



**SASSE**

*South African Survey of Student Engagement*

# **Impact of student engagement at the UFS**

**CHE COLLOQUIUM: IMPROVING  
UNDERGRADUATE SUCCESS**

**May 2009**



Studente Ontwikkeling en Sukses • Student Development and Success

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

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# Overview

- UFS institutional context
- Developing the SASSE
- Impact of a student engagement focus
- Impact of sharing student engagement data
- Initiatives to improve student engagement





# **UFS institutional context**

The UFS is...

- a university established more than 100 years ago (in 1904);
- the largest provider of HE in the central region of the country
  - (2009: a total of 26 909 students, 2057 international students from 45 countries);
- a multiracial and multicultural university
  - (2009: 57% African, 35% White, 6% Coloured and 2% Asian students coming from a variety of cultural backgrounds and representing all eleven official language groups in SA);





# UFS institutional context

The UFS is...

- a parallel-medium instruction institution since 1993
  - (72% students opt for English as medium of instruction and 28% students for Afrikaans as a medium of Instruction)
- a multi-campus university
  - (2009: Bloemfontein Main Campus 24 031 contact students and 1941 distance students, Qwa-Qwa Campus 2948 students)
- Commuter university where only 13% of students are housed on campuses and 87% commute.





# Developing the SASSE

- South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE)
  - developed and piloted for the last 3 years at the UFS
  - Developed in collaboration with the National Survey of Student Engagement Institute
- Items on the measure have been contextualised
- Benchmarks of Effective Educational Practices retained
- Measure is psychometrically stable and reliable
- CHE pilot study:
  - 7 institutions
  - Develop an understanding of student engagement across the higher education sector and institutional types





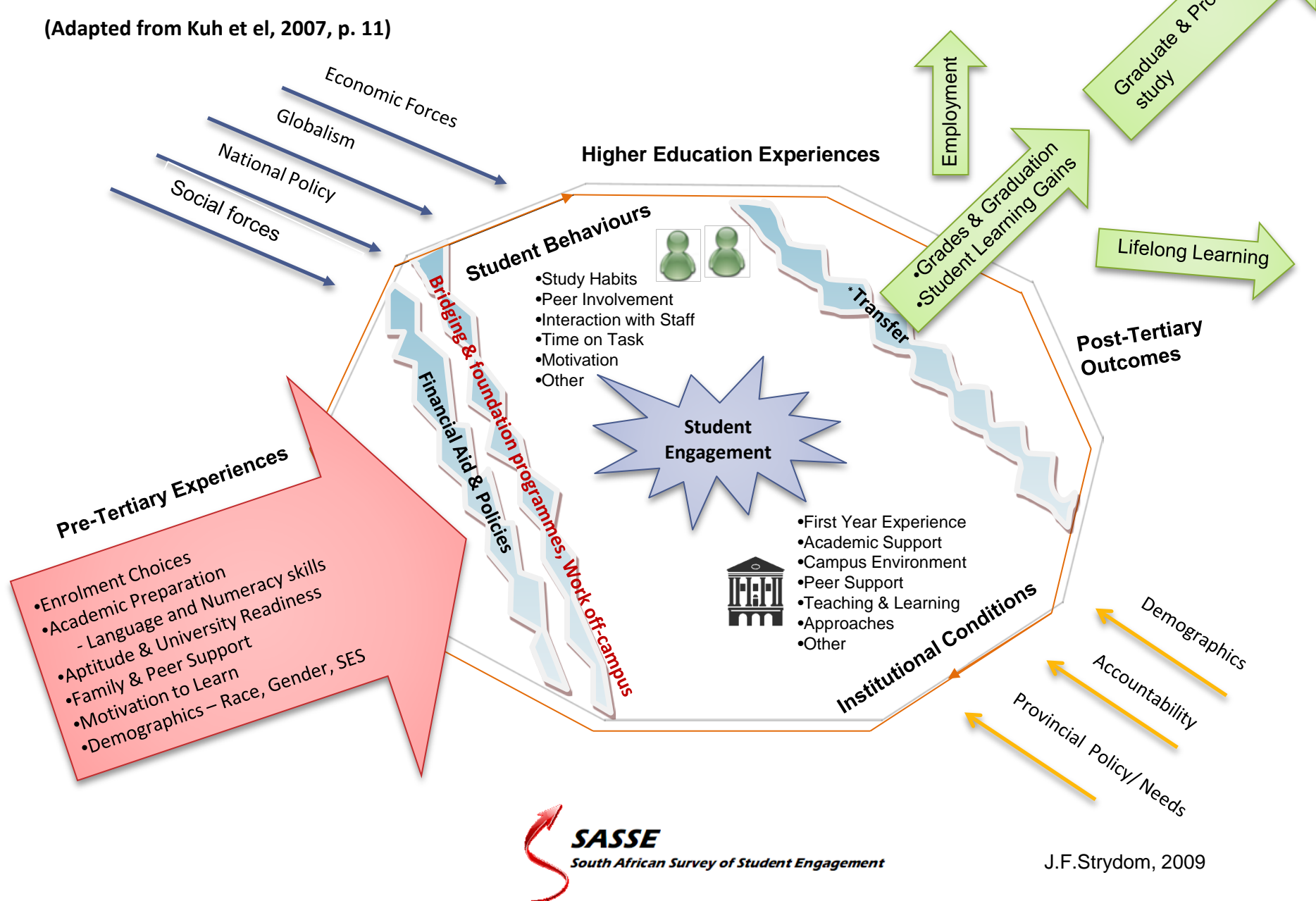
# **Impact of a student engagement focus**

