

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE  
VRYSTAAT  
YUNIVESITHI YA  
FREISTATA



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## GATEWAY 2019 REPORT

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SOUTH CAMPUS

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## Executive Summary

The 2019 Gateway Orientation sessions presented to the students on the South Campus of the University of the Free State was, by and large, successful. Session aspects that respondents were asked to evaluate included session content, session impact, session relevance, session engagement, session logistics, the sense of community brought about by the sessions, and the developmental impact of the sessions. The analysis showed that most students rated all aspects measured favourably, although some aspects did receive higher ratings than others. An especially high proportion of students indicated that they will make use of the services and resources made available to them, that they developed the ability to succeed, that the sessions made them feel welcomed and integrated into the university culture, and that the staff members were friendly and helpful during the sessions. In addition, the vast majority of students were satisfied to some extent with the developmental impact of the sessions. The only aspects that received somewhat lower ratings, albeit was still rated positively by the majority of students, were whether the sessions satisfied students' expectations and were held at a suitable time to attend.

Comparing the experiences of students living on- and off-campus revealed very similar ratings between on- and off-campus students, with both groups being satisfied with all aspects measured. That said, on-campus students were generally slightly more positive regarding most of the aspects measured, although off-campus students tended to engage with new peers during the sessions more frequently. Furthermore, a comparison between the experiences of students from different faculties showed little differences between the faculties, with the majority of students in all faculties assigning positive ratings to all aspects measured. That said, students from the Faculties of Education and Natural and Agricultural Sciences were in general slightly more satisfied than students from the other faculties, while students from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences were overall somewhat less satisfied compared to students from all other faculties.

## Introduction

This report aims to evaluate the 2019 Gateway Orientation sessions presented to the students on the South Campus of the University of the Free State (UFS). The Gateway sessions form part of the broader orientation programme for first-year students at the UFS, which also includes all the RAG activities and the Faculty Orientations.

Differently from how it was done on the Bloemfontein campus, where students assessed each session separately, students on the South Campus were asked to evaluate all sessions simultaneously via a paper-and-pencil survey at the end of the day on which the sessions were presented. Students were asked to rate the following aspects related to the sessions:

- **Session Content:** Students were asked about the importance, usefulness, and relevance of the content, whether the content was clear and easy to understand, and whether the content kept them engaged and interested in the topic.
- **Session Impact:** Students were asked whether their expectations of each session were satisfied, whether they will make use of the services/resources that they have been made aware of, whether the sessions inspired them to participate and get involved in the activities presented, whether the sessions developed their ability to be more successful in their studies, and whether the sessions were a good use of their time.
- **Session Relevance:** Students were asked whether the sessions were relevant to prepare them for their studies at the UFS and whether the sessions stayed focused and relevant to the topic of discussion.
- **Session Engagement:** Students were asked whether the questions regarding the subject were satisfactorily answered during the sessions and whether the sessions were interactive and interesting.
- **Sense of Community:** Students were asked whether they engaged with new peers during the sessions and whether the sessions made them feel welcomed and assisted with their integration into the university culture.
- **Session Logistics:** Students were asked whether the sessions were at a suitable time for them to attend, whether the Gateway staff members were present, friendly, and helpful during the sessions, and whether they were informed in time about the sessions in order to attend.
- **Developmental Impact:** Students were asked to rate their experience of the developmental impact of the sessions.

## Overview of Sessions

A total of 768 students on the South Campus completed evaluation forms after the Gateway sessions. This section details their responses. A profile of students who attended the sessions and completed the evaluation forms are first provided, followed by an overview of their overall satisfaction with the sessions<sup>1</sup>.

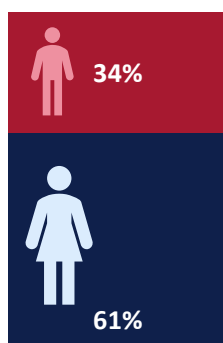
### Participant Profile

This section details the profile of the respondents.

