

Centre for Student Counselling & Development

Division of Student Affairs



Annual Report 2024







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Message from Dr Choice Makhetha

Senior Director: Student Affairs



Dear CSCD colleagues

As the year 2024 comes to an end, we look back at the amount and quality of work achieved at the CSCD, as well as more broadly within the institution. We congratulate everyone for doing so much with such limited resources, and for managing to turn around operations to function effectively with great efficiency.

The strength of the CSCD team is definitely in the unity built and nurtured among colleagues. I have admired how each colleague's strengths were appreciated,

given space to shine within their expertise, while stretching further to contribute to joint projects and initiatives. The diversity of skills and experiences, and the commitment to remain actively involved in communities of practice within the higher education sector, are commendable, because it is crucial to keep abreast of developments in your respective fields of specialty. This ensures that you remain relevant, and that you have the opportunity to do impactful research that keeps you ahead of any wave. Please continue to value one another and everything each one brings, because this kind of diversity is precious for life and work.

Throughout 2024, you managed to respond to the call to eradicate long waiting lists, shifting to rapid screening processes. You changed the mindset of students, making appointments and honouring these. When students understand why we do certain things in a particular way, they manage to shift their minds because they then understand better the importance of change. As CSCD, you also managed to lead the institution with regard to a focus on staff wellbeing and workload balance. The four-day workweek initiative you piloted within the

Centre showed amazingly positive results, with colleagues feeling healthier and less stressed, and pressure reduced. The level of productivity increased through better organisation and integrated planning and functioning.

Being in your company from time to time, I could feel the lightness of load and peace of mind coursing through everything you did. I am forever grateful for the commitment you made to initiate these changes that brought positive outcomes at all levels. You deserve to work within an environment that appreciates you as people and also values the expertise, skills and experiences you bring into the space. Please continue this powerful approach to work-life balance, as it will help avoid the burnout so many institutions are struggling with, both locally and around the world.

I want to thank Charl Davids for being such an incredible leader – a leader who appreciates other colleagues' strengths and lets them shine; a leader who communicates

and never leaves anyone behind. Even through emotionally strenuous periods, Charl remained steady because he understood that the work of CSCD was at the cutting edge and could never be compromised in any way. Working with Lynn April has been a breath of fresh air. It was wonderful to have a colleague who saw things from a different perspective as she entered the space, helping us to regain perspective and think through difficult aspects that were having a negative effect on our work. Bringing different leaders together does wonders, and we I want to thank Lynn for joining CSCD. Also thank you to the whole CSCD leadership team — for leading as a team and sharing this powerful journey together.

May you find time to enjoy the festive season with your families and friends, while still prioritising your needs as a person.

All the best for the future!

Dr Choice Makhetha

Message from Mr Charl Davids

Director: Centre for Student Counselling
& Development



I am delighted to present our Annual Report for the year 2024. As we reflect on the past year, it is evident that we have achieved significant milestones, navigated through challenges, and continued to progress towards achieving our mission. This report serves as a testament to our collective dedication and hard work, and the unwavering support of our stakeholders. When you page through the annual report, you will be able to read the excellent and pioneering work being done by each unit.

For the first time in years our Unit for Graduand Career Service (UGCS) had an in-person Career Fair on the Rooiplein. What made this significant is that we had a waiting list of company exhibitors that could not be accommodated. It is testament to the work our colleagues in the UGCS do to foster good relationships with corporate partners and stakeholders.

Mental health remains an extremely important aspect of wellbeing, along with the need for treatment and intervention. The amount of work done to support students is evident in the statistics in this report. I appreciate and deeply acknowledge the work done by staff in the Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services (UPSS) and the Unit for Academic Counselling and Development (UACD). For the first time in CSCD history, there is no waiting list and waiting times for students to see a therapist/counsellor have been reduced from three months to two weeks. Emergency accommodation was a significant challenge for SU at the beginning of 2024, but more so for our social workers, who worked at the coal face of the crisis. Thank you for the

many hours and late nights to ensure that our students in need were seen to.

Although the system migration at SU affected the entire University, the Disability Unit (DU) experienced significant challenges related to student concessions. I have deep admiration for how the DU staff managed the challenge of getting the necessary concessions for the students. It did not go unnoticed that you walked the extra mile.

To our intern psychologists (educational and counselling) — you have exceeded our expectations. Thank you for the exceptional work you did with our students. To our occupational therapy (OT) students - you brought an amazing energy to your work; thank you for keeping us updated through your weekly newsletter. We cannot offer the services we do without our consultants; thank you for your commitment and dedication to achieve our mission. I must single out our crisis counsellor consultants. Adding you to our basket of services has had a significant impact on how we work. Your input is highly appreciated.

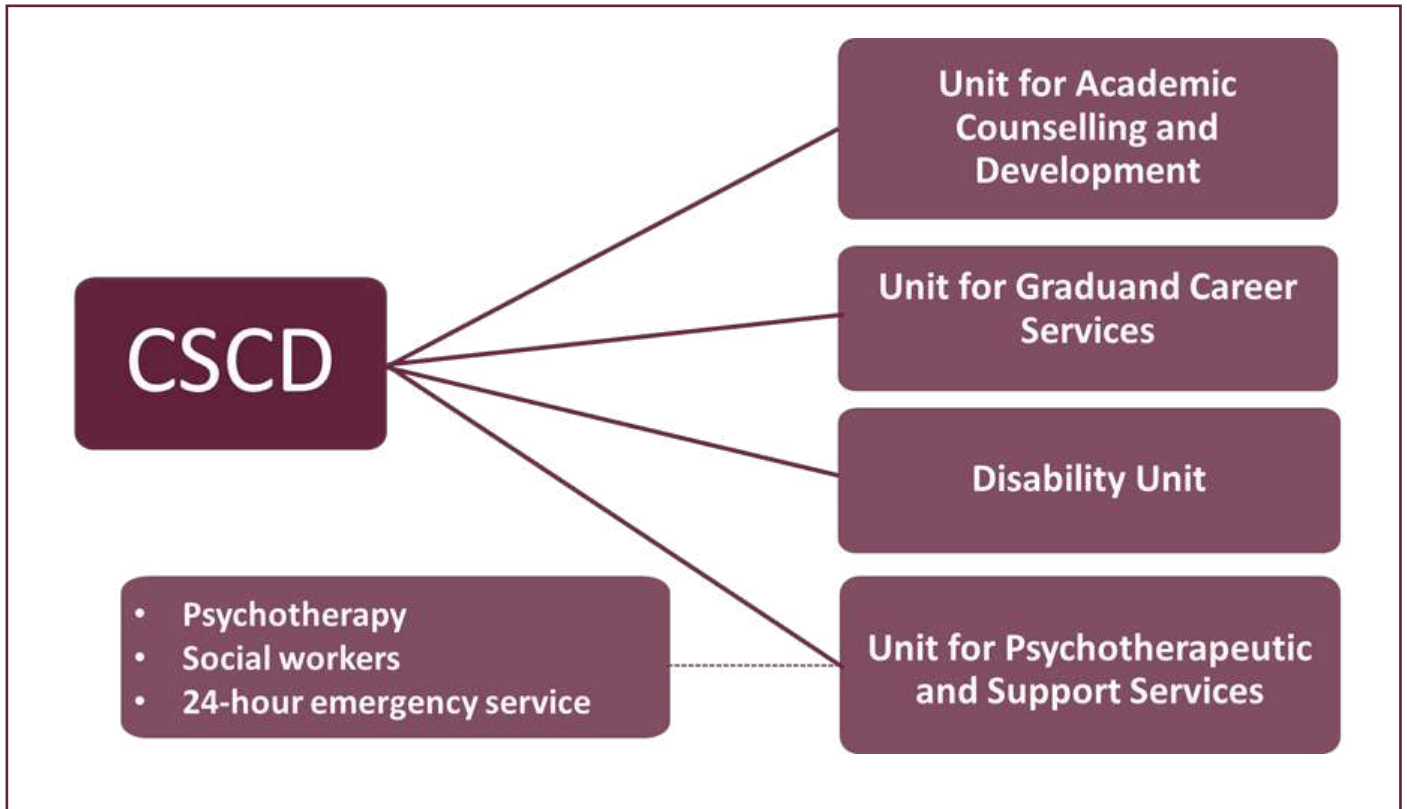
We are busy with the process of increasing our staff complement, and I am looking forward to welcoming the eight new staff members at the end of 2024 and the beginning of 2025.

To the staff of the CSCD – I am aware that you all go beyond the call of duty on a daily basis, and that this year was no different. Please know that all your hard work and effort, and the care that you put in to assist our students, are not going unnoticed. Your collective efforts have made it possible to get through this year. Thank you for making the four-day work week a success.

We sadly had to say goodbye to Dr Choice Makhetha at the end of October, as she joined another institution. Thank you for your unwavering support and guidance. The openness with which you listened to new ideas and ventures was admirable and appreciated. Our best wishes accompany you on your new journey.

Charl Davids

Introduction



The Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) offers professional psychological support and development services to students of Stellenbosch University.

The CSCD, which is centrally situated in five buildings in Victoria Street, comprises the following units, each of which offers a specialised service to optimise student success:

Unit for Academic Counselling and Development (UACD)

Disability Unit (DU)

Unit for Graduand Career Services (UGCS)

Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services (UPSS)

Unit for Academic Counselling and Development (UACD)

The service delivery by the Unit for Academic Counselling and Development (UACD) rests on three pillars, namely a developmental perspective, systemic case management and integration, and comprehensive student-centred services. The overarching goal is to empower students to improve their wellbeing in order to experience success. The team, under the leadership of Dr Elmien Sinclair, comprises educational psychologists, a psychometrist, a registered counsellor and intern psychologists. Academic skills support, as well as psychosocial and career development interventions, are offered in the form of work sessions, lectures, psycho-educational self-help material and individual consultations.

Unit for Graduand Career Services (UGCS)

This Unit is headed by Mr Marquard Timmey, a registered counselling psychologist, and the team consists of two educators, one who manages the graduate development portfolio and the other who manages the graduate recruitment portfolio. The fourth member of the team is the financial officer, who takes care of the Unit's finances and administrative duties. The Unit supports students with the transition from education to employment. This could include individual sessions about their career, work sessions on CV writing, interview skills,

their online profile and exposure to network opportunities with companies via career fairs, and assistance with job-searching methods. All our counselling services are also offered online. The Unit refers employers who would like to post their opportunities on an online portal to the Gradlinc team. Gradlinc is an online recruitment portal and allows students to easily search and apply for vacancies, internships and part-time jobs. All SU students are strongly encouraged to register on the Gradlinc portal. It is important for students to start preparing for their transition to the world of work from their first year. Several employers are also registered on the platform. This means that students can upload their CVs and search for employers' information and work opportunities.

Disability Unit (DU)

The Disability Unit fosters disability inclusion campus-wide in support of inclusive education. It offers a range of services to students with disabilities, from advice on appropriate academic support solutions to accessible, tailored study materials. The Unit's activities are informed by the Disability Access Policy of Stellenbosch University (SU). We advise prospective students with disabilities about the possible support available to them once they are at SU. We also discuss appropriate academic support solutions and ensure that academic material is accessible for study, test and exam purposes. The DU also offers students and

staff various training opportunities. These include a Lead with Disability programme for students and staff, as well the facilitation of staff training through the Siyakhula training sessions. Dr Marcia Lyner-Cleophas leads this competent team.

Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services (UPSS)

This Unit assists students with psychological and psychosocial challenges. The Unit also plays a significant advocacy role, as

it engages with various stakeholders who take an interest in students' wellbeing. For students to function optimally, it is essential that the services contribute to their holistic development. A key responsibility of the Unit is to provide students with continuous and professional services. The Unit strives to attain this goal by offering a range of services on the Stellenbosch and Tygerberg campuses, comprising individual psychotherapy, group therapy, work sessions, a 24-hour emergency service and support pertaining to social work.

Unit for Academic Counselling & Development (UACD)

A Reflection on the Unit's Year



a) Achievements

At the beginning of 2024 we welcomed three new full-time intern educational psychologists, Ida Wepener, Dané Lombaard and Ntombifuthi Maduna. They started their twelve-month Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) accredited internships in January. Their programme kicked off with a comprehensive orientation that covered the following topics:

- The different units of the CSCD
- Neuro-agility profile
- Intake interview and note-taking
- Psychometric assessment by the CSCD
- Screening and crisis management
- Scholastic assessments
- Career counselling with students
- Introduction to neurodiversity
- Psychotherapeutic interventions for students at a higher education institution

Strategic efforts in 2024 were geared toward strengthening UACD's presence and accessibility for extended curriculum programme (ECP) students across faculties, aligning closely with the unique challenges of this student group.

This year marked a significant milestone, as it was the first time in several years that the CSCD reintroduced a counselling psychology internship, with the intern placed specifically within the Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services (UPSS). Through close collaboration between the UPSS and the Unit for Academic Counselling and Development (UACD), the two units worked in tandem to provide interns with a rich array of learning opportunities. This partnership allowed the interns to benefit from the unique expertise and specialised resources of each unit, fostering a well-rounded, integrative approach to psychological service delivery and professional growth. Together, UPSS and UACD created a holistic training environment that emphasises both clinical skills and developmental support, ensuring interns were well-prepared to meet the diverse needs of the student population.

As early as 2022, the UACD began exploring the development of a systemic and holistic approach to academic advising at Stellenbosch University. This initiative is a key component of the Integrated Student Success Strategy, which was officially launched in November 2023. Since 2024, the

UACD, in collaboration with various centres within the Division for Learning and Teaching Enhancement, has been actively planning the implementation of comprehensive, data-driven academic advising strategies

across faculties, and within the co-curricular environment, set for rollout in 2025. This effort is part of a three-year institutional project.

Strategic efforts in 2024 were geared toward strengthening UACD's presence and accessibility for extended curriculum programme (ECP) students across faculties, aligning closely with the unique challenges of this student group. A comprehensive range of work session topics were integrated into the existing curriculum for the ECP students. These topics are highly relevant to the unique challenges faced by first-year ECP students. It is impressive how the follow-up activities in tutorials were designed to reinforce session content, ensuring these skills were not only introduced, but also practised and discussed further.

Reflecting on our 2024 initiatives with the ECP student population at Stellenbosch University, we are grateful for the positive shifts our tailored psychoeducational sessions have brought about in students and their respective faculties. By actively collaborating with ECP co-ordinators, we gained valuable insights that shaped a responsive and relevant series of work sessions addressing both the academic and personal development needs of first-year ECP

By enhancing self-advocacy and mental health literacy, we can continue to foster an environment that empowers students to seek support proactively, take ownership of their development and their learning, and enhance resilience.

students. This close alignment with students' unique challenges allowed us to design and deliver sessions that went beyond academic support, promoting resilience, self-advocacy (self-agency), and mental health literacy skills essential for both university success and their life beyond.

Between February and October 2024, the UACD team facilitated 28 specialised work sessions tailored to support ECP students. To enhance accessibility, these sessions were hosted at three faculties on the SU campus — Arts and Social Sciences, Economic and Management Sciences, and Engineering. A total of 927 ECP students attended the sessions.

In particular, the increase in the visibility of UACD support within faculties, and the normalising and destigmatising of accessing support services, stand out as crucial achievements. The threefold goal of destigmatising support services, strengthening study skills, and nurturing holistic development was consistently woven into each session. Feedback from students indicates that our topics, such as “dealing with failure”, “managing stress with resilience”, and honing “exam skills” resonated

strongly and were seen as not only relevant, but also empowering. By integrating tutorial-based follow-up activities, we enabled students to apply these concepts in real time, reinforcing both

understanding and engagement.

The expansion of sessions into both the mainstream and ECP programmes in Engineering and EMS highlighted the need for wrap-around support in the greater student population in both faculties. Further opportunities for capacity building, addressing not only the academic but also the psychosocial needs of all students, are an evident priority for future interventions. By enhancing mental health awareness and wellbeing, and increasing academic skills across our mainstream and ECP student populations, we acknowledge that the struggles and challenges remain the same amongst all students.

Looking ahead to 2025, our goals remain focused on sustaining and deepening this momentum. By enhancing self-advocacy and mental health literacy, we can continue to foster an environment that empowers students to seek support proactively, take ownership of their development and their learning, and enhance resilience. In addition, expanding on mentorship training and peer accountability could help create a sustainable network of support among ECP students, fostering their sense of community and belonging.

In summary, our work in 2024 laid a solid foundation for enhancing both the academic and personal resilience of ECP and mainstream students. Through consistent collaboration and responsiveness, and a commitment to mental health advocacy, we are well positioned to continue this journey in 2025, cultivating an inclusive and supportive academic environment that meets students where they are, and supports them in reaching their potential.

b) Challenges

The rollout of the SUNStudent system at the beginning of the year introduced a range of challenges for both faculty and students. Christa Koch, who teaches part of the “Being and Becoming a Health Practitioner” module (part of the MBChB first-year curriculum), encountered significant issues with the new system. As the module is delivered in a hybrid format, a substantial portion of the curriculum relies on online access through SUNStudent. However, system slowness, login issues, and difficulties with uploading content or responding to student questions in real time created barriers to effective teaching and learning. Despite adjustments made from

lessons learnt in the previous year — aimed at helping first-year MBChB students adapt to hybrid learning — SUNStudent's limitations severely affected students' ability to access essential content.

The challenges with SUNStudent also disrupted academic support services. Many students faced issues accessing their progress marks, with some year-long modules mistakenly reflecting a “fail” status after the June/July assessments, obscuring their true progress. This led to heightened anxiety among students, who feared for their academic standing and questioned whether they should continue their studies. Consequently, concerns over academic progress became one of the most common presenting issues at the Unit.

For psychologists and counsellors providing academic support, SUNStudent's issues compounded their difficulties. Limited access to students' marks, academic history, and overall performance information made it challenging to offer informed guidance on academic functioning. This system's constraints hindered both the delivery of psychological support, and the Unit's ability to respond to students' academic needs effectively.

Despite adjustments made from lessons learnt in the previous year — aimed at helping first-year MBChB students adapt to hybrid learning — SUNStudent's limitations severely affected students' ability to access essential content.

In 2024, our two ECP support colleagues, Liezl Kloppe and Lauren Schilder, were informed that their contracts could not be renewed due to a lack of funding. This news

Often, students would book sessions and then fail to show up without providing any notice or reason for cancellation.

was deeply disappointing, not only for Liezl and Lauren, but also for their colleagues in the Unit. Feedback from both students and faculty members involved in the ECP programmes highlights the exceptional contributions they have made to student success in these initiatives. It was particularly disheartening to receive ongoing feedback that the service could no longer be funded, meaning these students and faculty would have to continue without their support in the future. However, securing funding for the continuation of their contracts at the last minute was a great relief, and we are excited to continue benefiting from their expertise in the near future.

The UACD successfully managed the high demand for counselling services and accommodated a large client load, but a persistent challenge emerged from students not attending their scheduled appointments. Often, students would book sessions and then fail to show up without providing any notice or reason for cancellation. We hypothesise that the free nature of the service might contribute to lower commitment, with some students possibly feeling less accountable due to the absence of financial implications.

Once this trend was identified, we began exploring strategies to improve attendance rates. For instance, we implemented

measures such as resending appointment reminders the day before each scheduled session to encourage students to either confirm or

cancel if they were unable to attend. Despite these efforts, missed appointments remained a frequent issue.

Looking ahead, improving appointment attendance or facilitating timely cancellations will be a priority. Developing more effective reminder systems, or incorporating automated check-ins, could be beneficial. Reducing missed appointments will enable us to serve more students efficiently, as open slots could be allocated to those waiting for assistance. This will be a key area for system refinement next year to optimise service delivery and support access for all students.

c) Partnerships and Networking Opportunities

- The UACD partnered with the Western Cape Education Department to offer psychological support services at A.F. Louw Primary School in Stellenbosch. This forms part of the official twelve-month accredited programme for intern educational psychologists.
- The UACD partnered with Stellenbosch University's Department of Industrial Psychology to provide psychometry interns with valuable hands-on experience in assessment practices. This partnership

focuses particularly on assessments for students facing difficulties in completing their exams within the standard time limits and who may qualify for additional time or other exam concessions. With this collaboration, psychometry interns can gain practical exposure to evaluating students' needs for academic accommodations, developing their assessment skills while also supporting students in accessing the resources necessary for academic success.

- The UACD partnered with the Division for Learning and Teaching Enhancement to improve student success and throughput at the University.
- As part of the Integrated Student Success Strategy, the University partnered with the Siyaphumelela Network to improve student success through the collection and utilisation of student data to make informed decisions. Siyaphumelela has assigned a coach to Stellenbosch University who visited the institution on 14 and 15 November 2024.
- All staff are registered members of ELETSA: Academic Advising South Africa. A new working relationship was established that informs the practices of the Unit.

- The Unit partnered with the Centre for Student Recruitment to successfully onboard prospective students. Elmien Sinclair facilitated a session titled Building blocks for student success at the NextGenMaties 2024 event (12 October 2024) to guide the parents of prospective students in understanding the transition from high school to university, covering key academic challenges and offering parents strategies to support their children's success.
- The Unit partnered with the Reading Lab at the Language Centre to offer reading work sessions as part of the annual academic skills work session series.
- The ECP support team – Liezl Kloppe and Lauren Schilder – partnered with support staff in the faculties to ensure that a comprehensive psychosocial wraparound support service is available for all registered ECP students.
- The Unit works closely with various bursary providers, including the Moshal Scholarship Programme, Allan Gray Orbis Foundation, ISFAP, the Thuthuka Bursary Programme and the Dell Young Leaders Bursary Programme, to provide comprehensive

wraparound support for students funded by these organisations. Liezl Kloppe also served on the selection committee for the Dell Young Leaders Programme.

