Library and Information Service

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Stellenbosch
UNIVERSITY
IYUNIVESITHI
UNIVERSITEIT

Stellenbosch
UNIVERSITY
IYUNIVESITHI
UNIVERSITEIT

Templeton
Prize winner
Prof Pumla
Gobodo-Madikizela

Congratulations
Siyavuyisana nawe
Veels geluk

CONTENTS

"The Library continues to fulfil an integral role in advancing research excellence, thus helping the University reach its goal of addressing global challenges while fostering impactful research informed by the African context.

In 2024 the Library launched innovative tools, presented impactful research programmes and held collaborative events, all of which helped the University to maintain its position at the forefront of research and innovation, both locally and globally.

Having faced various challenges through the year – be it technical, environmental or financial – the Library also remained true to its purpose of providing in the information needs of the academic community and wider public."

Prof Sibusiso Moyo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies

1 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In 2024 we had another year of challenges and triumphs, marked by exciting experiences and valuable lessons, with the Library continuously making a concerted effort to stay relevant to our user community.

The lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic still coloured our operations and service delivery. One notable outcome of that was the closure of the Bellville Park Campus Library (USBL) as a physical branch.

Strategically, our commitment to supporting Stellenbosch University's Vision 2040 by advancing world-class research, teaching and learning through innovative and impactful library and information services remains steadfast. Following a review of our strategic plan and actions, and after studying the report on emerging trends shaping the academic-library landscape, we decided to extend by another year our five-year strategic plan that originally had been set to conclude in 2025.

As part of our effort to stay relevant to our user community, we undertook a survey to understand the space-use patterns and diversity of our clients. The survey had been motivated in part by our 2022 self-evaluation, in which external reviewers had recommended space enhancements to ensure a consistent user experience across all branches. The results will inform future decisions and help us to create an environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all our clients. The survey also yielded over 3 000 comments, which we are analysing and which may point to other problems that users encounter. On the other hand, the analysis may highlight aspects that our users are satisfied with and even excited about.

The University's digital transformation agenda received much attention in 2024, and the Library responded by continuing to use smart technologies innovatively. We did this by focusing on the potential of the latest developments in artificial intelligence (AI) to enrich our service offering. Intentionally promoting the digitalisation of all library processes and workflows aligns with the digital transformation agenda. In 2024, these initiatives included activating a generative AI search experience service by means of the Primo discovery interface; implementing a rules-based chatbot system – with the intention to upgrade it to a retrieval augmented generation (RAG) chatbot system; and supporting student robotics projects in our Makerspace.

Collaboration and partnerships continue to be key enablers of our success, such as securing favourable subscription agreements by virtue of our SANLiC (South African National Library and Information Consortium) membership.

Our staff remain the driving force behind the Library's achievements. In 2024, some staff members participated in international exchange programmes, others used opportunities to attend workshops and skills training, and a few colleagues successfully completed formal qualifications. This demonstrates our dedication to develop and sustain a competent, diverse and agile workforce in alignment with the University's core strategic theme of being an employer of choice.

HIGHLIGHTS 2

Highlights

The Library achieved several milestones in 2024, such as hosting the first IAML Congress in Africa, advancing open access by launching the #BeOpenAccessSmart webinar series and curating a special exhibition celebrating South Africa's 30 years of democracy. Regular activities, such as Library Research Week and the Manuscripts Section lecture series, made a successful return. We also celebrated staff achievements, innovations and awards.

International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML) Congress

The 2024 IAML Congress took place in Stellenbosch from 20 to 28 June – the first time that this prestigious event was hosted on African soil. The Congress, which brings together national and international delegates, offered some Library staff members an important opportunity to attend a congress of such calibre and to present papers at such a level. IAML 2024 aligned very well with the University's internationalisation agenda: delegates from 28 countries, including 8 African nations, attended the opening ceremony on 23 June.

Launch of SU's data management planning tool (SunDMP)

Launching a data management planning tool, SunDMP, to assist researchers in creating data management plans (as funders often require) was another highlight. This new tool supporting efficient research data handling was launched by Prof Sibusiso Moyo – Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies – who accentuated its utility for SU researchers. She encouraged them to make use of SunDMP for the University to realise return on investment in such research tools.

#BeOpenAccessSmart webinar series

The Library successfully launched a new webinar series about open access (OA), #BeOpenAccessSmart, on 17 September. It was partly in response to a need for better education regarding OA, as not all researchers are familiar with the OA publishing options available to them. Thanos Giannakopoulos from the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library delivered the inaugural webinar. His presentation, '(G)AI, Open Access, and Sustainable Development: The evolving role of libraries in a transforming world', delved into the convergence of generative artificial intelligence (GAI), OA and sustainable development, and highlighted the critical role of libraries in those fields. The webinar garnered 460 registrations from 23 countries, and at least 180 participants attended in person.

Library Research Week

Library Research Week was particularly popular in 2024, with 780 participants. The theme, 'Let's achieve excellence in research', aligned with one of the University's core values – research excellence. As usual, the programme featured daily webinars about all aspects of the research process, from preparing and writing research proposals to establishing research impact.

Manuscripts Section lecture

The 2024 Manuscripts Section lecture, which forms part of the Woordfees series Discourse, drew 60 guests. The lecture explored democracy through the lens of primary documents at Special Collections. The diverse panellists reflected on the importance of primary resources in researching and contextualising South Africa's political history.

30 Years of Democracy exhibition

In celebration of South Africa's 30 years of democracy, SU Library hosted a special exhibition about the country's road to the change in dispensation. The exhibition graced our floor for 8 months before moving to the Stellenbosch Public Library, to be enjoyed by an even larger audience.

We showcased documents preserved by our Special Collections division, featuring selections from the South African Debt Crisis 1985/86 Collection, the Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert Collection, the IDASA Collection, the South African Elections Collection, and more. The materials included documents, photographs, newspapers, political posters and books that illustrate key moments from this slice of South African history.

IFLA PressReader International Marketing Award

The Library received yet another feather in its cap, placing in the top 10 for the prestigious International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions' PressReader International Marketing Award from a competitive pool of 107 entries worldwide. The award recognised the Library for its creative TikTok marketing campaigns that were designed to help students overcome, by means of dynamic and easily accessible content, feeling intimidated and uncertain when using the Library. In their evaluation, the IFLA jury praised the campaign's creativity, relevance and success in engaging students, marking it as a pioneering leap in student outreach.

3

THE LIBRARY AT A GLANCE

The Library at a Glance

OUR STAFF

102
staff members

GENDER
65% female
35% male

OUR TRANING INITIATIVES

14 791 clients
received training

65
#SmartResearch
training sessions
presented

40
#SmartStudent
training sessions
presented

76
Makersapce
training sessions
presented

USER ENGAGEMENT

1 811 522
physical visits

514 768
website visits

470 244
views of Library Guides

519 579
searches on Library Search

OUR OPEN-ACCESS (OA) initiatives
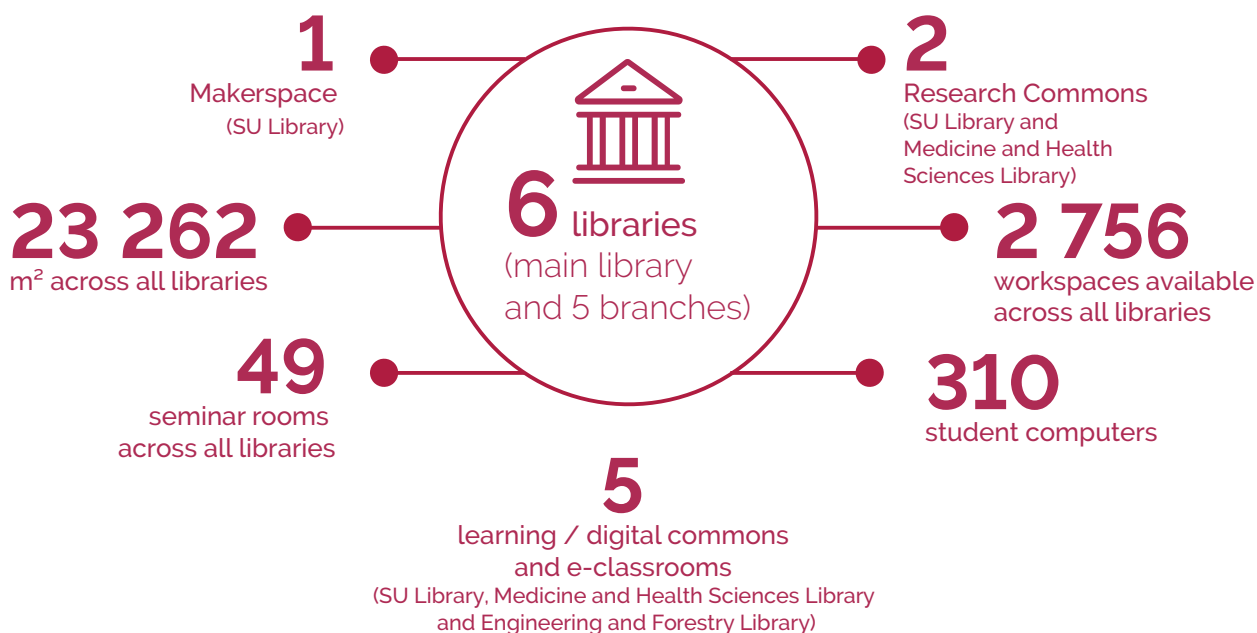
16
read-and-publish
agreements

690
OA articles
published through
read-and-publish
agreements

21
active OA journals
hosted on
SUNJournals

#BeOpenAccessSmart webinar series

OUR SPACES

1
Makerspace
(SU Library)

2
Research Commons
(SU Library and
Medicine and Health
Sciences Library)

23 262
m² across all libraries

6 libraries
(main library
and 5 branches)

2 756
workspaces available
across all libraries

49
seminar rooms
across all libraries

310
student computers

5
learning / digital commons
and e-classrooms
(SU Library, Medicine and Health Sciences Library
and Engineering and Forestry Library)

OUR RESOURCES

19 029
e-books

18 819
items in
SUNDigital
Collections

805 049
printed books

381 671
journal titles with
full-text access

35 675
research outputs
in SUNScholar

6 193
datasets in
SUNScholarData

4 810
linear metres
of manuscript
collections

INFORMATION RESOURCES BUDGET

2023	**2024**
R119 074 522	R123 413 849

OUR SERVICES

4

responsive, both
digital and physical

Our Services

This section relates to our strategic objective 1: "To provide responsive, transformative and inclusive services across digital and physical environments to support and advance research, teaching and learning".

The Library continues to play a critical role in fostering student success through targeted actions that address the evolving needs of our clients.

In the dynamic world of education and information access, we remain committed to ensuring academic achievement. Rapid changes have necessitated constant evaluation and adaptation, establishing the Library as a central hub that provides resources and spaces for on-campus as well as off-campus clients.

Our hybrid approach highlights this adaptability, featuring innovative tools such as the Ask a Librarian service and LibChat, which provides on-demand, real-time online support. Nonetheless, the value of our physical spaces remains clear. As a haven for individual and collaborative study, equipped with Wi-Fi, the Library offers an inclusive environment designed for diverse learning preferences.

4.1 Digital and information skills

Module-specific training

Faculty Librarians present module-specific training sessions tailored to academic modules or subjects, providing clients with the relevant skills, knowledge and resources aligned to their coursework and with a subject-specific library guide.

A total of 11 216 clients participated in module-specific training sessions: 8 406 undergraduate and 2 787 postgraduate students. A breakdown of these numbers is presented in figures 2 and 3.

Figure 1 shows that the number of clients trained has picked up since 2022, when it was the lowest (7 947), reflecting the full effect of the Covid-19 restrictions during that year.
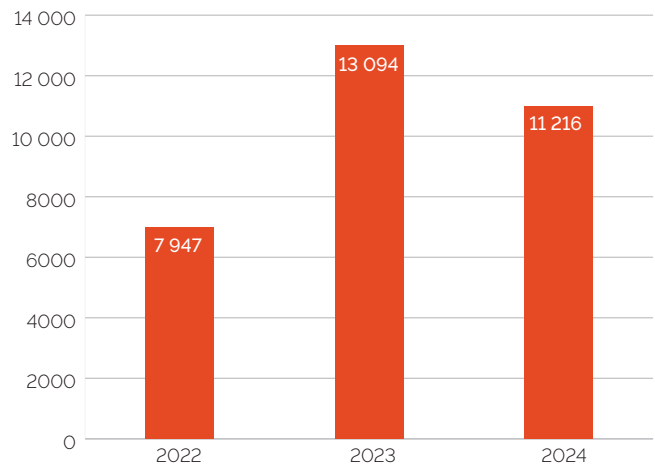

Figure 1: *Module-specific training 2022-2024*

Generic training – #SmartStudent

Generic training via #SmartStudent workshops equips students with skills in retrieving trustworthy information, conducting research and making the most of various library services. Attendance peaked in 2022 across most sessions and dropped notably in 2023 and 2024. A new session on generative artificial intelligence (generative AI) in 2024 attracted 26 attendees, reflecting the growing interest in AI-related topics. Faculty Librarians also covered AI in module-specific training sessions. Consistently popular sessions were 'Improving your literature search strategy' and 'Referencing 101'.