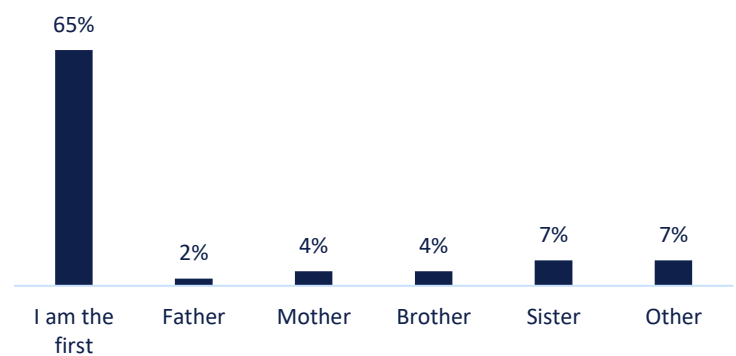
#### *Biographical profile*

The majority of participants in the 2019 Gateway Programme on the South Campus were black African (81%) and female (61%). Approximately two-thirds of the respondents were first-generation students, with only a quarter indicating that they have family members who had previously graduated from a university.

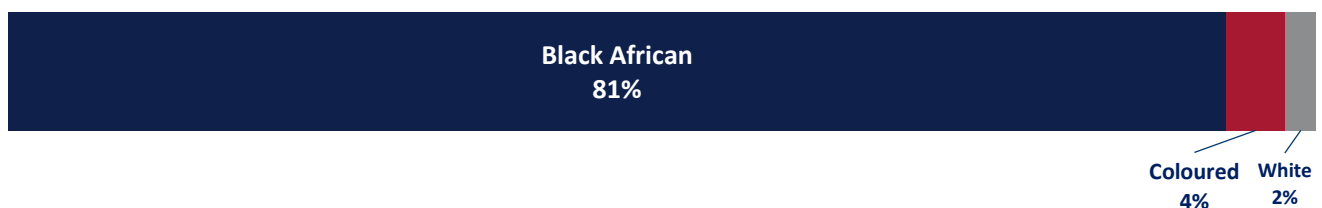
Gender Distribution



First-generation Students Proportion



Race Distribution

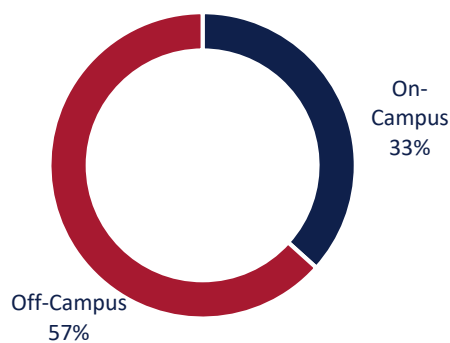


<sup>1</sup> Due to missing data, percentages in some graphs do not add up to 100%.

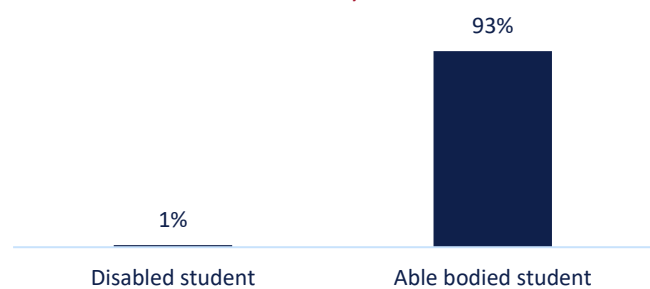
### *Residential status, students with a disability, and year of first registration*

The majority of participants on the South Campus who completed evaluation forms for the Gateway sessions lived off-campus (57%), while a third lived on-campus. Only six of the participating students indicated that they have a disability, while the vast majority (93%) were not disabled. Eight out of 10 students registered for the first time in 2019.