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The UACD team strengthened and expanded its collaborative efforts with faculty staff across various departments to support the effective implementation of systemic interventions.

d) Highlights

The UACD team strengthened and expanded its collaborative efforts with faculty staff across various departments to support the effective implementation of systemic interventions. Key highlights identified for 2024 include:

- Christa Koch conducted a self-management workshop for the BSc Honours students in Applied Mathematics. The session focused on equipping these students with skills and strategies to support their transition to postgraduate studies, emphasising time management and maintaining their wellbeing.
- The Unit has maintained a longstanding partnership with Neuro-Link, utilising their Neuro-Agility Profile to support students to develop effective study strategies and enhance their academic performance. This year, Neuro-Link introduced an upgraded tool, the Brain Potential Profile — a streamlined version of the Neuro-Agility Profile. While this new profile retains the high-quality feedback essential for developing students' study strategies,

its more affordable format has allowed for broader access, enabling more students to benefit from the intervention. The Brain Potential Profile was particularly valuable in a group intervention provided to students in the Thuthuka

Bursary Programme, helping them optimise their study techniques and academic skills.

- Three workshops were offered to postgraduate students by Dr Erna Gerrits via the Graduate School in the Faculty of Humanities. Master's and PhD students were extended an open invitation. Eighteen students attended on 10 May, with the session offered in a venue at the Faculty of Humanities, and 10 students attended on 5 September. This session was held in Den Bosch at the CSCD. A third workshop was offered on 22 November 2024. Themes that were addressed were related to mental health on the postgraduate journey. The involved assertiveness and individual conflict styles, engaging with my supervisor, managing relationships with close family members, mindful selfcare, and how finalising postgraduate studies would influence future career opportunities, as well as their personal vision and goals. Students reported benefiting from the sessions by meeting other students on the same journey. Postgraduate students are

often lonely and isolated when working on their individual research projects. Based on this feedback, organised 'coffee-date' meetings were organised in between the workshops for students to socialise in an organised setup.

- The Paarl Youth Initiative Career Project ran for the second time this year, in the September school vacation. Dr Erna Gerryts and the four intern psychologists, Dané Lombaard, Josephine Padarath, Ida Wepener and Ntombi Maduna, spent two days in Paarl with sixteen Grade 11 learners from four different schools in the town. These learners do not have access to career counselling services at their schools. The youth leg of the Rotary club financed the project. The

purpose of the project was to serve the farmworker community in Paarl, but also to give our interns exposure to group career counselling. Their exposure to career counselling in the UACD is only with individual students. In schools and communities, group career counselling is indispensable, because individual career counselling is just too expensive for households with lower incomes and without medical insurance.

- A standout achievement this year was the exceptional work done by our group of psychology interns. Not only were they highly committed to their professional growth, but they also dedicated themselves to delivering outstanding service to the student community. Their proactive approach was evident in the numerous initiatives they undertook to enhance and expand our services. For instance, they took the initiative to upgrade and enrich the content of our academic work sessions, ensuring these sessions were more relevant and impactful for students.
- The interns also fostered strong collaboration with OT students, working together on psychoeducational initiatives that combined their skills and knowledge to better support students' mental and academic wellbeing. In addition, their outreach extended beyond the University, as they connected with the broader Stellenbosch community through a



The Paarl Youth Initiative Career Project.

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support project and educational work session. This community engagement allowed them to apply their skills in diverse settings, amplifying the impact of our services and demonstrating their commitment to social responsibility. The interns' dedication and innovation not only benefited students, but also strengthened the overall reach and quality of our Unit's services.

- A notable trend this year was the increased demand from students for in-person sessions and interactions, marking a shift from the preferences observed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic, many students have expressed a greater need for face-to-face engagement, seeking the unique connection and support that in-person interactions provide compared to virtual sessions.
- This shift reflects a growing recognition among students of the value of personal interaction in fostering emotional support, accountability, and a sense of belonging. For many, the in-person format offers a more immersive, distraction-free environment, which can enhance focus and the therapeutic experience. Furthermore, students have shared that being physically present in a supportive space helps them feel more understood and engaged, as well as better equipped to tackle academic and personal challenges.
- This trend has underscored the importance of balancing both in-person and online service options to meet students' evolving preferences and needs. As we continue to observe this shift, we are mindful of adapting our services to ensure students have the most effective and supportive experiences possible.
- Elmien Sinclair and Christa Koch delivered an engaging session for the Feuerstein Interest Group, with attendance by both national and international practitioners. The presentation, titled "Applying MLE to Co-create Solutions in Psychotherapy for Higher Education Students", showcased how the educational psychologists at UACD integrate the theory of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) into their brief, solution-focused psychotherapy practices. Participants learnt how clients can set clear therapeutic goals and identify specific aspects that require mediation, ultimately contributing to the shaping of a supportive environment. The primary focus of this work is on undergraduate and postgraduate students in higher education.
- This year, the Unit collaborated with various faculties to expand its mainly office-based services to group sessions that are incorporated into the official curriculum and hosted as lunch-hour sessions organised by the faculties. This allowed the Unit's academic development and support services to reach students in



With the rise of pop psychology trends on social media, misinformation and self-diagnosis of ADHD have become increasingly common.

their specific faculties. Initiatives included lunch-hour sessions in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, targeted sessions to enhance BAcc students' classroom experiences, support sessions for postgraduate students in Transport Economics to help them meet academic expectations, lunch-hour sessions for Engineering students, and time and stress management workshops as part of the Crop Sciences curriculum in the Faculty of AgriSciences.

- On 17 October 2024, following Mental Health Awareness Day, Dané Lombaard and Lizzie Witbooi represented the CSCD on Maties FM radio station. During the interview, they discussed the role of their professions, the range of services offered by the CSCD, and addressed common misconceptions about mental health. They shared insights into their professional journeys and highlighted the importance of support structures for mental health within the University community.
- With the rise of pop psychology trends on social media, misinformation and

self-diagnosis of ADHD have become increasingly common. In recent years, the CSCD has experienced a significant increase in students suspecting that they may meet the criteria for ADHD. To update and

align her professional understanding of diagnosing and managing ADHD, Liezl Klopper attended the ADHD Short Course for Professionals in March 2024. This course was compiled and presented by practicing psychiatrist and Stellenbosch Business School professor, Renata Schoeman, who is highly regarded as an expert in this field. The course comprised 12 hours of self-study over three learning units: Understanding ADHD; Diagnosing and Managing ADHD; and Living and Working with ADHD. Upon completion of the learning units, Prof. Schoeman led an interactive virtual group discussion attended by medical and mental health professionals from as far as Finland and Hungary to address hot topics related to the course content. Liezl's feedback: "The course exceeded my expectations by providing invaluable insights into the neurobiology and neuropsychology of ADHD, along with the knowledge needed for accurate diagnosis and effective management of this condition in our student population."

Personalia

- **Ida Wepener** successfully completed her studies and was awarded the MEdPsych degree by SU. She also passed the HPCSA board examination and will be able to register as an educational psychologist on completion of her internship at the end of December 2024.
- **Ntombifuthi Maduna** successfully completed her studies and was awarded the MEdPsych degree by UJ on 21 July 2024.
- **Dané Lombaard** successfully completed her studies and will be awarded her MEdPsych degree by the University of Zululand, with the ceremony to take place in March 2025. She also received the Dean's Excellence Award for Highest Academic Achievement: Master of Education in Educational Psychology.
- **René Van Schalkwyk**, who worked as an intern psychologist in 2023, successfully passed the HPCSA board exam and is now a registered educational psychologist.
- **Liezl Kloppe**: "Despite the juggles of life and cancellations of trail running events due to storms and winds, I'm grateful for a healthy body that allowed me the opportunity to complete several endurance challenges in 2024, including the Mountain Ultra Trail 44 km in May; PuffFer 65 km for the seventh time, in August, and the first edition of the Blouklip 42 km route in November! I'm also thankful for the enriching experience to hike the Heuningvlei Camino. This route is nestled in the Cederberg mountains, and forms part of a vital tourism initiative sustaining the Moravian Community of Heuningvlei, an outpost of the greater Wuppertal missionary post.

The following feedback was received to the questions posed about the work sessions specifically:

What did you most appreciate/enjoy/ think was best about the session?

- *The collaborative environment, where we could all share and learn from each other's study techniques and such.*
- *I enjoyed the fact that it was a safe space and intimate and that we could openly share our concerns and questions.*
- *Being able to see that there is a lot you can do in developing yourself as a person.*
- *I think the best part was learning how motivation and persistence [are] important in our academic self-confidence. I also learnt that having a positive academic mindset is very important when it comes to self-confidence and I learnt that we all have an academic identity, we just have to figure out what it is.*
- *The presenter interacted with us and did not bombard us with information.*
- *How the presenter taught us a relaxing exercise and how she was honest about how difficult it really is being a student and students cannot have a work-life balance.*

- *Presenter was approachable and welcoming.*

Would you recommend this session to other students?

- *Yes, because talking about study methods commits you to achieve more.*
- *Yes, it encourages and promotes tips on staying motivated and productive.*
- *Yes definitely. It was extremely informative and can be a great asset for our personal university journeys.*
- *Without a doubt, I believe that most students should try to find ways to improve in their academics, and grow academically.*
- *Yes, the place is cozy and feels like a safe space to express vulnerability, which one cannot express when with friends. There is no fear of judgement.*
- *Yes. It is very helpful in helping you engage with your emotional side of academics and needs.*
- *Yes, it helped me gain insight into new techniques I haven't tried yet and I think that it will prove incredibly valuable in my studies.*

Evaluation of Services

- *For me, therapy was a shining light in my life, in times when my future and even present seemed dark, I was able to reach out and receive support. The service to me was extremely valuable, as I learnt how to better love and choose not only myself but those around me. The service is free and at your disposal; please do reach out even if its just for one session! There is value in YOU and the service.*
- *I always struggled with learning effectively and did not get the results I think I should have got, given my efforts. The Neuro Agility Profile (NAP) helped me to learn more effectively and how to properly use my time.*
- *Sometimes, there are certain things you can't just share with anyone, especially with those around you, usually because we fear being misunderstood or judged. So, it helps to have an environment where you can openly express what's on your mind without any awkward feedback. Sometimes, we just don't want to burden others with our problems. Therapy helps relieve that load, so we can focus on our studies. Personally, therapy has helped me keep a clear and level head, allowing me to stay focused academically. It's also taught me a lot about myself, including the career I'd like to pursue, not to mention study tips and coping mechanisms for difficult times.*

Work Sessions and Groups

Throughout 2024, the UACD conducted a series of work sessions dedicated to enhancing particular skills aimed at fostering student success. The sessions were offered as a semester programme to clients of the CSCD. Sessions were also featured within module programmes, as well as being presented upon invitation from various faculties. Session topics included:

- Academic skills for success
- Managing time as a student
- Healthy habits for student living
- Handling academic stress and anxiety for better results
- Skills to focus and concentrate better
- Building self-confidence academically
- Dealing with low marks and failure
- Motivation and discipline
- Exam writing skills
- A total of 2 141 students attended the work sessions offered in 2024.

Graphic summary of work session feedback

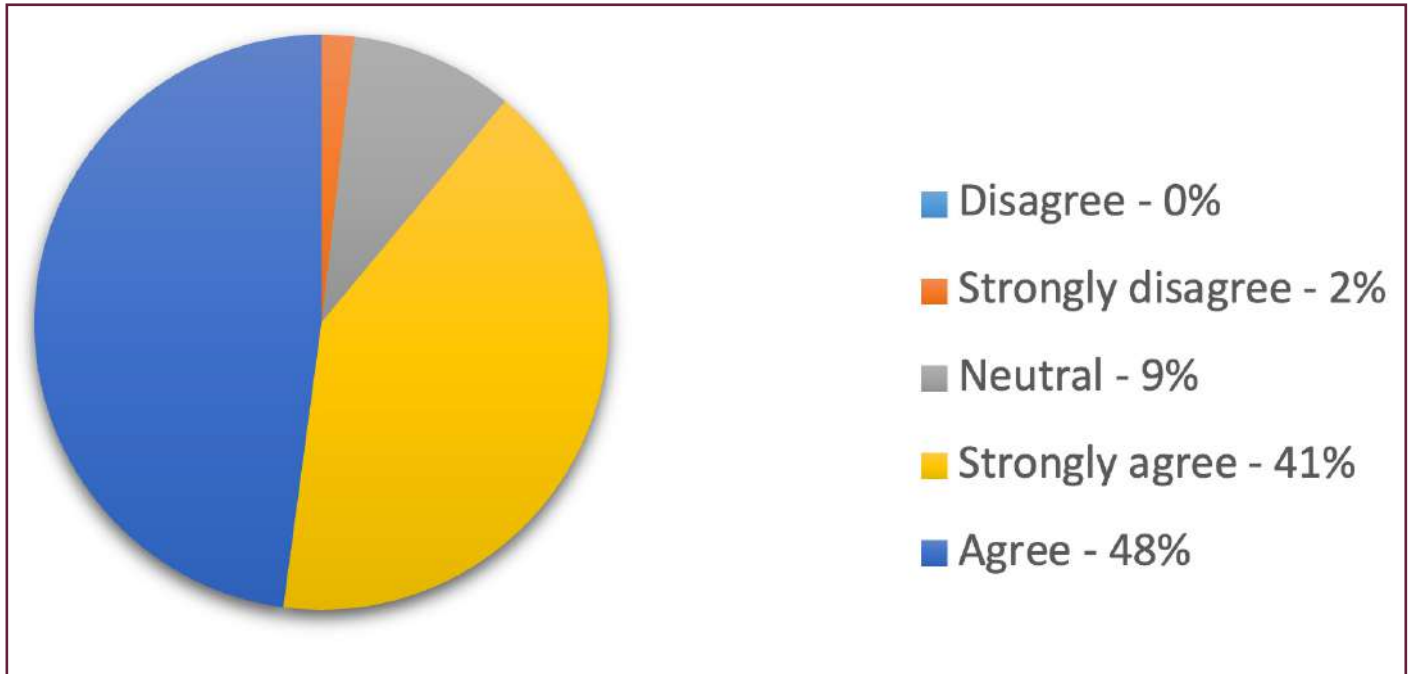


Figure 1: Knowledge and information gained from this session met my expectation.

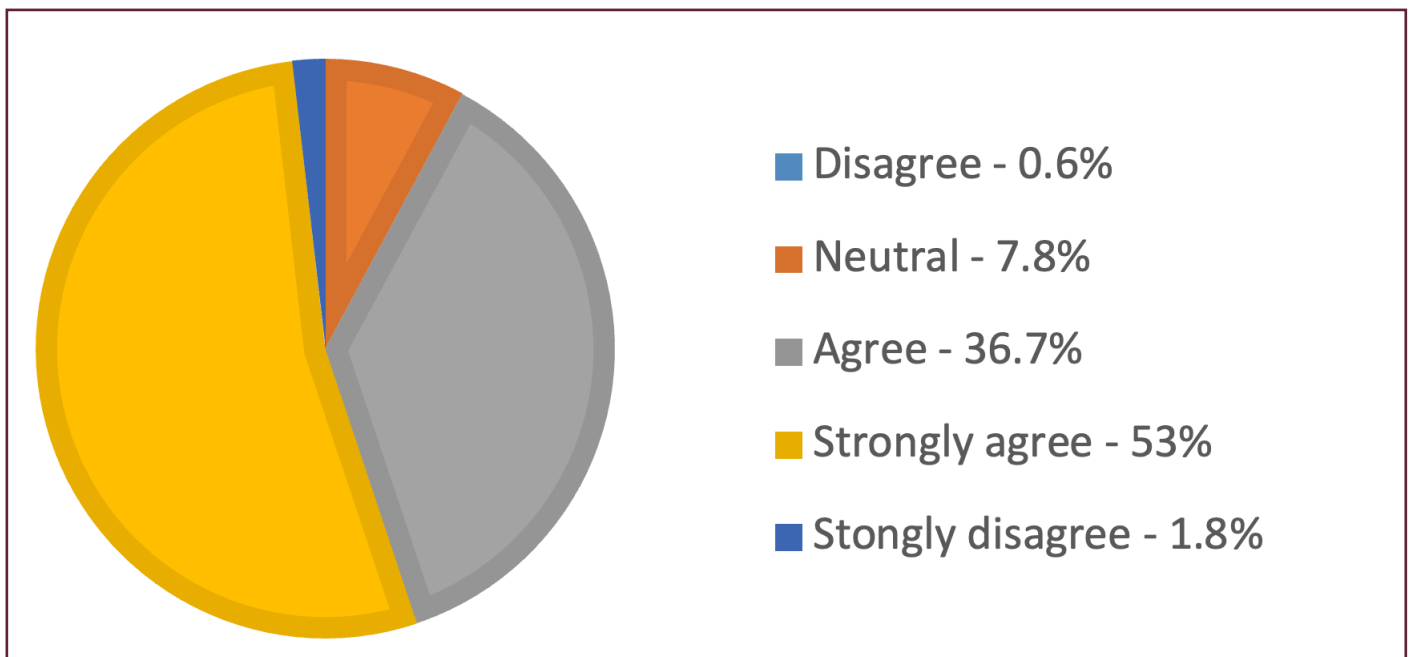


Figure 2: The content of the session will be useful/applicable in my studies/ personal development.

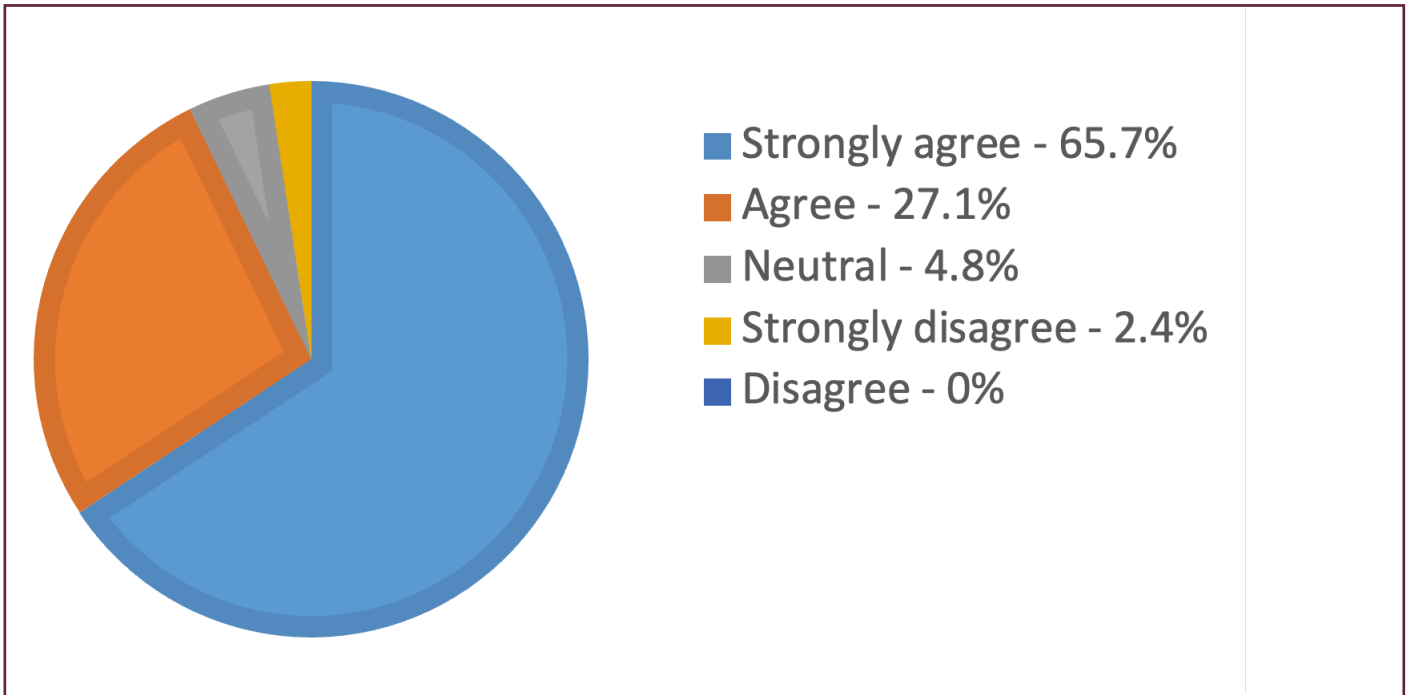


Figure 3: The facilitator was knowledgeable on the topic

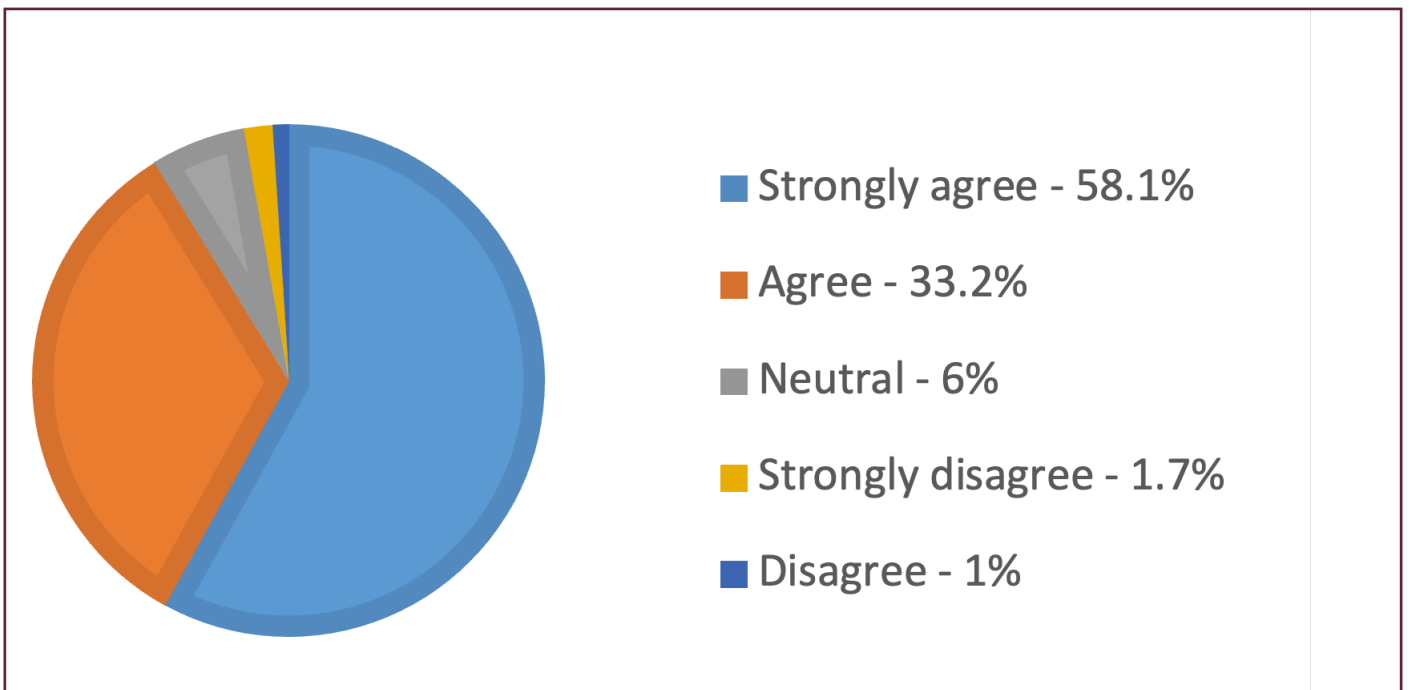


Figure 4: The facilitator presented at the correct level and presentation was well-paced and organised