Table 1: *#SmartStudent training attendance 2022–2024*

#SmartStudent training sessions	2022 attendees	2023 attendees	2024 attendees
Create and manage course reading lists in SUNLearn for lecturers	48	23	12
E-books workshop	29	12	14
Find books or articles using the library search engine or subject-specific databases	69	22	28
Find trustworthy information on Google and Google Scholar	54	18	15
Improving your literature search strategy	64	30	35
Introduction to the Library	49	19	13
Introduction to the Stellenbosch University Library Makerspace	24	10	4
Off-campus access to Library e-resources	48	9	N/A
Referencing 101	76	20	38
Introduction to the responsible use of generative AI at university			26
	461	163	185

Undergraduate student training

The number of trainees fluctuated, peaking in 2023 (10 471) following a sharp drop in 2022 (5 395) – likely because of lingering effects of the pandemic – before rebounding strongly in 2023.
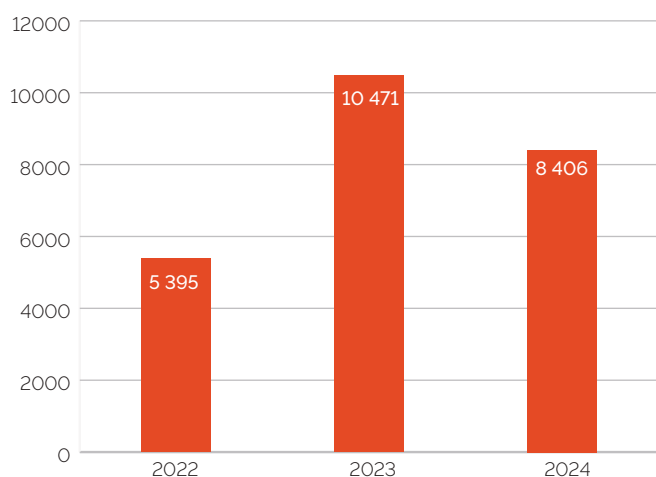
Figure 2: Undergraduate students trained 2022-2024

Postgraduate student training

The number of postgraduate trainees grew gradually from 2022 to 2024. Despite this increasing engagement the numbers remain below pre-pandemic levels.
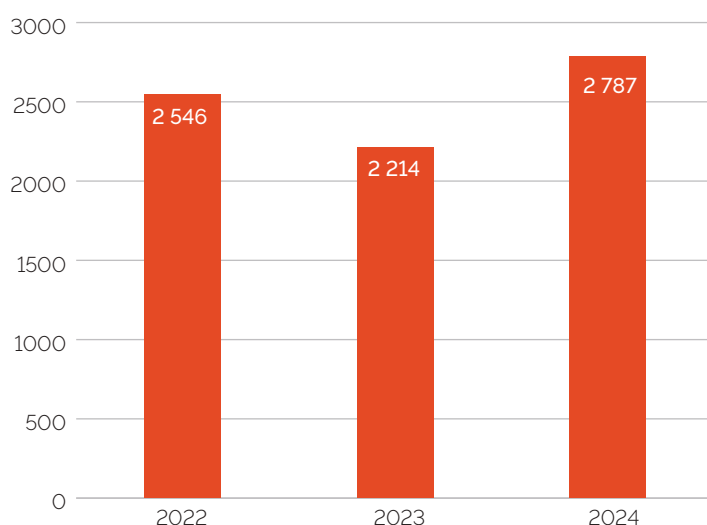
Figure 3: Postgraduate students trained 2022-2024

Library guides

Our library guides ('LibGuides') are crucial in supporting research and advancing information literacy. These research-oriented guides offer students subject-specific, curated resources. By providing easy access to relevant, authoritative content, our LibGuides offering aligns directly with SU strategic goals such as improving student success, advancing research capabilities and promoting academic excellence.

Among the interesting observations about the use of LibGuides in 2024 are that the guide for Law exceeded the 100 000 views mark to become the most viewed among these publications; that research-based guides (e.g. EndNote, Referencing and Research Process) remained popular; and that awareness of open access research (e.g. OA publications and OA textbooks) increased.
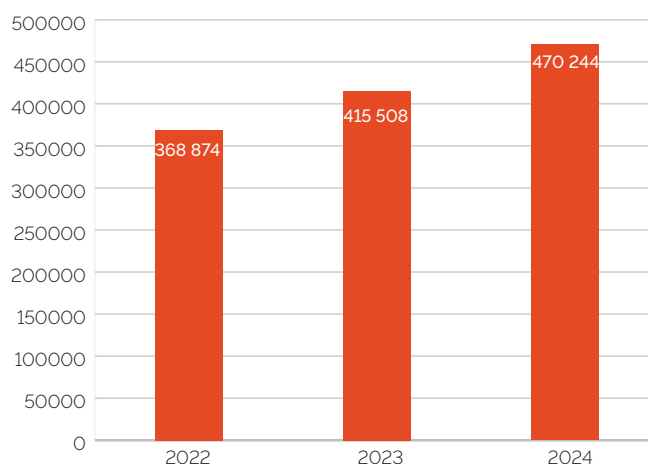
Figure 4: Total annual LibGuide views 2022-2024

Table 2: *Most popular LibGuides in 2024*

	Library Guide	Views
1	Law	105 922
2	Find, access and use information effectively: a step-by-step guide	104 854
3	EndNote 21	28 069
4	Library hours	25 489
5	Referencing	20 197
6	Research process	12 014
7	Political Science	9 208
8	Open Access publishing	9 086
9	Medicine and Health Sciences	8 983
10	Psychology	7 985
11	Open Access textbooks	7 340
12	Theology	6 950
13	Mendeley	6 192
14	Science in context	5 056
15	Directory of South African music collections	4 861
16	Makerspace	4 766
17	E-books	4 482
18	Economics	4 262
19	EMS Professional Communications	3 782
20	Data management planning tool	3 733

4.2 Library usage

Figure 5 shows the annual number of library visits over a three-year period for all our libraries.

One can see growth over the period, reflecting the gradual return to normal interaction and the reopening of physical spaces after the pandemic. Growth continued in 2023. In 2024 access statistics peaked at 1 811 522 – a 23% increase from 2023. This reflects sustained interest in access to the Library as physical space.
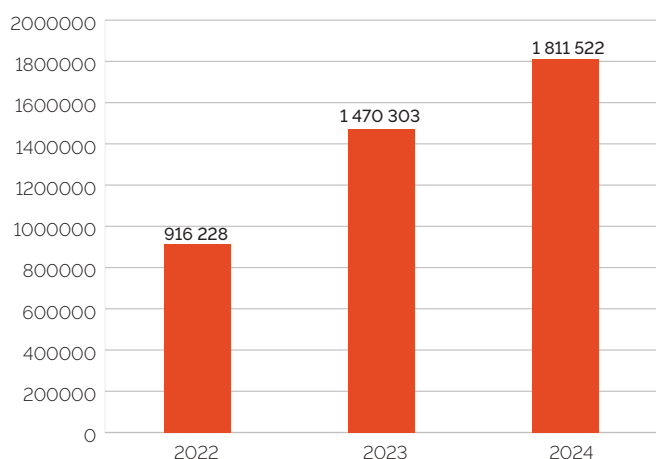

Figure 5: *Library access statistics 2022-2024*

4.3 Makerspace

The Makerspace continues to function as a dynamic hub for innovation, collaboration and creativity that empowers students, faculty and other staff with access to cutting-edge technology and in-demand skills.

In 2024 the Makerspace offered 76 training sessions, which attracted 471 participants. Attendance had grown by no less than 57%, indicating greater engagement and improved session impact, solidifying Makerspace's role as a vital resource for fostering innovation and education within the SU community.

Table 3: *Makerspace access statistics 2021-2024*

	2021	**2022**	**2023**	**2024**
Total entries gate count	n/a	n/a	9 251	8 705
Total gate count	5 088	5 482	5 852	6 130

Steady growth from 2021 (5 088) to 2024 (6 130) showed a 20% increase since the Makerspace had been established.

4.4 Participation in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference

The 2024 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Conference theme, 'Towards Integrated Student Success', emphasised a student-centred approach to teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) at SU. The focus was on emotional intelligence, inclusivity, digital literacy and the role of AI in higher education.

The conference strengthens collaboration among the Centre for Learning Technologies and faculties for curriculum development. The event underscored the Library's role in fostering student success and inclusivity while addressing digital and AI literacy needs. It delivered actionable ideas and collaborations to drive impactful initiatives in 2025.

4.5 Leganto system for course reading lists

The Leganto system for course reading lists enables lecturers to create and manage reading lists directly on the SU learning management system. Integrated with the Moodle environment and connected to the library management and discovery systems, Leganto saves lecturers time and provides students with a centralised hub for learning resources.

In 2024 the Library worked closely with faculties, the Centre for Learning Technologies and the Division of Information Technology to enhance lecturer course reading workflows in Moodle. Individual and group training sessions were conducted to raise awareness of Leganto, and a workshop for FASS (Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences) lecturers – 'Course reading list and copyright' – was held in March in collaboration with the FASS Advisor: Higher Education and the SU Copyright Office.

Leganto was upgraded to a new, more intuitive user interface with a cleaner look and feel as well as improved mobile responsiveness.

As regards uptake by departments, 41 of the 78 academic departments at SU had adopted Leganto reading lists by December 2024. They included Agronomy, Ancient Studies, Conservation Ecology and Entomology, Industrial Psychology, Psychology, Psychiatry, Visual Arts and the School for Public Leadership. The departments of Civil Engineering and Social Work had adopted Leganto for the first time.

4.6 Virtual information services

Ask a Librarian

Clients made good use of our virtual information service, Ask a Librarian. The frequently asked questions (FAQ) pages allow clients to find answers without having to submit a new question, which reduces duplication and effort.
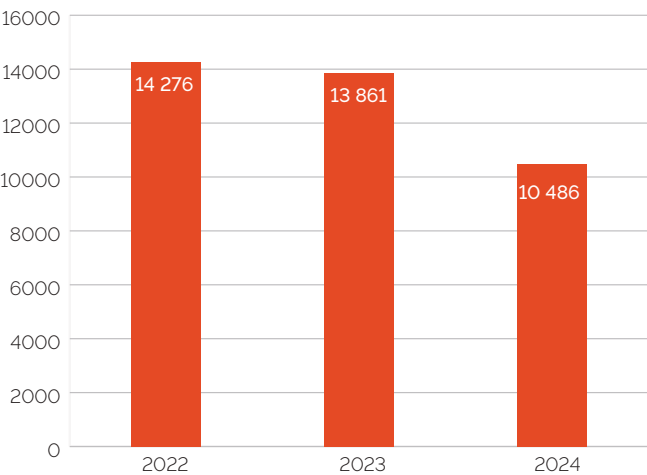

Figure 6: *Number of views of Ask a Librarian FAQ pages 2022-2024*

Numbers peaked in 2022 and dropped significantly, to 10 486, in 2024 – a 24,3% decrease from 2023. This may indicate reduced engagement, shifts in user behaviours or training that had empowered users to retrieve information from the Library website.

Figure 7 indicates a consistent decline also in new questions that were asked. This may correlate with the drop in FAQ views, as fewer updates could reduce user interest and the perceived relevance of the content.
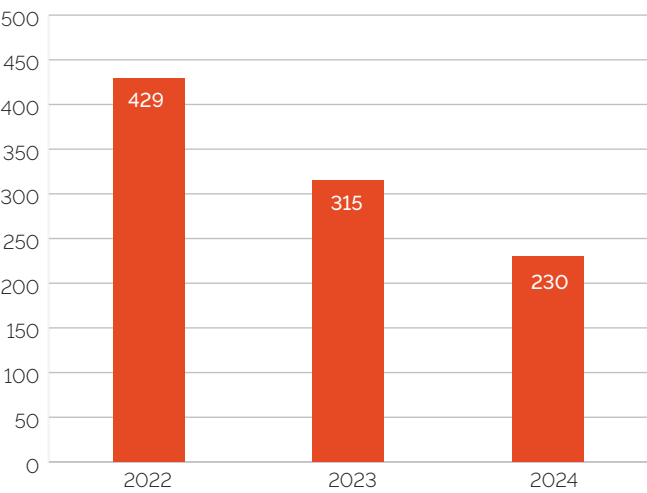

Figure 7: *New questions posted to Ask a Librarian 2022-2024*

LibChat

LibChat, the built-in reference module for LibAnswers, enables libraries to create and embed chat widgets, allowing patrons to connect with Library staff in real time during office hours. Librarians actively monitor and respond to inquiries. The most common queries of 2024 included requests for specific articles, books, software, database access and login assistance. Patrons also sought operational information, such as room bookings, circulation services and book renewal requests. Additionally, more in-depth support was requested, particularly for research assistance from Faculty Librarians. In total, we handled 432 queries in 2024.

4.7 Borrowing statistics

Figure 8 below shows borrowing trends at the Library and provides insights for optimising the use of resources.
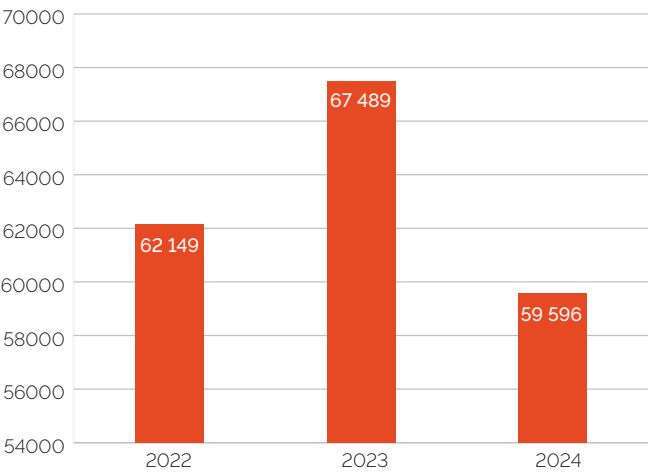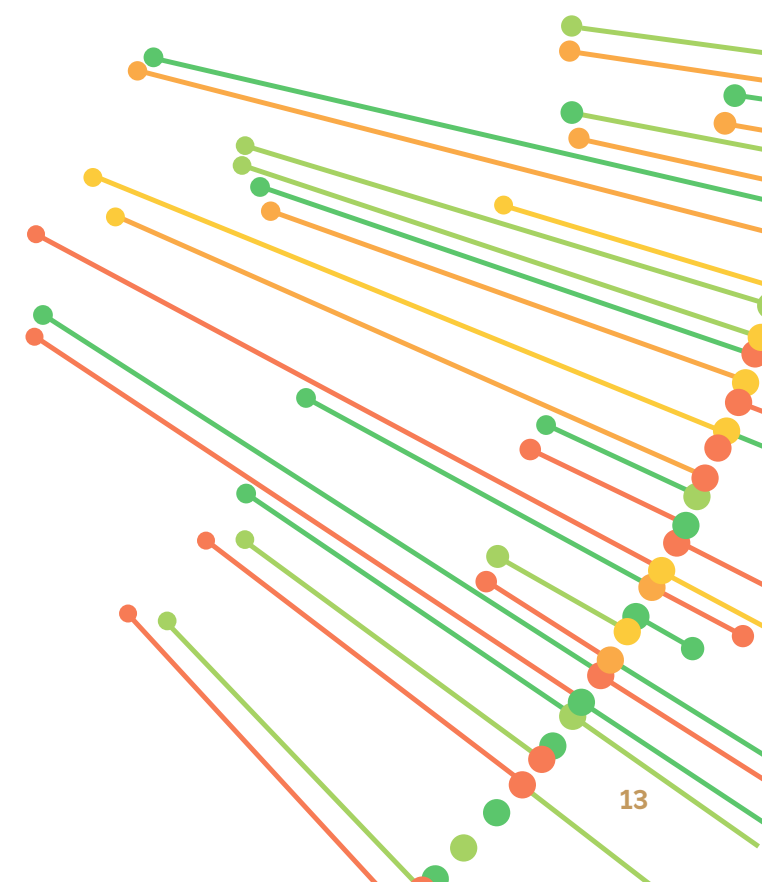

Figure 8: *Borrowing statistics 2022-2024*

Overall trends indicate that borrowing at the SU Library had increased from 2022 to 2023 and then declined during 2024. The 2024 total, 59 596, was a 12% decrease from 2023. This may reflect shifting user preferences, increased use of digital resources or other external factors.