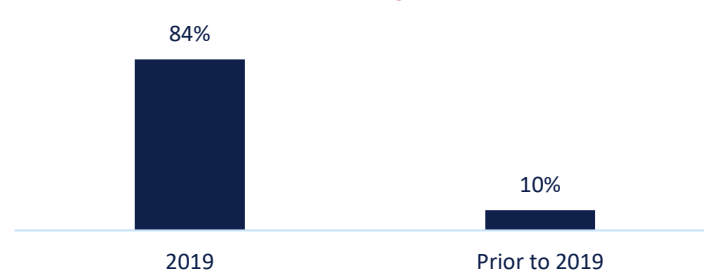
Residence Distribution



Student Disability Distribution



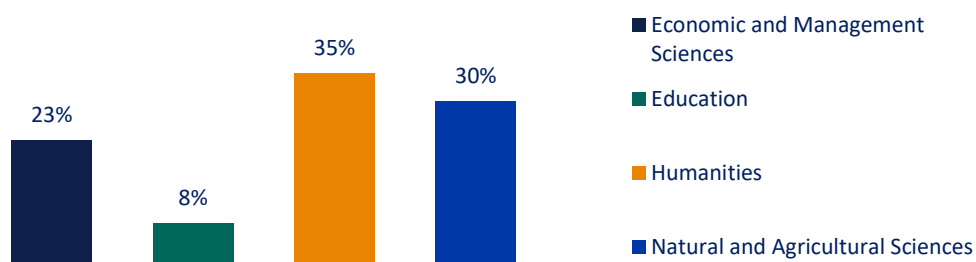
Year of First Registration



### *Student distribution among faculties*

The distribution of students participating in the Gateway sessions by faculty indicated that the majority of participants were from the Faculty of Humanities (35%), followed by the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (30%), and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (23%). There were no students from the Faculty of Theology and only one student from the Faculty of Law.

