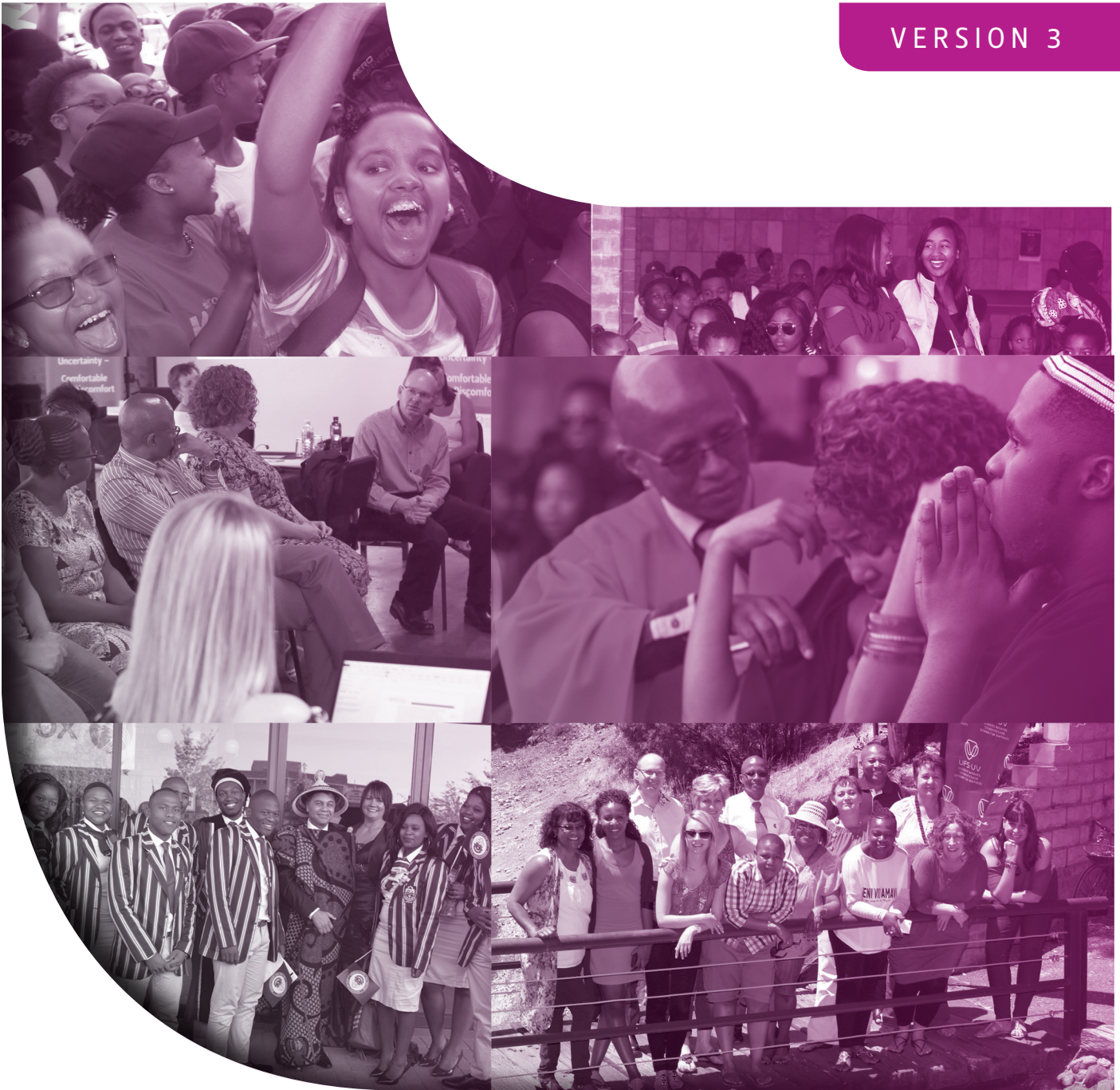


STUDENT AFFAIRS

STRATEGIC PLAN 2018 – 2022

VERSION 3



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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 2018-2022, which identifies seven strategic goals (and objectives): goal 1 - **improve student success and wellbeing**; goal 2 - **renew and transform the curriculum**; goal 3 - **increase UFS contribution to local, regional and global knowledge**; goal 4 - **support development and social justice through engaged scholarship**; goal 5 - **increase the efficiency and effectiveness of governance and support systems**; goal 6 - **achieve financial sustainability**; goal 7 - **advance an institutional culture that demonstrates the values of the UFS**.

HS 2022 is committed to the UFS Integrated Transformation Plan (ITP). The ITP imagines a transformed university in South Africa as: “...one which will strive for social justice in everything it does. It will be an institution where its diverse people feel a sense of common purpose and where the symbols and spaces, systems and daily practices all reflect commitment to openness and engagement. It will respond to the needs of the local community, while at the same time participating in global knowledge production. It will be an institution that engages actively with its colonial and apartheid legacies and recognises its common humanity and the universal nature

of intellectual endeavour. A transformed university will be a place for competing views, disagreements, and sometimes even discomfort” (ITP: 2017, p. 2).

The collaboratively developed ITP Framework indicates that “...transformation in South Africa means the dismantling of the legacy of apartheid and colonialism at political, social, economic, and intellectual levels in order to adopt new practices, modes of organisation, and values capable of delivering social justice” (p. 2). So, in the end, 10 work streams, grouped into three broad areas, were chosen: **Core University Functions**-Teaching and Learning, Research, Internationalisation and Innovation, and Engaged Scholarship; **University Culture** - Student Experience, Staff Experience and Composition, Names, Symbols, and Spaces, and Universal Access; **Structural Issues** - Financial Framework (Size & Shape), Governance, Systems, Policy, and Administration and The Multi-Campus Model.

HS 2022 assists Student Affairs in reimagining its role, aims and objectives. 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 HS 2022, which is built with the ITP as our foundation, will enhance the holistic development of students and humanise their lived experiences.

In addition, we realise that Student Affairs can only enhance the impact of implementing its mandate through existing (and new) collaborations and partnerships with other UFS departments and divisions.

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 (the humanising pedagogy and the pedagogy of discomfort) and universal access.* These pedagogies, in our view, advance the aspirations of the Human Project.
- *The intersectionality framework.* This framework recognises the intersectionality of lived student and staff 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 UFS strategy and the ITP 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 two abovementioned pedagogies

permeate the five key areas that together form the cornerstone and focal point of the Strategic Plan, namely:

- *Professionalisation*
- *High-impact practices*
- *Student communities and structures*
- *Intersectionality, partnerships and collaboration*
- *Integrated Transformation Plan - Institutional Change: Social Justice, Social Cohesion, Critical Diversity*

The departments will continue to pursue their particular mandates in order to translate them into service deliverables within the context of their specific work areas, taking account of the five aforementioned key areas. This plan is the direct result of the discussions conducted at the first Strategic Planning Workshop held from 24 to 26 October 2016 and the Strategic Plan Review Workshop held from 29 November to 1 December 2017 and it seeks to facilitate the implementation of the ideas related to the five 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



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1 | VISION & MISSION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

1.1. VISION

To be a data-driven, evidence-based co-curricular environment.