Figure 9 represents borrowing statistics across libraries from 2022 to 2024. Borrowing at the SU Library surpasses the numbers at other branches significantly and across all years, as the SU Library is our main library and has the largest and most diverse collections.
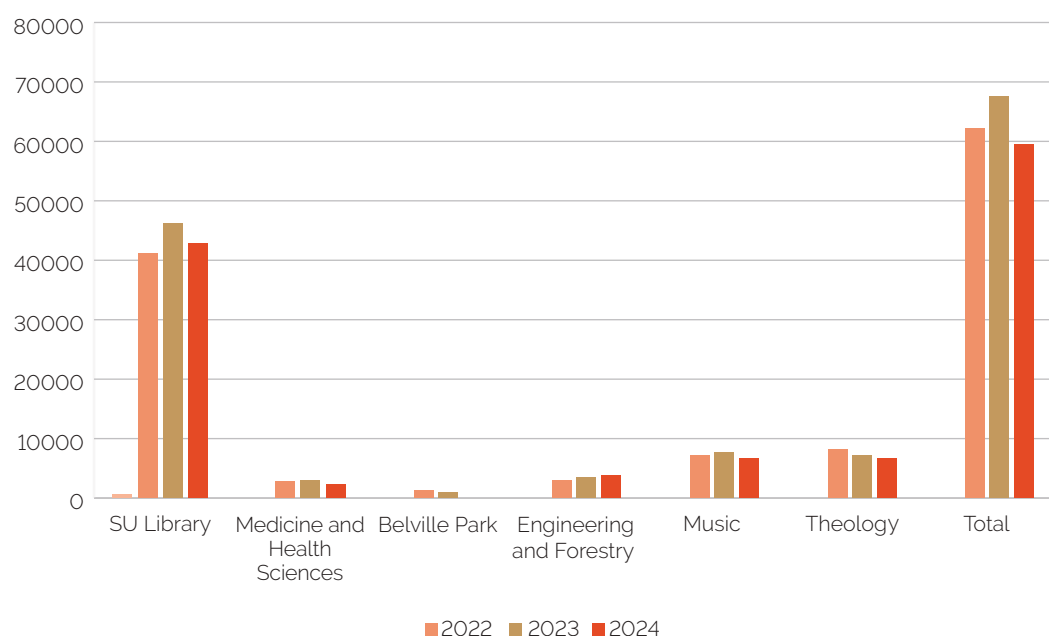

Figure 9: SU Library and branch libraries borrowing statistics 2022-2024

4.8 Interlibrary loans

As libraries are not always able to fulfil all clients' needs, interlibrary loans remain an important service. The Library often requests books from other libraries, nationally and internationally, to deliver to our users. Similarly, other libraries borrow from us.

In 2024 the Library received 1 397 requests, the majority being national requests, and we delivered 1 187 items to other libraries.

5

OUR
COLLECTIONS
beyond boundaries

Our Collections

"To accelerate scholarship and learning through the provision of optimal access to and use of format-neutral, responsive collections".

The Library focused on the following actions regarding collections:

- Increase the provision of digital content.

- Enhance the discoverability of all information resources.

- Optimise access to and use of digitised content.

- Develop innovative and engaging methods of showcasing our distinctive collections.

- Progress continued on our action plan for converting records in preparation for evolving formats. The Metadata Management division worked hard at this, enhancing our metadata quality by means of the Linked Data Project, which is central to the conversion of bibliographic records. Several AACR2 records (using the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules) were converted to the RDA standard (Resource Description and Access) and all new bibliographic records are described according to RDA.

5.1 Materials budget

To ensure the financial sustainability of the allocated budget, an intensive subscriptions evaluation and review was conducted in 2024. The exercise resulted in savings that will be redirected to purchase critical information resources and to realign the subscriptions collection with a focus on filling collection gaps.

In 2024 the University's allocation for library material was R125 574 781. This amount includes R97 003 826 from the Institutional Budget, a decrease of 1.62% on the 2023 allocation, and R28 570 955 from the University's investment pool funds to cover the shortfall due to higher foreign exchange rates.

5.2 E-journals and databases

R94 372 328 of the materials budget had been allocated for subscriptions (journals and databases), excluding continuations. In 2024 we added 270 print journals and 283 e-journals to the collection, bringing the total journal subscriptions to 553.

The Library provided access to 381 671 full-text journals and to 110 databases and journal packages.

The table below shows the top 25 databases based on usage in 2024.

Table 4: *Top 25 databases*

TOP 25 DATABASES 2024

DATABASE/JOURNAL PACKAGE	FACULTY	USAGE/ FULL-TEXT DOWNLOADS
Scopus	General	1 852 559
PressReader	General	1 390 888
ScienceDirect (Elsevier)	General	1 028 879
Web of Science	General	842 869
Springer Nature journal package	General	405 607
Wiley Online Library	General	298 885
Taylor & Francis. SSH and S&T Journals	General	278 479
JSTOR	General	180 996
UpToDate	Medicine and Health Sciences	153 122
Endnote	General	142 136
LexisNexis Law Database South Africa	Law	139 111
Sage Premier Journal Collection	General	110 127
EasyData	Economic and Management Sciences	89 383
ACS (American Chemical Society) publications	Science	78 034
Knovel	Engineering	77 143
IEEE	Engineering	76 182
APA PsycINFO	Arts and Social Sciences	73 146
Oxford Journal Collection	General	70 960
South African Labour	General	63 318
Sabinet African Journals	General	61 363
ProQuest One Business	Economic and Management Sciences	59 600
Encyclopaedia Britannica	General	52 257
HeinOnline	Law	51 604
Gale Research Complete	General	48 069
Thesaurus Linguae Graecae	Arts and Social Sciences	46 571
TOTAL		7 671 288

5.3 Books

The number of print books purchased in 2024 decreased by 38% from 2023: from 1 814 to 1 131. This was because of the limited budget allocation for purchasing print books in 2024 necessitated by the University's cost-cutting measures implemented in 2024.

The number of e-books purchased in 2024 decreased by 36,75% from 2023: from 615 to 389 due to the same cost-cutting measures mentioned above..

The graphs below show the growth of the print and e-book collections.
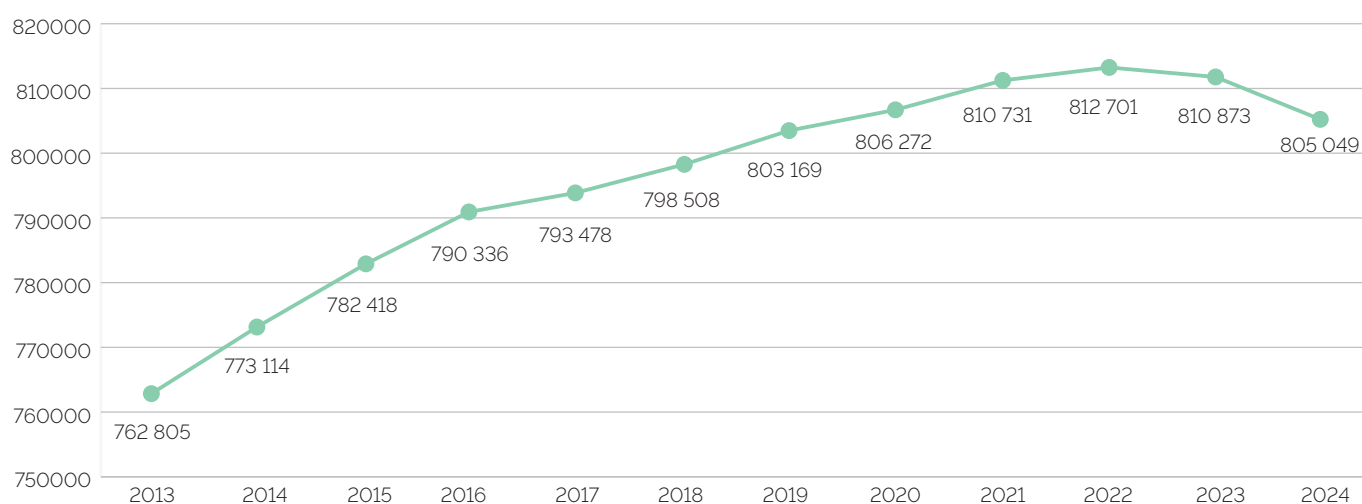

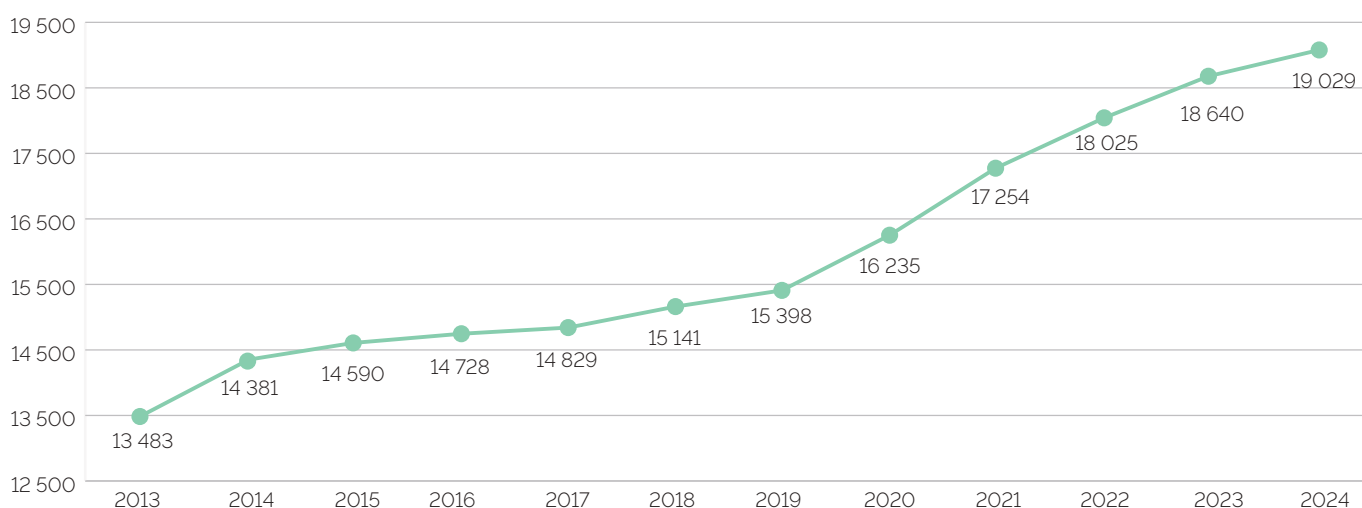**Figure 10:** *Growth of printed books collection 2013-2024*

Figure 11: *Growth of e-book collection 2013-2024*

5.4 Special Collections

Research outputs

Use of our Special Collections division – Manuscripts, Rare Books and Africana sections – and collections at the Documentation Centre for Music (DOMUS) delivered the following research outputs:

Articles

- Bangani, S. 2024. Leveraging community engagement to contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 11. *IFLA Journa*l, 50(3):451–462. https://doi.org/10.1177/03400352241263533.

  (Africana, Manuscripts: various collections)

- Lambrechts, L, Lindström, K, Hansen Van der Watt, L-M, Pitta, F, Deane, N, Moreschi, B & Petersen, L. 2024. Decay without mourning: Future-thinking heritage practices. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*:1-18. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2024.2417062.

  (DOMUS: Hidden Years Music Archive Project [HYMAP])

- Ncume, PS. 2024. Stellenbosch University Library exhibition celebrates 30 years of democracy *Liasa-In-Touch*, 25(3):25.

  (Manuscripts: various SA political collections)

Book

Cleophas, F. 2024. *Physical education and physical culture in South Africa, 1837-1966.* Cham: Springer.

(Africana)

Conference presentations

- Gollom, I. 2024. An overview of the life and career of South African concert pianist Lionel Charles Bowman (1919-2006) as compiled from the primary source material in the Lionel Bowman collection. Annual Congress, International Association of Music Libraries Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML), Department of Music, Stellenbosch University, 23-28 June.

  (DOMUS: Lionel Bowman Collection)

- Khati, P. 2024. Preservation of Special Collections material at Stellenbosch University Library and Information Service. Bi-Centenary Conference on Preservation of Knowledge and Documentary Heritage, Thaba Bosiu Cultural Village, Maseru, Lesotho, 22-24 August.

  (Manuscripts: various collections)

- Lambrechts, L & Van der Want, S. 2024. Life in the archive: Investigating growth and decay in the Hidden Years Music Archive. 18th annual SASRIM Conference, Department of Music, University of the Witwatersrand, 26-28 July.

  (DOMUS: HYMAP Collection)

- Lambrechts, L & Van der Want, S. 2024. Making the invisible visible: Investigating the hidden life of fungi in the archive. Annual Congress, International Association of Music Libraries Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML), Department of Music, Stellenbosch University, 23-28 June.

  (DOMUS: HYMAP Collection)

- Röntsch, M. 2024. Persona and the archive: Reconsidering the Christopher James Biography Project. 18th annual SASRIM Conference, Department of Music, University of the Witwatersrand, 26-28 July.

  (DOMUS: Christopher James Collection)

- Ncume, PS. 2024. Bringing the 'hidden' to the 'public': The case of Hidden Years Music Archive. Annual Congress, International Association of Music Libraries Archives and Documentation Centres (IAML), Department of Music, Stellenbosch University, 23-28 June.

  (DOMUS: HYMAP Collection)

Figure 12: *Staff of the Music Library, from left: Sonette le Roux, Melten Fortuin, Santie de Jongh, Mbongiseni Magagula and Beulah Gericke-Geldenhuys*

Theses and dissertations

- Bergemann, KJ. 2024. The Runaways: A study of enslaved, apprenticed and indentured labour flight at the Cape in the emancipation era, 1830-42 [Online]. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University. Available: https://scholar.sun. ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/10eddb3c-72ad-431b-b737-6defe0e179ed/content.

    (Africana, Rare Books)

- Malan, E. 2024. Vir die Musiekleier / To the Director of Music: Bydraes tot navorsing van orrel- en kerkmusiek (1980-2020) [Online]. Unpublished master's thesis. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University. Available: https://scholar.sun.ac.za/handle/10019.1/130257.

    (DOMUS: SAKOV Collection).

- Struwig, M. 2024. An intellectual history of institutionalised music studies in South Africa [Online]. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University. Available: https://scholar.sun. ac.za/handle/10019.1/130248.

