



A UoT-PERSPECTIVE: TUT, STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AND IMPROVING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT SUCCESS

**Dr E van Heerden (Director)
Student Development and Support (SDS)
CHE Colloquium
5 March 2010**

Live your life. Create your destiny.



**Tshwane University
of Technology**

We empower people



Contextual factors of the TUT-SASSE 2009-project

🎵 Post merger phase:

- one faculty per learning site - year of serious staff and student unrest

🎵 Multi-campus environment

- 9 learning sites with 7 faculties + 56 departments
- An enrollment target of 56000 students (only 4000 distance ed)



sampling!





TUT-SASSE-Survey 2009:

- Surveyed 1996 students across all learning sites within 10 days
 - 790 first year students + 1126 senior students + 27 from block courses
 - 45% male and 55% female
 - reasonable spread of languages
- = representative of the undergraduate population

Why such effort and emphasis on sampling?



**Tshwane University
of Technology**

We empower people



SASSE July 2009



TUT: an evidence-based approach to student success

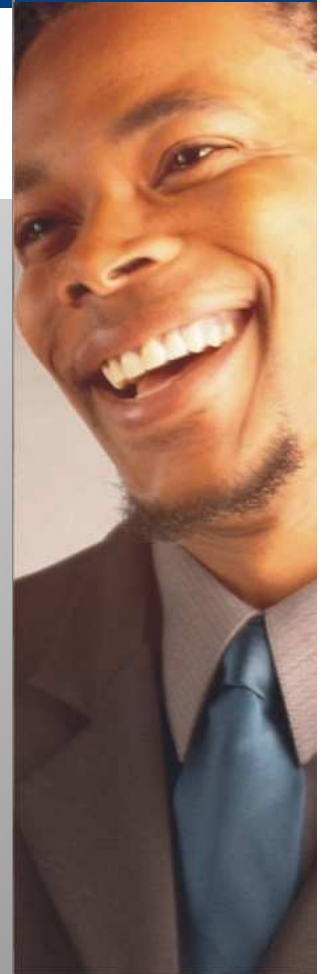
The University took a few critical steps:

- **DVC TLT** established a comprehensive Unit called

HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

- Academic Committee established a standing sub-committee:

STUDENT SUCCESS RATE SUB-COMMITTEE



**Tshwane University
of Technology**

We empower people



TUT: an evidence-based approach to student success (2)

HIGHER EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

Four key environments consolidated and correctly aligned:

- ✓ **Student Development and Support**
- ✓ **Curriculum Development (incl academic staff development)**
- ✓ **Cooperative Education**
- ✓ **Educational Technology (TLwT)**



TUT: an evidence-based approach to student success (3)

Academic committee: SUCCESS RATE SUB-COMMITTEE

Mandate: to investigate and lead in the analysis, approach and effective address of student success rates in the University

● Composed of :

- Specialists in the **HEDS environment** (curriculum, assessment, student development; academic staff development; educational technology)
- Faculty
- Faculty
- Research specialists and statisticians

● A highly specialised and focussed team
● Institutional spread of ownership

TUT and student success rates

Allen Rubin (2008): “*Easier said than done*”

Two key perspectives for an evidence based practice:

- It is a *process* that includes locating and appraising credible evidence as part of practice decisions
- It is a way to designate certain *interventions* as empirically supported under certain conditions

*Rubin, A (2008). Practitioners Guide to using research for evidence based-practice.
New Jersey, Wiley & Sons*