1.2. MISSION

- To base the UFS institutional culture on values, humanising behaviour, human rights and social justice principles.
- To inculcate prosocial student behaviour, student engagement and an inclusive institutional culture.
- To provide support for student wellbeing.
- To develop effective student governance and leadership excellence.

2 | VALUES OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The DSA values will be based 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.

2.2. ETHICS

The DSA regards it as critically important that students and staff be guided by ethical principles. This 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 emphasise 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 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 favour/benefit 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

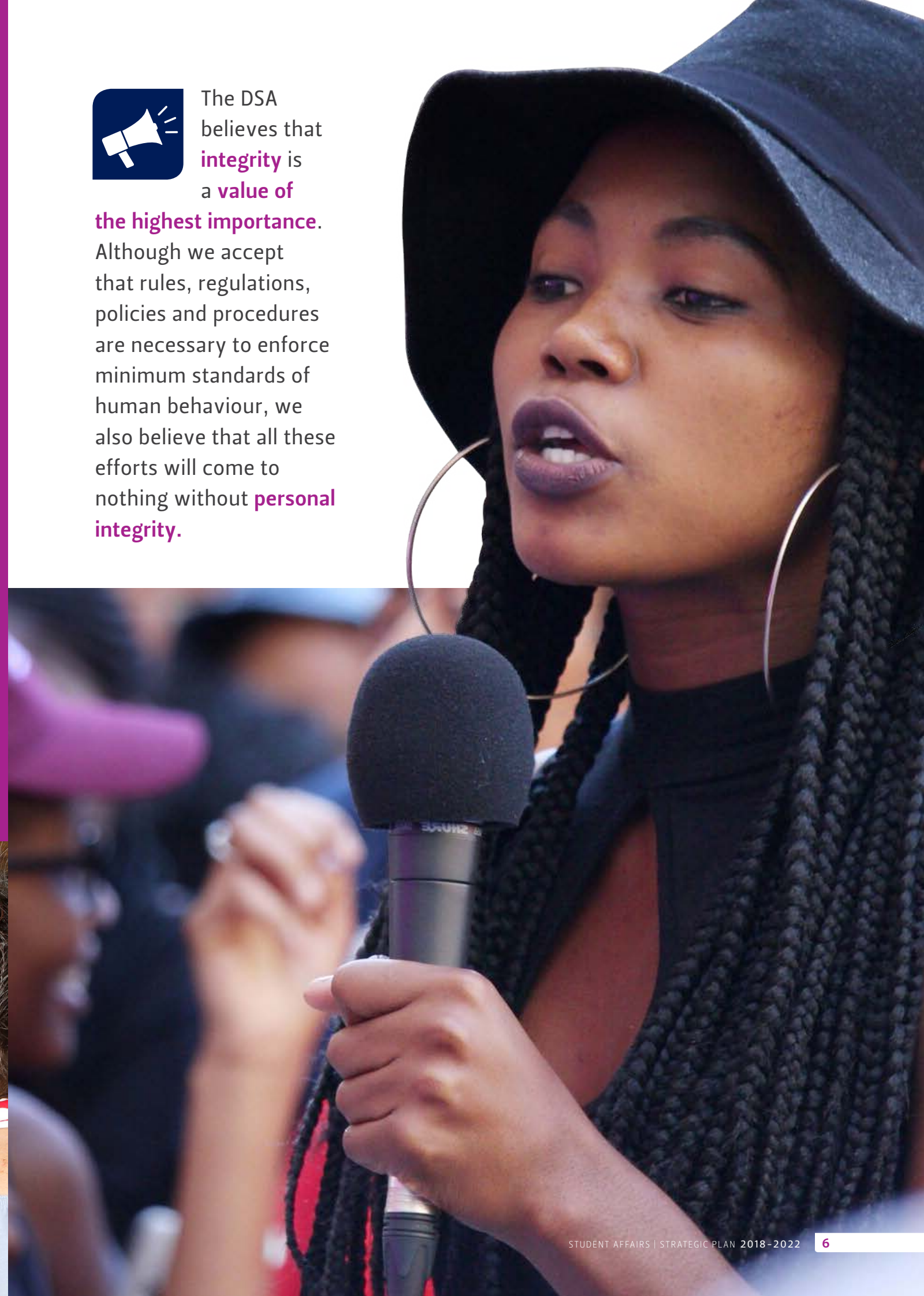
Although note is taken of the work already done by Student Affairs towards formalising its operations and planning, the adoption of the HS 2022 represents a new strategy. This strategy will concentrate the operations and efforts of Student Affairs to enable it to achieve its stated goals. The progress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



The DSA believes that **integrity** is a **value of**

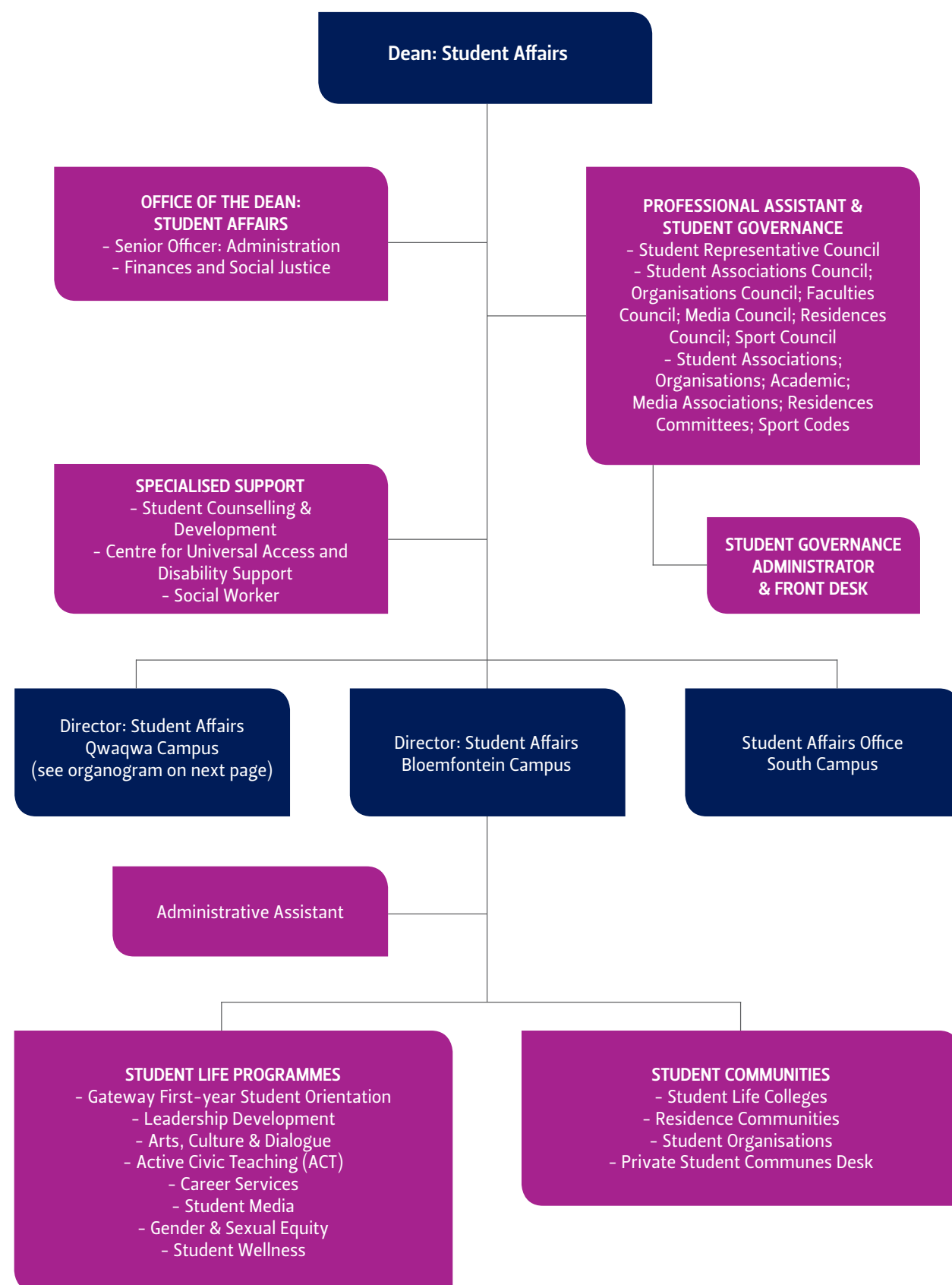
the highest importance.