    (DOMUS: Bernard van der Linde, SASRIM)

    (Africana, Manuscripts: various collections – GG Cillié Jnr, WJ du P Erlank, HB Thom)

New collections and additions

Five new collections were donated to DOMUS:

- The collection of composer Surendran Reddy, donated by Heike Asmuss, was shipped from Germany. The Africa Open Institute (AOI) covered the costs.

- Sandra Cohen donated videos and sound recordings to the Jewish Music Collection.

- Philippe and Marika Moonens donated CDs of works by Hendrik Hofmeyr, Arnold van Wyk and René Maillard during a visit on 27 March 2024. The CDs contain works performed by Marika Moonens (née Hofmeyr).

- Bret Werb donated a Jewish music CD, Ballads and Broadsides, during the IAML 2024 Congress.

- Garth Chilvers donated two books and a CD-ROM (containing a reference guide) on South African popular music artists by the donor and Tom Jasiukowiez.

Figure 13: *Philippe and Marika Moonens donated CDs of works by Hendrik Hofmeyr, Arnold van Wyk and René Maillard during a visit on 27 March 2024. The CDs contain works performed by Marika Moonens (née Hofmeyr)*

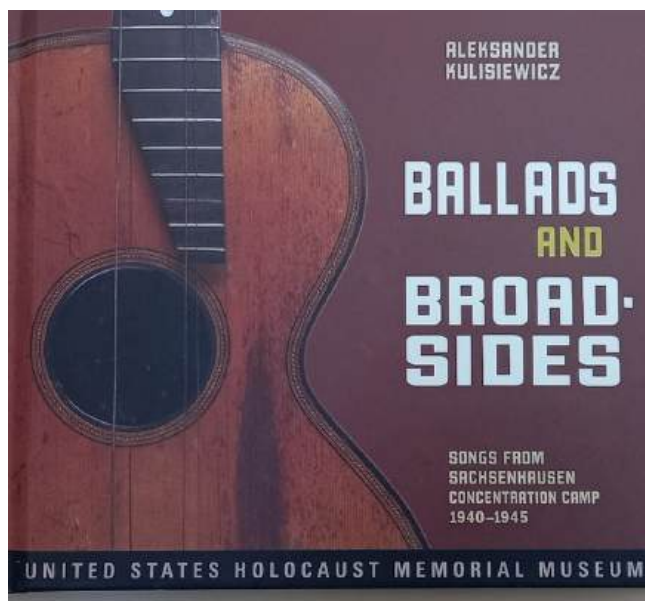**Figure 14:** *Heike Asmuss, donor of the Surendran Reddy Collection*

Figure 15: *Jewish music CD, Ballads and Broadsides, donated by Bret Werb during the IAML 2024 Congress*

Four additions were received to DOMUS collections in the Music Library in 2024:

- The fully digitised collection of Nico Carstens on a hard drive, together with paper documents, was donated during a visit by his son, Klem Carstens, on 15 August 2024.

- A CD with the complete works of South African composer John Simon (PDF and Sibelius formats), as well as sheet music, was donated by the composer during his visit on 6 November.

- Composer Michael Blake donated documents of scholar and composer June Schneider and notes, correspondence and music manuscripts of his own.

- Musicologist Christine Lucia donated research materials on South African composer Michael Moerane.

Figure 16: *Composer Michael Blake music manuscript*

Figure 17: *Klem Carstens handing over the Nico Carstens Digital Database to Beulah Gericke-Geldenhuys and Santie de Jongh at the SU Music Library*

The following items were added to the Manuscripts Section during 2024:

- Edwin Cameron Collection – more documents and articles on Justice Cameron's work [MS 461]

- Van Wijk Rhenish Missionary Society Collection [MS 295]

- New Unity Movement Collection [MS 463]

- SU Library Collection [MS 354]

5.5 Events and exhibitions

The following events, exhibitions and activities were undertaken in 2024 to raise awareness of Special Collections and DOMUS:

- The IAML featured an online event on 13 March as a curtain raiser for their Congress 2024. A film was shown that featured items from the South African Jewish Music Centre, Nico Carstens, Patrick Lee-Thorp, Albert Coates, John Roos, Eoan Group and Konservatorium collections held in DOMUS.

- During the IAML Congress, documents from the Eoan Group Collection – held in DOMUS – were exhibited in the Music Library foyer.

- The 14th Woordfees Manuscripts Section lecture was presented on 1 October. It focused on the political history collections and the road to democracy in South Africa from 1980 onwards. The lecture attracted a number of students; probably through a combination of the topic and a partnership with the Department of Journalism that included a student assignment. There were ±60 attendees. The event featured informative and interactive discussions.

- The family of James Walton and the Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa visited the Library on 3 April to view an exhibition of vernacular architecture collections in our Special Collections division.

Figure 18: *Members of Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa (VASSA) and family members of James Walton viewing the documents from the James Walton Collection*

OUR
TECHNOLOGY

6

the digital-first
experience

Our Technology

The Library's technology strategy is shaped by strategic interventions that use smart technologies innovatively to enable a digital-first library service and experience. In the physical library setting, this digital-first approach finds its implementation through self-assistance technologies and innovation spaces; in the online library environment, by implementing automated and direct client services. These strategic interventions are aligned with the Library's various strategic objectives to ensure that we remain in step with the latest technological developments in the service of our patrons and staff members.

Figure 19: *Staff of the Information Technology Services (ITS), from left: Wouter Klapwijk, Clint September, Natasja Malherbe, Anita Liebenberg, Marlon Adams and Shaun Adams*

6.1 Digital transformation

In 2024 the Library continued to use smart technologies innovatively by focusing on the potential of the latest developments in artificial intelligence (AI) to enrich our current service offering. Our AI initiatives are guided by the digital-first strategy, which in turn aligns closely to SU's digital transformation agenda by intentionally promoting the digitalisation of all library processes and workflows, capitalising on an earlier investment: the implementation of a cloud-based library system in 2016. An example of this strategy from 2024 was the activation of Primo Research Assistant, a generative-AI search experience service with the Primo discovery interface.

The primary focus of AI adoption according to the digital-first strategy is on applications in natural language processing (NLP), growing support for student robotics projects in our Makerspace, and continued investment in knowledge representation projects – such as the linked open bibliographic data project. Through applications in these AI focus areas, the Library in 2024 actively investigated opportunities to optimise access to collections, streamline our operations, enhance research support services and improve user experiences. The opportunities discovered were encapsulated in an AI framework to guide future AI implementation projects and upskill Library staff in relevant AI literacies. We finalised our investigation into a data visualisation system for implementation in 2025. The Library also made substantial progress in introducing virtual reality (VR) services – as precursor to a framework for data visualisation services – by training students in VR by means of 25 VR headsets.

The first project to emerge from the AI framework in 2024 was the implementation of a rules-based chatbot system, with the intention to upgrade it to a RAG system soon. In its current iteration, the chatbot system answers predefined reference questions and is due for implementation on the Library website in 2025. Preparatory work for reimplementing the Library website in 2025 also was completed during 2024, which allows for the site's being installed as a separate database in the SU Drupal system. That will facilitate customisation of the Library site's depth in information architecture, rich dynamic content and bespoke discovery services.
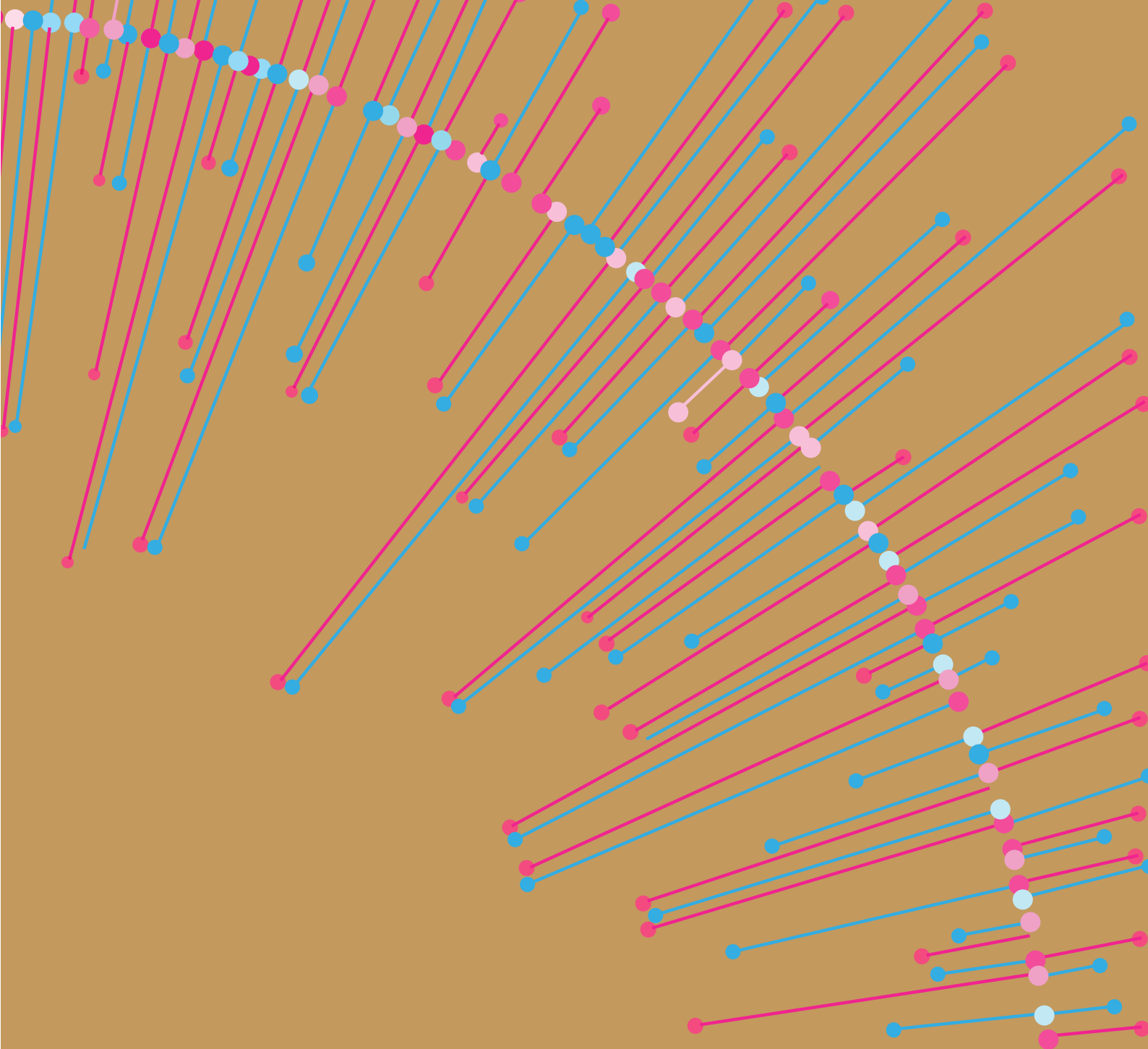
6.2 Research Information management

The Library participated actively in the implementation of a new research information system, Symplectic Elements, for SU. The process includes the integration of SUNScholar with Symplectic Elements and facilitates self-deposit of OA research outputs by academic authors, which in turn assists with reporting to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for publication subsidies. The Library also did the preliminary groundwork to activate ORCiD IDs within Symplectic Elements to allow for SU researchers' ORCiD profile records to remain automatically updated, which is required for maintaining comprehensive researcher profile records in the Symplectic Discovery system.

6.3 Resources – discoverability and access

In 2024 the Library made headway enhancing access for students and lecturers to academic resources that are available on our library management and course management systems, Leganto and Alma. We did this by continuing the process of replacing location-based access to electronic resources with the user-based access services of the South African Identity Federation (SAFIRE). Thus the Library is continually modernising our systems to provide access to electronic resources, and safeguarding them against cyberattacks and identity theft. For academic resources that are not yet compatible with the Federation standard, we maintain our off-campus Ezproxy system. The Library remains a staunch advocate for OA through our wide-ranging services and information systems offering.

7

SCHOLARSHIP

shaping the future of
academic exploration

Scholarship

This section relates to our strategic objective 4:
"To increase our leadership role in digital scholarship and research support at the institution".

7.1 Scholarly Communication

Scholarly Communication continues to respond to technological developments to ensure that sharing of research outputs and engagement with the academic community persist at a high level.

In 2024 engagements with external stakeholders have raised the profile of our repositories. The signing of an agreement with the AGRIS network (International System for Agricultural Science and Technology) of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations ensures that metadata be harvested from our institutional repository, SUNScholar. This makes SU research available on one of the most comprehensive search engines in the literature on food and agricultural sciences.

We have also given the Africa PID (Persistent Identifier) Alliance access to metadata in our heritage repository, SUNDigital Collections. The Alliance is part of the Open Infrastructure Program of the Training Centre in Communication Africa. Their mission is to secure the future of African innovation, indigenous knowledge and cultural heritage by providing reliable, open research infrastructure services that offer access to knowledge and metadata about digital objects. Access to SUNDigital Collections allows the Alliance to do a case study on how collections are used in research publications and, eventually, to develop persistent identifiers for these types of collections.

Institutional repository

We added 1 259 theses and dissertations and 1 171 research articles by SU authors to the institutional repository, SUNScholar, in 2024. Statistics regarding usage show an increase in visits, reaching ±528 000 in 2024.

