dialogue shows to promote involvement of student population.
- Learning projects to provide support to first-year students.
- Green campaigns to minimise the carbon footprint.
- First-aid training to provide life skills to student leaders.

Sport

Generally speaking, sport brings people together and promotes social cohesion. University sport contributes to the national sports agenda and as such plays a very important role in nation building. The Qwaqwa Campus offers a range of sporting codes: football, netball, volleyball, cricket, basketball and chess.

Programmes to promote sport:

- Intervarsity and intraleagues.
- League fixtures to sustain student participation
- Coaching clinics to enhance the quality of sport.
- Recreational sport to promote inclusivity and participation.
- Sports awards to recognise excellence.



5. CONTEXTUALISING THE STRATEGY



This strategy seeks to reimagine the role, aims and objectives of Student Affairs at the University of the Free State (UFS). The UFS Strategic Plan 2015–2020 foreword remarks that ... the academic project, the human project and the support services foundation, as the axes for the UFS's development and institutional definition, constitute the strong basis shaping and supporting the new strategy for the period 2015–2020.

So, the Student Affairs Humanising Strategy 2022 (hereafter HS 2022) builds on the spirit and letter of the UFS Strategy 2015–2020. The UFS Strategy 2015–2020 identifies three key pillars upon which it rests. These three pillars are: the Academic Project, the Human Project and Support Services. HS 2022 recognises that though in theory it is possible to separate these three pillars, in praxis, however, it is not only difficult but also not desirable. It is for this reason that HS 2022 seeks to reimagine the role, aims and objectives of Student Affairs at the UFS. The intersectionality framework has been chosen to articulate and address the complexities created by perceiving these projects as separate, both in theory and praxis. In reality, there is no way to separate the academic project and the human project. The danger of not understanding this fact is that Student Affairs, for example, could be required to contribute to the academic project (as it should), without doing the same for the human project. This would reinforce one project at the cost of the other. As a result, students' lived experiences will be inconsistent. HS 2022 argues that academics should be involved in the human project and service excellence, over and above the academic project. Only then, in our view, will the holistic development of students be possible and students' lived experiences bear fruit.

Student Affairs' contribution the UFS will, firstly, be through the co-curricular programmes and activities (Academic Project). These programmes and activities will be presented through the College of Student Affairs. Secondly, it will add value through the two pedagogies (i.e. humanising pedagogy and the pedagogy of discomfort). These pedagogies will advance the aspirations of the Human Project. Lastly, it will contribute through the intersectionality framework. The intersectionality framework recognises the intersectionality of lived experiences. Because people do not live single lives, we cannot use single strategies to address multiple issues. This rings true for students. For example, you may encounter a black student who is classified as female, but is actually transgender; who may also have a disability or multiple disabilities; who is poor and yet excels academically. In this example, the intersectionality framework allows us to address the multiple identities the student embodies. For us to succeed, our systems, structures and processes should be positioned optimally. The Student Services Council (SSC), for example, could be one structure, which operates within an intersectional framework. The SSC will accordingly be better positioned to monitor, evaluate and strengthen the intersectionality of the academic project and human project over and above the support services. The DSA will review and assess the existing structures for their compatibility with the intersectionality framework.



6. STUDENT AFFAIRS KEY STRATEGIC AREAS

The SOAR model was used to do an environmental analysis (refer to Appendix 8.2). “Like the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) 4-D model, the planning start with an inquiry, using unconditional positive questions to discover the organisation’s core values, vision, strengths, and potential opportunities. The inquiry is a time of reflection into the strengths of the past and how these have been constructed with an eye towards creating the change we may desire (i.e step 1 and 2). Next, the participants enter the imagination phase, in which time is spent dreaming and co-constructing the preferred future. At this transformation point, values are affirmed and long-term objectives and strategic alternatives and recommendations are presented in this phase. The next phase is a time of innovation to begin the strategic design of objectives, tactical and functional plans, integrated programmes, structures, and systems to best achieve the desired future. To ensure that measurable results are achieved, the AI approach and SOAR framework recognize that [we] must be inspired through authentic recognition and rewards systems. In short, the processes of assessment, planning, implementation, and control is replaced with the concepts of ‘inquire’, ‘imagine’, innovate’, and ‘inspire’ ” (Stavros, Cooperrider & Kelly, 2003).