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.**

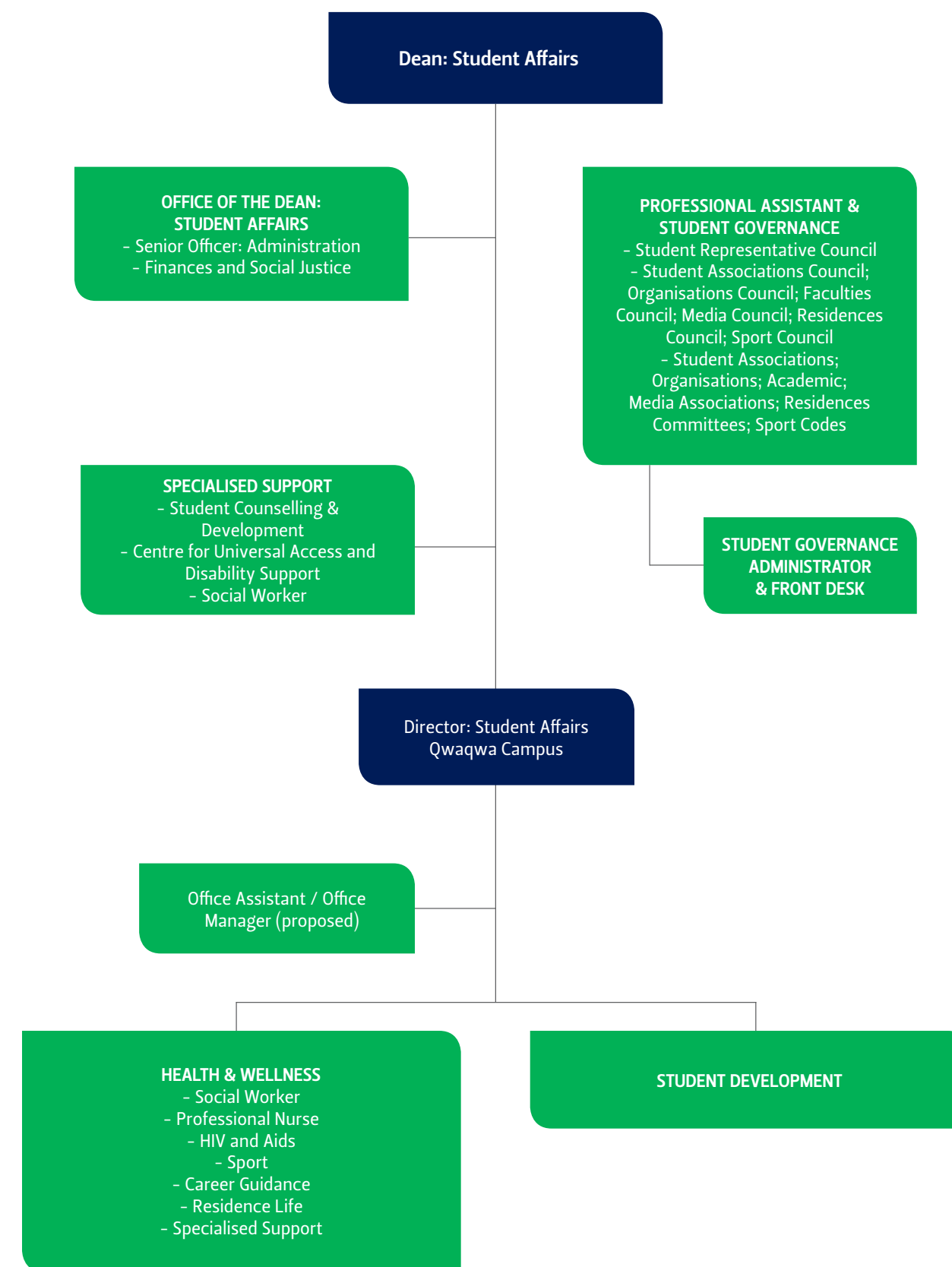


4 | STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFILE

4.1. Organogram



Student Affairs Qwaqwa





The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs provides strategic direction and leadership to all Student Affairs divisions.

4.2. OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Office of the Dean of Student Affairs (DSA) provides strategic direction and leadership to all Student Affairs divisions. These divisions are positioned within the following four areas that focus on the **learning activities, support, development and success** of students: (1) student governance; (2) specialised support; (3) student communities and (4) co-curricular programmes. The diagram below illustrates the four overarching focus areas of Student Affairs:

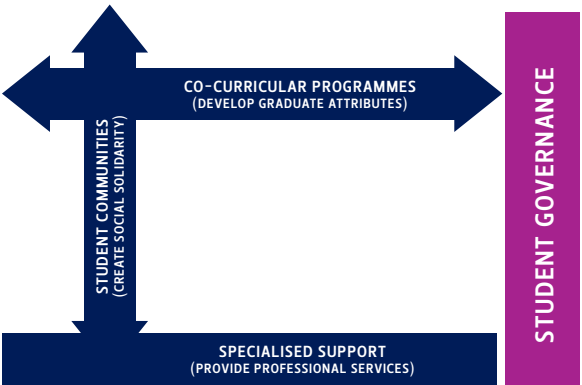


Figure 1: Four focus areas of Student Affairs divisions

The Office of the Dean: Student Affairs also 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 ITP. The DSA provides general assistance to students, facilitates financial and social support for students and mediates student academic and social 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, SRC executive committee, 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