The top five most viewed items in the repository in 2024 were:

- 'Bantoe-onderwys sedert die Wet op Bantoe-onderwys, 1953', a 1965 thesis with 3 504 views

- 'Corruption: consequences for socio-economic well-being in South Africa', an article published in 2019 with 3 104 views

- ''n Behoefte aan die integrering van tegnologie in die Afrikaans Huistaal-klaskamer om die ontwikkeling van 21ste-eeuse vaardighede te ondersteun : 'n gevallestudie', a 2019 article with 2 580 views

- 'The influence of music on concentration in individuals with ADHD', a 2020 thesis with 1 629 views

- 'Civilian-military interaction on the Matie campus: the 'battle of Wilgenhof', 1957', a 2009 article with 1 197 views
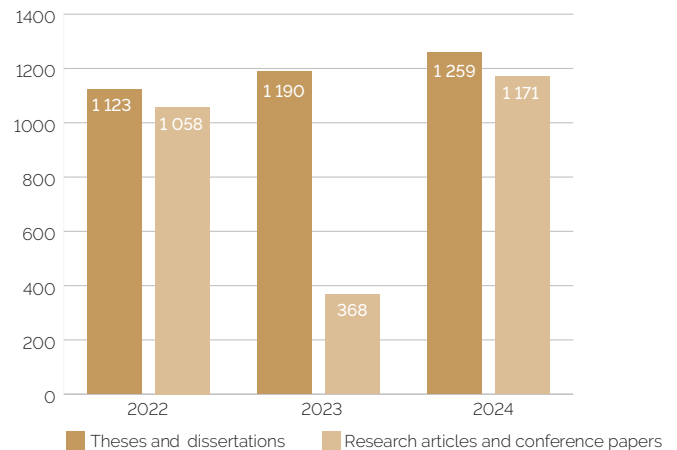

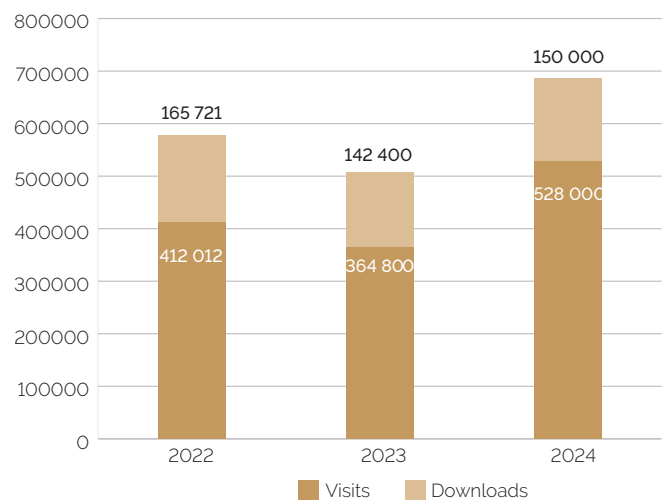*Figure 20: Research outputs added to SUNScholar 2022-2024*

Figure 21: SUNScholar usage 2022-2024

Digital heritage repository

We grew our digital heritage repository, SUNDigital Collections, by 325 new items in 2024, bringing the total to 18 819. Items were added to several existing collections, for example the IDASA and South African Elections collections. A notable new collection is that of the newspaper *De Paarl*, dating from 1892. Published by well-known Afrikaans family concern DF du Toit & Co., these newspapers offer a fascinating look at everyday life in a small town in the Western Cape before the 20th century. They also cover national and even international news of the time.

Use of the repository increased compared to 2023: from 43 090 views to 50 226, and from 19 685 downloads to 24 826. Most visits in 2024 were from North America, while in previous years most visitors had come from the African continent.

We conducted a preliminary investigation into the impact of this repository. A Google Scholar search revealed that 52 research outputs had emerged from collections or items hosted on SUNDigital Collections. Those included several journal articles, theses and dissertations, book chapters and a contribution to the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History*.

For example the article 'Between memory and history: the restoration of Tulbagh as cultural signifier' by J Augustyn-Clark was a 2017 UCT thesis utilising the André Pretorius Collection, 'Advertising the enslaved for sale 1830-4' by W Raaijmakers was a book chapter drawing on De Zuid-Afrikaan newspaper Collection and 'The complexities of heritage production in a South African community from the 1900s to the present: Graaff-Reinet, a Case Study', by AF Kayster was a SU doctoral thesis referencing the HB Thom Collection.
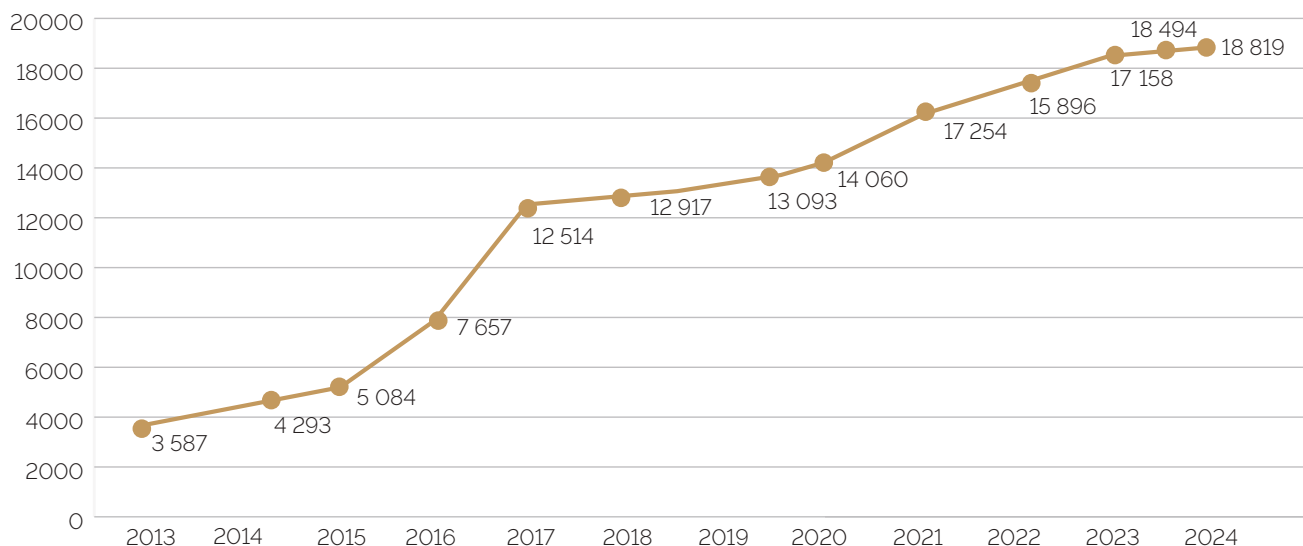

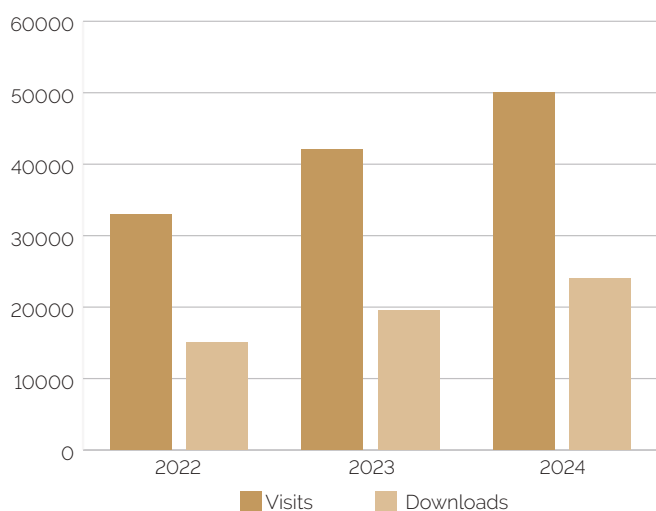**Figure 22:** *Growth of items in SUNDigital Collections since inception*

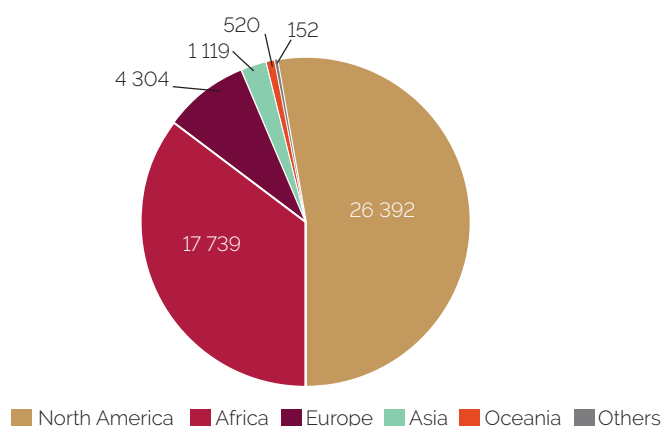**Figure 23:** *SUNDigital Collections usage 2022-2024*

Figure 24: *SUNDigital Collections visits by continent 2024*

Journal hosting service

SUNJournals, the Library's OA journal hosting service, hosted 67 research outputs by SU authors in 21 active journals in 2024. We added one journal to the platform in 2024: *R&D Journal of The South African Institution of Mechanical Engineering.*

We employed the CiteScore metric to investigate the impact of journals hosted by the Library. Several journals showed high citation counts. For the *South African Journal of Enology and Viticulture*, the average citation rate was 2,5 per article, placing it in the 60th percentile of sources in its category. *Lexikos* also performed well, placing in the 68th percentile of lexicography journals.

7.2 Research support

#SmartResearcher training

These training sessions offer practical and theoretical workshops aimed at postgraduate students and early-career researchers. Training is structured according to the research process. The 2024 #SmartResearcher programme was as successful as in previous years. The number of attendees increased from 2023: from 1 043 to 2 611. We introduced hybrid workshops in 2024, but attracted too few in-person attendees to justify continued use of the electronic classroom. Thus, in the second semester, the workshops reverted to online only.

The Library introduced a few new workshops in 2024. Notably, 'EndNote for reference management' replaced Mendeley training. Other new workshops included 'Enhancing your research impact through open-access publishing', 'Makerspace for research and innovation – 3D printing, rapid prototyping and more', 'Tableau for intermediate users' and 'Systematic reviews for medicine and health sciences'.

Clients who had attended three or more workshops qualified for a certificate of attendance. We received 11 requests for such certificates in 2024.

Table 5: #SmartResearcher workshop attendance 2024

Webinar	Attendees	Recording Views
An overview of SUNScholarData – the SU institutional data repository	24	3
Copyright issues in theses and dissertation writing	27	6
Data Management Planning	49	5
EndNote for reference management	297	119
EndNote for reference management at Medicine and Health Sciences	50	1
Enhancing your research impact through open access publishing	16	0
Finding Government Statistics	33	6
How to conduct a Literature Review	305	89
Increasing the visibility of your research output through self-archiving	6	1
Introduction to Microsoft Power BI	59	34
Introduction to Special Collections: Dealing with primary collections	19	0
Introduction to Tableau Desktop and Flourish for data visualisation	51	16
Library induction for postgraduate students and academic staff	135	36
Makerspace for Research and Innovation – 3D Printing, Rapid Prototyping and More	12	1
Making important decisions about publishing your research	13	2
Managing your unique author identity with ORCID	16	0
Maximise your research impact	2	1
Migrating your Mendeley Library to EndNote	136	39
Migrating your Mendeley Library to EndNote (Medicine and Health Sciences)	31	2
Overview of software for effective data analysis and data visualisation	82	25
Principles of Data Visualisation	103	8
RDM tools, resources and training	48	6
Submitting your thesis /dissertation to SUNScholar	78	0
Systematic Reviews	103	36
Systematic Reviews for Medicine and Health Sciences	2	3
Tableau for Intermediate Users	17	11
Tips on how to format your thesis (MS Word)	255	54
Tools and applications for research	109	21
Total	2078	525

Research impact services

To aid researchers in demonstrating their research impact, we provided reports to researchers comprising data from five databases – Google Scholar, Web of Science, Scopus, Dimensions and Altmetric Explorer. About 40 full reports were delivered to individual researchers. The reports included a Microsoft Power BI report, which provides more in-depth information about a researcher's output and metrics related to their publications.

Faculty Librarians received fewer requests for bibliometric analysis compared to 2023: ±140 requests in 2024 (230 in 2023). These requests included SciVal reports, h-index requests, journal indicators and, in some cases, an overview of metrics for researchers from a whole department or faculty. SciVal is a research performance assessment tool that allows users to visualise research performance, benchmark relative to peers and analyse research trends.

We created a template to include the most important metrics based on SciVal data from 1996 onwards for individual researchers. The template was shared with the whole University community via the SciVal platform. Table 6 shows the statistics for usage in 2024.

Table 6: *SciVal usage statistics January to December 2024*

2024	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Users	32	17	32	35	44	36	40	33	32	41	38	21	401
Visits	74	32	71	68	96	105	78	81	55	85	98	63	906
Page views	620	129	474	524	600	841	453	497	356	649	662	505	6 310

Subsequently, SciVal usage at SU was compared with statistics for the top three SciVal users among South African universities. Table 7 shows that SU compares very well with other universities. The data reflect the numbers for 2024 and cover only logged-in users.

Table 7: *Top SciVal usage at universities, compared to average for South Africa and usage at SU*

University	Logged-in users	Logged-in visits	Page views
University 1	549	1 488	6 333
University 2	486	1 155	6 527
University 3	348	1 084	7 756
SA average	220	560	3 819
Stellenbosch University	428	906	6 310

Unique author identification with Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID)

As of 2024, 8 113 SU staff and students using an SU email address have registered ORCID IDs – 1 160 more than at the end of 2023. Among those 8 113, 2 149 (27%) had connected their IDs to their SU identities through the University's integration with ORCID (see Figure 25).

Integration between ORCID and the institutional repository, SUNScholar, had been established in 2023. By December 2024, a total of 425 IDs were thus connected, while 315 researchers connected their IDs via Symplectic Elements.
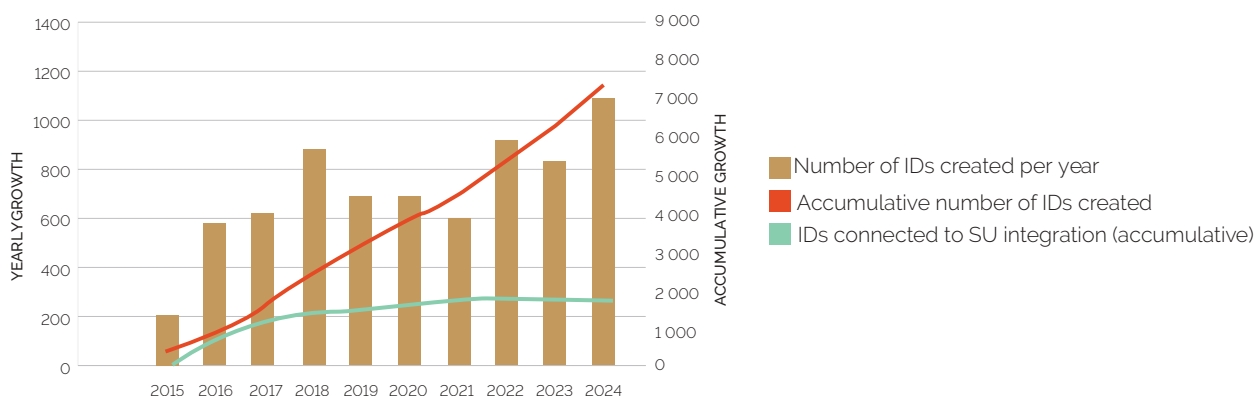

Figure 25: *ORCID IDs created with a SU email domain compared with the number of researchers who connected their IDs through SU integration*

Research data services

The Library continued to advance our research data management (RDM) initiatives, ensuring that researchers be equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to manage their data effectively. Continued use of our online resources and the successful implementation of innovative tools and services vouch for our commitment to enhancing research data stewardship.