The environmental analysis assisted Student Affairs in identifying its key strategic areas as follows:

6.1 KSA #1: Professionalisation

We deeply care about the professionalisation of Student Affairs. In this we aspire to prioritise research in order to ensure that our praxis remains data-driven. We passionately want to develop Student Affairs staff in such a way that they remain relevant to the developmental needs of students and exhibit a competitive edge within the higher education sector.

We recognise that the continuous professional development of staff in key competency areas presents itself as a definite opportunity to professionalise Student Affairs at the UFS even further. The opportunity to build a strong partnership with Human Resources and to establish a system of recognition for the professional achievements of staff is therefore important. The reimagining of roles and responsibilities in order to create a more effective structure is also seen as an important prospect to pursue.

In all of this, we wish to build on our current strengths and successes. Past experiences with the Odyssey and Tipping points programmes have created a firm foundation for the professionalisation of Student Affairs at the UFS. Furthermore, the existing culture of ownership and accountability and our willingness to be proactive are considered huge assets in the current environment.

The way in which the current Student Affairs research desk functions also helps to strengthen the professionalisation of Student Affairs at the UFS.

Goal statements:

1. Enhance research outputs.
2. Increase the visibility of Student Affairs as a profession.
3. Reorganise Student Affairs to optimally utilise staff members.
4. Foster the continuous professional development of staff.

6.2 KSA #2: High-Impact Practices

We deeply care about the employability of our graduates, and we are therefore passionate about developing graduate attributes through co-curricular programmes and high-impact practices. In this regard, the various student communities are seen as sites that provide access to the co-curriculum. Because we want our students to develop as global leaders in their fields, it is vital that co-curricular programmes and activities become internationally recognised. This makes the seamless integration of the in-class and out-of-class experiences of students an important aspiration; something which points towards the academic reconfiguration of Student Life Colleges.

A distinct opportunity therefore exists to create an academic development committee for Student Affairs. Furthermore, the reconfiguration of existing programmes and activities in order to purposefully align it with specific developmental outcomes is therefore considered an import strategic opportunity. Additionally, the fostering of internal and external partnerships, as well as the professional development of personnel in this regard, is also an important strategic prospect to pursue.

There are a number of strengths related to current programmes and activities that can help to effectively develop graduate attributes through co-curricular programmes and high-impact practices. The current systems encourage active student participation. Although over-involvement can become counterproductive, active engagement currently forms a strong basis to work from. Also, the current way in which programmes and activities are assessed and evaluated forms a good foundation for future research. In this regard, an opportunity exists to relate data more effectively to the theory of student development, and to produce applicable research outputs. The involvement of students in annual planning and feedback conversations on co-curricular programmes creates a culture in which students become actively engaged in co-curricular programmes and subsequently receive proper recognition; something that is important to create student buy-in. The development of leadership is considered a particular strength of current co-curricular programmes.

Goal statements:

1. Establish outcome-based co-curricular programmes.
2. Enhance access and participation.
3. Enhance quality through monitoring and evaluation.
4. Establish a system that is responsive to the environment.

6.3 KSA #3: Student Communities and Structures (enabling environment, conducive communities)

We deeply care about creating inclusive student communities that embrace students in their diversity, and we provide opportunities for all to access developmental co-curricular programmes and activities. The wellness of all students, whether on-campus or off-campus, is important to us, and through active involvement in student communities, all students will have the opportunity to develop individually and collectively.

We acknowledge that these aspirations cannot be achieved in isolation, and we therefore aim to closely collaborate with strategic partners, internally and externally. Furthermore, we see the development of personnel and student competencies as an opportunity to establish the kind of environment we aspire to. We also recognise the growth of commuter student engagement in student communities as a particular opportunity to pursue. Social media and other forms of communication could also be used to achieve our goals.