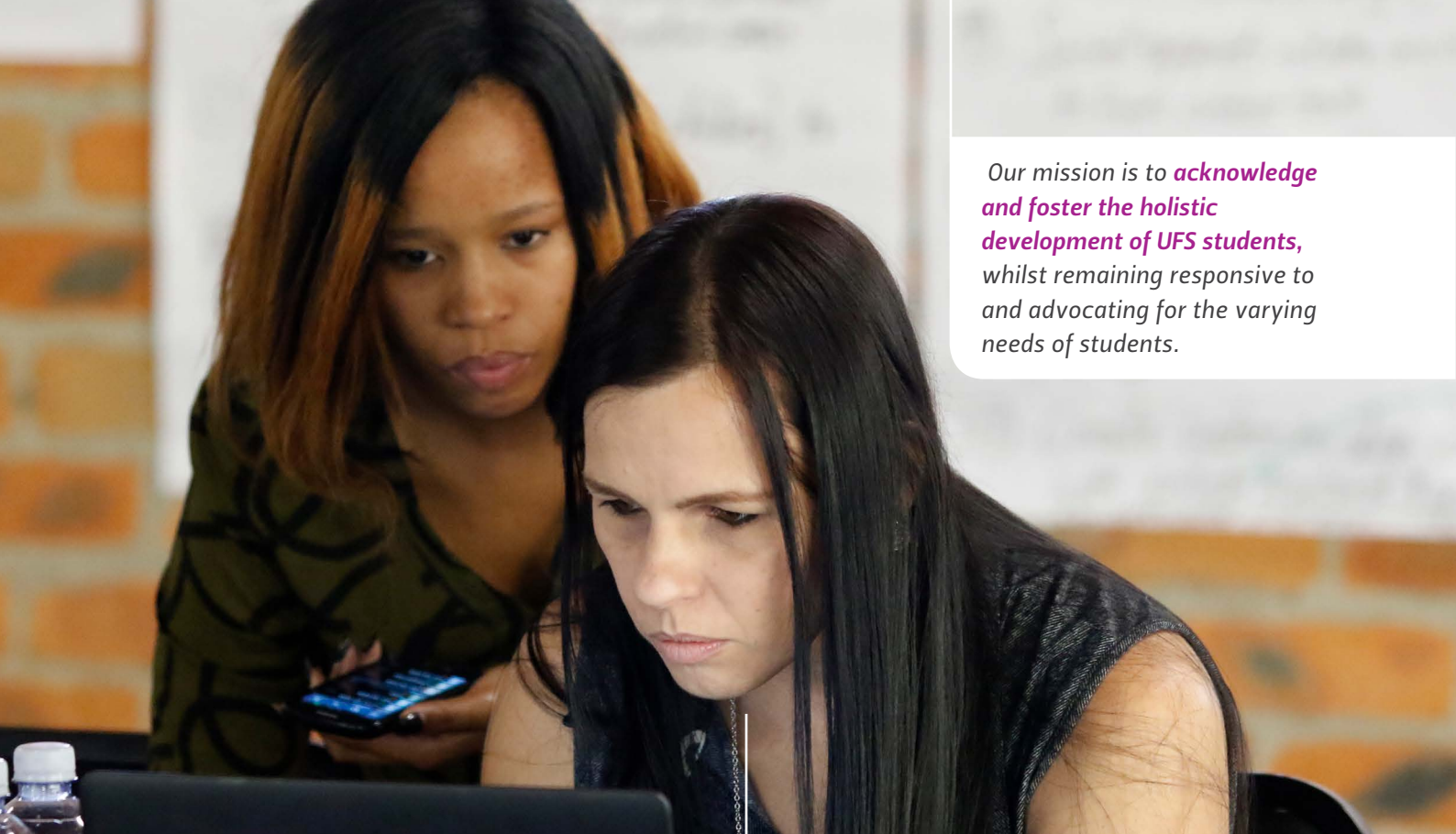
4.4.1. Student Counselling & Development (SCD)

Student Counselling & Development's vision 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, whilst remaining responsive to and advocating for the varying needs of students. We ultimately 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.

In order to achieve the abovementioned objectives, SCD provides the following services to registered UFS students:

- Individual and group therapy.
- Career counselling (also offered to prospective students at a fee).
- Psychological crisis response and an after-hours on-call service.
- The designing and presentation of developmental workshops on topics such as stress- and time-management, emotional intelligence (EQ) and self-esteem. The workshops are reviewed on an annual basis to make the necessary improvements and adjustments. New workshops are developed regularly (and on request) to address specific needs. We have recently introduced the concept of 'Workshop Packages' as a co-curricular activity.
- An eight-week Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy Programme (REBT) is offered to students seeking counselling. The REBT Programme is a practical, action-oriented approach to assist individuals in overcoming

*The Office of the Dean facilitates **student governance** activities, such as elections, training and strategic planning.*



*Our mission is to **acknowledge and foster the holistic development of UFS students**, whilst remaining responsive to and advocating for the varying needs of students.*

and coping with adversity, achieving goals and enhancing personal growth by addressing attitudes, unhealthy thoughts and emotions, and maladaptive behaviours.

- An eight-week Self-Esteem Enhancement Programme. Positive self-esteem has been shown to lead to an increase in psychological wellbeing, happiness, academic achievements, adjustment and success.

SCD's collaborations with other departments:

- Student Wellness: the presentation of Emotional Intelligence (EQ) and Healthy Relationships workshops within the Student Wellness Programme.
- Housing and Residence Affairs (HRA): the presentation of developmental workshops at residences.
- Social Work Department: the administering and interpreting of psychometric assessments for selection purposes.
- Student Academic Services (SAS): the administering of psychometric evaluations with the purpose of providing recommendations related to the admission of prospective students who do not meet the prescribed admission requirements of the university. These evaluations flow from referrals by the

UFS Admissions Office.

- Unit for Professional Training and Service in the Behavioural Sciences (UNIBS): the training, rotation and supervision of intern counselling psychologists.
- Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS): assessments, evaluations and recommendations relating to extra-time dispensations.
- Faculty of Theology: Theology Developmental Programme to ensure that selected students are provided with the necessary developmental skills.
- SCD Qwaqwa Campus: programme and service alignment.

Other projects:

- The development of a Student Toolkit, which will be made available in both hard copy and electronic format. This toolkit will provide students with basic therapeutic tools and strategies for self-help purposes.
- Mental Health Day to create awareness of mental health and the psychological challenges that many students face.

4.4.2. Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support (CUADS)

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. This will be done through the promotion of the human rights of persons with disabilities, including the development of practices such as universal design and universal access. The ultimate aim is to create a welcoming institutional culture on all three UFS campuses that embraces students with disabilities and helps them to perform well academically. The application of the principles of universal design and universal access will be instrumental to move away from the traditional focus on the individual with a "problem". It will enable the UFS to create an environment in which students with disabilities can experience all aspects of student life in a way similar to the experiences of their non-disabled peers.

The activities of the CUADS are rendered, facilitated and coordinated through the implementation

*The ultimate aim is to create a welcoming institutional culture on all three UFS campuses that **embraces students with disabilities and helps them to perform well academically.***



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. Partners are the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and 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 buildings 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 assessment options.
- Student Academic Support Programme in collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning.

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 in the format of their choice, which includes braille, audio (material is read on a digital recorder), enlarged material and Etext.
- Hearing impaired (Deaf, hard of hearing and deafened).
- Debilitating psychological and other chronic conditions (e.g. schizophrenia, epilepsy, panic disorder, anxiety).
- Temporary impairments (e.g. a broken hand).