Table 1: Community school interventions, educational psychology interns: Ida Wepener, Dané Lombaard, Ntombifuthi Maduna

AF LOUW PRIMARY				
Type of session	Description	Term	Participants	Intern
Assessment	Comprehensive Psycho-educational	1 & 2	2	Ida
Assessment	Comprehensive Psycho-educational	3	2	Dané
Assessment	ADHD screening and appropriate referral	4	-	Ntombifuthi
	Total		4	
Type of session	Description	Term	Hours	Intern
Individual	Sessions with grade R-7 learners	1	22	Ida
Individual	Sessions with grade R-7 learners	2	27	Ida
Individual	Sessions with grade R-7 learners	3	38	Dané
Individual	Sessions with grade R-7 learners	3 & 4	48	Ntombifuthi
	Total		135	
Type of session	Description	Term	Hours	Intern
Individual	Parental guidance	1	3	Ida
Individual	Parental guidance	2	3	Ida
Individual	Parental guidance	3	3	Dané
Individual	Parental guidance	4	4	Ntombifuthi
	Total		13	
Type of session	Description	Term	Hours	Intern
Individual	Collaboration with teachers, the principal and social workers	1	4	Ida
Individual	Collaboration with teachers, the principal and social workers	2	5	Ida

Individual	Collaboration with teachers, the principal and social workers	3	4	Dané
Individual	Collaboration with teachers, the principal and social workers	4	4	Ntombifuthi
	Total		17	
Type of session	Description	Term	Hours	Intern
Individual	Supervision with Ms. Amanda van der Vyver	1	4	Ida
Individual	Supervision with Ms. Amanda van der Vyver	2	3	Ida
Individual	Supervision with Ms. Amanda van der Vyver	3	9	Dané
Individual	Supervision with Ms. Amanda van der Vyver	4	9	Ntombifuthi
	Total		25	

PAARL YOUTH INITIATIVE (GRADE 11 LEARNERS)				
Type of session	Description	Number of learners	Month	Intern
Group	Group career counselling and development	16	September	Ntombifuthi, Dané & Ida
Group	Thorough career assessment	16	September	Ntombifuthi, Dané & Ida
Individual	Report writing and individualised recommendations	12	September	Ntombifuthi, Dané & Ida
Individual	Supervision with Dr. Erna Gerryts (senior psychologist)	2	November	Ntombifuthi, Dané & Ida
Individual	Feedback on career assessment and personalised recommendations shared	12	November	Ntombifuthi, Dané & Ida
Individual	Report writing and individualised recommendations	12	September	Ntombifuthi, Dané & Ida
Individual	Feedback on career assessment and personalised recommendations shared	12	November	Ntombifuthi, Dané & Ida
Total hours: 82				

Unit for Graduand Career Services (UGCS)

A Reflection on the Unit's Year



The past year has been a revival of our core career services that brought with it our Unit embracing new trends in career development. Another encouraging trend was the continued focus on staff wellness that was initiated by our Centre's director and supported by our senior director. Our goals for 2024 were to improve team wellness, rekindle our partnership with the Tygerberg Postgraduate Student Organisation, revive our partnership with the Connecting to Industry co-curricular module,

continuously adjust to the new Oracle Fusion Cloud (OFC) system, fulfil our contractual duties in our partnership with Gradlinc, revive our career fairs and address our staff challenges in the best possible way.

a) Achievements

Despite the costs and effort to organise and host the Career Fairs in marquee tents on the "Rooiplein", it has become abundantly clear

that it works. The space is central and ideal for on-campus events. It the first time we hosted the General and Auditing career fairs on the “Rooiplein” since before lockdown. All three career fairs, including the Engineering Career Fair, were well attended, and we had a waiting list of employers. The payment trend has become better over the past few years, and most companies adhered to SU payment instructions of 30 days from the invoice date. Although the registrations for our work sessions declined due to the transition to the Gradlinc platform, it picked up again thanks to our mailshots system. Our student assistant of the past few years graduated and started his master’s degree in engineering. This made it possible for us to appoint him on a fixed-term contract. His improved role added more value to his involvement in our day-to-day services. Our Unit’s footprint grew due to the Career Fairs, work sessions and Career Khulumas. After many months of back-and-forth communication, we received the online Ultimate Career Guide at the end of October. This will boost our career information resources. Another highlight was the invitation from the IEC (Intercultural Education Corporation) for one of our staff members to visit China from 10 to 19 December. This is indeed a great opportunity to build new networks.

b) Interesting Events

A colleague from the Centre for Student Life and Learning met an AI developer in the USA at a conference and referred him

to our Unit. He had developed a product called InterviewAI. This product is a real gem, as it helps students to develop their CVs, work on their personal branding and practise interviews via an AI-generated mock interview that is industry specific. We piloted the product with some of our student societies and the Senior Living Spaces Cluster and await the results. He allowed us to pilot the product for free, as it is very expensive. We look forward to continuing our partnership with InterviewAI in 2025.

c) Partnerships and Networking Opportunities

We can report on the following partnerships:

- Transformation Office Student Leaders
- Department of Logistics
- Dietetics 3
- EDP
- OPTIMUS
- Faculty of Theology
- Sports Science
- Engineering Faculty
- Centre for Student Life and Learning
- FVZSI
- AEPA Skills Development — Agriculture Dept
- Science Ambassadors – Faculty of Science.

d) Challenges

As mentioned before, transitioning from MatiesCareers (Symplicity) to Gradlinc for work session registrations was a challenge. The initial decline in work sessions registrations was however rectified by using mailshots. Despite the demand for career interventions during this period, we have

Despite the demand for career interventions during this period, we have realised that group sessions in May and October are not ideal. Work sessions and Career Khulumas must end in September.

realised that group sessions in May and October are not ideal. Work sessions and Career Khulumas must end in September. Securing venues for on-campus events remains a challenge due to cost. This is concerning, as the Graduate Destination Survey, SAGEA Candidate Survey and other surveys show that SU students prefer on-campus events. It remains a challenge to receive all payments timeously from the employers who participate in our career fairs. We must rely on our third-stream income to finance most of our services. Although there are improvements with the new OFC system, it does not send out the invoices automatically, as with the old system, and this could be problematic. It was mentioned that senior management will investigate the

possibility that the 25% indirect cost recovery rate paid from third-stream income might be invested back into the unit/centre that generated the funds. This would make a real difference to our Unit's sustainability. We also experienced challenges with the Graduate Destination survey due to the transition to

the new student information system. Unfortunately, we received the graduate lists too late, which led to a poor response rate. Our staff capacity will continue to affect the sustainability of some projects, like the Co-curricular

Connecting to Industry Module, as we only have one staff member in the graduate development portfolio.

Personalia

- **Mr Marquard Timmey's** son started his Stellenbosch University journey as a first-year student.
- **Ms Thobeka Msi** continued her MSc Psychological Sciences studies at Brunel University, London.

Evaluation of Services

We received the following qualitative feedback from students and employers:

- *On behalf of the Burgiss group, I just We received the following qualitative feedback from students and employers:*
- *I would just like to say thank you again for a wonderful and amazing career expo yesterday!!! "It (the career fair) was well represented by the students! We appreciate all the work and effort you and your team do!!*
- *I appreciate that it (the work session) was hosted online since I do not live on campus and rely on transport from other people. Well researched and thought out. Easily accessible information and nicely laid out or structured.*
- *Super thanks to you and your (career fairs) team. It is an absolute pleasure working with you.*
- *All my questions were answered in this session and everything that I was wondering about.*
- *The presenter was transparent, and her demeanour created a warm and welcoming atmosphere.*

Work Sessions and Groups

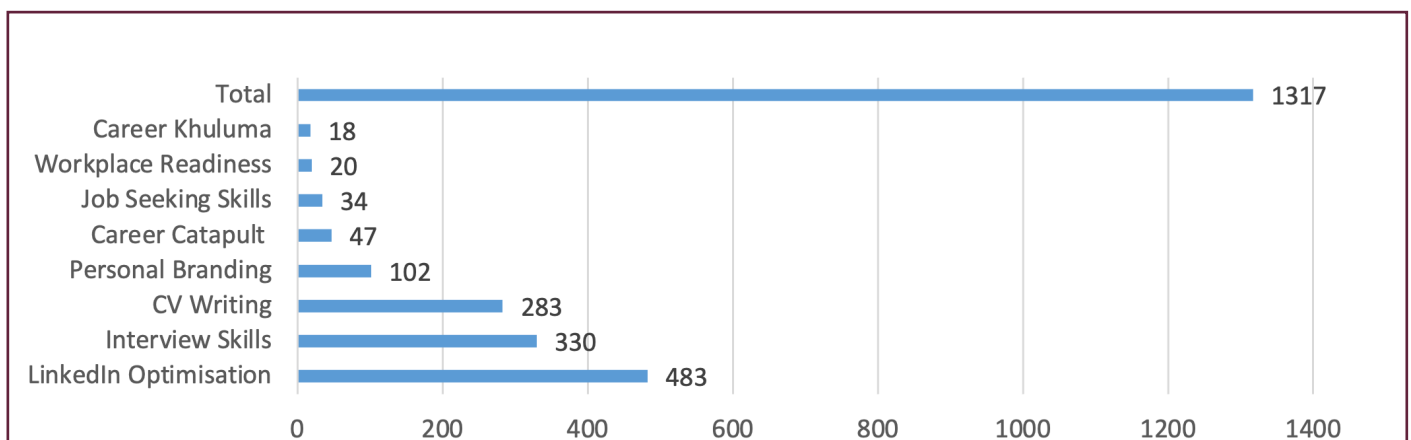


Figure 5: UGCS work sessions participants



Figure 6: Students Reached via Mailshots

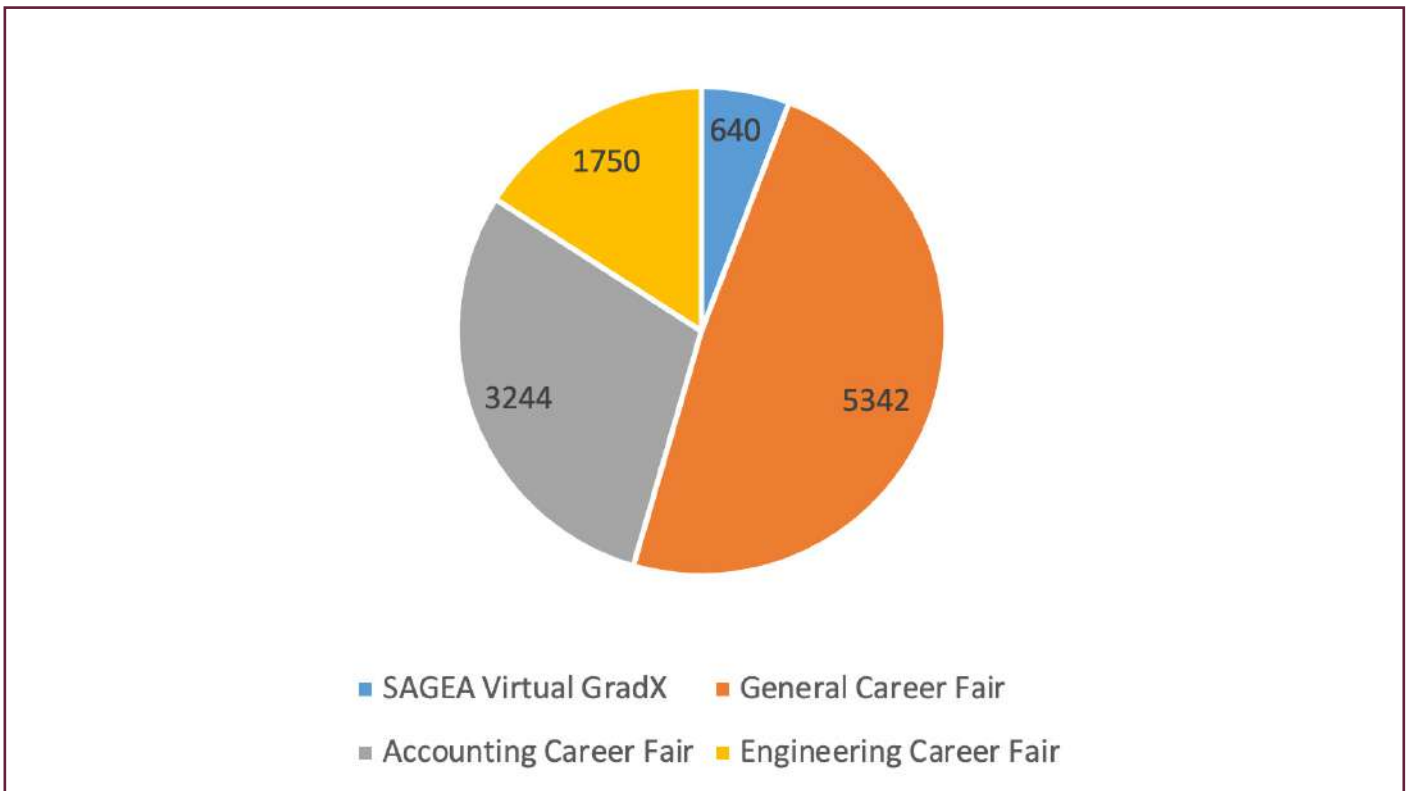


Figure 7: Career Fairs Registered SU students visits

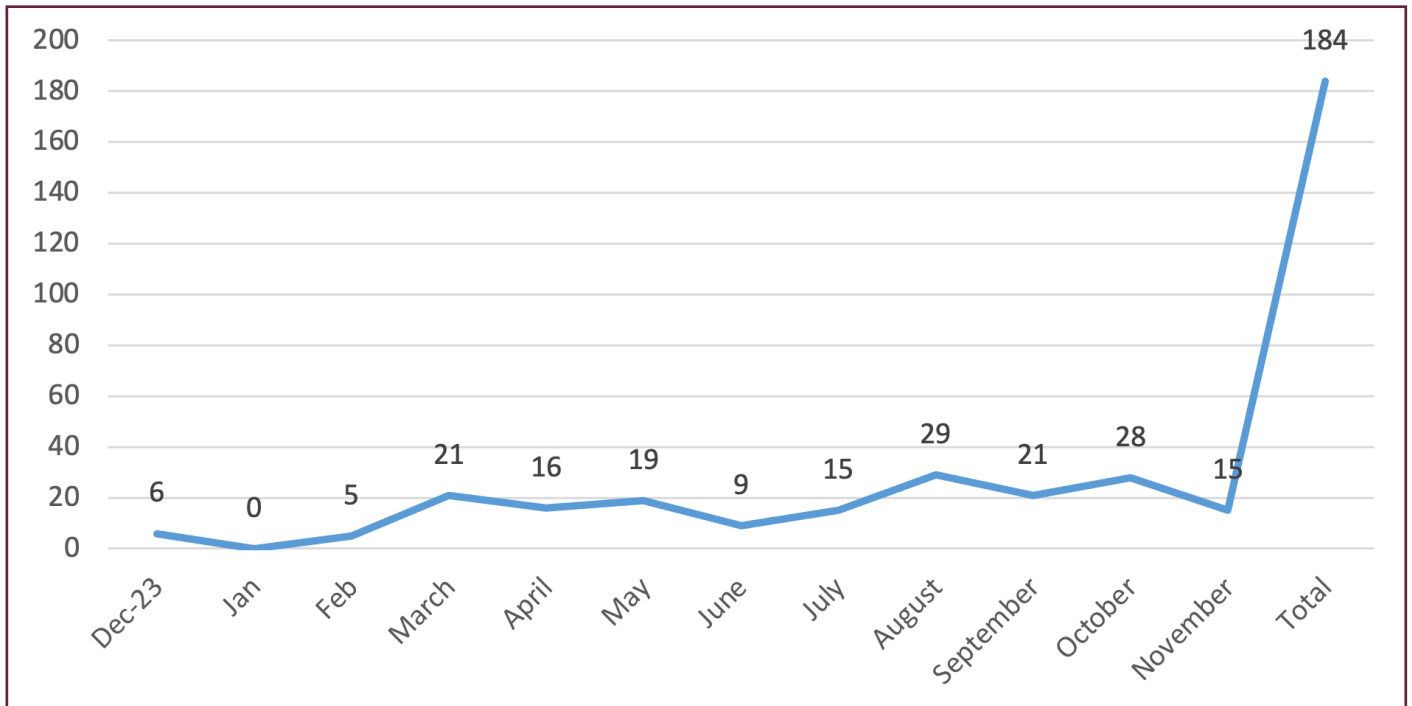


Figure 8: Number of jobs posted via Mailshots

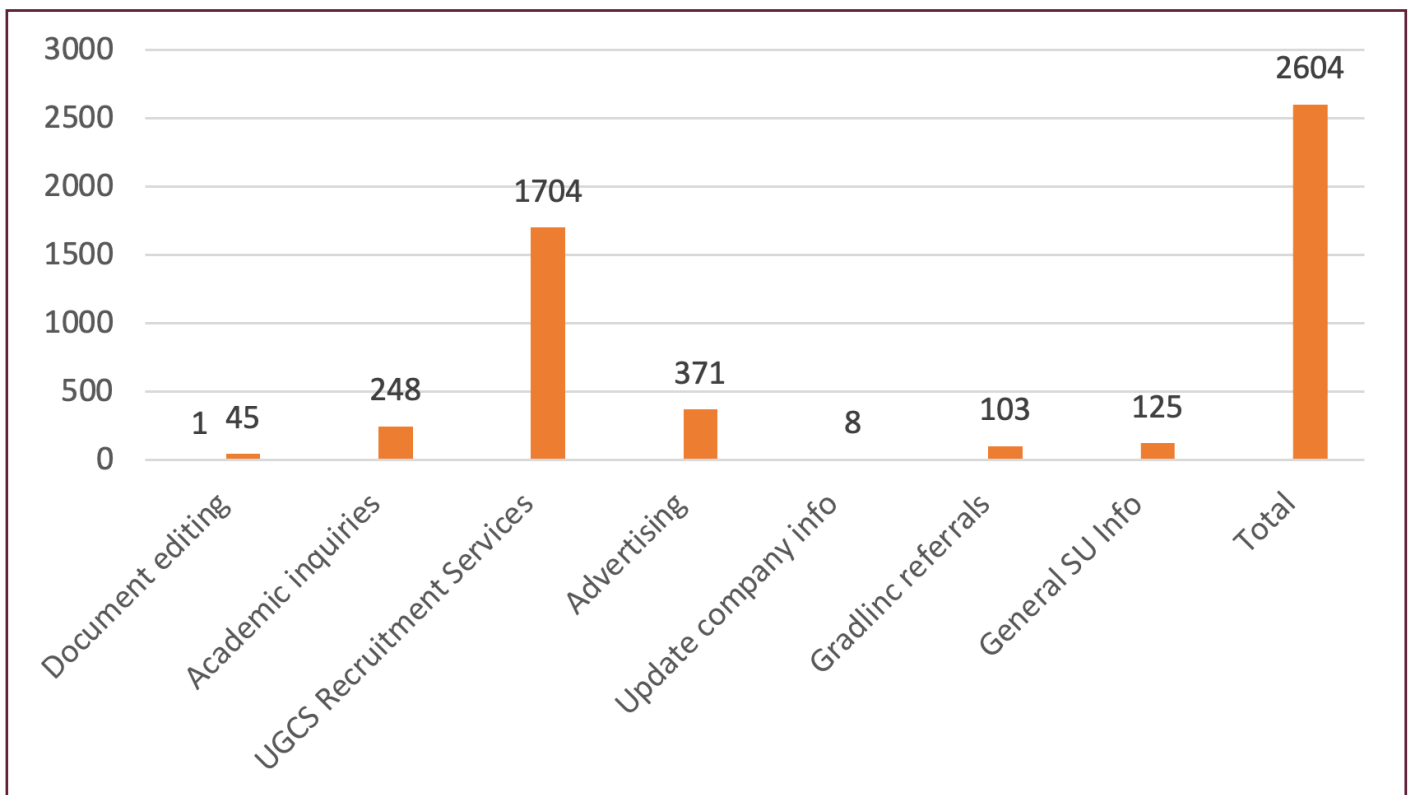
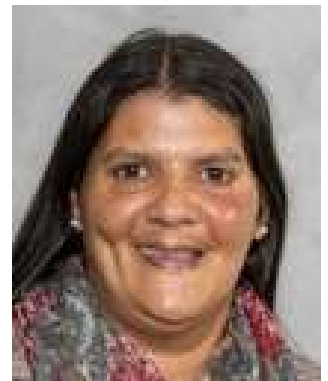


Figure 9: Student and Employer enquiries via careerservices@sun.ac.za

Disability Unit (DU)

A Reflection on the Unit's Year



a) Challenges

This year was particularly challenging for the Disability Unit. With the move of SU to the SUNStudent environment, assessment concessions had to be developed for use and application on SUNStudent by students and staff. This took place while still having to work with applications for assessment concessions and manual processes. Functionalities like the issuing of letters were developed alongside the awarding of assessment concessions, which was done manually by generating Excel lists, then having these put through Serosoft to generate an Exam Concessions Report, visible to faculties and the Assessment Office.