In all of this, we wish to build on our current strengths and successes. The diversity of our student communities and the sense of belonging that has been created (through the consecutive nesting of smaller systems into larger systems) are seen as particular strengths. The establishing of a conversational culture (and the way in which it has helped to address stereotypical thinking) has laid a firm foundation for future discussions and the continuous transformation of student communities. The value-driven approach provides strength and direction to students and the way in which residences share resources with one another builds strong student communities. Also, the encouragement of student engagement in programmes and activities enhances individual and collective development. The current peer mentor programme, with its mediated learning approach, is also considered a tremendous asset to student communities.

Goal statements:

1. Increase participation of non-participating students.
2. Expand and increase student communities, utilising the existing Student Life Colleges at all three campuses.
3. Establish and strengthen student structures.
4. Establish a responsive environment.
5. Advocate an inclusive institutional culture.

6.4 KSA #4: Intersectionality, Partnerships and Collaboration (3 campuses, internal and external)

We deeply care about creating intersections between different programmes, departments, groups and campuses. We recognise that growth and development happens at the place of discomfort and therefore aspire to create a disequilibrium through interconnections.

In this regard, we consider the fostering of partnerships and collaborations within Student Affairs, the university and the wider community as a distinct opportunity to establish this ethos in the whole environment.

The currently intersectional framework, the pedagogy of discomfort and the humanising pedagogy form a firm foundation for creating this kind of environment.

Goal statements:

1. Create intersections between programmes, departments and campuses.
2. Foster powerful partnerships within the university and beyond.

6.5 KSA#5: Transformation: Social Justice-Social Cohesion-Critical Diversity

We deeply care about and commit ourselves to creating a campus climate that is socially just. We recognise that this can be achieved through our understanding of the value of diversity and through our collective efforts to interrupt and eradicate all forms of unearned power and privilege, internalised oppression, internalised domination and discrimination. Through the pursuit of these two constitutive elements (social justice and critical diversity), we aspire towards creating a socially cohesive student body, student life and UFS community. The ideal is that the last-mentioned community should use its power and privileged positionalities to ensure humanising lived experiences for those who are different from them (i.e. socially, economically, politically, religiously, disability-wise, sexual orientation, class, place of origin, culture, language, etc.).

Identified opportunities

We will work with various institutional governance structures of the university (SRC, Institutional Forum, Senate and Council), university management, faculties and departments. This we intend to do through the Integrated Transformation Plan (ITP).

In this regard, we consider the fostering of partnerships and collaborations within Student Affairs, the university and the wider community as a distinct opportunity to establish the ethos as set out in this document in the whole environment.

The currently intersectional framework, the pedagogy of discomfort and the humanising pedagogy form a firm foundation for transformation. The ITP will facilitate the creation of socially just humanising lived experiences for members of the university

community. It is important that these members should be critical about their positionalities of power and privilege and that they intentionally work towards ensuring social justice and social cohesion.

Goal statements:

1. Create co-curricular programmes that critically address themes such as social justice, critical diversity, transformation, citizenship, human rights, democracy, intersectionality, pedagogy of discomfort, humanising pedagogy and social cohesion.
2. Foster powerful partnerships with faculties, departments, the higher education sector, the DHET and international institutions.

7. IMPLEMENTATION

During implementation of the HS 2017-2022, we will evaluate and monitor our delivery in key strategic areas. We will also determine whether our programmes are aligned to the needs of the students we serve (Appendix 8.1) while sharply focusing on human capital. The intention is to provide a working environment conducive to job satisfaction, skills development and the implementation of the HS2017-2022 (also refer to Appendix 7.2 for skills identified). The Department will continue to integrate the activities and operations of various programmes in order to improve service levels and maximise limited resources. Student Affairs will also use its partnerships as a means to implement its strategies wherever they can make a positive difference.