Special arrangements made for students include:

- Amanuensis for some students during tests/ exams.
- Application for extra time during

tests/exams in accordance with 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 A_Step 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 and other communication access methods (for deaf, hard-of-hearing and deafened students); computer facilities (the CUADS computer lab houses the latest assistive technology and software, including alternative furniture and adapted hardware for physically impaired and blind students); and specialised exam and test venues for the implementation of alternative test and exam procedures.

4.5. STUDENT COMMUNITIES AND CO-CURRICULAR PROGRAMMES

The concept of student communities assumes that communities provide a context that is most conducive to the learning activities, development and success of students. In this regard, Student Life Colleges provide the communal structure for Student Life Programme delivery on a macro level. The mere existence of student communities will not necessarily result in student development, therefore the functioning of each



The office provides strategic support to all Qwaqwa Student Affairs departments

respective community has to be based on specific developmental purposes. This means that specific developmental outcomes must be developed in order to enhance the employability of graduates. Furthermore, it is important to optimally develop students through the seamless integration of the social context and the academic context of the student experience, i.e. the in-class and out-of-class experiences.

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 in one another, starting from the smallest group and moving 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).
 - Macro groups (the Kopsie 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 & Development; No Student Hungry Programme).
- 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 & Development, 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 heard 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 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 & 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. Activities include:

- 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 assisting with mock interviews. It is the responsibility of the officer to do research on the potential employer and make the mock interview as realistic as possible. We also assist with motivational letters for bursary applications.

Services and programmes:

- Equipping students for the world of work through various interventions.
- Assisting students with CV- and cover-letter writing.
- Equipping students with negotiation and networking techniques.
- Developing students' interview skills.
- Supporting students with their career development path.



The Clinic

The Campus Clinic Service offers a comprehensive outpatient healthcare 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. The clinic:

- Prescribes and administers medication to students.
- Emphasises the importance of good nutrition for good health.
- Liaises with the broader community with regard to all health-related matters
- Provides sexual and reproductive education to students.
- Provides 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. Their tasks include:

- Liaising with various stakeholders internally, and creating awareness about HIV/AIDS externally.
- Advocacy programmes focused on voluntary testing, abstinence and use of condoms.
- Providing 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' socio-economic 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 assists with drug abuse and related problems.

Services rendered:

- Provides support to hungry students.
- Makes assessments and recommendations on bursary allocations and the academic inclusion of needy students.
- Refers vulnerable students for counselling and clinic assistance.
- Collaborates with external stakeholders to enhance service provision to students.



Student Life

Based on the premise that university residences are a 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 the 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

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 sports: soccer, netball, volleyball, cricket, basketball and chess.

Programmes to promote sport:

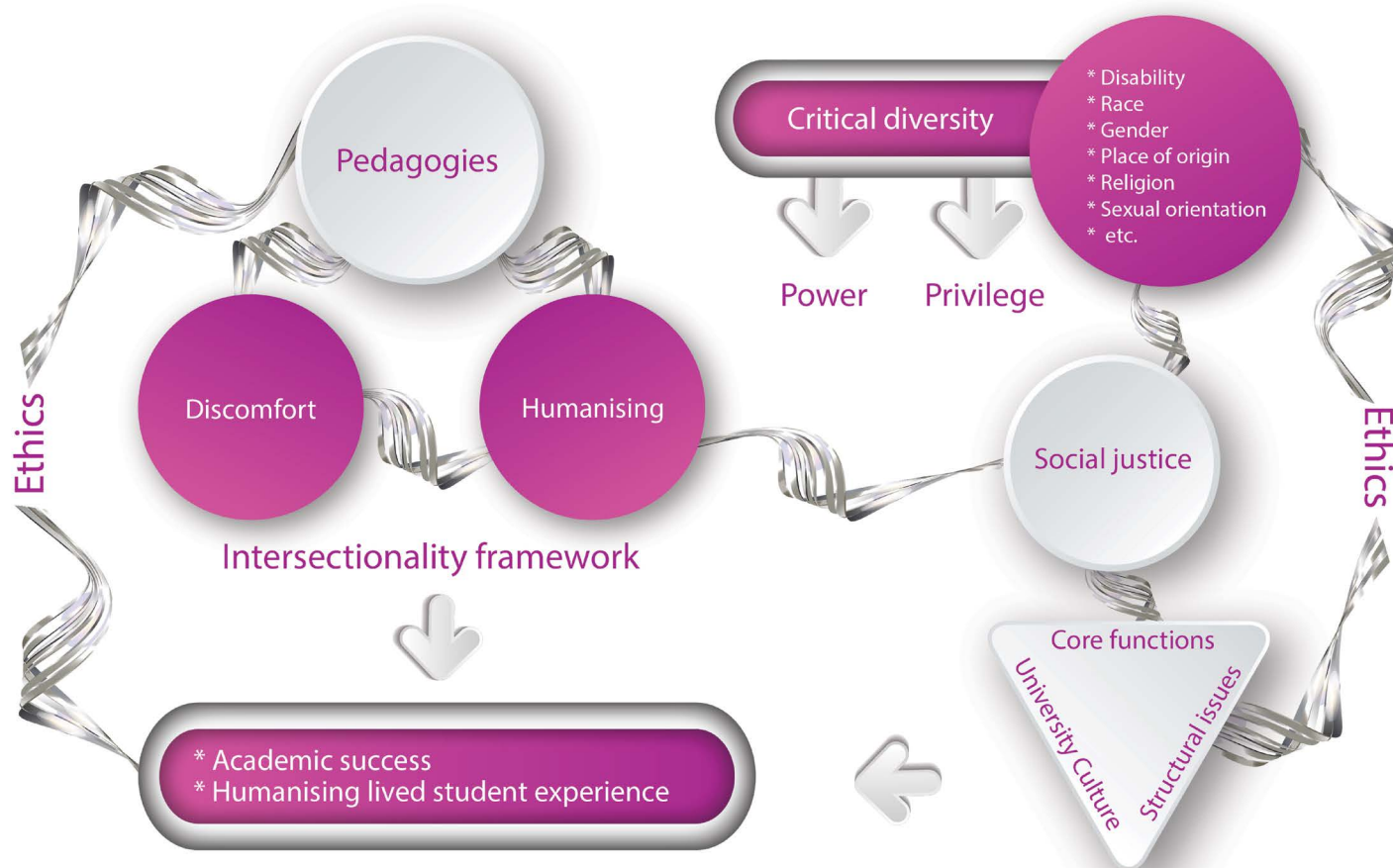
- Intervarsity and intra-leagues.
- League fixtures to sustain student participation
- Coaching clinics to enhance the quality of sport.
- Recreational sport to promote inclusivity and participation.
- Sports awards to recognise excellence.

CONTEXTUALISING THE STRATEGY

**Certain about uncertainty
Comfortable with discomfort**

2018 | VERSION 3

DSA Strategy Framework 2018–2022



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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 Student Affairs Humanising Strategy 2022 (hereafter HS 2022) builds on the spirit of the UFS Strategy 2018–2022 and the ITP. The ITP identifies three key pillars upon which it rests. These are: the Core Functions, the University Culture and Structural Issues. HS 2022 recognises that although it is possible to separate these three pillars in theory, in practice, however, it is not only difficult but also not desirable. It is for this reason that HS 2022 has reimaged the role, aims and objectives of Student Affairs at the UFS. The intersectionality framework has been chosen to articulate and address the complexities identified by the ITP, both in theory and practice.