The functionalities are not fully in place, as some functions still take place manually. We hope that the kinks will be ironed out of the assessment concessions capability in 2025, and that most of the concession applications can take place online, with the needed data accessible to all. We had to scale down some of our usual activities, such as the annual Casual Day event, for which much planning usually took place, to focus on the new capability development.

b) Achievements

Among our achievements were the new Lead with Disability for Staff six-session programme, which started in the first semester in collaboration with HR. HR also introduced a more comprehensive induction video with information regarding diversity at SU, inclusive of disability. In our Lead with Disability programme for students, we had 98 participants this year, and 65 passed. We presented six sessions in the first semester and six sessions in the second semester. The sessions were presented in a hybrid way. We have played an active role in these initiatives since 2023 and our footprint is growing.

c) Carl & Emily Fuchs Foundation

We received a grant from the Carl & Emily Fuchs Foundation to purchase assistive technologies such as earmuffs and hearing devices that could be on loan to students. These enhance hearing in academic activities such as lectures and group work. See some of the hearing assistants and ear muffs in the pictures and links below:

Lh 10 Amplified Hearing Assistant

LINK

The mobile iLoopTM+ inductive loopset is for people with hearing aids. When you use the iLoopTM+, you can speak directly to the caller through the microphone inside the system. So, the device works as a wireless system. Compatible with products equipped with

a standard 3.5 mm coaxial microphone and headset socket, and with most cellular phones like iPhone, Blackberry, Samsung etc., and digital enhanced cordless communications (DECT).



Low-Profile Earmuffs

LINK

Students on the spectrum of neurodiversity conditions (e.g. ADHD and autism) often find sensory stimulation overwhelming. When in a classroom or exam/test room, sounds like the clicking of pens and squeaking of chairs can cause a disturbance. Wearing low-profile earmuffs can aid to soften such noises, which results in better focus. Students who are sensitive to noise can come to the DU to test these low-profile earmuffs before these are given to them to use on campus.

CL Hook 3

LINK

Ear hooks offer clear sound quality while listening to music for hearing-impaired users, without feedback

and distracting background noise, since the inductive loop is in immediate proximity to the hearing aid receiver.

3,5mm stereo jack / Two hooks



iLOOP PLUS_v3

LINK

This device is used by deaf people to enhance their listening in a group context or meetings. It is hung around the neck and connects to devices such as smartphones.

d) Coaching and mentoring

The coaching and mentoring sessions done at the DU have produced good results and positive student experiences. The key objectives are to create a safe and welcoming space that assists students to:

- embrace and celebrate their unique identities and differentness;
- develop and build on their confidence and self-worth while pursuing self-knowledge, self-acceptance, personal growth and development;
- identify their personal, academic and

social goals, as well as potential barriers that might hinder them from reaching these goals;

- take ownership and develop agency while navigating their academic journey.

Personalia

Mrs Lizelle Apollis left the Disability Unit to take up a post at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. She now lectures in the Department of Occupational Therapy. We wish her only the best and that she continues to make her mark in her career. We are excited that Mrs Jacqueline Lenting will be taking up her position. A new post was also created to help fulfil the administrative duties, as well as assist with assessment concessions. Lefu Kumeke was appointed in this Administrative Officer position. We are very happy about this! Both incumbents started on 1 December 2024.

Evaluation of Services

Comments about coaching and mentoring sessions

- *I would like to take this time to thank you very much for your support and guidance. Words cannot express how grateful I am for everything you have done for me. I really appreciate everything you have done for me from the first time we met until now. You are one of the few good, loving and caring people I know in Stellenbosch. Thank you very much.*
- *I would like to share with you that I am off to a good start this week. I have been thinking about what we have discussed in our session and it has really helped me to navigate a few challenges through the remainder of last week. I would just like to thank you again for your time and support and everything you shared. I have informed my parents about how the session went and they are so grateful for your support.*

- *Thank you for getting back to me. Your words of wisdom have helped me to calm down and find my centre again. Thank you for your continuous support, I really appreciate it.*
- *Thank you so very much for talking with me today and for listening to my aspirations. Our conversation today was the first positive conversation about ASD that I have had in a while. Thank you so very much!*

Student comments about assistive technology received

- *I am sending a review of the earmuffs, all of these are opinions in comparison to the JBL 510 headphones that I had on (apart from the noise-cancelling element).*
- *Comfort: The earmuffs are very comfortable; they feel secure and have that adjustable band. Comfort decreases with prolonged wear; however, they are never painful. I have taken a nap with them on and experienced only moderate discomfort.*
- *Noise cancelling: The noise-cancelling feature is great. I can hear a lot of what is happening around me, so I am not distracted from my surroundings. I would describe it as the sound being compressed, all the sounds still exist but it is like they exist individually versus the usual cacophony. Also sounds that are further away; the usual humming and buzzing of buildings does become very faint ... which is very helpful when I am on campus.*

Comments about the Lead with Disability programme

- *During this programme, I gained valuable knowledge concerning the diverse experiences and challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. It aided me in understanding the broad scope of disabilities, and how societal and environmental barriers often exacerbate these challenges. This programme has taught me how to be conscious about things that I would normally just bypass, i.e. the non-accessible things around campus.*
- *As someone with Tourette's Syndrome and ADHD, this programme has been incredibly insightful for me. I've learnt that leadership is more than just a title; it's about genuinely understanding and advocating for the diverse needs within our community. The programme highlighted the importance of inclusivity and how to create environments that respect and support individuals with various disabilities, particularly those that are often invisible, like mine. I've also gained practical skills in empathy, active listening, and effective communication, which are crucial for advocating for neurodiversity.*

DSAf Open Days

The DU was involved in outreaches on both the Tygerberg and Stellenbosch campuses.

Outreaches and support from students (above) at the DSAf Open Day at Stellenbosch University.



Work Sessions & Groups

This year, the Disability Unit facilitated a range of disability inclusion and awareness-raising sessions, reaching 1 217 students and 269 staff members. These sessions included engagements with students in residences, work sessions conducted at Den Bosch and online, and tailored training for staff across faculties and support services. A significant milestone was the launch of the Lead with Disability at Work programme, developed in collaboration with Human Resources, which focused on empowering staff to create inclusive and supportive workplaces. These activities have contributed to promoting a culture of inclusion on campus, and the Disability Unit looks forward to continuing and expanding these efforts in the coming year.

Unit for Psychotherapeutic & Support Services (UPSS)

A Reflection on the Unit's Year



This year has been an exciting and productive year for the Unit. Our Counselling internship programme started with our first intern, Josephine Padarath. The Dell Young Leaders position was filled by Tracey Delport-Williams. All staff attended a two-day Solution-focused Brief Term Therapy session presented by Dr Jacqui von Cziffra-Bergs. We continued

our collaboration with two academic departments to offer students a platform for their practical rotations. We also participated in the first DSAf Open Day on campus.

The start of every year is very busy for our Social Work services, who assist with emergency accommodation and food security for newcomers (145 requests were

handled in January alone). The majority of the staff members were involved with the readmissions process – not just in advocating for students via the supporting documents we provide, but also serving on the various Readmissions Committees. Requests for appointments for therapeutic support pick up rapidly at the Unit once classes start, and the UPSS manage a steady stream of clients throughout most of the year. Our consultants continued to play an important role in

assisting the UPSS to avoid a waiting list and extended waiting periods during 2024. The UPSS also offered a range of support and developmental groups that students could join that cover various topics. As always, the UPSS values the role ER24 plays in making it possible for the Centre to collaboratively provide a 24-hour crisis service to students. The Unit managed to provide in excess of 8 500 sessions in 2024.

a) Achievements

- The offering of a walk-in crisis service (daily during office hours) in the Centre was a very important enhancement of the delivery of our support services this year. Dr Eric Horn and Dean Bailey provided valuable professional expertise in managing individual and group crisis and on-site de-briefing services.
- Another significant achievement this year has been our transition to a responsive intake system that enables client bookings to be achieved without the need for a waiting list. Therapy is now based on a brief-term model and clients have four sessions – including an intake session – to identify and work on the most important issues. We have also streamlined our administration support roles and responsibilities to ensure that staff can easily rotate when required.
- Staff attended the Mandatory Reporting Training on Gender-based Violence and Sexual offences at the Thuthuzela Centre.
- Nordlind Fouche, Eugene Booysen, Lizzie Witbooi and Dané Lombaard spent time discussing various mental health issues on MFM.
- Nordlind Fouche was selected to be part of the teaching team during the META study that took place at the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences between August and November of 2024. This study was run by Dr Nabeela Kajee, Prof Elize Archer and Prof Lucy Bowes. It forms part of a collaboration between researchers at Stellenbosch University and Oxford University, and is funded by the AfOx Catalyst Grant. The study ran two cohorts of mindfulness teaching (shorter adapted

version of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) for medical students. During this period, Nordlind taught mindfulness to two different groups of medical students.

- Eugene Booysen presented a paper at this year's SAACHDE Conference, titled: Conceptualisation of therapeutic process: In the face of significant resistance, can

process-orientated groups serve as a catalyst to explore and sustain cathartic experiences for students at the University of Stellenbosch? In addition, as part of the university's international exchange programme, he visited Universidad Nacional del Litoral in Santa Fe, Argentina.

- Deviné Kamalie visited Pecs University in Hungary.

b) Interesting events

Throughout the year, a variety of presentations, training sessions and support groups were offered, all designed to enhance student wellness. Thematic therapeutic and skills groups were organised to address key areas such as relationships, coping strategies for depression and anxiety, mindfulness practices, managing addictive behaviours, healthy habits for student living, issues related to sexuality and identity, and stress management. Our social workers collaborated with various stakeholders to offer students a financial literacy course.

During the DSAf Open Day in September, students engaged with CSCD staff to learn about the full range of support services available to them. OT interns enriched this event with interactive activities that generated substantial interest and enthusiasm among attendees. (see pictures of OT students' Open Day stall on the next page).

The OT interns contributed throughout this year through awareness campaigns during Mental Health Awareness Day in

October, organising a Puppy Therapy Day, creating a TikTok video to inform students about a display of mental health books at the library, and facilitated sensory intelligence assessments and groups.



Puppy Therapy Day on the Rooiplein.
Photo: Amy Lindstrom



c) Partnerships and networking opportunities

The UPSS works closely with the other units within the CSCD to provide a holistic service to students. Further partners in terms of service delivery to students include the other DSAf Centre (CLL), the Centre for Bursaries and Loans, the Registrar's Responsibility Centre, Campus Health, the Stellenbosch Provincial Hospital, Welgevallen Clinic and other psychiatric service providers, support staff and lecturers in the various faculties, the Dell Young Leaders programme of the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, as well as other student financial aid programmes/ student wellness and support programmes. Staff from the UPSS participated in the various committees on campus that contribute to student wellness. This past year we have also forged close relationships with the Department of Occupational Therapy and the Theology Faculty.

Staff from the UPSS participated in the various committees on campus that contribute to student wellness.

Personalia

- We welcomed Tracey Delport-Williams (clinical psychologist) and Khalyn Laymen (administrative officer) to our staff complement. We celebrated with Nontozamo Tsetse, who welcomed a baby girl in September, and we wish Sinazo Nyembezi all the best for the birth of her baby in 2025.
- Sadly, we bid farewell to Devine Kamalie. We are grateful for her dedication in delivering care to our students and wish her well in her new chapter.

Evaluation of Services

Feedback from two OT IV students on their practical experience at the CSCD:

We cannot believe that next week is our last week at the CSCD. We have learnt so much! We are so grateful for all the opportunities we were given, and how kind the team was every step of the way.

Client feedback on the OT service:

They gained a lot of knowledge about the topic and were able to apply it to their lives, especially in stressful situations like exams.

Client feedback on the Building Relationships group:

- *I had the opportunity to express myself in a safe space.*
- *I felt a sense of belonging.*
- *After attending the group I could present at a conference (a theology student who had difficulty with public speaking).*

Feedback on Trauma and Tension Release (TTR) group:

Learning grounding, breathing and to self-regulate. Still in shock of how my body reacted, looking forward to the next session.

Feedback on the Art Therapy group:

- *Saved my life, claimed my identity.*
- *Community, safe space for reflection. Sense of self-esteem.*

Groups and Other Support Activities

During 2024, therapists at the UPSS, social workers, counselling psychology interns, OT and pastoral care interns, and our crisis support team facilitated mental health workshops and presentations; support and skills groups; and debriefings for more than 3 500 students. A variety of topics were covered across several faculties, residences and campuses, including undergraduate and post-graduate levels.

Table 2: Breakdown of group and other support services offered between January and December 2024

Type of Group or Support Activity	Total no of Students/ Participants or Sessions	Facilitators
Support & Skills groups	211	UPSS therapists
Big group presentations & workshops (min 10 & max 500 participants)	2 707	UPSS therapists
Crisis support	343	Eric & Dean
Afterhours crisis support	114	ER24
OT & Pastoral Care	58 sessions	OT interns & 1 Theology intern

Summary of topics that were covered in above groups and support activities:

- Addictive behaviour
- Art Therapy
- Habits for success
- Sleep seminars
- Various life-skills groups focusing on adjustment
- Mindfulness for wellbeing and general functioning
- Presentations in faculties and residences on several topics
- Financial literacy (two workshops)
- Depression and anxiety skills groups
- Building relationships
- Debriefing regarding experiences on the clinical platform (FMHS)
- General support group
- Grief/bereavement
- LGBTQI+
- Mindfulness for self-care
- FMHS postgraduate students
- Training sessions with leaders on campus
- Tension and trauma release (TRE)
- Wellness for healthcare workers (best version conversations)

General CSCD Information



Staff at 37 Victoria Street

At the Centre we believe in a consultative management approach. The Director manages the Centre, along with the Deputy Director and the Management Committee. The Committee consists of the heads of the four units, as well as a senior psychologist

from UPSS. The Management Committee assists the Director with strategic planning throughout the year, as well as revising and realigning objectives, where necessary. Thank you for your input throughout the year!

CSCD Total Statistics

Due to a technical issue with SUNStudent, we were unable to provide complete statistics as we have in previous years.

Table 3: Number of individual sessions per CSCD units

(Including: assessments, cancelled, consultations, did not arrive, expert reports, food security. Excluding: work sessions, notes, group interventions)

DU	724
UACD	3057
UGCS	33
UPSS	8114
Grand Total	11928

Research And Personal Development Of Staff

a) Training

- All UACD and UPSS staff attended Solution Focused Brief Therapy training offered by Dr J von Cziffra-Bergs from the Solution Focused Institute of South Africa
- **Liezl Klopper** attended the ADHD short course for professionals presented by Prof Renate Schoeman
- **Claudia Saunderson** attended the NEUROZONE Personal Assessment at JvR Training in March 2024
- **Melanie Willems** attended Scribes training, 6 April 2024
- **Melanie Willems** attended SUNStudent training for the Centre for Student Counselling and Development – Assessment Concessions Capability, from 8 April 2024 to November 2024
- **Melanie Willems** attended the Stellenbosch University International Staff Training Programme held at SU – Cultivating global excellence: Empowering internationalisation practitioners
- **Luigia Nicholas** attend the Digital Transformation course in March 2024,

Basic Mental Health Awareness course, July 2024, a course on AI and Socially Responsive Pedagogies in August 2024 (Luigia Nicholas), a Social Justice Short Course in September 2024, and Wellbeing Ambassador training during the year

b) Conferences attended

- **Elmien Sinclair** attended the Supporting Diverse Needs & Struggling Students in Higher Education Institutions 2024 Conference organised by SkillingSA in Johannesburg from 24 to 25 July 2024. The paper she presented was titled 'Supporting at-risk students in extended curriculum programmes (ECP) — A model for psychosocial wrap-around services'.
- **Charl Davids, Elmien Sinclair, Eugene Booysen** and **Lizzie Witbooi** attended the 44th annual SAACDHE Conference in Durban from 9 to 11 September 2024. The theme of Charl's presentation was 'Staff wellness as part of a change management journey within CSCD'. Elmien co-presented a paper with Christina Harvett, titled 'Enhancing mental wellness support for Stellenbosch University students through a self-help web application'. Eugene presented a paper titled: 'Conceptualisation of therapeutic process: In the face of significant resistance, can process-orientated groups serve as a catalyst to explore and sustain cathartic experiences for students at the University of Stellenbosch?'

- **Charl Davids** attended the SAASSAP (South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals) Conference in East London, hosted by the University of Fort Hare from 26 to 28 September 2024.
- **Luigia Nicholas** attended the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Conference in November 2024.

c) Publications

- Bantjes, J., Hunt, X., Cuijpers, P., Kazdin, A.E., Kennedy, C.J., Luedtke, A., Malenica, I., Petukhova, M., Sampson, N., Zainal, N.H., **Davids, C.**, Dunn-Coetzee, M., Gerber, R., Stein, D.J., Kessler, R.C. (2024). Comparative effectiveness of remote digital gamified and group CBT skills training interventions for anxiety and depression among college students: results of a three-arm randomised controlled trial. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 178, 1-10. Article 104554. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2024.104554>
- **Marquard Timmey, Thobeka Msi, Wilna Naudé** and **Annette Joubert** from UGCS published the Unit's annual Graduate Recruitment Booklet and made hard copies available to students.
- **Saunderson, C.** & Carolissen, R.L. (2024). "I just want to get my degree and leave". Psychosocial experiences of Black male students navigating a historically white South African university. *Race, Ethnicity*

and Education. July 2024. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2024.2371969>

- **Willems, M** & Zimba, ZF 2024, 'Logistical, teaching and learning challenges of undergraduate students with visual impairments at a selected university', in AL Shokane, A Keet & V Nadesan

(eds.), Social work in the 21st century: Scholarship and praxis reimagined towards vulnerability, Knowledge Pathing: Multi-, Inter- and Trans-Disciplining in Social Sciences Series, vol. 3, AVARSITY Books, Cape Town, pp. 171–204. <https://doi.org/10.4102/aosis.2024.BK473.11>

Committee Involvement (Within SU and External)

- Advisory Committee for Tygerberg Student Affairs (ACTSA) (An-Maree Nel, Lynn April)
- Anti Bullying Action Team (Charl Davids)
- Assessment Concessions Task Team (Charl Davids)
- CIRCoRe workstreams (Marcia Lyner-Cleophas, Lizzie Witbooi, Sinazo Nyembezi, Thobeka Msi, Charl Davids)
- CSCD Think Tank (Munro Strydom, Carmen Balie, Christa Koch)
- Disability Inclusion Advisory Committee (Luigia Nicholas, Marcia Lyner-Cleophas)
- DSAf Leadership (Vastrohiette Gilbert, Sinazo Nyembezi, Devine Kamalie)
- DSAf Staff Wellness Committee of SU (Liezl Kloppe)
- DSAf Safety Committee of SU (Lauren Schilder)
- DSAf Transformation Forum (Luigia Nicholas, Thobeka Msi)
- DSAf Transformation Forum (Melanie Willems, Charl Davids)
- DSAf Tygerberg Committee (An-Maree Nel, Sinazo Nyembezi, Carmen Balie, Nontozamo Tsetse, Lynn April)
- ECP Steering Committee of SU (Elmien Sinclair)
- FMHS Undergraduate Student Health Committee (An-Maree Nel)
- Institutional Committee for Staff Health and Wellbeing (Charl Davids)
- Institutional Transformation Committee (ITC) (Marcia Lyner-Cleophas)
- NSFAS Task Team (Lizzie Witbooi)
- Open Day Committee (Luigia Nicholas)
- Readmission Appeals Committees of various faculties (Elmien Sinclair, Liezl Kloppe, Erna Gerryts, Lauren Schilder, Marquard Timmey, Munro Strydom, Jan-Hendrik Meyer, Nordlind Fouche, Elmarie Kruger, Deviné Kamalie, Vastrohiette Gilbert, Elmarie Kruger, Carmen Balie)

- Rector's Awards for Excellent Achievement (RAEA) (Lynn April)
- SAACDHE EMC (Charl Davids, Elmien Sinclair)
- SAACHDE Western Cape Regional committee (Lizzie Witbooi & Elmien Sinclair)
- Student Affairs Selection Committee (Lynn April, Thobeka Msi)
- Student Success Steering Committee of SU (Elmien Sinclair)
- Task Team for the Revision of SU's Leave of Absence (Charl Davids)
- Website Redevelopment Committee (Luigia Nicholas)
- Welcoming Programme Committee (Luigia Nicholas, Melanie Willems)
- Wellbeing Ambassador (Luigia Nicholas)

Educational Psychology Internship Programme

Internship reflection

The CSCD internship has been invaluable, fostering both personal and professional growth as I develop my skills as an educational psychologist. Working in a deeply supportive environment, where friendship, mentorship and supervision have nurtured my learning, has been a privilege. Over the past year, I've gained confidence and strengthened my clinical judgment through handling complex cases that challenged me to think critically and stay curious. This role has highlighted the importance of ethical and reflective practice, deepening my appreciation for each client's unique journey through therapeutic processes, as well as psychoeducational and career assessments. Navigating the balance between cases, studies and self-care has improved my time management and emotional resilience, whilst working with a diverse team of professionals has highlighted the power of a multidisciplinary approach. This experience has reinforced my commitment to expand my skills, adapt my perspectives and meet the diverse needs of those I serve. I look forward to continuing this journey, dedicated to raising awareness and providing meaningful support, especially for neurodivergent individuals.