Faculty Distribution

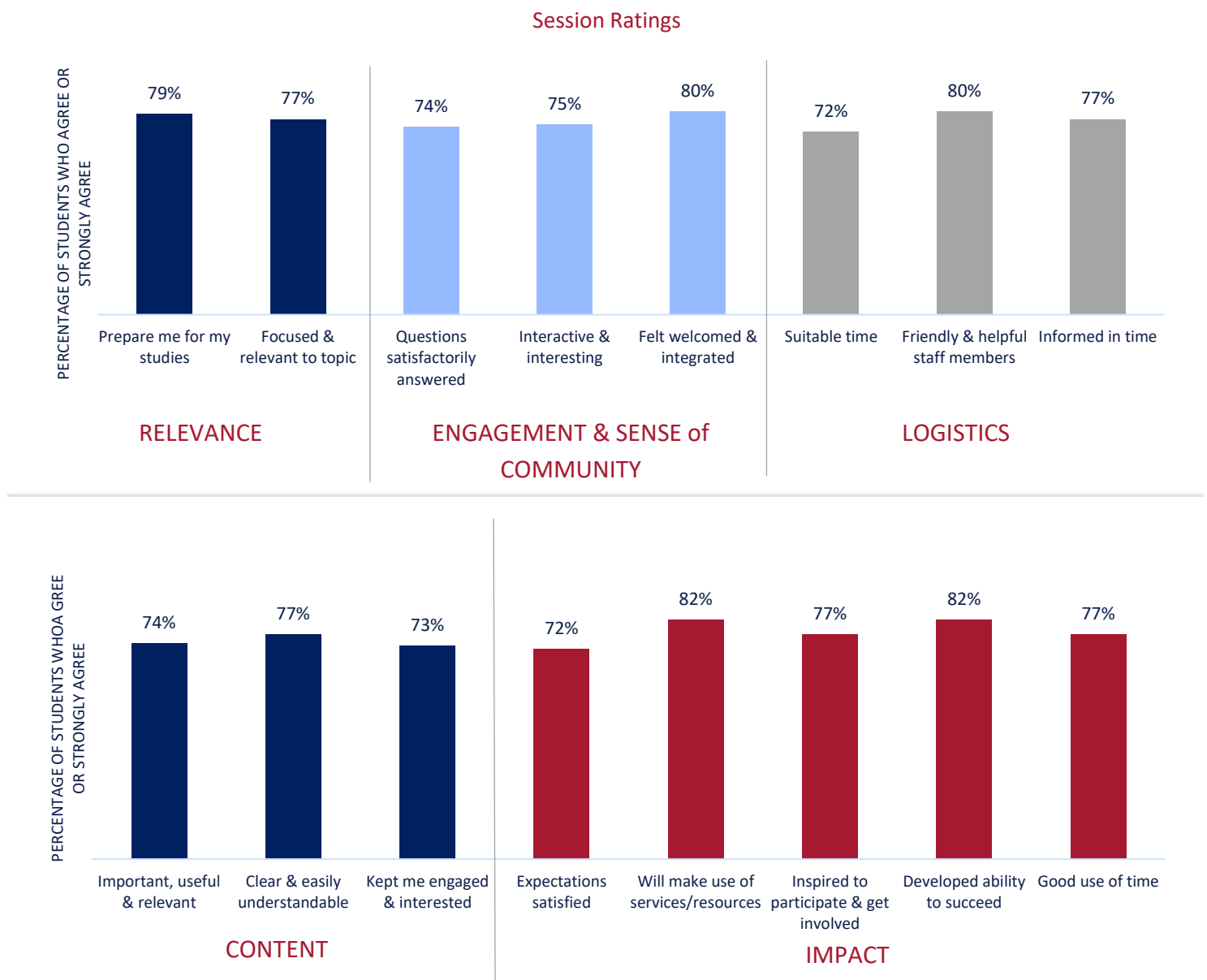


## Session Feedback

This section examines the experiences of the respondents for all the sessions combined<sup>2</sup>.

### *Ratings and satisfaction*

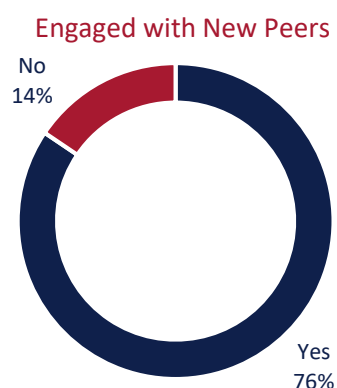
The responses of the students to each specific question are detailed in the graphs below. Looking at the graphs overall, it can be seen that the students were positive about the sessions, with a clear majority assigning positive ratings to all aspects measured (responding agree or strongly agree to the questions).



<sup>2</sup> Since the sessions were only evaluated in aggregate form, it was not possible to report on the students' experience of the individual sessions.

When the graphs are considered in more detail, the following trends are noted:

- **More than two-thirds of students assigned positive ratings** to all aspects related to **session relevance, session engagement and sense of community and session logistics**, with an especially high proportion indicating that **the staff members were friendly and helpful (80%)** and that the sessions helped them to **feel welcomed and integrated into the university culture (80%)**. In line with this finding, a high proportion of students indicated that **they engaged with new peers during the Gateway sessions (76%)** (pie-chart to the right).
- All aspects related to **session content and impact were also rated positively** by the students, with at least seven out of ten students assigning positive ratings to each aspect measured. An especially high proportion of students indicated that they would **make use of the services and resources that they were made aware of during the sessions (82%)** and that the sessions helped **develop their abilities to succeed in their studies at the UFS (82%)**.



In addition to the above, from the graph below, it can be seen that students were also satisfied with the developmental impact of the sessions, with approximately eight out of ten students indicating that they were either satisfied or highly satisfied with their experience in this regard.