Student Affairs' contribution to the UFS will, firstly, be through the co-curricular programmes and activities (Core Functions). These will be presented through the Division 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 ITP with regard to the University Culture. Lastly, it will contribute through the intersectionality framework (Structural Issues). This 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 Committee (SSC), for example, will be one of the structures operating within an intersectional framework and will be better positioned to monitor, evaluate and strengthen the intersectionality of the university culture and the way this culture enhances or inhibits the core

function of the university. 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 as a blueprint for strategic engagement (refer to Appendix 8.2). "Like the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) 4-D model, the planning starts 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. 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 recognise that [we] must be inspired through authentic recognition and rewards systems. In short, the processes of assessment, planning, implementation and control are replaced with the concepts of 'inquire', 'imagine', innovate' and 'inspire' (Stavros, Cooperrider & Kelly, 2003).

This model of engagement has 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 and 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.

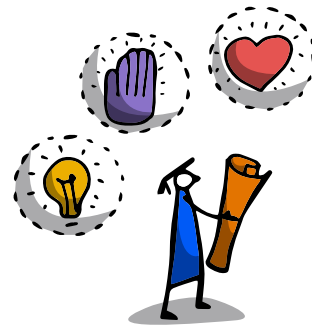
We wish to build on our current strengths and successes. Past experiences with the Odyssey and Tipping Points programmes have created a firm foundation for the professionalisation of Student Affairs. Furthermore, the existing culture of ownership and accountability and our willingness to be proactive are considered huge assets in the current environment. The way in which the Student Affairs research desk functions also helps to strengthen this professionalisation.

Goal statements:

1. Enhance research outputs with a distinct scholarly focus.
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.
5. Promote effective corporate governance.
6. Actively link and contribute to Student Affairs organisations.

6.2. KSA #2: High-Impact Practices



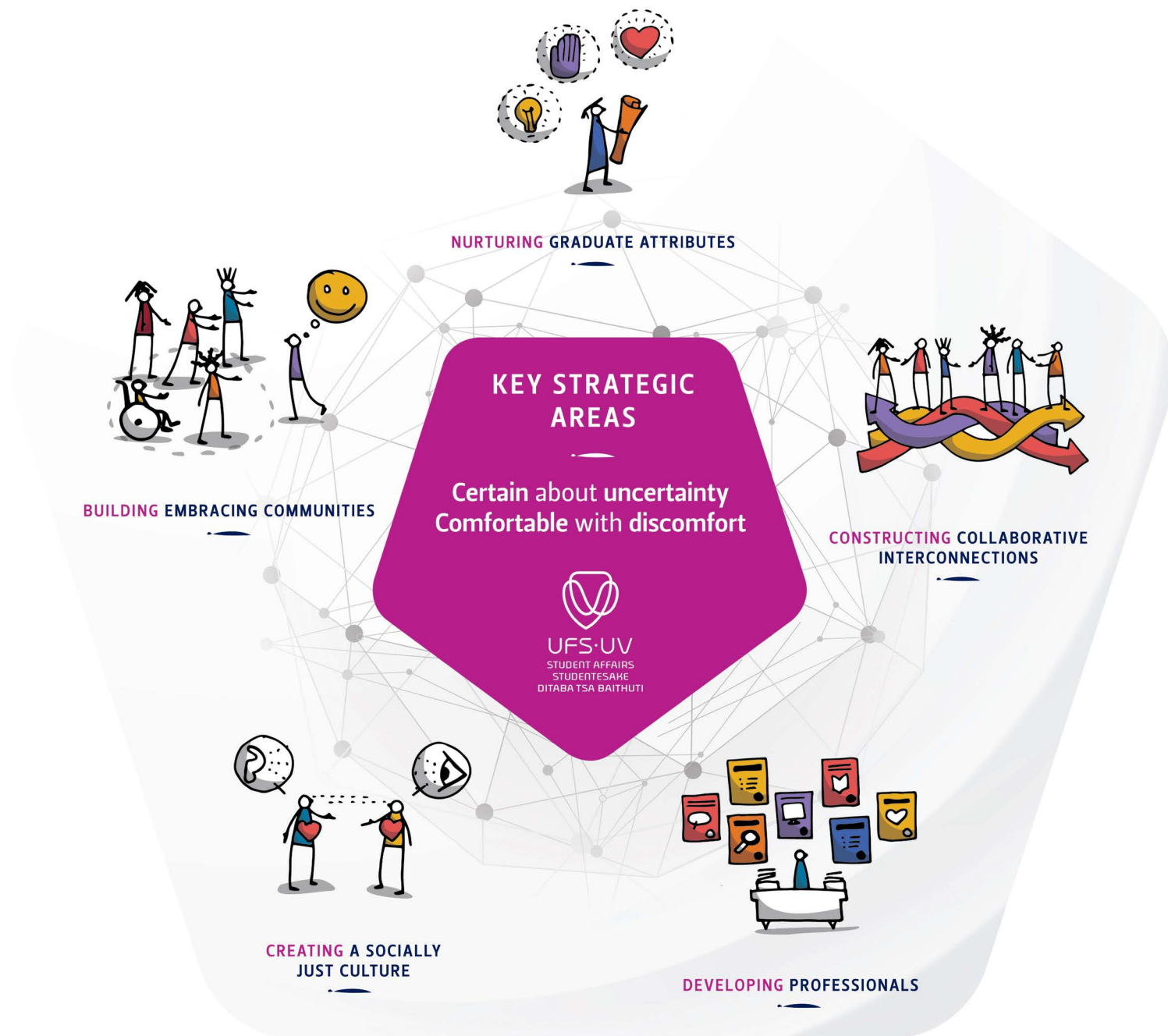
We deeply care about the employability of our graduates, and we are therefore passionate about developing graduate attributes through co-curricular programmes and high-impact practices. In this regard, the various student communities are seen as sites that provide access to the co-curriculum. Because 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 exists to create an academic-development committee for Student Affairs. The reconfiguration of existing programmes and activities in order to purposefully align them with specific developmental outcomes is therefore considered an important strategic opportunity. Additionally, the fostering of internal and external partnerships, and the professional development of personnel are also important strategic prospects to pursue.

Current programmes and activities have a number of strengths that can help to effectively develop graduate attributes through co-curricular

Key Strategic Areas UFS Student Affairs

Certain about uncertainty
Comfortable with discomfort



programmes and highimpact 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 these programmes and consequently receive proper recognition for them, something that is important to create student buy-in. Leadership development is considered a particular strength in this regard.

Goal statements:

1. Establish internationally recognised outcome-based co-curricular and social justice programmes.
2. Enhance access and participation.
3. Enhance quality through monitoring and evaluation.
4. Establish a system that is responsive to the environment.
5. Establish innovation, entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship as distinct foci in all programmes and activities.