8. APPENDIXES

8.1. Operational Plan Template

KSA#1: Professionalisation of Student Affairs

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	MEASURING INSTRUMENT	QUARTERLY REPORTING			
			JAN-MARCH	APRIL-JUNE	JULY-SEPT	OCT-DEC
1. Enhance research outputs	Quantifiable research output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Published articles by each division - Presentatioån at conference 				
	Establish a database of research conducted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings held - Database established - Report, including findings and proposals for research to be conducted. 				
2. Increase the visibility of Student Affairs as a profession	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Establish Student Affairs project team - Student Affairs branding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project team established - Streamlined Student Affairs and divisions - Student Affairs Week - Open Day - Website 				
	Centralised facilities	Space identified				
3. Reorganise Student Affairs towards optimal staff utilisation	Skills identification	Database of skills established, including learning activities.				
	Allocate skills where needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussions with Human Resources regarding budget and spaces. 				
4. Foster the continuous professional development of staff	Revive Odyssey and Tipping points for staff to interact in safe space	4 tipping points annually				
	Communicate skills needed within Student Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop needed competencies through the professional development of personnel - Human Resources informed of skills needed - Establish skills database for Student Affairs 				
	Recognise staff and students	Establish a system of recognition 1 annual prestige event				
	Alignment with CAS standards	Revision of CAS standards and alignment by Student Affairs divisions				

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	MEASURING INSTRUMENT	QUARTERLY REPORTING			
			JAN-MARCH	APRIL-JUNE	JULY-SEPT	OCT-DEC
1. Establish outcome-based co-curricular programmes	Set co-curriculum with clearly defined outcomes and partnerships in place for student development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Database of learning activities - Develop content continuously 				
	Constructively align all co-curricular programmes and activities in student communities with developmental outcomes (i.e. graduate attributes) and assessment criteria.	Co-curricular programmes and activities aligned with developmental outcomes and assessment criteria.				
	Align co-curricular programmes and activities with international standards for high-impact practices.	Co-curricular programmes and activities aligned with international standards for high-impact practices.				
	Establish powerful partnerships, internally and externally.	Partnerships established				
	Engage student leaders annually in a cycle of conversations to ensure that programme planning, monitoring and reporting are purposeful and aligned with co-curricular goals.	Student leaders engaged				
2. Enhance access and participation	Enhance access to co-curricular programmes, with specific focus on off-campus students. Capture student participation in co-curriculum programme to provide E-portfolio for student upon graduation.	Identify off-campus sites for programme delivery on a continuous basis Report on statistics of programme attendance for on- and off-campus students.				

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	MEASURING INSTRUMENT	QUARTERLY REPORTING			
			JAN-MARCH	APRIL-JUNE	JULY-SEPT	OCT-DEC
3. Enhance quality by monitoring and evaluation	Develop a standard framework for developing, monitoring and evaluating of programmes and activities in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Monitoring and evaluation reporting - Research and literature reporting - Developed templates for reporting 				
		Annual report on implementation of standardised framework.				
4. Establish a system responsive to the environment	Establish a responsive system based on code of ethics and value-driven culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developed standardised format for use as an early warning system to identify academic risks - Staff trained in skills needed to respond to environment (de-escalation, mediation, difficult dialogues) 				

KSA#3: Student Communities and Structures

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	MEASURING INSTRUMENT	QUARTERLY REPORTING			
			JAN-MARCH	APRIL-JUNE	JULY-SEPT	OCT-DEC
1. Increase participation of non-participating students	Identify existing student communities not associated with SA or college models.	List of student communities & contact details				
	Have first contact session & negotiations to open conversations and ultimately establish memorandum of understanding	Signed MOU Number of students represented				
	Create terms of negotiation document	Terms of negotiation document compiled				
	Identify place within college structure	Signed MOU & number of students represented				
2. Expand and increase student communities and establish and strengthen student structures	Identify existing OTHER student communities not associated with S/A or college models	List of student communities				

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	MEASURING INSTRUMENT	QUARTERLY REPORTING			
			JAN-MARCH	APRIL-JUNE	JULY-SEPT	OCT-DEC
	S/A lists all existing community pockets, excluding resident communities (all associations, political, faculty, religious, etc.)	List established				
	Activate and define possible engagement of S/A programmes with associations	Possible engagements identified				
	S/A increased total no. of students part of an association.	Total no. of students represented				
3. Responsive environment	Revise Student Crisis Protocol to include de-escalation, mediation, difficult dialogues and academic risks, taking into account specific needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revised Student Crisis Protocol and communicated to all stakeholders. - Standardised format for identifying specific needs 				
4. Advocate inclusive institutional culture	Promotion of social justice, human rights and humanising lived experience.					