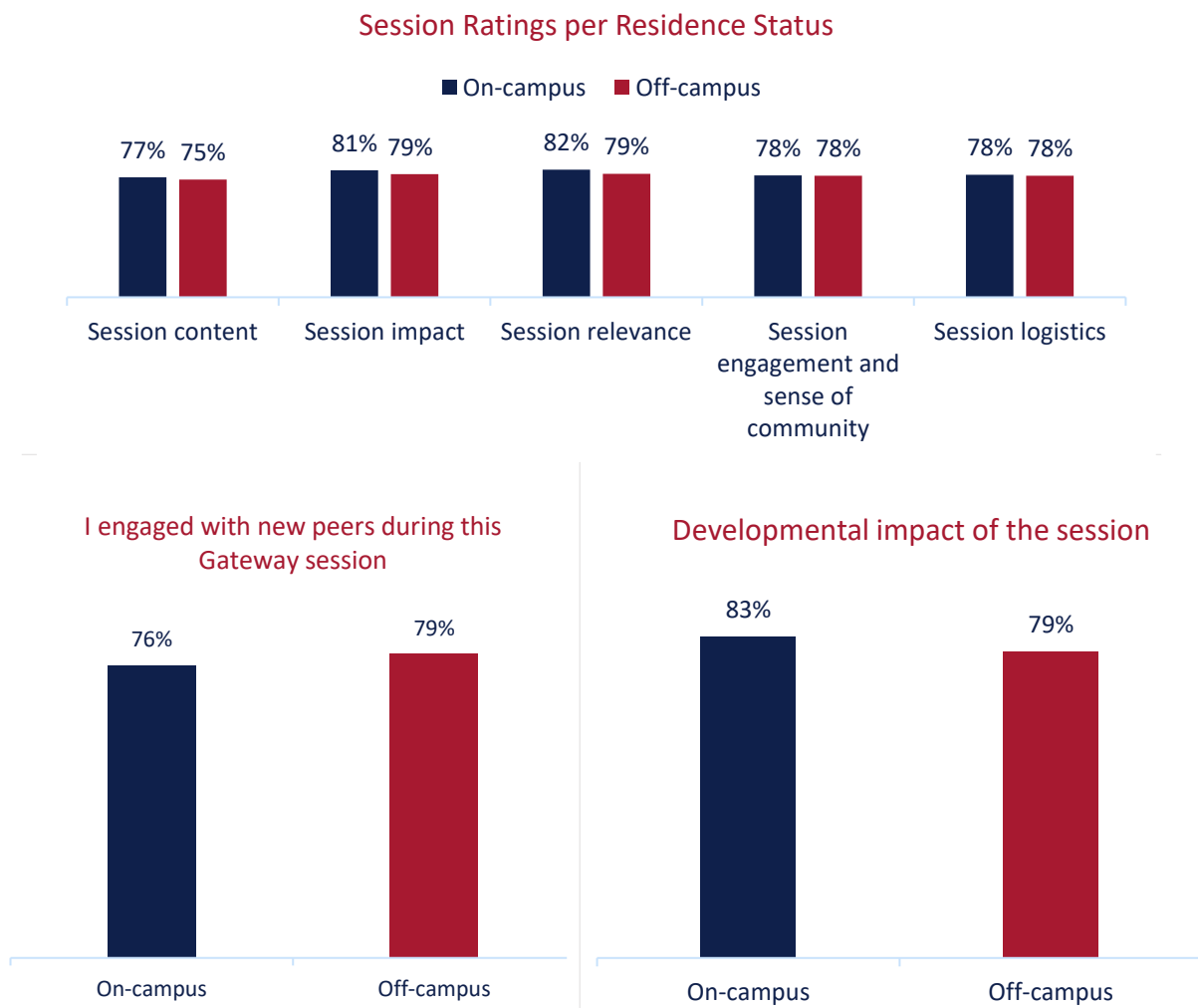
#### Satisfaction with Developmental Impact



■ Highly Satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Neutral ■ Highly Dissatisfied

### *Ratings and satisfaction according to residence status*

There was little difference in the ratings when the data was split according to residence status, with both on- and off-campus students assigning positive ratings to all aspects measured. On-campus students were, however, slightly more positive regarding session content, session impact, session relevance, and the developmental impact of the sessions, whereas off-campus students more frequently engaged with new peers during the sessions.