The LibGuide Data Management Planning Tool (SunDMP) received an impressive 3 766 views during the 2024 academic year, while Research Data Management Guide recorded 3 802 views, as shown in Figure 26. Those resources provided comprehensive support to researchers in creating and maintaining robust data management plans.
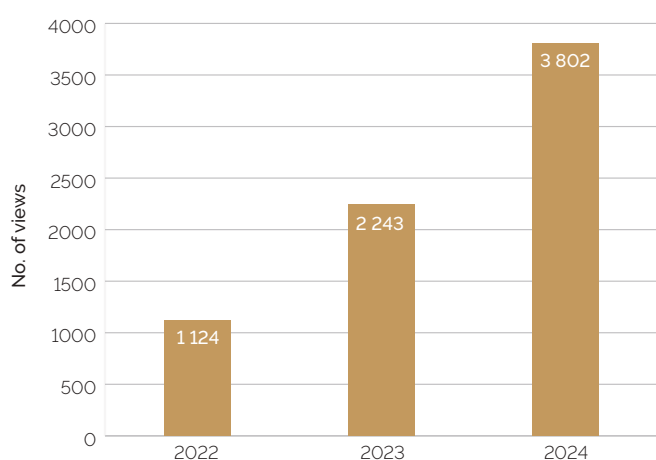

Figure 26: *Research Data Management LibGuide views*

Data management planning tool (SunDMP)

The journey toward the launch of SunDMP on 13 May at the opening event of Library Research Week, began in 2023. This innovation complements our internationally certified data repository, SUNScholarData. Powered by FAIR Wizard, the tool is designed to empower researchers to create detailed and compliant DMPs and to manage their research data effectively across the data's lifecycle. SunDMP represents SU's dedication to advancing RDM practices that are aligned with the FAIR principles: findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.

The Library organised a series of workshops, presentations and promotional activities to introduce SunDMP to the research community and encourage its adoption. Those initiatives were amplified by a strategic communication campaign that featured articles and updates across official SU platforms, including the Library's newsletter, website and social media channels.

By the end of 2024, the platform showed significant user engagement, with 125 active users and 121 DMPs generated using SunDMP. Faculty Librarians were critical in this achievement: by working with researchers to tailor the platform to the needs of specific disciplines, they helped to guarantee its usability throughout the broad research environment at SU.

The Library also introduced SunDMP Wednesdays to equip researchers with the skills and knowledge to navigate and utilise SunDMP effectively. These sessions, conducted via Microsoft Teams, were designed to provide comprehensive guidance on creating DMPs that adhered to funder and ethical compliance standards. We hosted 26 SunDMP Wednesdays, with 90 confirmed registrations and 34 attendees.

SUNScholarData

To enhance the scope of SUNScholarData, our institutional data repository, the Library introduced a metadata field that allows researchers to select a Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) that their research aligns with. Incorporating the SDG selection feature into SUNScholarData not only increases the visibility and impact of the research but also aligns the institution with global priorities. This initiative enhances opportunities for collaboration, funding and recognition by showcasing the University's role in driving progress towards achieving SDGs across multiple fronts. Table 8 represents usage of SUNScholarData in 2024.

Table 8: *SUNScholarData usage statistics 2024*

Downloads	7 173
Views	53 911
Storage used (gigabytes)	108
Depositors	71
Data deposits	167

Library Research Week

We hosted our inspiring annual Library Research Week (LRW) from 13 to 17 May and drew 780 attendees. The theme for 2024 was 'Let's achieve excellence in research'. Aligned with one of the University's core values – research excellence – the event spotlighted excellence at all stages of the research process and featured prominent speakers who provided expert insights and shared knowledge.

At the launch, speakers highlighted the importance of collaboration and partnerships in achieving research impact. They emphasised the need to align SU's research initiatives with the 17 SDGs set by the United Nations.

Prof Sibusiso Moyo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies, delivered an inspiring keynote in which she underscored the role of universities in addressing global challenges such as poverty, water scarcity and inequality while fostering impactful research informed by the African context.

The rest of the LRW programme featured daily webinars about aspects of the research process, such as preparing and writing research proposals, research methodology, systematic and scoping reviews, research impact and data visualisation.

Figure 27: Keynote speaker at the LRW: Prof Sibusiso Moyo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies

EndNote 21

In January 2024, the Library took up its subscription to EndNote 21 as a supported reference management tool. In preparation for the rollout, six staff members were trained as super users to provide advanced support to clients. To ensure smooth adoption, extensive resources and training opportunities were made available to students and staff alike. We also created a comprehensive LibGuide on EndNote, covering installation, style guidance and integration with SU systems. By the end of 2024, the guide had been viewed 28 576 times, ranking third among the most visited LibGuides for the year.

Numerous training sessions were conducted for Library staff and SU departments by means of the #SmartResearcher training series, LRW and EndNote Mondays. Since February 2024, EndNote training reached 543 clients, with recordings viewed 141 times. YouTube videos on EndNote garnered an additional 190 views and the tool was downloaded 3 491 times.

#BeOpenAccessSmart webinar series

The scholarly communication landscape is undergoing significant transformation driven by the global movement towards open science. SU has embraced this shift through various initiatives, including our institutional repository platforms, OA journal systems, transformational agreements (also called read-and-publish agreements) and researcher empowerment workshops.

In 2024, the Library offered a new series of webinars, #BeOpenAccessSmart, designed to promote open science and foster a more inclusive research environment. Targeted at researchers and librarians, the series aims to provide a platform for education, discussion, and engagement regarding the latest developments, challenges and opportunities in the open science environment.

The inaugural webinar began on 17 September and was conducted by Thanos Giannakopoulos from the United Nations Dag Hammarskjöld Library.

The title of his presentation was '(G)AI, open access and sustainable development: The evolving role of libraries in a transforming world'. The webinar explored, among other themes, the evolving role of libraries in promoting AI literacy, safeguarding data privacy, elevating the need to mitigate bias, and fostering OA for all. We received 460 registrations from 23 countries, with at least 180 people attending, which points to the potential global appeal of this series.

Library Research News

The success of our newsletter, *Library Research News*, continues. In 2024, we covered mostly events and general research support news. The statistics of the linked blog, Library Research News, show that many researchers and postgraduate students read the news and followed the links to book events. The article about LRW garnered the most views among blog posts published in 2024.

Table 9: Top five articles in Library Research News, according to views

Article	Number of views
Library Research Week 2024	432
New books in the Research Commons	302
A new face and place for thesis/ dissertation submissions	296
Migrating from Mendeley to EndNote	226
Common issues encountered with EndNote 21	207

International Open Access Week

On 24 October 2024, the Library celebrated International Open Access Week with a hybrid event on the theme 'Community over commercialisation'. Held in the SU Library auditorium and streamed online, the event featured a panel discussion facilitated by our Director: Research Services, Dr Siviwe Bangani.

Opening the discussion, Ellen Tise (Senior Director: Library and Information Services) highlighted SU's longstanding commitment to OA. She spoke about the financial challenges, such as high subscription fees and fluctuations in local currency, that limit access for South African institutions.

Prof Marena Manley from SU's Department of Food Science discussed how OA extends research impact beyond academia to benefit society. She also emphasised quality control in OA publications, advocating for 'open reviews' that involve public engagement.

Dr Reggie Raju, Director: Research and Learning at the University of Cape Town, spoke on the dominance of commercial publishers, arguing that scholarship should be a public good rather than a profit-driven commodity. He referred to initiatives like diamond open access (DOA) as viable paths for reclaiming academic publishing from commercial interests.

Jeroen Sondervan, Programme Leader: Open Scholarly Communication, Open Science NL at the Dutch Research Council (NWO), highlighted transformative agreements and policy reforms as essential. He advocated for DOA to promote inclusive publishing, suggesting that funding for OA infrastructure could reduce reliance on traditional metrics such as citations and h-index. The panel concluded with a shared commitment to foster OA policies that prioritise equity and community impact.

Figure 28: *Celebrating International Open Access Week 2024. Herewith some of the speakers Left to right: Mimi Seyffert-Wirth, Ellen Tise, Marena Manley and Siviwe Bangani*

PARTNERSHIPS 8
connecting threads

Partnerships

This section relates to our strategic objective 5:
"To foster internal and external partnerships and inclusive networks".

Fostering "purposeful partnerships and inclusive networks" remains a core strategic imperative at SU, and the Library's strategic objective is directly aligned to that. In 2024, partnerships helped the Library extend our limited resources, enhance our services and foster innovation.

Through our Senior Director, we played a pivotal role in national negotiations involving international publishers and South African university libraries to reduce or waive article processing charges (APCs) for South African researchers publishing in hybrid journals. Those efforts saved the University millions of rands in potential APCs on articles.

Efforts to engage other stakeholders, such as the SU Museum, are bearing fruit, as demonstrated by the Library exhibition 'Celebrating 30 Years of Democracy'. It ran from May until the end of 2024.

8.1 External committees

South African National Library and Information Consortium

The South African National Library and Information Consortium (SANLiC) is a nonprofit organisation of which the Library has been a member since its founding in 1999. SANLiC facilitates cost-effective access to high-quality scholarly information in public institutions of higher education and research to support research, teaching and learning. Its membership consists of all 26 public universities in South Africa, 5 research councils and institutes, and the National Library of South Africa. SU's Senior Director: Library and Information Services currently chairs its board.

Harnessing the power of collective bargaining, SANLiC managed in 2024 to negotiate reduced price increases for subscription agreements. Four of those were read-and-publish agreements.

Cape Higher Education Library Network

The Cape Higher Education Library Network (CHELiN) is a project of the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC). Its membership consists of Stellenbosch University Library and Information Service, University of Cape Town Libraries, Cape Peninsula University of Technology Libraries and University of the Western Cape Library.

CHELiN's purpose is to leverage the collective strength of the library services at all four institutions to provide optimal access to their quality information resources. This reciprocal agreement allows SU researchers to request material from the other member libraries, and vice versa. In 2024, the Library received 54 books from CHELiN members and sent out 219 books to them.
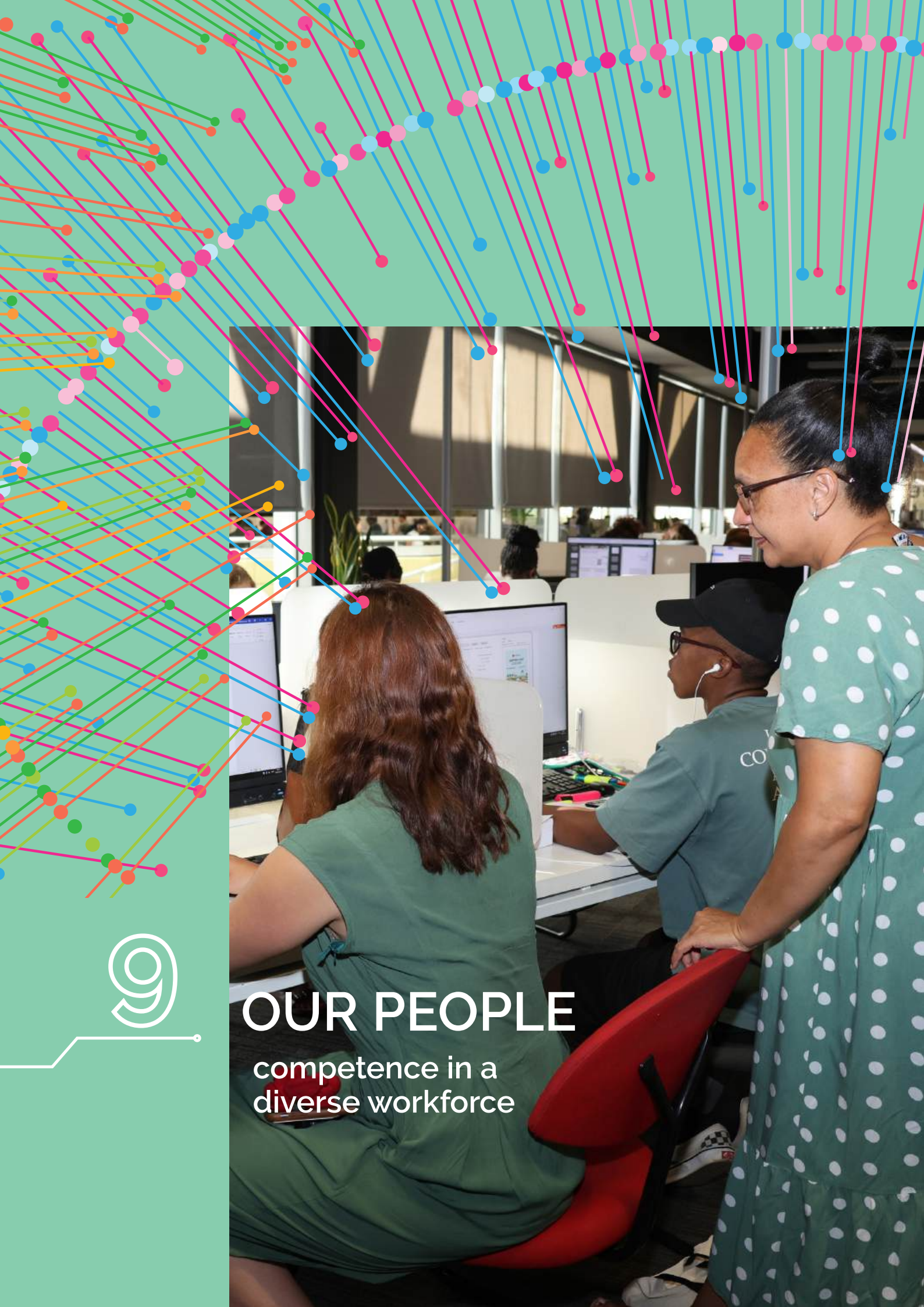
Additionally, the Library hosts and maintains the CHELiN website on behalf of all the member institutions. An ad hoc working group, consisting of a member from each CHELiN institution, updates the site content regularly. News on events, services and projects of interest, as well as annual borrowing statistics across the institutions, are uploaded to the website, which drew 3 227 page views in 2024.

8.2 Collaboration with students

Recognising the importance of engaging students, we held joint displays with them, providing students with space to demonstrate their creativity while showcasing their research achievements.

In partnership with Occupational Therapy students involved at the Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD), the Library hosted a mental health book display during Mental Illness Awareness Month (July). For World Mental Health Day, 10 October we collaborated again on a project that comprised circular handout notes containing affirmations created by the students, a poster display and a curated selection of books on mental health from the Library.