STUDENT SUCCESS STRATEGY @ TUT



Risk-profiling

SR analysis and reporting

Student Tracking System

Independent research

SASSE

Cohort studies

PG studies

Research
Evidence

Success
rate
Sub-
Committee

Institutional
strategy



STUDENT SUCCESS STRATEGY @ TUT



Risk-profiling

SR analysis and reporting

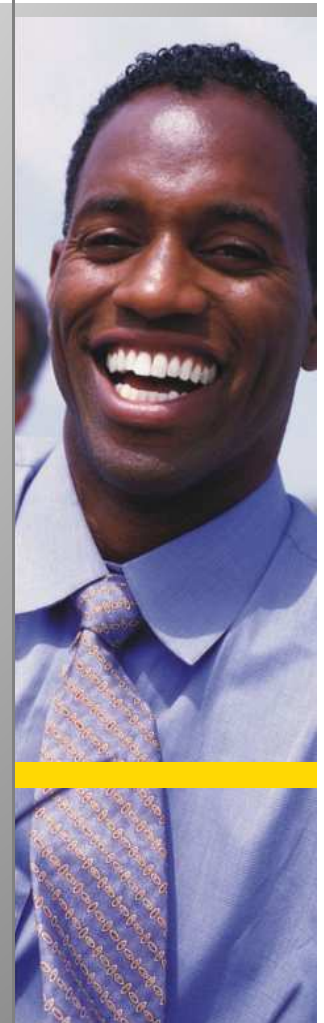
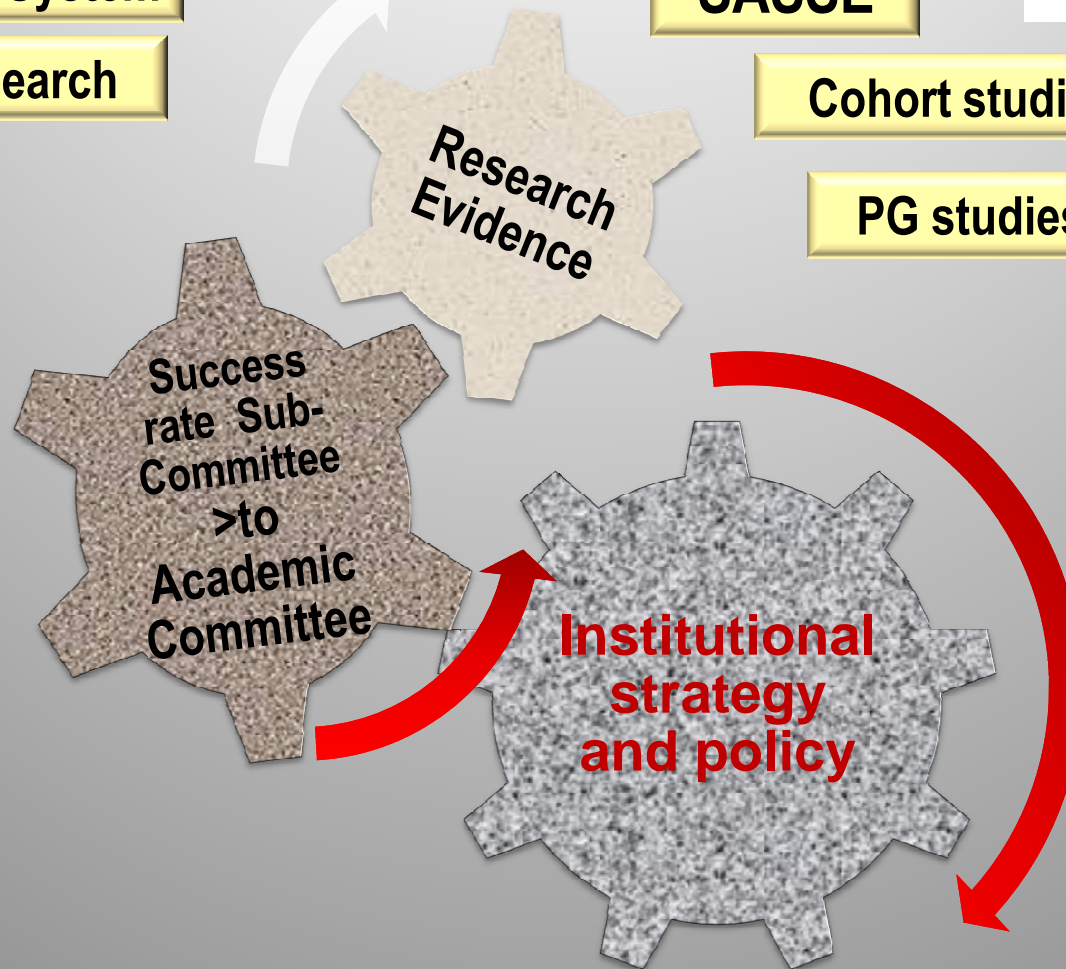
Student Tracking System