- Helped us to get a better understanding of the success puzzle
- Renewed focus on the good practices
  - Results from the survey have given recognition to existing good practices
  - Emphasised effective educational practices
- Created space for innovation in structures
  - Results have supported the need to review the structure of student life and how it relates to learning and success



# What Matters to Student Success: A student engagement framework

(Adapted from Kuh et al, 2007, p. 11)





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# **Impact of sharing student engagement data**

- Empirical basis for thinking about students
  - A data driven discussion helps to minimise reflections on student life and learning based on anecdotal and individual based experiences
- Engaged discussions
  - Academics pay attention to data and are more engaged in trying to understand the results
- Reflection on programme design
  - Data shared as part of considerations around the nature of undergraduate programmes and how to maximise support and chances for success
- More nuanced understanding of institutional culture
  - Data on experience of different groups in relation to effective educational benchmarks, relationships and satisfaction with their higher education experience provide a nuanced understanding of institutional culture.





# **Initiatives to improve student engagement**

## **Level of Academic challenge**

- Student engagement data used inform planning of a first-year experience approach

## **Active-collaborative learning**

- Integration of SASSE data in teaching and learning plan of the UFS

## **Enriching Educational Experiences**

- SASSE data used in conceptualising the development of residence life programmes





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# **Initiatives to improve student engagement**

## **Supportive Campus Environment**

- Student Portal
- New Academic Tutorial Programme
- Electronic Notice Board Network
- Reconceptualisation of orientation



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# STUDENT PORTAL

English

Search

## News

Prof. Jonathan to take up office on 1 July 2009



### Prof Jonathan Jansen appointed Rector of UFS

The Council of the University of ...

[Read More](#)

## STUDYING AT THE UFS

Here you will find information about:

- Admission requirements
- Tuition Fees
- Financial aid
- How to apply at the UFS
- All faculties and academic programmes
- Senior Students Registration
- Examinations
- Prospectus 2009

Enter

## STUDENT LIFE

What is it like to be a UFS student?

- What is a Koyzie?
- Student Services
- International Office
- Student Activities
- Where can I get help?