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



We deeply care about creating inclusive student communities that embrace students in all 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 collaborate closely 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 can also be used to achieve our goals.

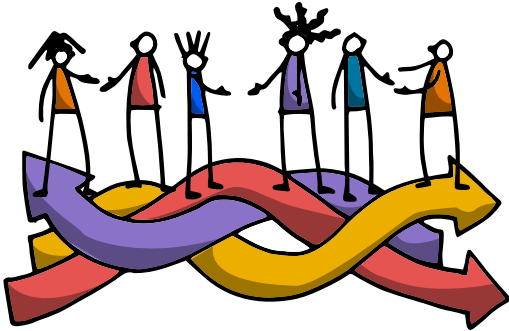
In all of this, we wish to build on our current strengths and successes. The diversity of our student communities and the sense of belonging that has been created (through the nesting of smaller systems in larger systems) are seen as particular strengths. The establishment of a conversational culture (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 a tremendous asset.

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. Develop an innovative model for student

communities to enhance social solidarity among students.

6.4. KSA #4: Intersectionality, Partnerships and Collaboration (three 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.

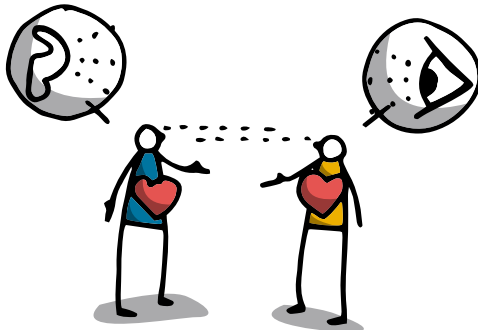
In this regard, we consider the fostering of partnerships and collaborations within Student Affairs, the university and the wider community as a distinct opportunity to establish this ethos in the whole environment.

The current 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, faculties, departments and campuses.
2. Foster powerful partnerships within the university and beyond.
3. Establish structural alignment of Student Affairs on all three campuses.

6.5. KSA #5: Institutional Transformation Plan (ITP): Institutional Change, 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 social justice and critical diversity, we aspire towards creating a socially cohesive student body, student life and UFS community. The ideal is that the UFS community use its power and privileged positionalities to ensure humanising lived experiences for those who are less privileged (i.e. socially, economically, politically, religiously, disability-wise, sexually, culturally and with regards to disability, class, origin and 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 will be done through the Integrated Transformation Plan (ITP).

In this regard, we consider the fostering of partnerships and collaborations between 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 current 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 be critical of 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, universal access, citizenship, human rights, democracy, intersectionality (disability, sexual orientation and gender), pedagogy of discomfort, humanising pedagogy and social cohesion.
- 2. Foster powerful partnerships with faculties, departments, the higher-education sector, the DHET and international institutions.
- 3. Create a campus climate that is socially just to uphold the human dignity of all.

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 with 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 8.2 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.



During implementation of the HS 2017-2022, we will **evaluate and monitor our delivery in key strategic areas.**

8 APPENDICES
8.1. Operational Plan 2018

OBJECTIVES				
KSA#1: Professionalisation of Student Affairs	KSA#2: High-Impact Practices	KSA#3: Student Communities and Structures	KSA#4: Intersectionality, Partnerships and Collaboration	KSA#5: Transformation: Institutional Change, Social Justice, Social Cohesion, Critical Diversity (ITP)
1. Establish and formalise KSA teams including all the divisions and campuses	1. Establish and formalise KSA teams including all the divisions and campuses	1. Establish and formalise KSA teams including all the divisions and campuses	1. Establish and formalise KSA teams including all the divisions and campuses	1. Establish and formalise KSA teams including all the divisions and campuses
2. Create and fund a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme for all Student Affairs staff focusing on the following themes: a. Universal access b. Gender c. Publications d. Humanising pedagogy e. Disability	2. Reposition and rebrand Civic and Social Responsibilities activities	2. Re-affirm value-driven residence communities on all three campuses	2. Encourage collaboration to eliminate duplication for higher impact	2. Create platforms for continuous critical dialogues once per term for inclusivity (gender, masculinity, disability and sexual orientation)
3. Build a value-driven culture within Student Affairs	3. Reimagine the Career Office	3. Re-imagine the student shuttle service	3. External partners' values must be aligned with UFS strategies and values	3. Ensure equitable and socially just residence life
4. Introduce critical dialogues for staff on a quarterly basis	4. Increase visibility and impact of purposeful programmes in the broader environment	4. Advocate for the expansion of WiFi access for off-campus students	4. Ensure Collaboration between Student Wellness, Community Engagement, Service Learning, KvsieACT and Faculties (food security)	4. Establish a social support team with members drawn from different Student Affairs departments

KSA #1	KSA #2	KSA #3	KSA #4	KSA #5
5. Implement and instill ethical corporate governance through: a. FINCOM b. IT replacement fund per division	5. Establish co-curricular transcript through which individual students can receive formal recognition for co-curricular participation	5. Create functions within Student Affairs dealing with off-campus students in order to: a. Align values of private communes with UFS b. Increase participation in co-curriculum c. Expand college structures (esp. fellows)	5. Identify and invite key UFS stakeholders into the Student Affairs space for knowledge-sharing and insight	5. Develop and update existing policies to be inclusive
6. Report on professional bodies and associations involved with each division	6. Develop programmes (expansion of current programme) related to food insecurity, student behavior modification and wellness	6. Expand student wellness programmes together with relevant divisions for: a. Social support b. Food security c. Behavioural modification d. Wellness programme and campaigns	6. Increase visibility and impact in a broader environment	6. Develop diversity programmes with focus on intersection of gender and disability (HR training)
7. Establish communities of practice in different focus areas where staff can share knowledge, experience and expertise, and maximize their unique strengths to improve quality of work and collaboration	7. Contribute coherently to engaged scholarship (eco-vehicle, community garden, school project, community celebration and food insecurity)	7. Enhance student governance model and engagement (e.g. the Heher report)	7. Make Student Affairs policies accessible to the broader campus community	7. Build a value-driven culture
8. Brand the professionalisation of Student Affairs	8. Utilise fellows and identify academic residence heads to build capacity for scholarly engagement	8. Develop leadership programmes that speak to values and systems of UFS communities	8. Improve, streamline and cluster functions, administrative systems and corporate governance practices within Student Affairs	8. Articulate the role of Kovsie-ACT in Civic and Social Responsibility

KSA #1	KSA #2	KSA #3	KSA #4	KSA #5
9. Expand staff capacity	9. Expand co-curricular programmes to off-campus private residences	9. Utilize Lynda.com for student skills development (SRCs, RCs & RAs)	9. Establish a Student Affairs ITP team	9. Mainstream the humanising pedagogy and universal access
10. Enhance excellence by means of data-driven practice e.g. membership of professional bodies	10. Mainstream all programmes to all campuses	10. Expand student community programmes to Student Life programmes	10. Mainstream programmes on all three campuses	10. Enhance Gender and Sexual Equity (GSE) focus and capacity (directorate)
11. Undertake the Student Affairs policy audit, review, development, awareness, training and access	11. Understand the impact of Higher Education Commission reports and policies (e.g. Heher report, Soudien report etc.)	11. Intensify safety measures and awareness campaigns in a structured environment	11. Intensify partnership with CTL	
12. Develop staff competencies (Lynda.com)			12. Prioritise the institutional alignment of student experience in the co-curricular and support environment (HRA, Sports, Gender etc.) on all three campuses	
13. Train staff on funding-proposal writing (external funding sought US/EU)			13. Advocate for SAS to recognise identity pronouns	
14. Develop from staff according to the SOAR facilitation model			14. Establish team to fundraise external funding in partnership with Institutional Advancement	
			15. Develop service-level agreements with departments	
			16. Establish a Student Affairs registration team to collaborate with the institutional registration team.	