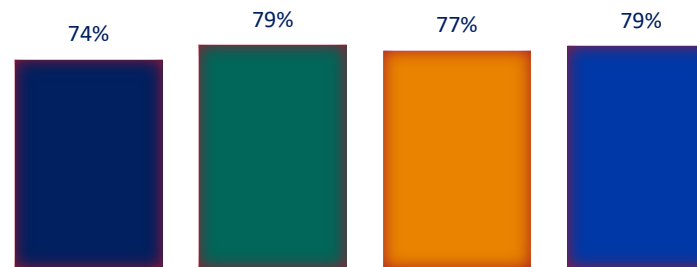
## FACULTY COMPARISON

- On average across all aspects of the sessions, students in the **Faculties of Education and Natural and Agricultural Sciences** were more **positive** than other students, although differences were slight.
- Similar to the overall trend, students in the **Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences** had **higher positive ratings** for session impact and session relevance, with an especially high proportion indicating that they **will make use of the services and resources** that they had been made aware of during the sessions.
- Students in the **Faculty of Education** were most positive with regards to **session engagement and sense of community** as well as **session logistics**, with most students indicating that the sessions helped them to **feel welcomed and integrated into the university culture**, and that the **staff members were friendly and helpful**. In addition, a high proportion of students from **all faculties** indicated that **they engaged with new peers** during the Gateway sessions.
- At least three-quarters of students in all faculties indicated that they were **satisfied with the developmental impact of the sessions**, with students from the **Faculty of Education** being the **most satisfied**.



*Note: The Faculties of Theology and Law were excluded from this comparative analysis as too few students evaluated this session*

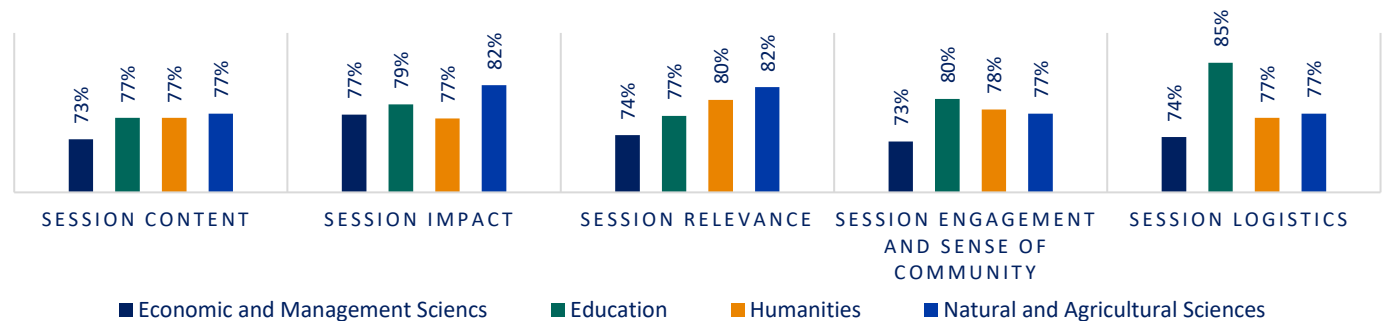
### OVERALL POSITIVITY IN EACH FACULTY



### DEVELOPMENTAL IMPACT OF THE SESSIONS PER FACULTY



### AVERAGE POSITIVE RATING IN EACH FACULTY



## Conclusion

In conclusion, the 2019 Gateway Orientation sessions presented to the students on the South Campus of the University of the Free State, were, by and large, received well and can be deemed to have been successfully implemented. The majority of the students were positive about the relevance of the sessions, the impact, the logistics, the content, and the sense of community that the sessions brought about. In addition, the majority of the students were satisfied to some extent with the developmental impact of the sessions. Furthermore, comparing the experiences of on- and off-campus students showed that on-campus students were slightly more positive about most of the aspects measured. Off-campus students did, however, more frequently engage with new peers during the sessions than on-campus students did. A faculty comparison was also done and indicated that students from the Faculties of Education and Natural and Agricultural Sciences were more positive than students from the other faculties regarding the Gateway Orientation sessions, although differences between the faculties were slight.