– Ida Wepener

My internship at the Centre for Student Counselling and Development has been a truly transformative journey. I am deeply grateful for the support and insights from everyone here, including my supervisors, clinical mentor, colleagues and fellow interns, who have all shown me the value of strong connections and teamwork. The guidance I received taught me the importance of empathy in our work and provided practical tools to navigate complex situations with clarity. I was challenged to think critically, beyond conventional solutions, and benefited greatly from structured guidance that helped me build a solid professional foundation. Experiences like our rotation at AF Louw Primary School and the Paarl Career Guidance and Counselling project enriched my skills in meaningful ways. This journey has solidified my commitment to educational psychology and fuelled my excitement for what lies ahead in my career.

– Dané Lombaard

My internship as an educational psychologist has been a defining period of growth, both personally and professionally. The varied focus areas, including the psychometry block, school rotations and career counselling with scholars in Paarl provided a breadth of experience that expanded my skills and deepened my understanding of student support. Each rotation brought new insights and challenges, pushing me to develop a more adaptive and thoughtful approach. Working within a multidisciplinary team was especially impactful; I saw firsthand how collaborative efforts enhance the quality and effectiveness of student care. The supportive environment encouraged me to explore different practices, ask critical questions and receive guidance that was both constructive and empowering. This experience has not only sharpened my skills, but has also reinforced my dedication to the field, equipping me with the tools and confidence to make a lasting impact on students' lives.

– Ntombifuthi Maduna

Counselling Psychology Internship Programme

The year 2024 saw the appointment of the first Counselling Psychology intern at the UPSS, Josephine Padarath, in addition to the Educational Psychology interns employed at the UACD. Josephine has made a very valuable contribution to the Centre's functioning by providing individual therapy to students, offering services at the collaborating school (AF Louw) to learners one day a week, participating in the career counselling outreach to learners in Paarl, as well as assisting with the work sessions on

academic skills. She also initiated a project with a local NGO – she arranged to offer a psychoeducational workshop to caregivers at an NGO, the Youth Outreach, together with the Educational Psychology interns. She also volunteered to manage the Instagram account for the Centre – assisting with promoting our various activities as well as posting tips and information on mental health topics. Thank you to all the staff who were involved in the supervising and mentoring of the intern.

Internship reflection

As my internship year draws to a close, I find myself reflecting on the transformative journey I've had at the CSCD. Like many interns stepping into an unfamiliar environment, I began this experience filled with nervous anticipation, unsure of what lay ahead. Little did I know that this year would surpass all expectations and become one of the most enriching and memorable chapters of my professional and personal life. The immaculate training at the CSCD, led by highly skilled and experienced supervisors and colleagues, has been a cornerstone of this experience. The countless opportunities for learning, the inclusive and supportive environment, and the level of professionalism and prestige within the CSCD have all contributed to my growth as an aspiring psychologist. However, what stands out most for me is the relationships I've been privileged to build with the incredible staff at the CSCD. Each individual has imparted invaluable wisdom, guiding and mentoring me with kindness, patience and grace. The culture of genuine investment in each other's personal and professional development is a testament to the unique ethos of the CSCD. The support and encouragement I've received here have not only shaped my competencies, but have also deeply enriched my character. As I look to the future, I carry with me not only the skills and knowledge I've gained, but also profound gratitude for being part of a community that prioritises growth, compassion and excellence. This year has solidified my passion for therapy and my commitment to making a meaningful impact in the field.

– Josephine Padarath

A Reflection on the CSCD's Involvement in the Readmissions Process

As in previous years, a number of CSCD staff and consultants served on the panels of the faculty readmission subcommittees.

A total of 1 278 applications were received for the 2024 academic year, from across nine faculties of SU (excluding Military Sciences). This is a decrease of 25.6% in comparison to 2023. Although a decrease in the number of applicants was detected, the CSCD is aware of some instances where specific faculties decided to apply individualised rules/processes to decrease the number of applications that served before the RAC.

During the Readmission Application Process, students are referred to the CSCD by the RAC for different reasons, including

- students who are readmitted (D38 and F44 codes), who are referred for support with specific challenges, as identified by the student in their application and/or by the members of the RAC,
- students who are denied readmission (B codes), who are referred for containment and future planning, and
- in cases where the RAC needs more information before a final decision can be made (C36 and C37), students are referred for further exploration and/or discussion of the challenges identified by the student and/or the RAC.

Besides the CSCD's involvement by way of the referrals discussed above, the Centre also provided support to students who approached the CSCD for assistance on their own initiative.

Time spent on these consultations between November 2023 and the end of February 2024 are indicated below:

- Issuing of practitioners reports for existing CSCD clients: 71 hours
- Consultations to enquire about readmission: 22 sessions
- Consultations with students readmitted and not referred by the RAC: 36 sessions
- Consultations with students denied readmission and not referred by the RAC: 51 sessions

Also note that students affected by readmissions continue to utilise the support services of the CSCD throughout the year.

In addition to the time spent with students during the readmission period, the CSCD spent a significant number of hours preparing for, and attending, RAC meetings. Information on hours spent per faculty is set out below:

- AgriSciences: 81 hours
- Arts and Social Science: 78 hours

- Economic and Management Sciences: 18 hours
- Education: 6 hours
- Engineering: 102 hours
- Law: 67 hours
- Medicine and Health Sciences: 57 hours
- Science: 69 hours
- Theology: 11 hours
- Readmission Coordinator, CSCD: 185 hours
- Administrative support – Readmission, CSCD: 15 hours

The following recommendations were made to the Registrar's office regarding the 2025 readmission process:

- The allocation of readmission coordinators within the Registrar's Division who work exclusively in this role throughout the readmission period (i.e. until all faculty RACs have confirmed that all readmission outcomes have been finalised and communicated).
- Early identification and training of faculty officers who coordinate the administrative process for their faculties and attend the RAC meetings of their faculties. This training should include information about collaboration and communication with the CSCD.
- A workshop with all readmission role players that should include a discussion of the proposed change of the description

of the D38/F44 code from "conditional readmission" to "readmission with recommended support", as well as the addition of two new B-codes for students who require support from the CSCD.

- A workshop with all readmission role players that should include a discussion of the content of readmission outcome information/letters that are sent out to students. This should specifically include a discussion with the CSCD regarding information shared with students who require support (whether readmitted with a D38/F44 code or denied readmission).
- Renaming of the Medical/Health Care Practitioners Report to Medical/Mental Healthcare Practitioners' Report, and more specific communication about this report, as well as the Programme Change Motivation report on the application form, readmission website, and other communication sent out to students.
- A discussion of the consistent interpretation of, and adherence to, readmission rules as set out in the SU Calendar Part 1.

It was also recommended that the role of the CSCD representative on the RAC be changed to be more specialised and time efficient, and that a training session with all involved in the readmission process, incl. all RAC chairs, faculty administrators/officers and CSCD representatives, is held before the start of the 2025 readmission process.

It was recommended that the training should include the following:

- Information on factors that influence student success
- Typical challenges students face and recommended strategies to manage these challenges
- How to determine what would be in the best interest of students
- Interpreting and responding to information in the Medical/Mental Health Practitioners Report and Programme Change Motivation Form
- The appropriate use of readmission codes referring students to more information from the CSCD (C36/37)
- The appropriate and consistent use of readmission codes recommending student support (D38/F44)
- The appropriate use of readmission codes referring students who were denied readmission for support at the CSCD, including communication to these students regarding further applications for readmission
- Appropriate record keeping of readmission decisions and recommendations to inform decision-making in future applications for readmission by students
- The possible implications of the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Amendment Act 13 of 2021, which mandates that any person who has knowledge, reasonable belief or suspicion that a sexual offence has been committed against a person who is vulnerable as defined in the Act must report such knowledge, reasonable belief or suspicion immediately to a police official.

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy



The Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) had the privilege of hosting Dr Jacqui von Cziifra-Bergs, President of the Solution Focused Institute of South Africa, for a two-day workshop. Dr von Cziifra-Bergs led an in-depth session on applying the Solution-focused Brief Therapy (SFBT) model in our approach to supporting students. The workshop was attended by a diverse group of professionals, including counselling, clinical,

educational and industrial psychologists, registered counsellors and social workers. The sessions struck an effective balance between experiential and theoretical learning, fostering enthusiastic and active participation. Attendees expressed a strong need for incorporating a brief therapy model into our context and emphasised the importance of ongoing training opportunities.

A Reflection On Test and Examination Concessions

a) Background

During the first semester, students with disabilities could apply for assessment concessions by downloading the three forms from the Assessment/Test and Exams section the SU website [see link <https://www.sun.ac.za/english/students/Pages/Tests-and-Exams.aspx>].

The cut-off dates for the first semester were 23 February 2024 and 15 April 2024,

and for the second semester it was 14 August 2024. The Disability Unit (DU) faced a few challenges during the year regarding assessment concessions. The Assessment Concessions Capability was assigned to us on the developing SUNStudent platform. At the same time, on 1 January 2024, the Legacy System was deactivated, which meant that the usual issuing of 2024 concessions

Students who received concessions for the duration of their undergraduate or postgraduate studies could not receive their updated concession letters for 2024.

letters and the accessing of this data on the lecturers' class lists for the new year could not take place. Any concessions data was fixed as on 31 December 2023, and students who registered for 2024 did not have their existing concessions visible because SUNStudent was not compatible with Legacy. Therefore, no new concessions could be captured on the SU Legacy system. Students who received concessions for the duration of their undergraduate or postgraduate studies could not receive their updated concession letters for 2024. The DU, mainly the Assessment Concessions Team, had to put a manual approval process in place.

After the Assessment Concessions Committee deliberated about each application, the approved concessions were captured on Form 1 as the approval concessions letter, as well as on an Excel spreadsheet. The assessment concession letters were emailed to students who had applied for the first time, with an explanation of why a manual process was being used. The approved concessions for all faculties were captured on an Excel spreadsheet and communicated to all faculties, as concessions did not reflect on the lecturers' class lists, as in the past.

The DU worked with a SUNStudent project team, Serosoft, Student Information Systems Support and IT to make concessions lists available to faculties, the

Assessment Office (AO), as well as the Disability Unit Resource Office. At the same time, the new capability was being developed to be ready for 2025, where students will upload their applications via the SUNStudent platform.

A few challenges were identified, as not all concessions migrated to SUNStudent. Many students with disabilities emailed skryftyd@sun.ac.za as they had not received their concession letters for 2024. After the concessions were uploaded to the SUNStudent portal, many students indicated that they could not access their concession letters. As a result, all the students had to be provided with manual letters for the May/June exams. Letters were also issued to all students after the August closing date in preparation for the October/November exams.

The emergency concession requests received on the same day as the students' exams were challenging to manage, as all the relevant parties needed to be informed to make emergency arrangements (faculty and AO). This placed pressure on the DU, the faculties, as well as the AO. In addition to the above, the DU was told to do the training of scribes and develop a database for the use of faculties and the AO. This led to a range

of complexities that the DU had never dealt with before, yet these matters were escalated quickly, resulting in a less than satisfactory

way of dealing with the nuances and complexities between the two offices.

b) What worked well this past year

A full-time concessions administrator was appointed on a fixed-term contract (February to November 2024) and assisted with the manual concessions process, as well as kept the Excel spreadsheets up to date. When students submitted their applications to skryftyd@sun.ac.za, not all submitted them as a single document. In the past, the documents were printed and scanned to upload them in the correct order for the assessment concessions committee

to review. This time, it was possible to download the applications using Adobe Pro instead of printing and rescanning them. This saved time as well as printing costs. The Student Information System Support Centre and IT also assisted with an Assessment Concessions Teams group for 2024, from which all the faculties and departments could access the approved concessions for 2024, even though the data was static.

c) Scribe reader training



On 6 April 2024, the DU hosted their first scribe reader training for different faculties and departments. These trained scribes and readers were placed on a database for the AO and faculties to access as needed. The DU did a reflection exercise with the first cohort of scribes to get a sense of their experiences, as well as to ascertain their availability for 2025. On 18 October 2024, DU held a meeting with all the new individuals interested in being trained as scribes and readers/prompters, and the plan is to conduct scribe training in February/March 2025.



d) Students With Disabilities and Concessions Statistics

Figures 10-29 (below) show students with disabilities who disclosed their disability during registration in all years of study (2017 to 2024). Figure 10 shows a total number of 655 students with disabilities in September 2024 (updated stats), an increase of 111 from the total of 544 in May 2024.

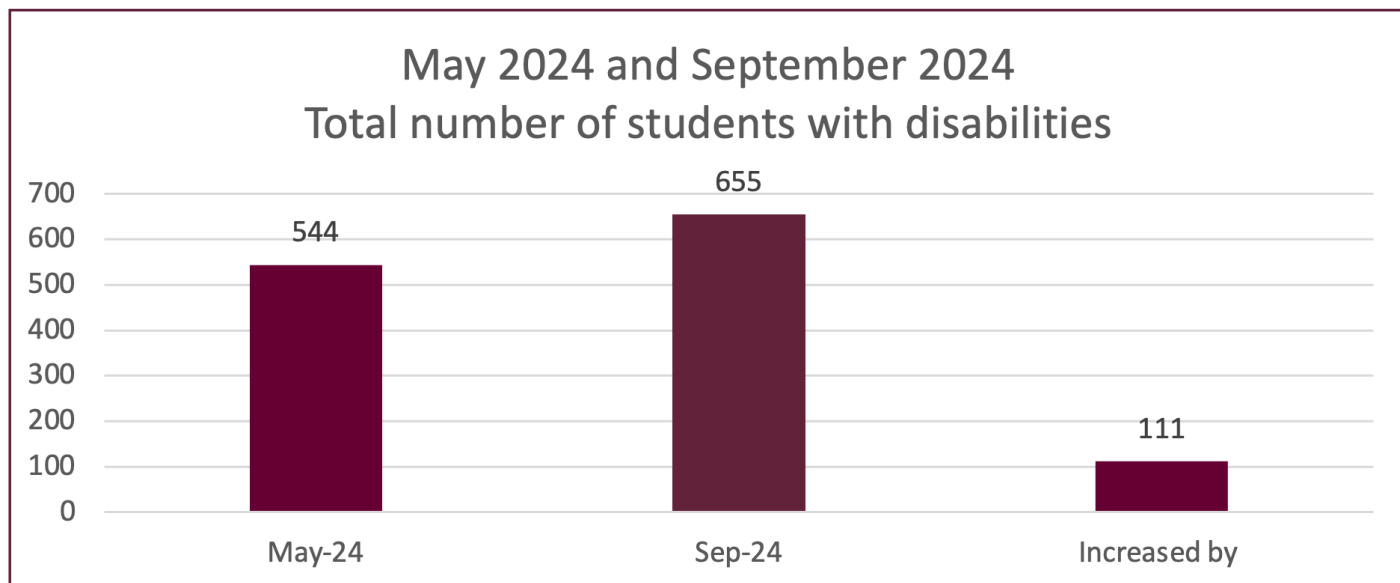


Figure 10: Students who disclosed their disabilities

Figures 11 and 12 below indicate the number of students from 2017 to 2024 for comparative purposes, and illustrate the various categories of disclosed disabilities.

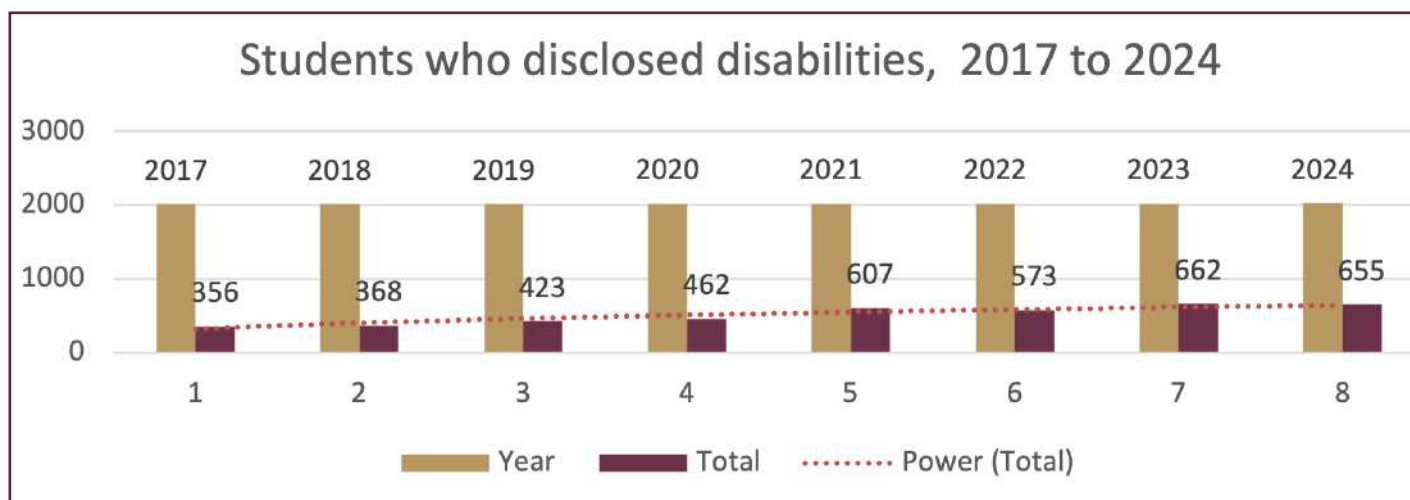


Figure 11: Students who disclosed disabilities, 2017 to 2024

DISABILITY /GESTREMDHEID	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
BLINDNESS/ BLIND	5	10	9	6	13	11	7	7
CEREBRAL PALSY/ SEREBRALE VERLAMMING			2		1	2	2	3
CHRONIC HEALTH IMPAIRMENT/ CHRONIESE GESONDHEIDS TOESTAND	48	49	34	34	42	44	40	37
DEAFNESS/ DOOF	17	23	23	18	21	14	17	19
DIAGNOSED MENTAL HEALTH DISORDER/ GEDIAGNOSEERDE GEESTESGESONDHEIDSVERSTEURING	29	53	73	78	121	141	156	146
DIAGNOSED READING DISORDER/ GEDIAGNOSEERDE LEES VERSTEURING	45	46	27	34	30	29	36	40
DIAGNOSED WRITING DISORDER/ GEDIAGNOSEERDE SKRYF VERSTEURING	17	17	20	14	11	13	17	30
MOBILITY OR ORTHOPEDIC DISABILITY/ MOBILITEIT OF ORTOPEDIESE GESTREMDHEID	30	25	42	36	41	38	51	51
NEUROLOGICAL DISABILITY/ NEUROLOGIESE GESTREMDHEID	17	16	23	26	53	58	84	82
OTHER DISABILITY OR CONDITION/ ANDER GESTREMDHEID OF TOESTAND	57	36	28	47	34	37	55	67
OTHER HEARING DISABILITY/ ANDER GEHOORGESTREMDHEID	40	47	72	87	142	113	112	87
OTHER VISUAL DISABILITY/ ANDER VISUELE GESTREMDHEID	46	42	61	74	85	65	68	59
SPEECH DISORDER/ SPRAAK VERSTEURING	5	4	9	8	13	8	17	15
NONE								11
TOTAL/ TOTAAL	356	368	423	462	607	573	662	655

Figure 12: Students who disclosed disabilities, 2017 to 2024

New approved concessions for assessments from 23 February 2024 to 14 August 2024 totalled 444 students, as indicated in Figure 13 below. Most of the support was in the form of extra writing time (309) as the primary concession. Additional concessions (135) included enlarged font size, computer use, assistive technology use, or the use of a scribe or reader.