8.2. SOAR model of Student Affairs’ strategic engagement

(see Section 6 on explanation of the SOAR model)

S STRENGTHS	A ASPIRATIONS
Clear strategic plan and clear vision with goals of what we would like to achieve	Work on KSA teams and be more inclusive of all divisions
Strong interconnectedness and social solidarity amongst students	Foster a welcoming, inclusive environment, e.g. regarding gender, issues in residence, disability in RCs, affordability of some rooms (socio-economic aspect). Confronting issues of policy differences. Move towards universal access. Push the value-driven approach in residences.
Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support	Train Student Affairs staff on issues of disability. Negotiate with HR on training staff in the broader environment. Intersect the notions of gender and disability. Open dialogues and conversations.
Creation of a humanising experience for students. Student Affairs professionals are advocates for students and this creates a reciprocal effect where students respect staff (e.g. for providing food parcels). We are people who care. Insight into student needs.	Expand on ways to address food insecurity Continue engaging students with dignity and show continuous commitment to students Build a value-driven environment/ culture focused on human dignity, even in the face of opposition from students Introduce dialogues and open platforms to hold key discussions
Professionalisation of Student Affairs	Expand staff capacity and enhance excellence Encourage assessments, tracking, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of information (data-driven practice) Encourage presentation and publications Join professional organisations (POPA) Attend writing retreats
Strong, cohesive staff team in Student affairs Non-hierarchal, strong levels of collaboration, diversity of skills	Utilise the unique strengths of individuals (particularly in KSA teams) Match CPD with strengths Continue with the professionalisation of staff. Build a ‘we’ and ‘us’ in projects/ environments Foster collaboration/ partnerships/ teamwork Brand the professionalisation of Student Affairs and showcase it Focus on a teambuilding day for the whole of Student Affairs
Strong partnerships built with external stakeholders (within the University and beyond)	Invite stakeholders into our space (meetings, conversations)
Strong student governance model and engagement	Continue policy development – roadshow and raise awareness Connect engagement with Civic and Social Responsibility
Purposeful programmes	Continue working with all divisions Increase visibility and impact in broader environment Articulate Civic and Social Responsibility
Policies	Make sure that all areas are covered and do audits in all areas Build awareness and conduct training Enhance accessibility through website

O OPPORTUNITIES	R RESULTS
Student Affairs Strategic Plan to influence institutional culture	ITP positions Student Affairs in a relevant way
Saturation of the environment with humanising pedagogy and universal access for a deep understanding	Access to pedagogy for our programmes to speak to it Identification of scholar in pedagogy for operationalisation of it in our context Intellectual and practical capacity developed
Improvement of administrative systems through collaboration between Student Affairs Departments, to work together in functional areas and share expertise and best practice	Access internal capacity to build staff capacity
Development of online Student Affairs website / platform / application to provide access to important information and documents	
Elevation of Financial Committee	
Collaboration with Health, Gender Office, HIV Office and other departments.	Expansion of Student Wellness Programme to include campaigns focusing on risky behaviour significantly influencing student well-being.

IDENTIFIED SKILLS NEEDED:

Networking, monitoring and evaluation
 Research design, method development 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



8.3. List of collaborations and partnerships

WELLNESS AND SOCIAL SUPPORT

- HIV/Aids
- Health
- Student Counselling & Development (SCD)
- Gender
- Department of Psychology

STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- CTL
- IRSJ
- Student Counselling & Development (SCD)
- ACT
- SLD
- CUADS

GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

- International Affairs
- Directorate of Institutional Research and Planning
- Department of Research Development
- Institute of Reconciliation and Social Justice
- All faculties
- Various universities in the United States, Europe and Asia

STUDENT COMMUNITIES

- Student Life
- Residence Life
- CTL
- Fellows
- Housing & Residence Affairs
- University Estates
- CUADS
- Student Counselling & Development (SCD)
- Health Centre
- Wellness Centre
- All Student Life divisions

SRC ELECTIONS

- SAS
- Finances
- Protection Service

- Physical resources
- ICT

CIVIL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Kovies ACT
- Community Engagement
- Service Leadership
- HRA
- CTL
- CBM
- NAS
- FTC

STAR OF THE STARS

- Kovies Marketing

CUADS

Disability Support Programme:

Student Affairs intersectionality:

- Student Life & communities
- Residence Life & Residence Committees
- Career Office
- Student Counselling & Development (SCD)
- Research Desk
- Student Governance
- Partnerships and collaboration
- Faculties & Academic Departments
- Housing and Residence Affairs
- No Student Hungry
- UFS Estates
- Centre for Teaching & Learning
- Bursaries & Loans Office
- Student Academic Services
- Library Services
- Kovies Health
- Kovies Sport
- Interpreter Services
- Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice

Liaison, Advocacy and Awareness Programme:

Student Affairs intersectionality:

- Residence Life
- Student Affairs Open Day
- KoviseFM
- Gateway Programme
- Student Counselling & Development (SCD)
- Wellness

Partnerships and collaboration:

- Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice
- SASL Department
- Communication and Brand Management

Staff with Disabilities Programme:

- Human Resources

Staff Development and Training Programme:

- Human Resources
- Centre for Teaching and Learning

Accessibility Programme:

- UFS Estates
- Institutional Advancement Office
- Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice

Accessible Study Material Production Programme:

- Library Services
- Centre for Teaching & Learning
- Academic Departments

Communication Access Programme:

- SASL Department
- Interpreter Services

Alternative Assessment Programme:

- Student Counselling & Development (SCD) – Extra-Time Panel
- Exam Division

Student Academic Support Programme:

- Centre for Teaching and Learning

STUDENT COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT (SCD)

Wellness/Counselling

- Health
- Student Wellness
- HIV/Aids
- Protection Services
- Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support

Development

- Student Wellness
- Student Life & Communities
- Residence Life & Residence Committees
- Career Office
- Student Governance
- Housing & Residence Affairs
- Centre for Teaching and Learning
- Student Leadership
- Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support
- Faculties and Academic Departments

Specific Psychometric Assessments

- Department of Social Work
- Faculty of Education
- Faculty of Theology
- Faculty of Humanities
- Student Academic Services
- Centre for Universal Access and Disability Support
- Exam Division

Operations, Services & Awareness

- Unit for Professional Training & Behavioural Sciences (UNIBS)
- ICT
- Gateway Programme
- Communication & Brand Management
- Kovies Media
- Research Desk

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



UFS·UV
STUDENT AFFAIRS
STUDENTESAKE
DITABA TSA BAITHUTI