Further demonstrating the Library's role in advocating for diverse voices and inclusivity, we partnered with SRC members Thandile Ngxikwe and Solomozi Mphambo during Gender Equality Week in August. As part of their initiative, the SRC launched a student-curated book celebrating queer narratives and experiences on campus. In support of this, the Library dedicated a section of shelves to queer literature and scholarship, celebrating diverse identities and fostering dialogue regarding gender and sexuality.

9

OUR PEOPLE

competence in a
diverse workforce

Our People

"To develop and sustain skilled, diverse, adaptable and engaged staff".

This objective links to the University's strategic goals of being an employer of choice and a thriving Stellenbosch University.

The Library developed the following strategic actions to pursue this goal meaningfully:

- Keep promoting awareness of and support for the SU Health and Wellness Policy.

- Create and implement a customised mentorship programme for new and existing staff members to provide career and academic support.

- Develop a comprehensive and customised staff training and development programme.

- Propose and plan for the Library's StEP (staff enrichment programme) for 2024.

9.1 Staff

By the end of 2024, the Library staff complement comprised 102 members, 100 of whom were full-time permanent staff and 2 were part-time permanent staff. Two staff members were appointed in one-year contract positions. We also appointed 15 student assistants to provide after-hours services at the branch libraries.

At the year-end function, on 6 December, we said goodbye to the following colleagues: Henriëtte Swart, Director: Branches, had completed 37 years of service at the Library; Sarie Wilbers had served as Faculty Librarian for 36 years; Annemarie Eagleton had completed 42 years of service at the Library, and Alna Marias 30 years.

9.2 Staff training and development

One of the Library's strategic actions is to develop a comprehensive and customised staff training and development programme. The #SmartStaff Programme includes various types of training, aiming to address skills gaps and to develop new and emerging skills.

The following events were hosted in 2024: 'Use technology to your advantage at work and home', 'SU Botanical Garden: our research partner', 'Road to Democracy: Diverse manuscript collections', 'Becoming a data literate librarian: digital marketing for library services', an information session titled '3D printing in the Makerspace' and conference feedback.

In November 2024, staff from Lund University (Sweden) visited SU. The Library also hosted David Holoshka, a librarian specialising in information technology, for two days as part of the Lund-Stellenbosch PASS Staff Blended Mobility Programme 2024-2025. The programme aims to strengthen ties between the two universities while fostering global collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Mimi Seyffert-Wirth attended the Erasmus Staff Training Week in Liège (Belgium), from 10 to 14 June. The theme was 'Opening up our heritage: challenges and opportunities in digitising and promoting cultural and research collections'.

Dr Siviwe Bangani attended a training week for librarians at the University of Bologna (Italy) from 24 to 28 June.

Norman Hebler participated in StEP2023/2024, from 24 to 28 June, which offered various opportunities for the professional development of Library staff to improve the skills needed for their current roles and future development by visiting and/or collaborating with other academic or research libraries locally, nationally and internationally. Norman visited the Liverpool John Moores University (UK), focusing on the institution's AI initiatives.

9.3 Staff publications

Journal articles

Bangani, S. 2024. Leveraging community engagement to contribute to Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 11. *IFLA Journal*, 50(3):451-462. https://doi.org/10.1177/03400352241263533.

Bangani, S. 2024. 'Librarying' under the candlelight: The impact of electricity power outages on library services. *Open Information Science*, 8(1):20240008. https://doi.org/10.1515/opis-2024-0008.

Bangani, S. 2024. Stellenbosch University data repository certified by an international body as sustainable and trustworthy. *Liasa-In-Touch*, 25(2):28.

Mngomezulu, S. 2024. Launch of an open access webinar series, #BeOpenAccessSmart, at Stellenbosch University Library, *Liasa-In-Touch*, 25(4):24.

Ncume, PS. 2024. Stellenbosch University Library exhibition celebrates 30 years of democracy. *Liasa-In-Touch*, 25(3):25.

Schoeman, T. 2024. Beginning of a discovery journey: Summary of library orientation 2024. *Liasa-In-Touch*, 25(2):28.

Schoeman, T. 2024. Ellen R Tise honoured with prestigious SCECSAL Presidents' Award. *Liasa-In-Touch*, 25(3):22.

Schoeman, T. 2024. Top 10 of the IFLA PressReader International Marketing Award winners. *Liasa-In-Touch*, 25(3):24.

Notable blog articles

Mngomezulu, S & Bangani, S. 2024. Impact of transformational agreements in scholarly publishing [Online]. *Library Research News.* Available: https://blogs.sun.ac.za/libraryresearchnews/2024/03/07/impact-of-transformational-agreements-in-scholarly-publishing/.

Conference presentations

Bangani, S. 2024. Academic libraries, SDG 4 and 11: Fostering social cohesion through community engagement. University of the Western Cape's South African Library Week celebration, 20 March.

Bangani, S. 2024. Open access and the SDGs: The nexus. Joint UNISA/UP webinar to celebrate International Open Access Week, 22 October.

Khati, P. 2024. Preservation of Special Collections material at Stellenbosch University Library and Information Service. Bi-Centenary Conference on Preservation of Knowledge and Documentary Heritage, Thaba Bosiu Cultural Village, Maseru, Lesotho, 22-24 August.

Maré, H. 2024, #Yourhistory: Embedding information literacy creating LibGuides for a history module. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Conference, Stellenbosch, 5 November.

Moll-Willard, E & Wirth, K. 2024. Scaffolding and integrating Information literacy skills across the undergraduate programme. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Conference, Stellenbosch, 5 November.

Ncume, PS. 2024. Bringing the 'hidden' to the 'public': The case of Hidden Years Music Archive. IAML (International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres) Congress, 23-28 June.

Roux, M. Mapping skills and tools needed for researcher impact reports to the competencies model for bibliometric work. Poster presented at the Bibliometrics and Research Impact Community (BRIC) Conference, 5 June. Online.

Seyffert Wirth, M. 2024. Digital heritage collections: Can we measure impact? Erasmus Staff Training Week at University of Liège Library, Belgium, 15 June.

Tise, E. 2024. Community over commercialisation. Panel discussion at the Library and Information Service International Open Access Week event, Stellenbosch, 17 September.

Tise, E. 2024. Keynote address at Community Services, Health and Library and Information Services, Cape Town, 10 July.

Tise E. 2024. North and south partnering for academic open access monographs. Panel discussion at the Africa Fiesole Development Retreat Series, Cape Town, 8 May.

Tise, E. 2024. Reflecting on 30 years of democracy in the South African library and information Sector. Keynote address at the LIASA South African Libraries Day, 10 July.

Tise, E. 2024. Research assessment within a diamond OA framework. 2nd Global Summit on Diamond Open Access, Cape Town, 13 December.

9.4 Qualifications obtained by staff

- Mbongiseni Magagula: Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies (UKZN)
- Xabiso Xesi: Master's in Data Curation (UCT)
- Bulelwa Sthetho: Bachelor of Arts Honours in Social Behaviour Studies (HIV Aids) (UNISA)
- Pamela Nyokwana: Bachelor of Information Science Honours (UNISA)
- Celeste Lindoor: Bachelor of Information Science (UNISA)

9.5 Staff achievements and awards

Long-service awards

Celeste Lindoor and Ricardo Galant received the University's 25 years long-service award. Celeste joined the Library in April 1998 and has proven herself to be a person of excellence through the years. Ricardo joined in May of the same year and has worked his way up from assistant to administrative officer in our Finance division.

SCECSAL Presidents' Award

The Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern African Library and Information Associations (SCECSAL) commemorated its 50th anniversary in 2024. To celebrate this milestone, SCECSAL honoured the presidents and chairpersons of national library associations that hosted their association's first SCECSAL conference in their respective countries.

Ellen Tise, our Senior Director: Library and Information Services, received this prestigious award for her invaluable contribution to the success of the 2002 SCECSAL Conference, which had been held in Johannesburg. Her efforts have contributed significantly to the development and growth of SCECSAL in the region.

9.6 Attendance of conferences and events

To thrive in the dynamic landscape of the 21st century, university librarians must commit to continuous personal and professional development, whether through formal education or through informal learning opportunities. Such commitment empowers them to adapt, evolve and transform alongside their rapidly changing profession. Consequently, a key strategic priority for 2024 had been to strengthen staff skills, ensuring that they could meet the evolving needs of the academic community regarding learning, teaching and research effectively.

Library staff attended the following conferences and workshops:

- Twelve staff members enrolled in formal studies; among others, for a PhD in Information Science, MPhil in Digital Curation, M in Library and Information Science, MCom in Leadership, BInf and LISHons and PG Dip in Public Management.

- Staff members enrolled for CHEC courses, too, such as 'Leadership: personal leadership' and 'Project management: principles and practices'.

- The Library encourages staff to develop IT and computer skills. Some attended SU training programmes in Microsoft Excel for beginners and Microsoft Word, and two staff members attended a desktop, laptop and server management programme.

- Library staff attended various conferences, such as SoTL, LIASA and IAML; regional teaching and learning conference of the law faculties; Marketing, Advancement and Communication in Education; Fiesole Collection Development Retreat Series; and National University of Lesotho Bi-Centenary and Data Intensive Research Initiative of South Africa.

- Staff attended various events, courses and workshops during the year, such as 'Carpentries instructor training: software carpentry, data carpentry and library carpentry', 'Open data management', 'Elsevier Author Training' and performance management training by SU Human resources (HR).

9.7 Community engagement, social impact and staff wellness

Library staff engaged in various other community outreach activities, such as donating non-perishable food and other items for needy students as part of our Mandela Day celebrations, and buying 100 tickets as contribution to the SU Casual Day activities.

To promote awareness and support for the SU Health and Wellness Policy, the Library hosted sessions for staff that focused on diversity, gender inequality and mental, emotional and physical health; such as 'Staying safe at home, at work and on the road', 'Dust to trust: library strategies in the desert' (a team-building exercise) and sessions on professional development, wellness programmes and leave procedures presented by HR.

Besides the sessions hosted at the Library, staff also benefitted from the SU Sports Day coordinated by HR's Employee Wellbeing Office. More than 39 staff members attended the event on 27 November, where they participated in various activities.

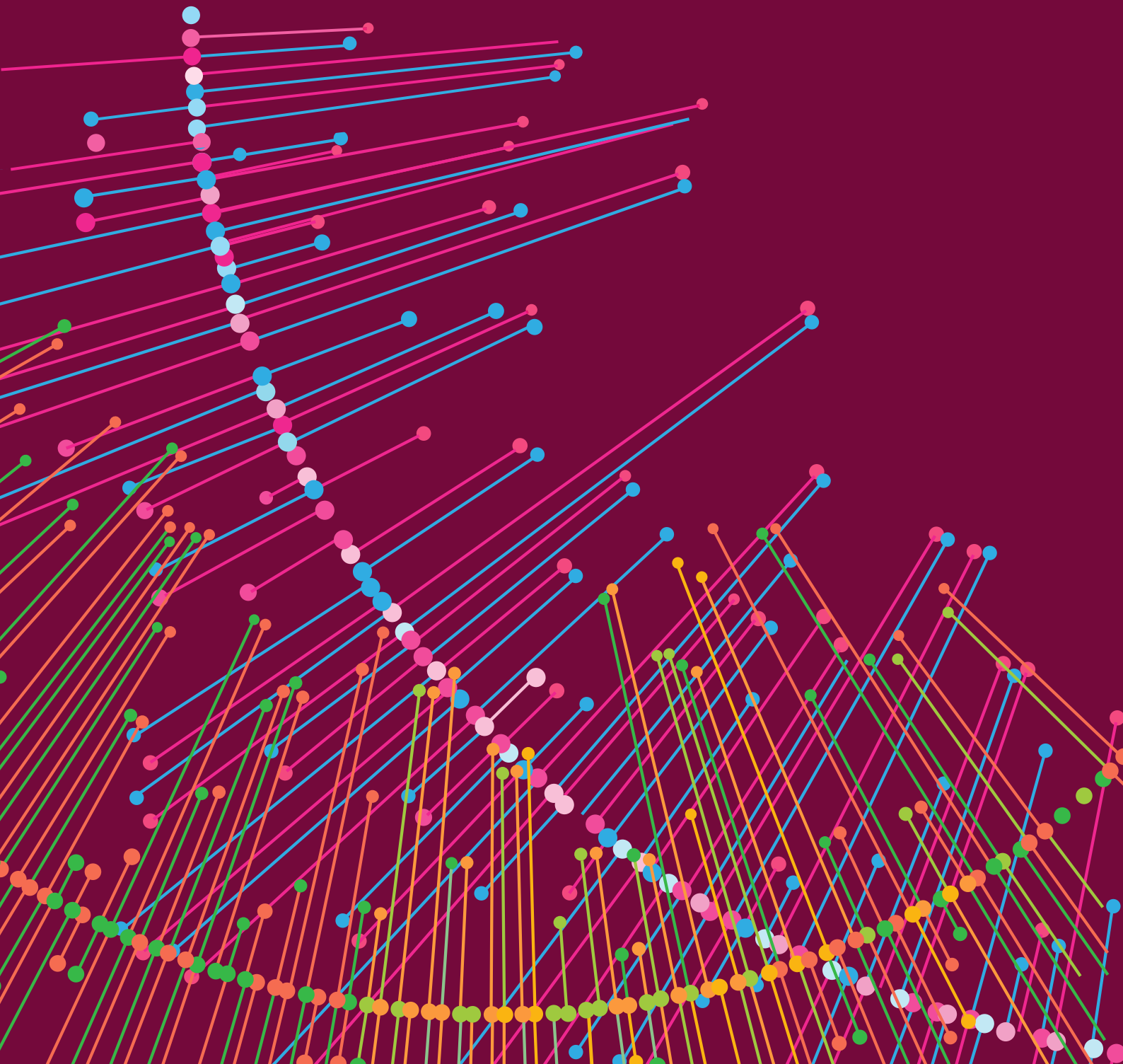## 9.8 Staff involvement in professional organisations

Several staff members were involved in professional bodies in 2024. Ellen Tise is a member of the ORCID board and chairs the SANLIC board. Dr Siviwe Bangani is an associate editor of the *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science* as well as standing committee member of the IFLA Academic and Research Libraries Section. Wouter Klapwijk is a standing committee member of the IFLA Information Technology Section, while Bronwyn Bruton serves on the CHELSA Data Analytics task team (part of the CHELSA National Statistics Database Project) and Hendra Pretorius serves on the CHELSA Information Literacy Committee.

Figure 29: Staff of the Medical and Health Sciences Library (MHSL); seated, from left: Kay Jacobs, Nombulelo Magwebu-Mrali and Yusuf Ras; standing, from left: Tracey Louw, Alvina Matthee, Franklin Februarie, Pamela Nyokwana and Lizanne Botha

Other Activities

10.1 Visitors to the Library

The Library upheld our reputation as a benchmark service for numerous national and international libraries. Among recent noteworthy engagements was the visit by Prof Luciano Saso (Faculty of Pharmacy and Medicine, Sapienza University of Rome, Italy) on 19 March. The aim of his visit was to gain deeper insight into the array of services we provide.