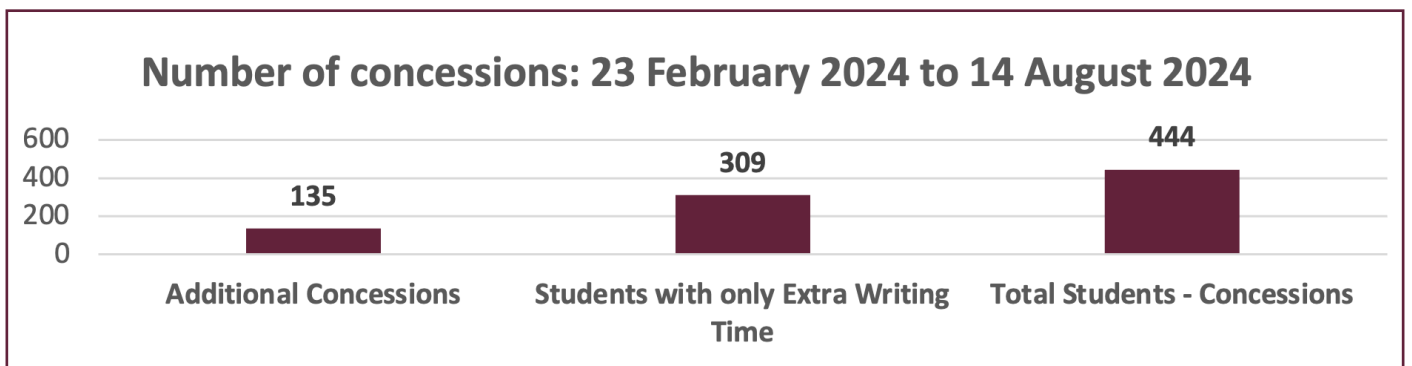


Figure 13: Number of concessions in all faculties from 23 February 2024 to 14 August 2024 – applications for new concession in 2024

Figure 14 shows the emergency concessions and updated letters in the run-up to and during the July/August 2024 exams. These were the result of injuries, mainly in cases where concessions such as extra time or scribes were needed. Furthermore, due to the movement from the old Legacy system to the SUNStudent system, some students could not access their concession letters on SUNStudent. To solve this, printed letters were sent to students (updated letters).

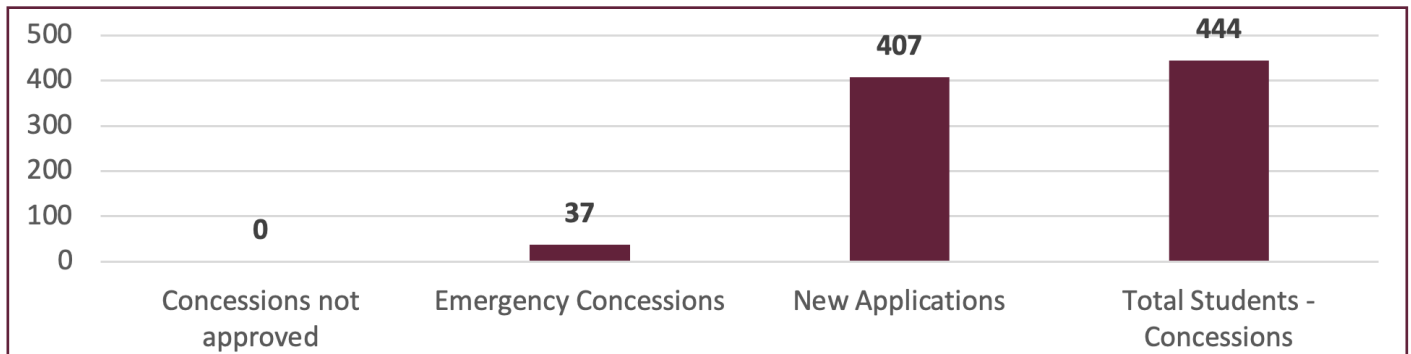


Figure 14: Emergency concessions

The concession categories in 2024 are shown in Figure 15 below (23 February to 14 August 2024).

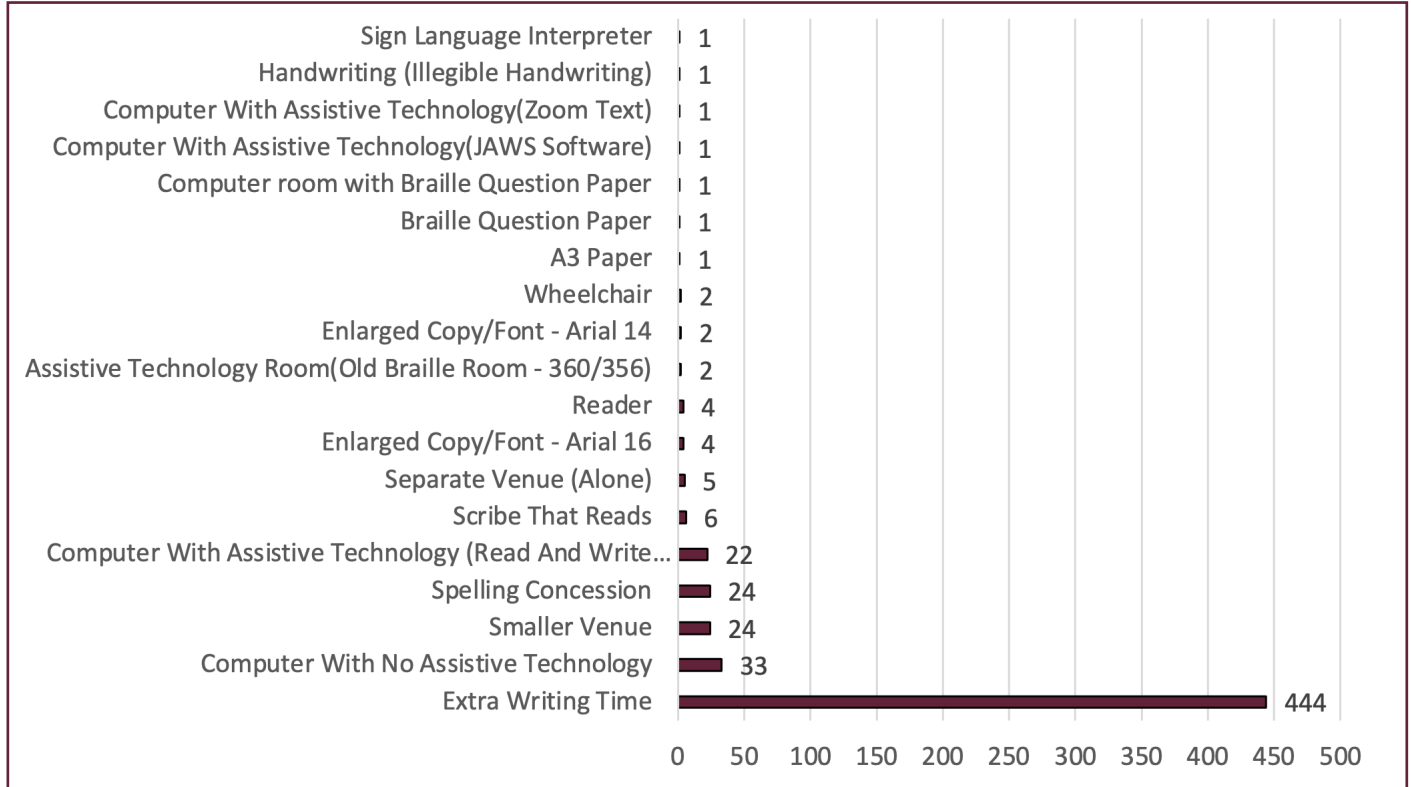


Figure 15: Concessions categories

e) Total number of concessions per faculty

The total number of concessions per faculty are shown in Figure 16 below (23 February to 14 August 2024, all years of study)

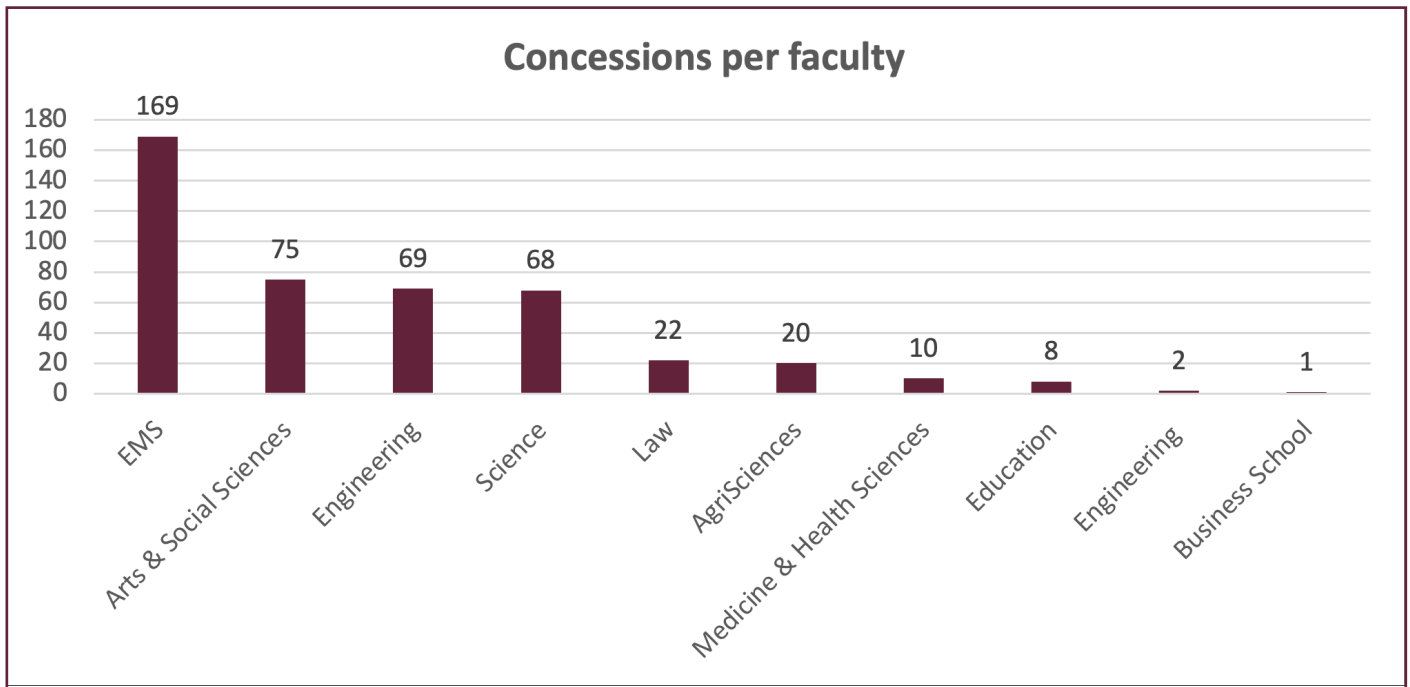


Figure 16: Total number of concessions per faculty.

The following graphs show the concessions per faculty. The Faculty of Theology had no requests for concessions in 2024.

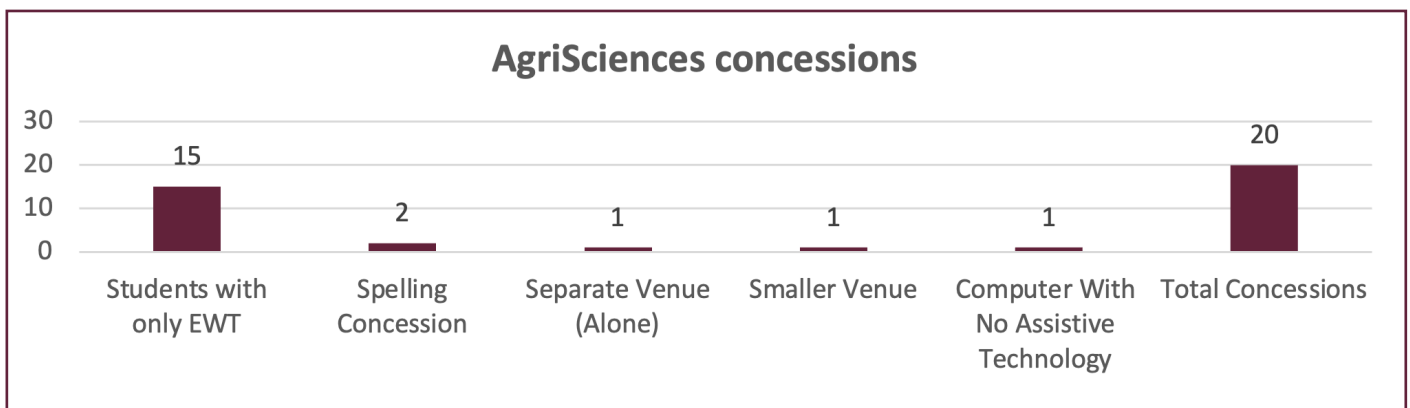


Figure 17: Faculty of AgriSciences

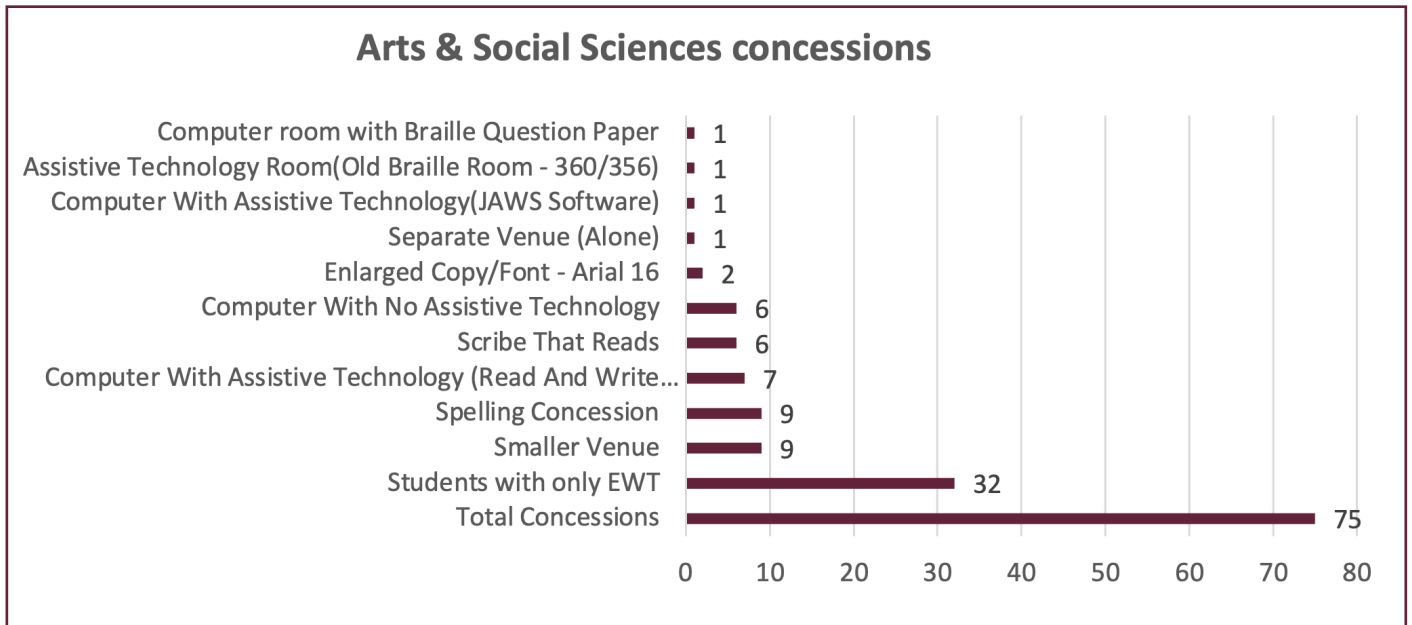


Figure 18: Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

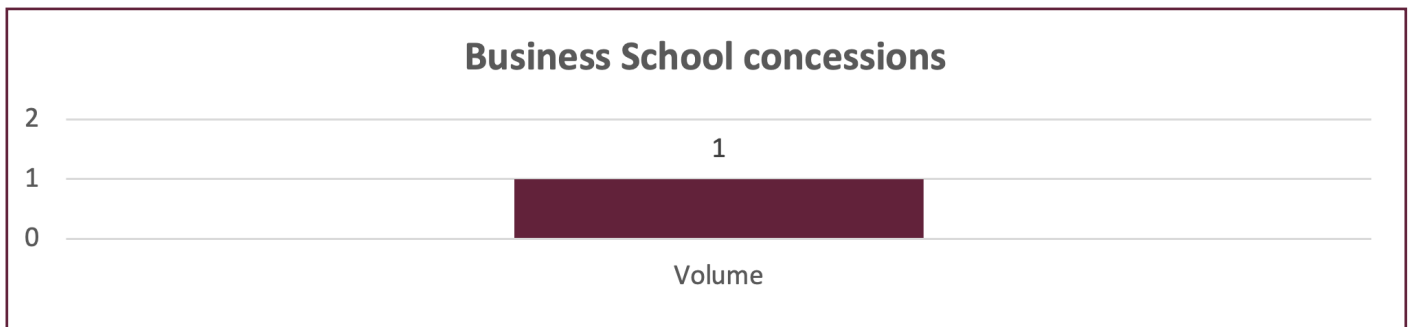


Figure 19: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences – Business School