KSA#4: Intersectionality, partnerships and collaboration

GOAL	OBJECTIVES	MEASURING INSTRUMENT	QUARTERLY REPORTING			
			JAN-MARCH	APRIL-JUNE	JULY-SEPT	OCT-DEC
1. Create intersects between programmes, departments and campuses	Each division shares at least 3 collaborative ventures with others.	Reports Evaluation Performance plan				
	Each campus has at least 2 collaboration programmes / ventures	Reports Evaluation Performance plan				
2. Foster powerful partnerships within the university and beyond	Each division has at least one collaboration with external stakeholders (local, national and international)	Memorandum of understanding Feedback, paper trail Evaluation of performance as evidence Benchmarking report				

SOAR
Strengths - Opportunities - Aspirations - Results

STRENGTHS	ASPIRATIONS	OPPORTUNITIES	RESULTS
<p>Diversity No student hungry, food banks Universal access, CUADS Proactive Academic criteria for elected positions Research desk Open door policy Human project Odyssey and Tipping points Integrated excellence awards SRC swearing in and handover ceremonies Colleges Student engagement Rag procession goes into communities Global leadership summit TedEX Adaptable and flexible Dean's Office: One-stop shop Ownership: Culture of accountability Qwaqwa FY's Amazing Race Campus orientation</p> <p>ASSETS, CAPABILITIES, ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO BUILD UPON</p> <p>Proximity and access: Enclosed campus Knowledge and experience of staff CUADS, SASL, ULFE (integrated) Buildings and facilities ICT support, online engagement On- and off-campus accommodation Positionality as Student Affairs Collaborations and partnerships Forum engaging off-campus landlords Support from community National and international partnership and collaborations Vibrant student life Living and learning spaces Brand 3 campuses Budget Support from senior management Expertise for academic output Rich data</p>	<p>Holistic development and holistic perspective Psychological and emotional wellbeing Safety and security Developing life skills Creating and channeling students towards opportunities Enabling students/staff to obtain a competitive edge Professionalising of student affairs Research and staying relevant Passionate about the success of students Diversity and inclusivity Building trust relationships in our environment Creating a vibrant student life on our campus Greening our campus Early warning system Student development: Mentoring, Access for all, Citizenship Leadership development: value- and ethics-driven Faculty Collaboration Social justice Supporting students CAS</p> 	<p>Various forms of dialogues Creating more opportunities for access (online, commuter students) Fundraising and resources, funding strategies Partnerships with faculties and other departments Alumni Training Research Staff development in different forms of delivery Staff recognition Partnership with HR Recognition and reward of high-impact projects Safety Align S/A programmes with student governance structure Reimagine responsibilities, functions and structure Accreditation of programmes Central Service Points Universal access, clear referrals Professionalisation of student affairs Campus CATS Organising off-campus students in communities Facilitating difficult dialogues</p> <p>IDENTIFIED SKILLS NEEDED:</p> <p>Networking, monitoring and evaluation Research design, method and writing Facilitation of dialogues Leadership skills Conflict resolution Listening and communication Planning and organisation Technology, fundraising De-escalation and mediation Critical thinking, reflective skills Negotiation, including roles and responsibilities Student development knowledge</p>	<p>GOALS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase participation of current students not participating 2. Student communities as structures: Increase, expand 3. Outcome-based co-curriculum programmes 4. Visibility of Student Affairs: Branding, centralised facilities 5. Quantifiable research output 6. Professionalisation: Staff development, Certified, Critical skills 7. Monitoring and evaluation system: Annual review of programs, SOP template 8. Collaboration: Streamline within S/A 9. Restructuring: HR, Budget, Spaces 10. System responsive to environment: De-escalation, mediation, difficult dialogues, academic risk, code of ethics, value-driven culture Project teams Skills: Qualification audit 11. Advocate for an inclusive institutional culture based on social justice and human rights

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