Enter

## KEYS TO SUCCESS

Information to help you maximize your success:

- Expectations of University students
- Key Skills for your academic success
- University and the World of Work
- Career Planning and Management

Enter

## STUDENT SELF SERVICE

Tools to manage your student life:

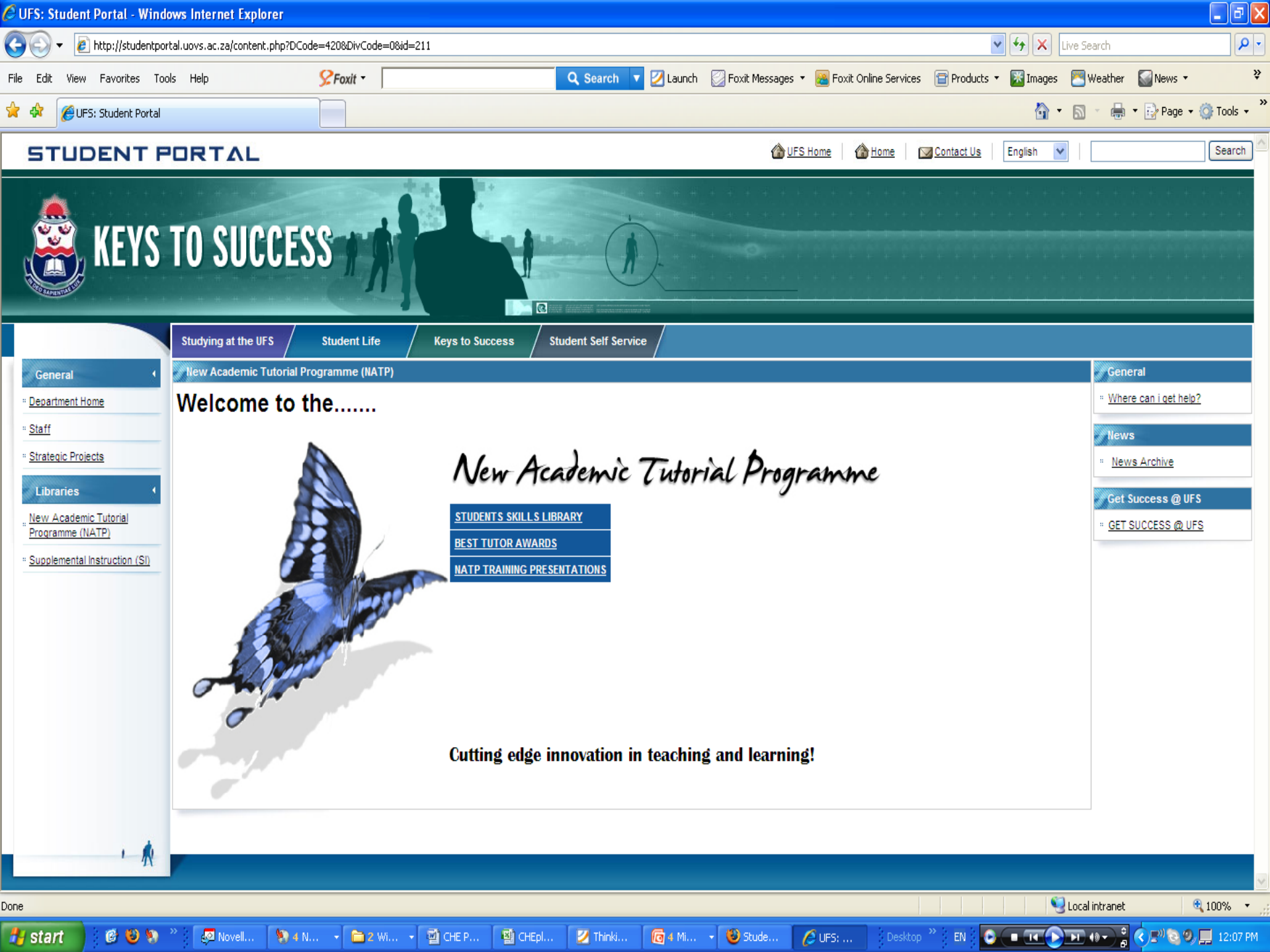
- E-Learning
- Time-tables
- Accounts
- Estimated degree costs
- Internet billing
- Exams
- Proof of registration
- Study records

Login

"Know where to find the information and how to use it - that's the secret of success" Albert Einstein

Welcome to the Student Portal. Here you will find the information and tools you need to become a successful student at the University of the Free State, and to build your skills as a knowledge worker for the 21st century world of work.

The Student Portal is a joint initiative of Student Development and Success and Computer Services, in collaboration with various departments.







# Electronic Notice Board Network

- 29 LCD screens across campus



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# Thank you



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