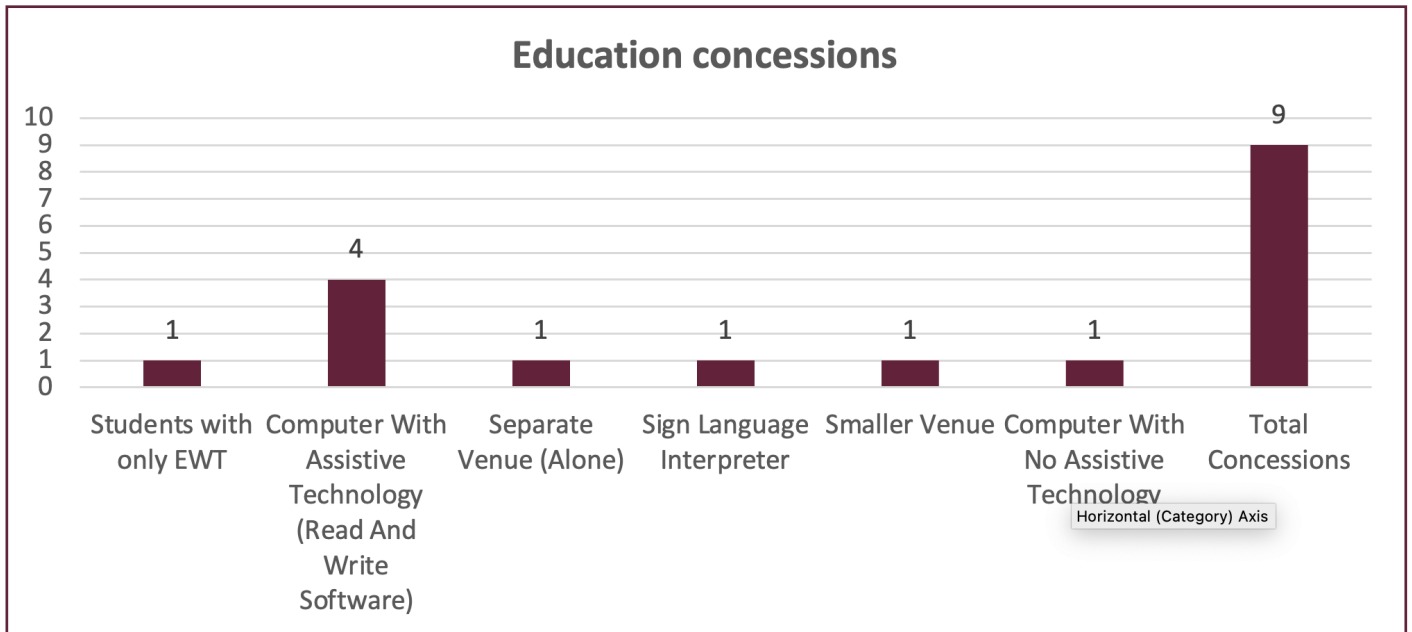


Figure 20: Faculty of Education

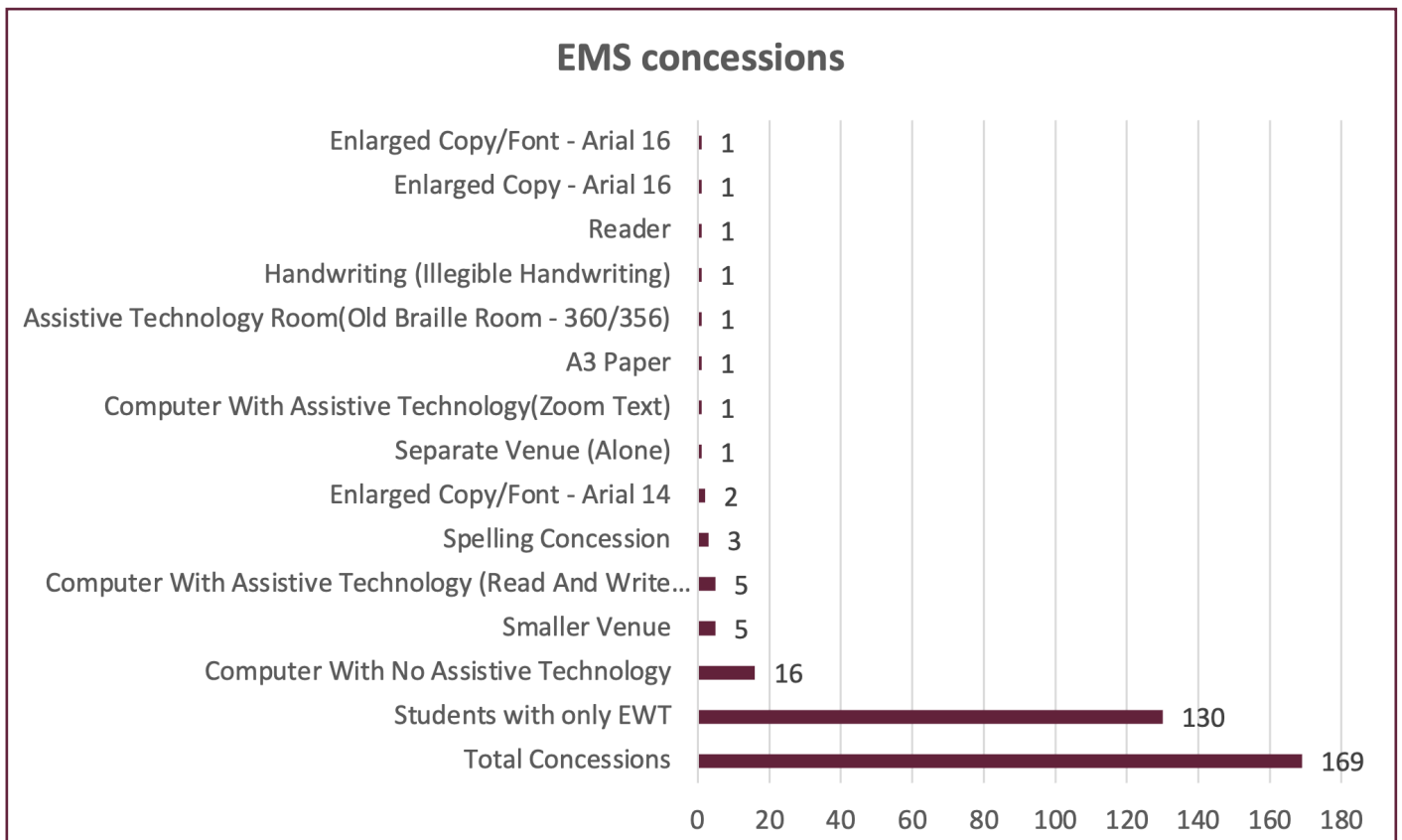


Figure 21: Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

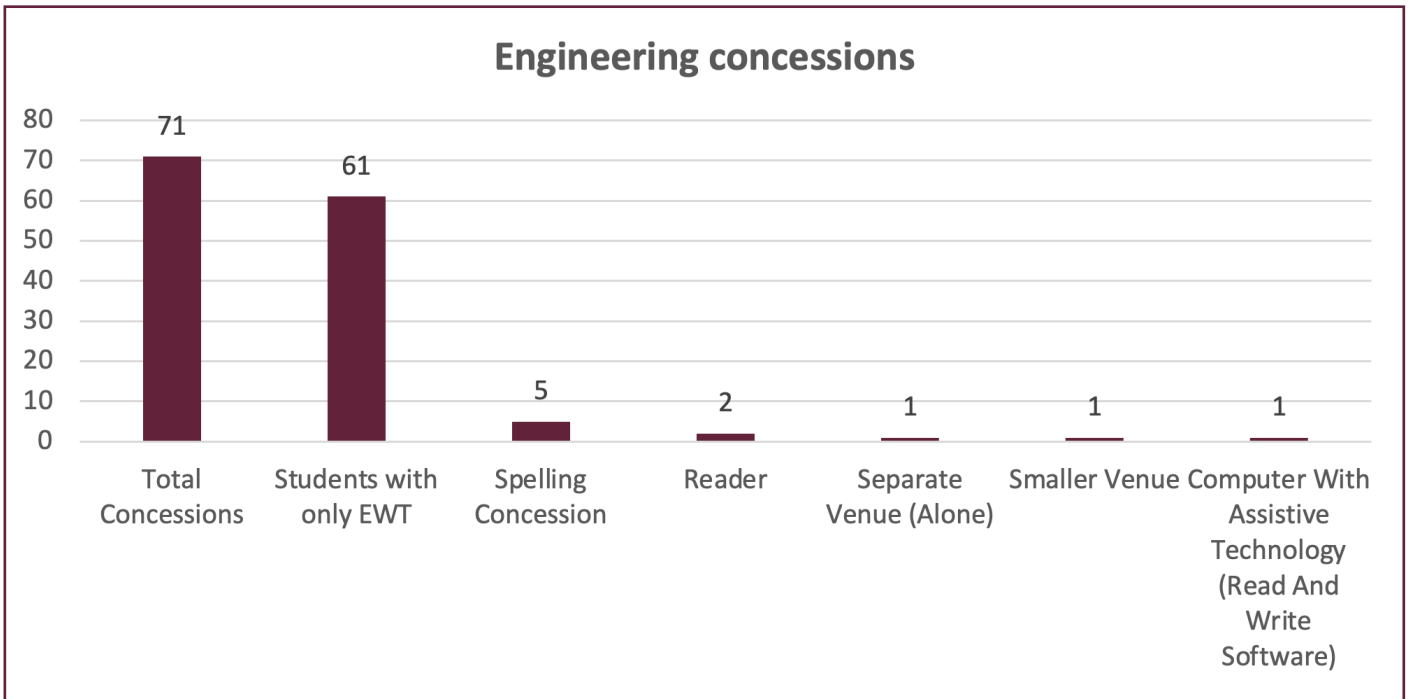


Figure 22: Faculty of Engineering

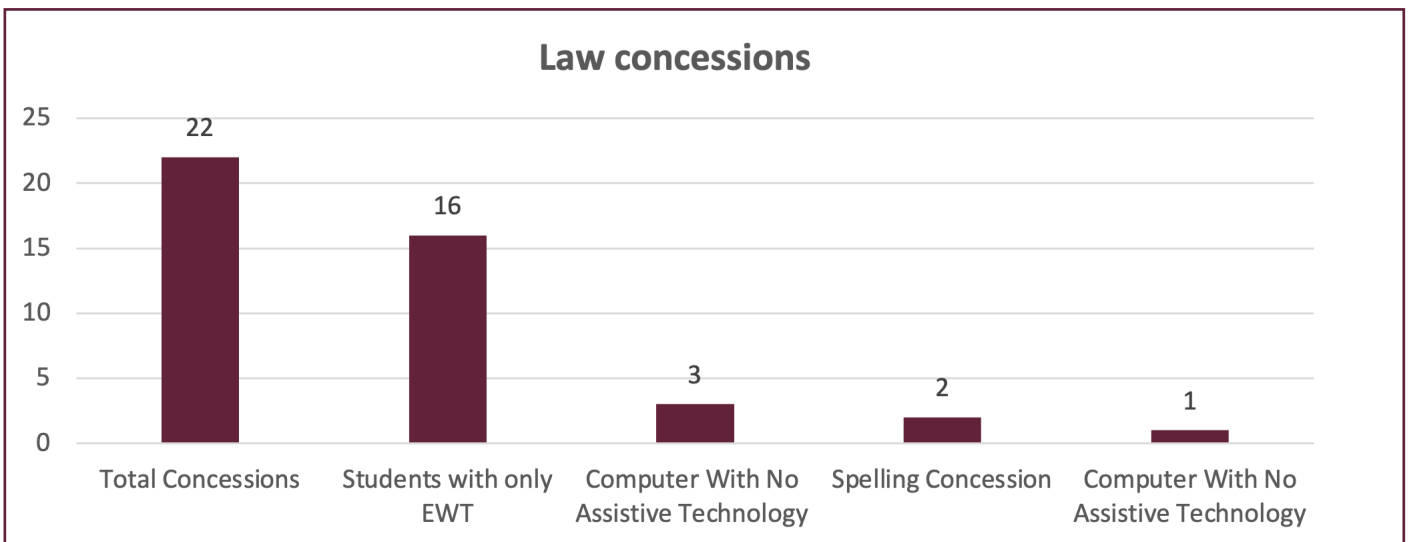


Figure 23: Faculty of Law

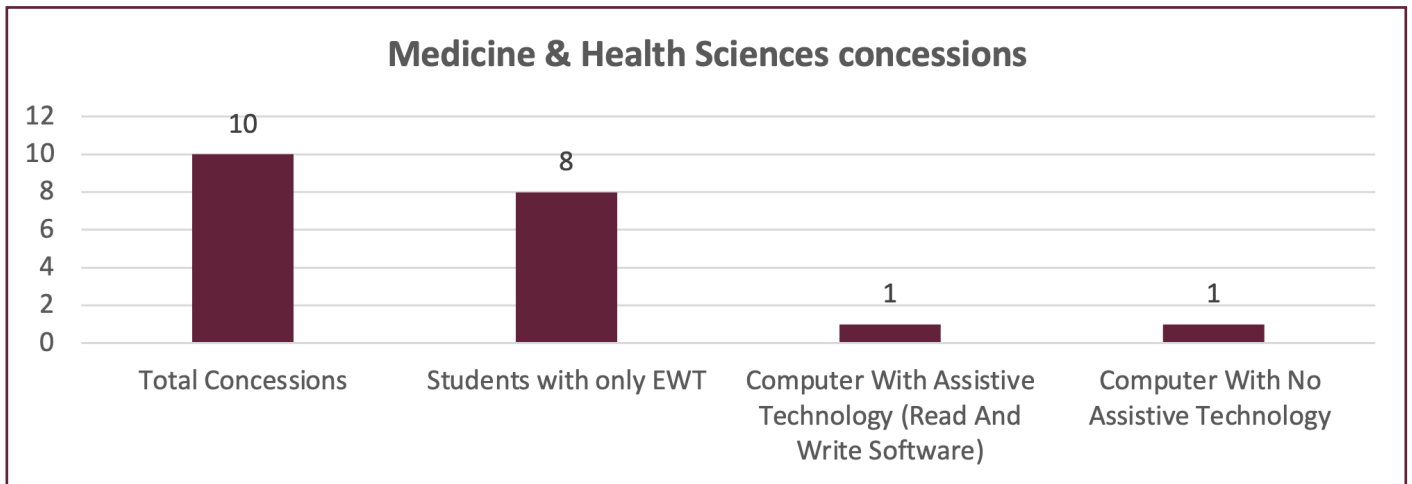


Figure 24: Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences

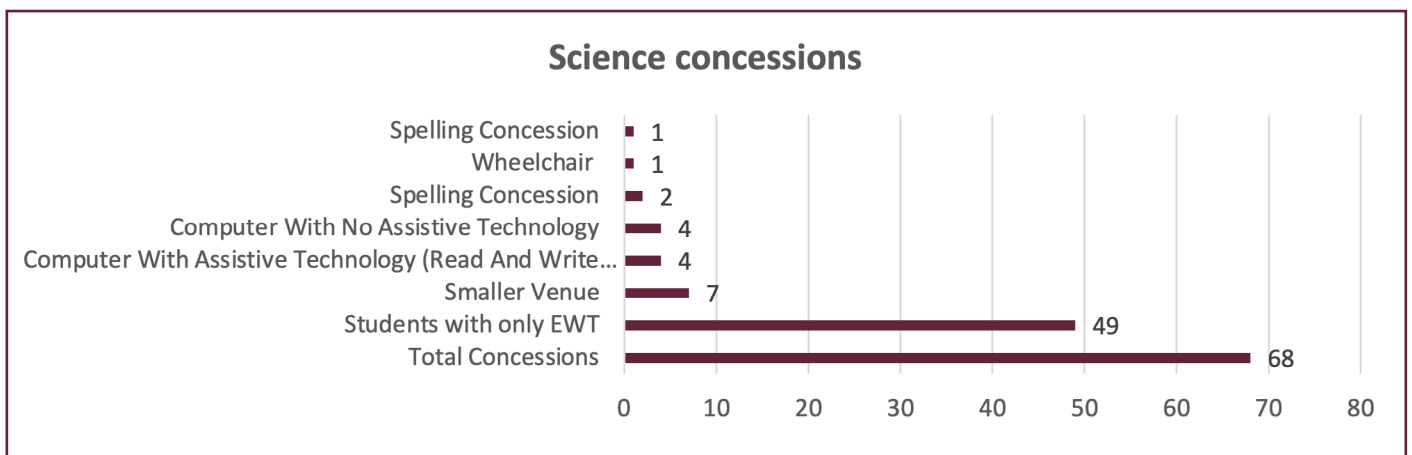


Figure 25: Faculty of Science

f) Historical concessions – 2023

A total of 506 students were granted new, approved concessions for assessments in 2023, as indicated in Figure 26 below. Most of the support was in the form of extra writing time only (397) as the primary concession. Additional concessions (109) included enlarged font size, computer use, assistive technology use, or the use of a scribe or reader.

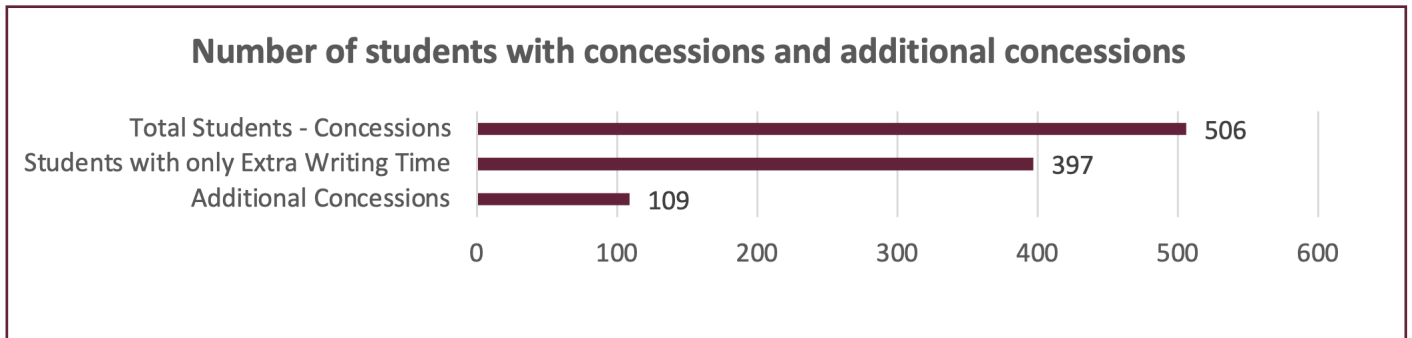


Figure 26: Number of students with concessions and additional concessions

Figure 27 below gives a breakdown of the categories of concessions granted to registered students in 2023

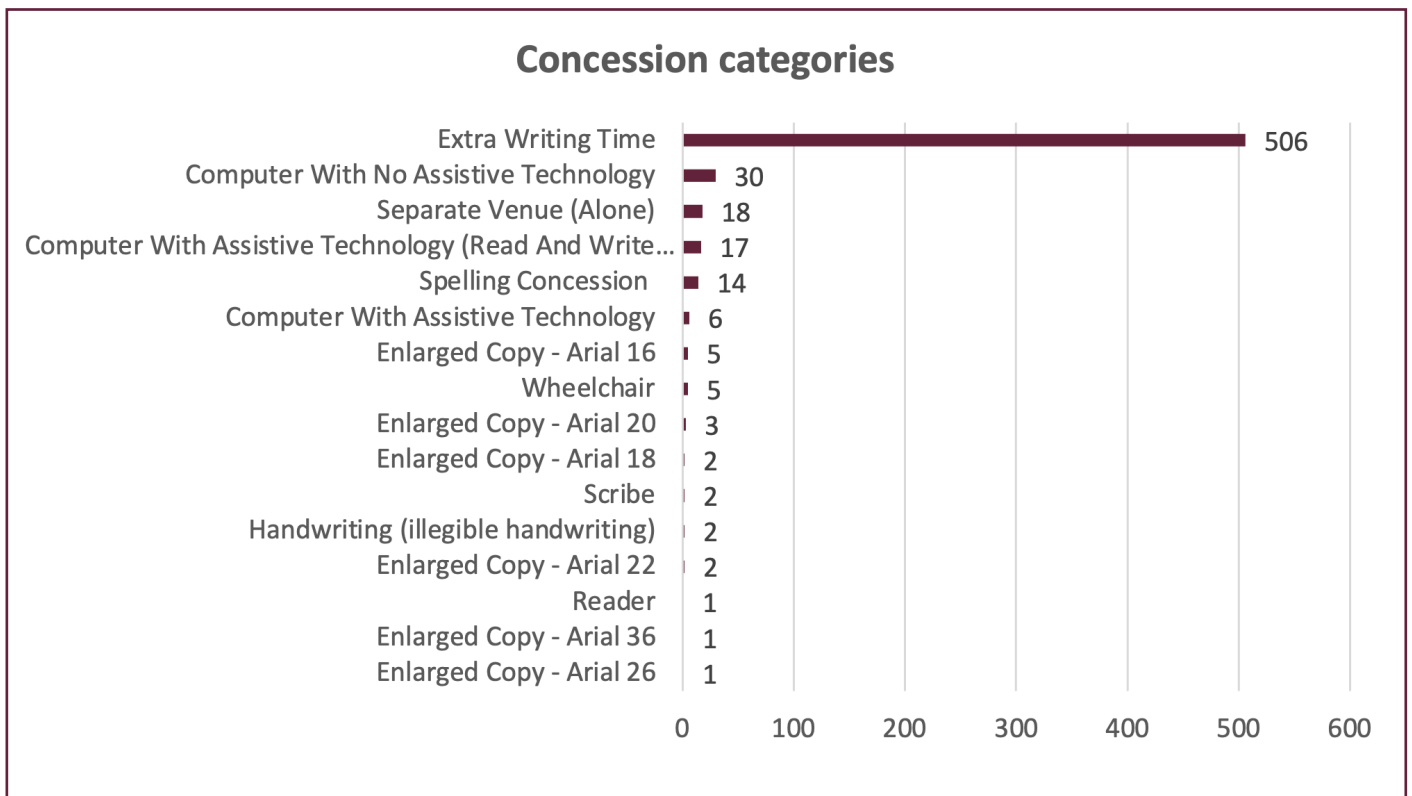


Figure 27: Number of concession categories in 2023

Figure 28 below show the number of concessions per faculty in 2023.

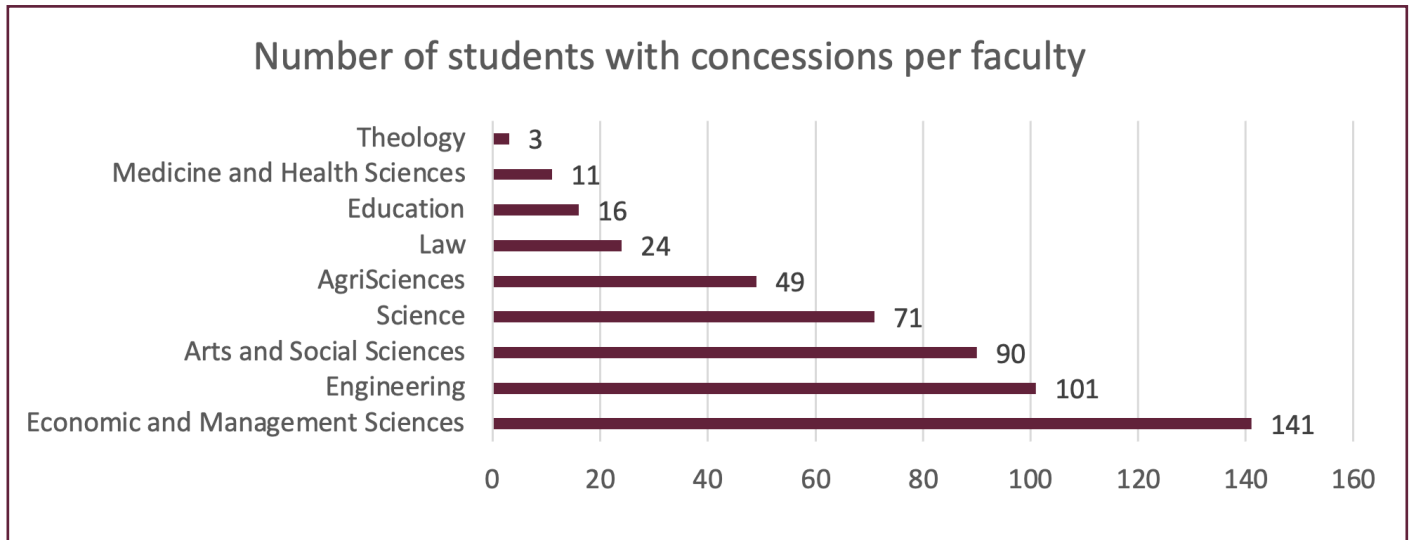


Figure 28: Total number of concessions per faculty

Figure 29 below shows the approved concessions for 2023 and 2024.