Also in March, we welcomed Dr Jonathon Woodyard, Vice President: Student Life and assistant professor of historical theology at Southwest Baptist University (Bolivar, USA), as well as Prof Daniel Adjei-Boateng, Dr Patrick Karani and Etienne Hinrichsen from AU-IBAR (the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources in Nairobi, Kenya).

Other visits included new students pursuing the MPhil in Sustainable Development, SU postgraduate students from the .Net community and students from the Senior Living Spaces (SLS) cluster.

On 10 May Prof Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, a distinguished guest lecturer from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (USA), visited the Library and presented an enlightening talk on removing stumbling blocks for user access to content. She provided valuable insights into initiatives such as Get Full Text Research, Seamless Access, and the Article Sharing Framework, sparking a thought-provoking discussion on how libraries could leverage those advancements to enhance researchers' experience.

The visit by a delegation from the University of São Paulo (USP; Brazil) on 16 May marked an important milestone in fostering international collaboration. Led by Prof Paulo Martins (Dean: Faculty of Philosophy, Languages and Literature, and Human Sciences) and Prof Marcos Martinho (head of the Faculty's International Office), the delegation engaged with SU to explore collaborative opportunities and to strengthen ties between Brazil, South Africa and France through initiatives like the International Research Centre (IRC), which had been established in 2023.

On 29 August we hosted colleagues from the University of Zululand Library and Information Services for a benchmarking visit. The delegation explored critical areas, including research data management, research support, copyright management and the digitisation of special collections. The visit fostered meaningful exchanges, provided insights into best practice and strengthened collaborative ties between the institutions.

In addition to these institutional visits, we hosted various learners and teachers in school groups, mainly to inspire motivation for tertiary studies and to provide insight into experiences of campus life.

Figure 30: University of Zululand Library and Information Services staff with Stellenbosch University Library senior management staff

10.2 SU Open Day

The Library was a key participant in events for SU Open Day 2024, showcasing our facilities and services to prospective students and their parents. Organised by Student Recruitment, those events provided an excellent platform for the Library to engage with future students, both online and in person.

The online event, on 6 April, featured a range of resources designed to offer a virtual experience of the Library. Submissions included brochures in English and Afrikaans, a comprehensive FAQ section, a short video tour of the SU Library and branch libraries, and a detailed 'stall' description with photographs.

The in-person event, on 20 April, brought the Library to life with tours and activities. The Medicine and Health Sciences Library also welcomed visitors on 20 April. A dedicated team of Library staff worked tirelessly to ensure a smooth and engaging experience for all visitors – 1 928 in total. Visitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Figure 31: Library staff member, Zisiwe Mnothoza (seated), taking Library visitors on a tour of SU library

Figure 32: Medicine and Health Sciences Library visitors at Open Day 2024

10.3 NextGen Maties

The NextGen Maties event forms part of SU's Grade 12 conversion campaign, offering a personalised on-campus experience for provisionally accepted students and their parents/guardians. The Library participated in this event on 12 October by providing guided tours to highlight services such as the Makerspace and Special Collections, and our overall service and spaces. SU Library welcomed 112 guests for the occasion.

10.4 International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres Congress (IAML)

IAML is a global organisation dedicated to fostering the activities of music libraries, archives and documentation centres. These efforts support projects in music bibliography, music documentation and music library and information science at national as well as international level. A key component of IAML's work is its annual international congress, which rotate among the member countries and which offers a platform for knowledge exchange, collaboration and the celebration of musical heritage.

The 2024 event, from 23 to 28 June, marked a historic first for the organisation: the first IAML congress held on African soil. The Library organised this landmark event. The main venue was at the SU Conservatoire, home to one of the largest academic music libraries in South Africa.

The opening ceremony, on Sunday 23 June, was a momentous occasion that welcomed 156 delegates from 28 countries, including 8 African nations. A highlight of the opening ceremony was the performance by renowned traditional-music artist and cultural historian Dizu Plaatjies. He took the audience on a musical journey across Africa, showcasing the continent's rich and varied musical traditions.

Figure 33: IAML Congress Opening ceremony, Sunday 23 June

The 2024 IAML programme covered various topics and strongly emphasised Africa, reflecting the continent's diverse musical traditions and contemporary innovations. Among the topics included were colonial and postcolonial impacts, digital collections, musical institutions, musical encoding, indigenous and folk music and instruments, and popular culture in Africa. This thematic emphasis not only celebrated African musical heritage but also fostered dialogue and collaboration among African and other international scholars and practitioners.

10.5 Survey on space use and diversity

From 4 September to 4 October, the Library conducted an online survey to understand the space use patterns and diversity of our clients. We received 886 responses, of which 71% came from undergraduate students. The data showed that 27% of respondents visited the Library daily, primarily to study, and that 69% of all reported to be satisfied or highly satisfied with our current spaces. Regarding diversity, over 79% of respondents were satisfied or highly satisfied with inclusivity at the Library, where we accommodate individuals from diverse backgrounds. While the results showed encouraging overall satisfaction levels, the Library is attentive to areas for improvement – such as the 30% of respondents who reported to be neutral to or dissatisfied with our physical spaces.

The Library is still analysing nearly 3 000 comments from respondents to better understand client needs and priorities. These insights will inform actionable changes to ensure that we continue to serve as a welcoming, inclusive and user-centred space.

10.6 Newcomers' welcome

From 5 February, excited anticipation of our orientation programme could be heard and felt throughout the SU Library. The theme was: 'Let's library together!' Our dedicated staff welcomed and guided hundreds of newcomers on their journey through this vast sea of knowledge.

Figure 34: Students gathering outside the SU Library to join a guided tour

Students were treated to a brief yet insightful tour of the Library's key spaces, including the innovative Makerspace, Learning Commons and quiet study areas. The tour was concluded with an engaging video showcasing our services and resources. The SU Library came to life with the surprise appearance of the University's mascot, Pokkel, who made the joyful occasion unforgettable.

Figure 35: The SU mascot, Pokkel, delighted students with freebies and led them in a spirited Mexican wave in the auditorium of the SU Library

Following orientation, we presented GetSmart@URLibrary, a valuable opportunity to enhance students' information literacy skills through one-on-one drop-in consultations with Library staff.

10.7 Farewell to Bellville Park Campus Library

After nearly four decades of service, the Bellville Park Campus Library (USBL) officially closed its doors as a branch library at the end of 2024. That marked the end of an era and opened a new chapter for library services at the Stellenbosch Business School and School of Public Leadership (SPL).

The USBL's journey began in 1986, when the Business School relocated to our Bellville Park campus. What was initially known as Bellville Park Campus Information Centre (USBI) started with a modest collection of printed material and a dedicated team of two staff members. After some years, the small 'satellite' library became a branch library, moving to a new facility in 2002.

Figure 36: Bellville Park Campus Library

Henriëtte Swart, Director: Branch Libraries, joined the USBL in 1987. She recalls that they became a hub for the full-time MBA students and broader Bellville Park campus community, and that the USBL was highlighted often in accreditation reports as a key contributor to academic success.

Due to the decline in traffic after the Covid-19 pandemic and library services becoming increasingly virtual, even before the pandemic, it was decided to close the physical library by the end of 2024. A virtual library service and comprehensive library support will be provided to the academic community at the Bellville Park campus.

From January 2025, a small collection of frequently used physical books will be retained on campus for borrowing, and Business School staff will assist with operational tasks such as document delivery, circulation and interbranch requests. The library service will remain robust, ensuring seamless access to electronic resources such as databases, e-books and e-journals. Judy Williams, who is Faculty Librarian for Economic and Management Sciences at the SU Library, will continue to provide virtual research support, training and consultations.

The USBL leaves behind a legacy of excellence, innovation and community. From its early days as a small facility with limited resources to its role as a vital academic support system, the USBL had been a cornerstone of our Bellville Park campus for nearly four decades.

10.8 Manuscripts Section lecture

On 1 October the Library hosted a panel discussion, 'Democracy through the lens of primary documents at Special Collections' as part of the Woordfees programme. That was our 14th Manuscripts Section lecture featured in the Woordfees series Discourse Talks. The discussion brought together a diverse group of panellists to reflect on the importance of primary resources in researching

and contextualising South Africa's political history. The focus was on collections related to South Africa's journey to democracy from the 1980s onwards, highlighting how those materials continued to inspire new research and provide deeper insights into the country's political transformation.

In her opening remarks, Ellen Tise – Senior Director: Library and Information Services – emphasised the critical role of primary sources in preserving the history of democracy in South Africa. The Manuscripts Section hosts over 480 manuscript collections, covering subjects such as South African artists, press figures and political history. This reflects the Library's ongoing commitment to diversifying its collections and providing a comprehensive view of South African history.

The panel discussion was led by Dr Marietjie Oelofsen, who had given journalism students an assignment to write articles based on the IDASA collection. At the event, Dr Oelofsen invited the students to share their experiences working with those primary sources. Both BAHons (Journalism) students, Sherie Vollenhoven and Nkululeko Ndlovu, mentioned that they had enjoyed engaging with the physical materials, particularly newspapers and magazines. They highlighted how those resources had uncovered to them relevant narratives and had stimulated personal reflection on the unexpected discoveries they had made.

Figure 37: From left to right: journalism students Nkululeko Ndlovu and Sherie Vollenhoven, and Dr Marietjie Oelofsen (SU Museum)

10.9 Democracy exhibition

In 2024, South Africa marked the 30th anniversary of its democratic dispensation following the first democratic elections of 27 to 29 April 1994. To honour this milestone, the Library launched an exhibition on 13 May: '1994-2024 – Democracy in South Africa: a history told by unique library collections'. The exhibition showcased documents preserved by the Special Collections division, featuring selections from the South African Debt Crisis 1985/86 Collection, the Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert Collection, the IDASA Collection, the South African Elections Collection and more. The materials – which included documents, photographs, newspapers, political posters and books – illustrated key moments in South Africa's democratic history.

The display included voter education posters, a photo of Nelson Mandela casting his vote, a letter from Mandela on the renegotiation of South Africa's debt in the 1980s, handwritten notes on the 1987 Dakar Conference by Slabbert, and the handwritten copy of 'Die Stem' by CJ Langenhoven.

Amidst democracy's achievements and ongoing challenges, the exhibition aimed to transport visitors back to crucial moments shaping the nation's democratic identity. Thus the Library promoted scholarly engagement and inspired current and future generations to uphold and defend democratic principles, fostering an inclusive and vibrant democracy for the future. The exhibition underscored the essential role of libraries in a democratic society.

Figure 38: 30 Years democracy exhibition

10.10 IFLA PressReader International Marketing Award

The Library's TikTok entry, 'Promoting the Library via TikTok', made the top 10 for the IFLA PressReader International Marketing Award 2024. We are proud of our innovative approach to library marketing receiving recognition as one of the best among 107 outstanding and diverse submissions from around the world.

The entry stood out for its creativity and effectiveness in showcasing the services and spaces available to students at Stellenbosch University. By leveraging TikTok trends, Faculty Librarians reached students on a platform familiar to them and showcased the Library in a fun, informal way. As for the impact of the video, Faculty Librarians noted anecdotally that students seemed much more comfortable approaching them for assistance and often mention that they enjoyed the videos.

Feedback from the jury stated, "Stellenbosch University's bold venture into TikTok to promote the library marks a pioneering leap in student outreach. By embracing the vibrant world of short-form video, they've transformed library promotion into a captivating experience. Stellenbosch University deserves applause for its forward-thinking approach, harnessing the power of social media to connect, inform, and inspire."

11 CLOSING REMARKS

Closing Remarks

Reflecting on the progress and achievements of 2024, it struck me as commendable that the Library continued to meet the ever-evolving needs of the academic community with world-class services, spaces and resources despite challenges such as limited funding and capacity.
This commitment has been instrumental in supporting Stellenbosch University's vision, mission and strategic priorities.

We said farewell to the Bellville Park Campus Library (USBL) which coincided with the retirement of Henriëtte Swart, Director: Branch Libraries and Head: USBL.
She reflected on the role that the USBL had played as a hub for students and the broader campus community. The library had been highlighted frequently in accreditation reports as a key contributor to academic success. USBL leaves behind a legacy of excellence, innovation and community. From its early days as a small facility with limited resources to its role as a vital academic support system, USBL was a cornerstone of the Bellville Park campus for nearly forty years.

The end of 2024 also meant bidding farewell to four colleagues: Henriëtte Swart and Alna Marais, who retired from the USBL; Sarie Wilbers, who retired as Faculty Librarian for Education; and Annemarie Eagleton, who retired from the Theology Library. We thank them for their decades of dedicated service and invaluable contributions to the Library's success.

We were honoured to host the 2024 IAML Congress. As the first such occasion on the African continent, IAML 2024 was a groundbreaking event, fostering new connections, celebrating Africa's musical heritage and paving the way for future collaborations.

In celebration of South Africa's 30th anniversary of democracy, we contributed – by means of the Library's unique collections – to an exhibition in the SU Library showcasing key moments that had shaped the nation's democratic identity.

In alignment with our digital-first strategy, and with SU's digital transformation agenda, the Library made significant strides in AI initiatives in 2024. Notable achievements include the digitisation of library processes, the implementation of a chatbot system, the introduction of data visualisation services and the launch of virtual reality services. Thus we further cemented our position as a leading and innovative library on the African continent.

The results of the survey on space use and diversity that the Library conducted in 2024 reaffirmed that our clients are highly satisfied with the Library as a space for collaboration, studying, consulting with staff, conducting research and successfully completing their academic work.

Looking ahead, the Library can rely on a diverse, knowledgeable, agile and hardworking staff to navigate future challenges and seize opportunities. Achieving so much is no small feat, and it would have been impossible without the combined effort of everyone involved.

Ellen Tise, Senior Director: Library and Information Services

Members of the Senate Library Committee in 2024

Prof S Moyo, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Postgraduate Studies

Prof J du Plessis, Law

Prof N Gey van Pittius, Medicine and Health Sciences

Prof AL Cloete, Theology

Dr C Makhetha, Senior Director: Student Affairs

Prof S Cornelissen, Arts and Social Sciences

Prof D Ramjugernath, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Learning and Teaching

Prof GF Midgley, School for Climate Studies

Prof C Schutte, Engineering

Prof S von der Heyden, Science

E Tise, Senior Director: Library and Information Services

M Bolotina, Student Representative Council

H Swart, secretary

design
workspace