Independent research

SASSE

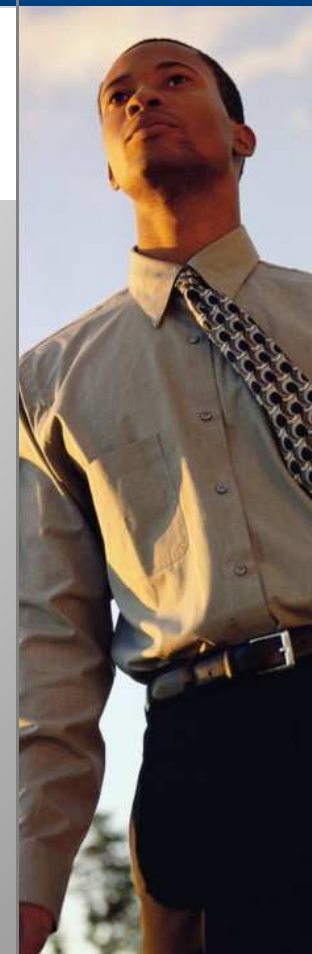
Cohort studies

PG studies





 Tshwane University of Technology <i>We empower people</i>	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009?
Success rates	65,12%	64,68%	67,09%	70,25%	70,78%	72,0%	
Headcount enrolments	45 368	50 933	49 785	48 168	47 942	49 852	



STUDENT SUCCESS: CONTINUED CHALLENGES FOR TUT

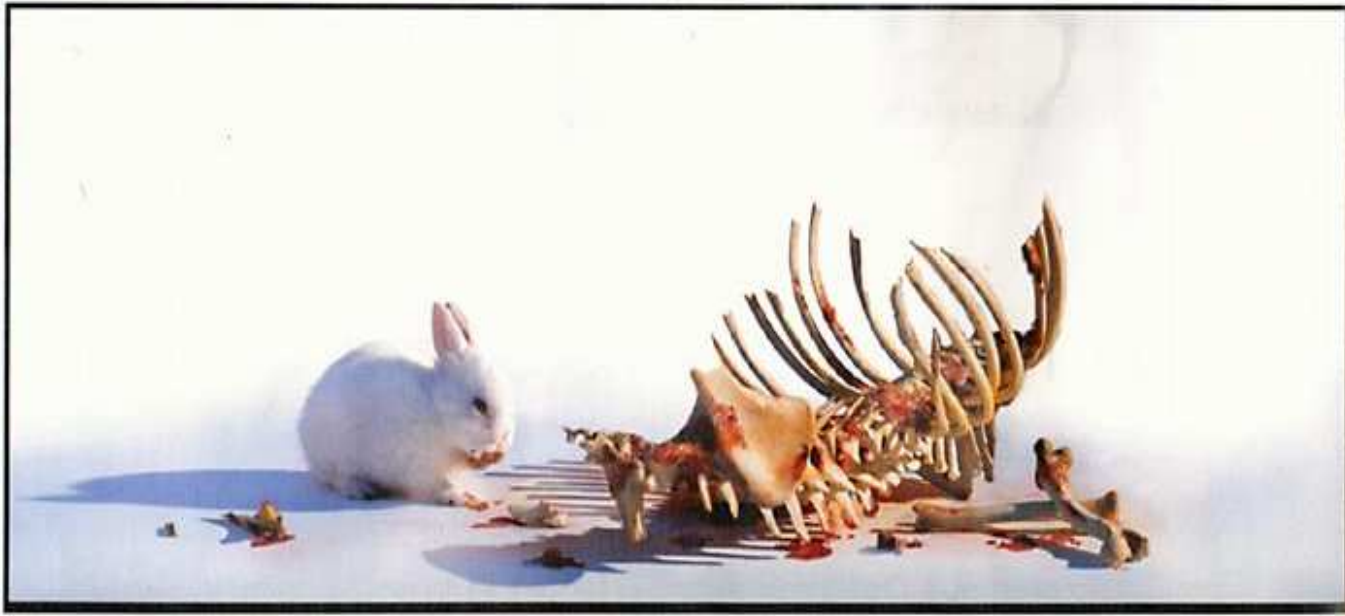
- ✿ Entrench successful initiatives (SRS 10111)
- ✿ Shifting the paradigm: underprepared student to prepared university
- ✿ Collaboration and partnership
- ✿ Revisiting the curriculum: incorporating the co-curriculum
- ✿ Review institutional priorities - based on evidence
- ✿ Review institutional values – based on evidence
- ✿ Contextualise quality assurance activities

STUDENT SUCCESS: Ongoing projects @ TUT



- ✿ **Risk profiling** of all first time entering students
- ✿ Implementation of the **Student Tracking System**
(early identification and continuous monitoring)
- ✿ Departmental analysis and reporting on **subject success rates**
- ✿ Institutional survey of Faculty staff re factors impacting on student success (**staff engagement!**)
- ✿ **Foundation programme** longitudinal study
- ✿ Revision of **Academic Plan**
- ✿ **New/ Evidence based Policy revision:**
e.g. Teaching and Learning Materials

.....>



Facing up to the challenge: Student Success in HE