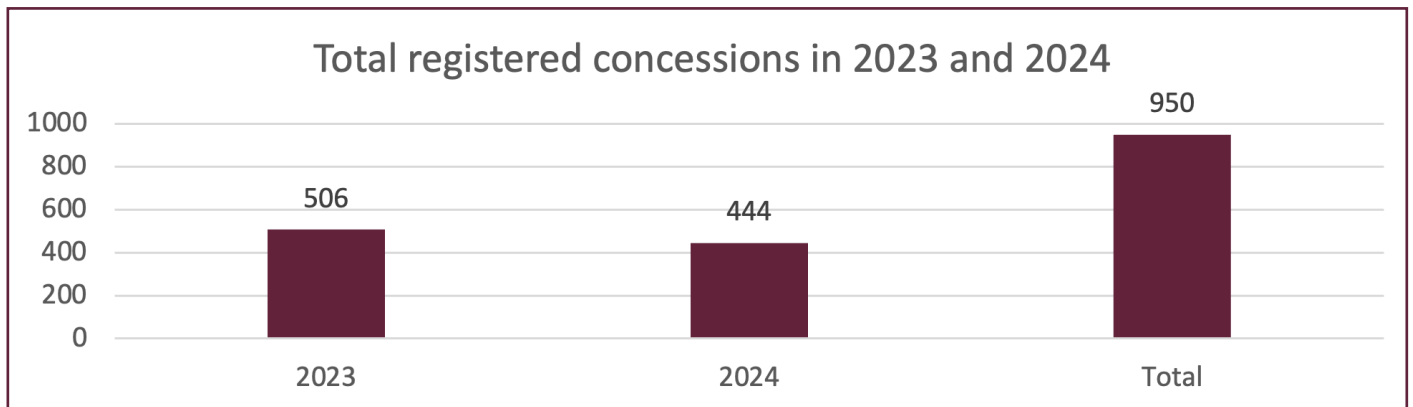


Figure 29: Concessions for 2023 and 2024

g) Resource Office

The Resource Office at the DU provides critical support to students during the term, inclusive of all assessments. They ensure that the students' texts are accessible in the formats needed to read effectively, particularly with the use of software such as JAWS, ZoomText and Read & Write. To this end, they have worked with the following number of students' texts:

Text services were rendered to 79 students (74 undergraduates and five postgraduates) in 2024. Six of these students were blind, 18 partially sighted, and 50 received support for learning disabilities, such as reading or writing challenges or neurological conditions.

The undergraduate distribution per faculty was as follows: Arts and Social Sciences (33, with nine students graduating in 2024), Law (3), Economic and Management Sciences (11, with one student graduating in 2024), Engineering (8), Education (7), Theology (1), Health Sciences (1), AgriSciences (3) and Natural Science (eight, with two students graduating in 2024).

The five postgraduate candidates were registered for the following programmes: PGDip Financial Planning (1), BA Hons Chinese (1), MSc Agric (1), MA Sociology (1) and PhD Psychology (1).

h) Assessment concessions capability for 2025

Before the assessment concessions capability can go live on SUNStudent, it needs to be tested by staff and students with disabilities. The SUNStudent Project Team will manage this with the DU. User guides

are developed for students and staff to assist them. The role-playing users have been granted access to SUNStudent in preparation for training on 14 November 2024.

i) Conclusion

The first semester of 2024 was very challenging, as noted at the start of this report. Demands were made by the faculties, as well as Assessments Administration, Academic Records and Graduations (AARGO), for concession lists. We have never made these available, as they were generated by the old Legacy system, along with the

new concessions letter after the student has registered. Given some developments in SUNStudent during the year, we hope systems will work better in 2025. Going forward, we are still unsure of the extent to which SUNStudent will be able to manage concessions fully, as this will only be implemented from 2025.

Psychology CPD Well Programme

The Psychology CPD Well programme has been a vital initiative of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development since 2003 and is accredited by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) as a continuous professional development (CPD) programme. The programme offers psychologists, registered counsellors and psychometrists a variety of enrolment options to earn CPD points, facilitating their ongoing professional growth and adherence to industry standards.

Since 2022, the programme has been led by Charl Davids, alongside a dedicated team comprising Elmien Sinclair, Sanet Van Zyl, Christa Koch and Lezel Jansen. Under their leadership, the HPCSA accreditation process for courses in 2024 was executed smoothly, ensuring that the offerings align with the rigorous standards set by the Council. The team's commitment to quality has enhanced the programme's reputation, allowing participants to benefit from high-calibre training that is both relevant and impactful in the field of psychology. This ongoing effort underscores the importance of continuous learning and professional development within the psychology community, equipping practitioners with the skills necessary to adapt to the evolving landscape of mental health care.

The following options – in a variety of combinations –were on offer in 2024.

- Option B (four online presentations covering the following topics):
 - Negotiating the therapeutic alliance with boys and men
 - Movement wellness and dance as a holistic approach to mental health challenges in South Africa
 - Understanding the impact of attachment
 - Confidentiality when working with children (ethics)
- Option C General (10 topical articles and multiple-choice questionnaires)
- Option C Industrial Psychology (10 topical articles and multiple-choice questionnaires)
- Option C General Psychometry (10 topical articles and multiple-choice questionnaires)
- Option C Top-Up 15 General (five topical articles and multiple-choice questionnaires)
- Option C Top-Up 15 Industrial (five topical articles and multiple-choice questionnaires)

As the economy becomes more constrained, it has become essential to cater to clients across the economic spectrum. In addition, we provided a group discount for practitioners in corporate or private practice. In today's digital landscape, we face increased competition to remain relevant and keep our clients engaged with our offerings.

Final participant numbers for the different options in 2024 were as follows:

- Option B Plus C General Psychology/Industrial Psychology/Psychometry: 79
- Option C General Psychology: 144
- Option C General Psychometry: 47
- Option C Industrial Psychology: 171
- Option C General Psychology Top-Up 15: 5
- Option C Industrial Psychology Top-Up 15:6

DSAf Gardening initiative



At the beginning of 2024, new members of the DSAf Wellness and Recognition Committee met to brainstorm and plan care initiatives for the upcoming year. When the suggestion was made to upgrade the communal gardens around CSCD, everyone was enthusiastic! The idea was well-received by Meg Pittaway and her team at SU Facilities Management, who offered practical help in preparing the area. Months of planning ensued, and our goal focused on planting an assortment of indigenous, waterwise succulents. This initiative aimed to symbolise our care for the environment and portray mutual care and hope for collaborative growth within DSAf and with our student clients.

Despite delays due to exceptionally bad weather, including strong winds and heavy rains, our spirits remained unbroken. The exciting day finally arrived on 1 August. Colleagues with green fingers dug in, sharing fabulous lunch packs and chocolate gift packs thoughtfully sourced and beautifully packaged by Audrey and her team from Dr Choice's office. As we gardened together to give our green space a makeover, our bonds grew stronger, with colleagues affirming inspiring messages, reminding each other that "we take up space" and that our collective impact matters!

We are thankful to witness our new garden bloom! This transformation reminds us of our potential to grow, thrive and have an impact in the ever-evolving SU landscape that we serve.

Collaboration With ER24

The CSCD and the Campus Health Services of SU partnered with ER24 to offer registered SU students 24-hour access to trauma counselling and medical support. The service comprises emergency medical services, trauma counselling (telephonically or face to face) and medical assistance via the medical hotline.

The UPSS provides sessions for emotional/ psychological crises during office hours, and the dedicated SU ER24 crisis line provides

support after hours. There is very close collaboration between these two partners, and students who are assisted overnight are followed up by the UPSS the next working day. The ER24 counsellors provided invaluable support this year when critical incidents took place on campus. Students and staff invariably expressed their gratitude and appreciation for the way in which the ER24 counsellors engaged with them during such times.

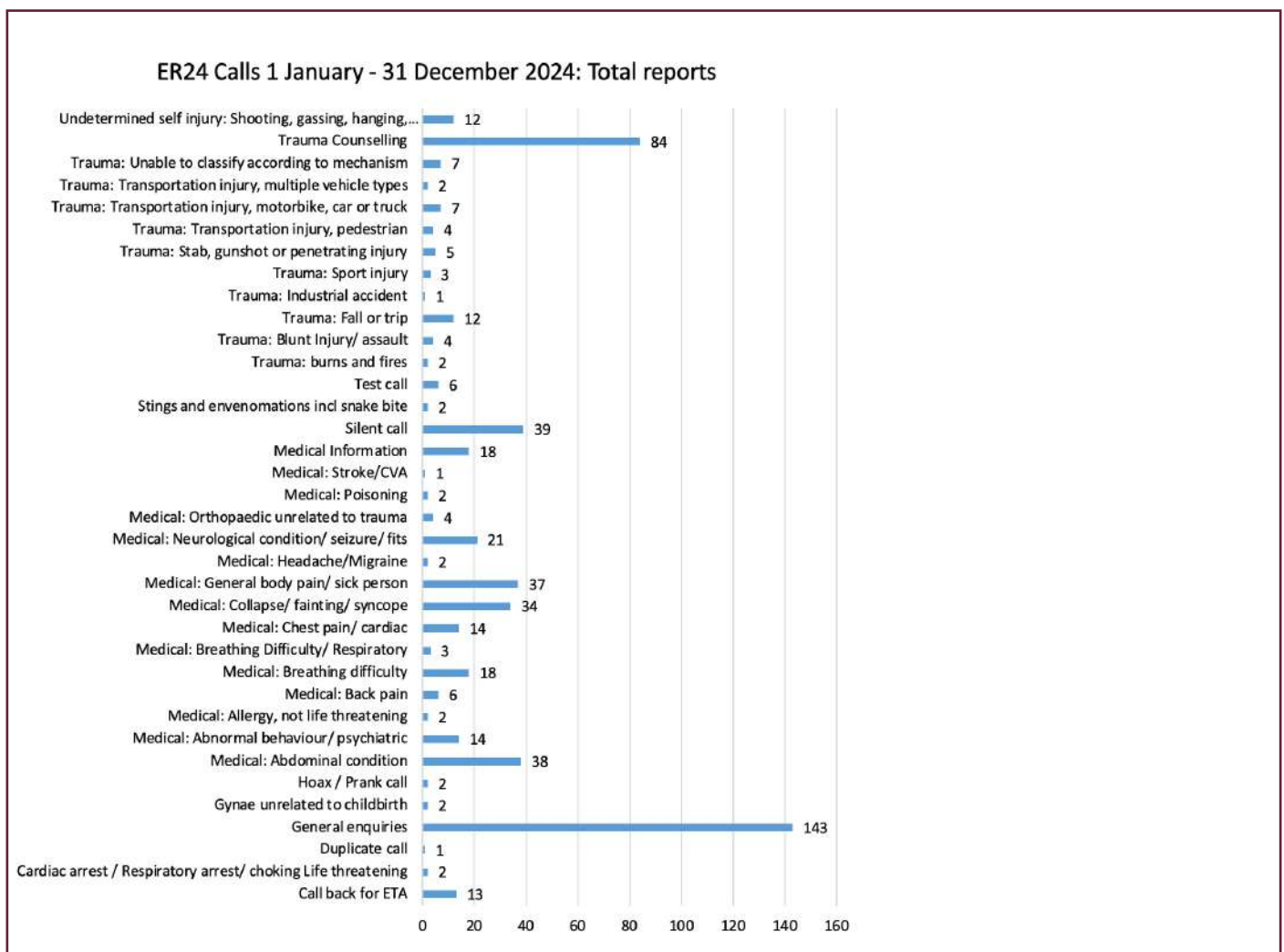


Figure 30: Total ER24 reports, 1 January to 31 December 2024

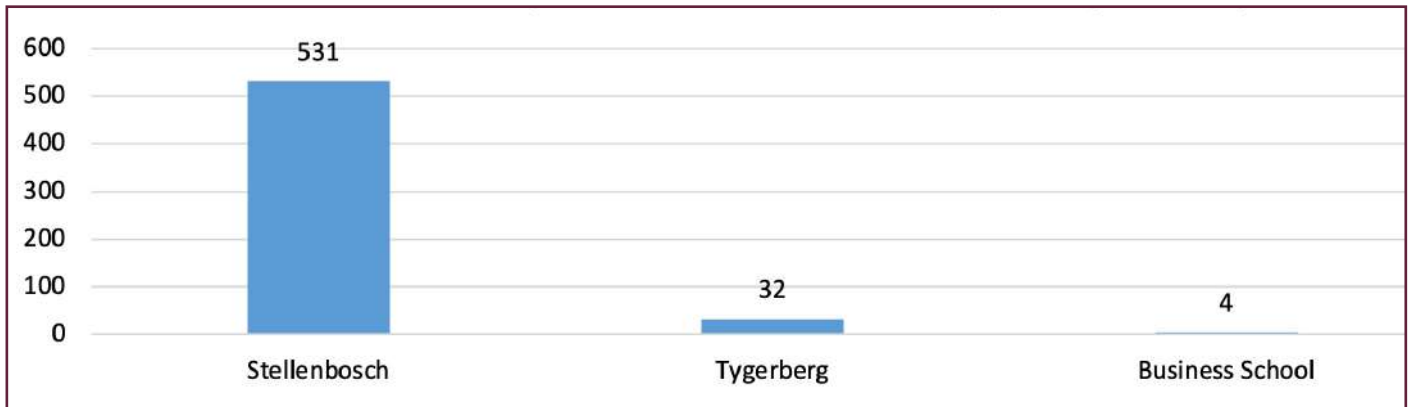


Figure 31: Total ER24 calls per campus, 1 January to 31 December 2024

Food Security

South African higher education institutions are facing challenges related to student hunger and food insecurity, which can negatively affect academic success and overall student wellbeing. To address these issues, Stellenbosch University has implemented various support resources.

From January to September 2024, a total of 925 students requested food assistance. Of these, 679 students received support through various food aid sources. However, 246 students were not assisted because they either had access to food through their meal quota or food allowances, or they were receiving support from their families.

A significant challenge remains for students who lack funding, being defunded by NSFAS (National Student Financial Aid Scheme), or whose NSFAS appeals are still pending. Therefore, it is crucial to continue providing food assistance to these students.

It is unfortunate that the Giving Day organ-

ised by the Alumni Office has been postponed to next year. This initiative would have collected non-perishable food items to support students during the examination period.

Since the beginning of the second semester, the NSFAS Task Team has initiated a programme to provide one free lunch for all NSFAS-funded students living in catered residences whose meal quotas have been depleted, capped at R13 500. The costs of the free lunch will be covered by the University.

From October 2024 onward (until the end of the examination period), we will continue to provide food assistance to those in dire need.

In the 2025 academic year, the Centre for Student Counselling and Development, in collaboration with other support stakeholders on campus, will continue to provide food assistance to students, depending on the availability of donations, including funding and other food sources.

Reflection of Social Work Services 2024

This year began with several challenges that we overcame successfully. Through the emergency accommodation process, and in collaboration with other support structures on campus, we assisted 541 students who arrived without any accommodation by providing them with temporary accommodation. The shortage of accommodation was largely due to a lack of funding and having no residence hemis, among other factors.

South African higher education institutions are confronting issues related to student hunger and food insecurity, which can adversely affect academic success and overall student wellbeing. To address these challenges, Stellenbosch University has implemented a range of support resources.

In addition, various psychosocial interventions were offered to students who sought assistance.

Four-Day Work Week

The Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD) at Stellenbosch University, in partnership with 4 Day Week South Africa NPC, has achieved extraordinary outcomes from its six-month 4 Day Week Trial. The trial, which ran from February to July 2024, marks the world's first 4 Day Week trial conducted within a student counselling centre at a tertiary institution. The results revealed remarkable improvements in both staff wellbeing and service delivery to students.

Notably, the results included:

- Student wait times for services decreased from three months to two weeks, a result on par with private sector standards
- Staff sick leave was reduced by 38%

- A decline in the use of ER24 crisis services by 43%
- A 74% cost saving on external practitioners, saving the centre over R1 million.

Moreover, staff wellbeing metrics, including job satisfaction, work-life balance, sleep, exercise and stress levels, showed substantial improvements, alongside enhanced self-rated productivity and work ability.

The findings were presented at the 44th annual SAADCHE (South African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education) Conference, where the decision was taken to explore an industry trial. The CSCD trial results are poised to inspire significant change across South Africa's higher education landscape.

Insights Discovery



As part of staff development, Insights Discovery was introduced for CSCD and DSAf staff. The self-awareness journey starts with a psychometric tool based on the psychology of Carl Jung, and Insights Discovery is built to help people understand themselves, understand others, and make the most of the relationships that affect them in the workplace.

The Insights Discovery methodology uses a simple and memorable four-colour model to help people understand their style, their strengths and the value they bring to the team. We call these the colour energies, and it's the unique mix of Fiery Red, Sunshine Yellow, Earth Green and Cool Blue energies that determines how and why people behave the way they do.

Through Insights Discovery, staff gained a common language that has wide-ranging benefits, including connecting colleagues across cultural boundaries, and helped people understand themselves and their colleagues so that they can have more respectful, productive and positive working relationships.

Staff of the Centre

Please also refer to the attached organogram (Addendum A)

Director	Mr CI Davids
Personal Assistant: Director: CSCD	Ms HZ Kotzé
Financial Administrative Officer	Ms S van Zyl
CPD Well Administrative Officer	Ms LS Jansen

Unit for Academic Counselling and Development

Head	Dr E Sinclair
Educational Psychologist	Ms C Koch
Educational Psychologist	Dr EW Gerrys
Educational Psychologist	Ms L Kloppe
Registered Counsellor	Ms L Schilder
Psychometrist	Dr CP Saunderson
Intern Educational Psychologist	Ms N Maduna
Intern Educational Psychologist	Ms I Wepener
Intern Educational Psychologist	D Lombaard
Central Reception: Senior Secretary	Ms A Welgemoed

Central Reception: Secretary (until 29 February)	Ms MC Denyssen
Temporary Administrative Officer (from 1 March)	Ms K Layman
Consultant Educational Psychologist	Ms A van der Vyver
Consultant Educational Psychologist	Ms C Bosman-Vosloo
Consultant Educational Psychologist	Ms S Silber
Consultant Educational Psychologist	Ms L Cloete

Unit for Graduand Career Services

Head	Mr MA Timmey
Project Co-ordinator: Graduate Recruitment	Ms W Naudé
Part-time Administrative Officer 5/8	Ms A Joubert
Co-ordinator: Virtual Career Information	Ms ST Msi
Student Intern (<i>1 March – December</i>)	Mr M Mdau

Disability Unit

Head	Dr MM Lyner-Cleophas
Co-ordinator: Disability Support	Ms ME Willems
Resource Officer	Ms PH Louw
Resource Officer	Ms MM Minnaar

Resource Officer	Ms EMS Erasmus
Inclusivity and Access Support Officer	Ms JL Apollis
Administrative Assistant	Ms I Pool-Le Roux
Diversity, Inclusion and Student Success Life Coach	Dr CP Saunderson
Coordinator: Marketing and Training	Ms L Nicholas

Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services

Deputy Director and Head	Ms L April
Administrative Officer (Tygerberg Campus)	Ms BE Fredericks (née Sheldon)
Administrative Officer	Ms I Pool-Le Roux
Senior Counselling Psychologist	Ms E Kruger
Clinical Psychologist	Mr M Strydom
Clinical Psychologist	Mr E Booysen
Clinical Psychologist	Mr JH Meyer
Counselling Psychologist	Ms NC Fouché
Registered Counsellor (until 31 October)	Ms DC Kamalie
Registered Counsellor	Ms VE Gilbert
Dell Young Leaders: Psychologist	Ms T Delport-Williams
Senior Clinical Psychologist (Tygerberg Campus)	Ms AM Nel

Counselling Psychologist (Tygerberg Campus)	Ms N Tsetse
Counselling Psychologist (Tygerberg Campus)	Ms C Balie
Social Worker	Ms LG Witbooi
Social Worker (Tygerberg Campus)	Ms S Nyembezi
Assistant	Ms MM Vlok
Assistant	Ms JL Moffat
Consultants: Please note these consultants only provide the UPSS with limited hours per month:	
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Ms W Arnolds
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Dr A Grundling
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Ms T Manuel
Consultant Counselling Psychologist	Ms M O'Reilly
Consultant Registered Counsellor	Ms L Abrahams Allie
Consultant Registered Counsellor	Ms C Thomas
Consultant Registered Counsellor	Ms A Smith
Consultant Wellness Counsellor	Mr D Bailey
Consultant Wellness Counsellor	Dr E Horn
Consultant Clinical Psychologist	Ms J Petersen

Budget

The Director ensures our budget expenditure is in line with the objectives of the Centre. Our operational budget is supplemented by third-stream income through the Psychology CPD WELL programme. A couple of marketing initiatives have led to growth in the number of psychologists joining our programme. Another supplement to our operational budget is Insights Discovery Training. We have also seen an increase in offering this service to faculties, departments and the private sector.

Conclusion

Thank you for the opportunity to share the most important parts of the past year's journey of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development. We remain true to our vision to deliver an approachable, inclusive and client-centred service. This year challenged us on a number of levels, but true to its nature, the CSCD managed these challenges to the best of its ability. My sincere gratitude to each staff member and all our partners within and outside the University for making this year memorable.

**ORGANOGRAM: CENTRE FOR STUDENT COUNSELLING AND DEVELOPMENT (CSCD)
DECEMBER 2024**

