

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

Welcoming of new First-Year Engineering Students

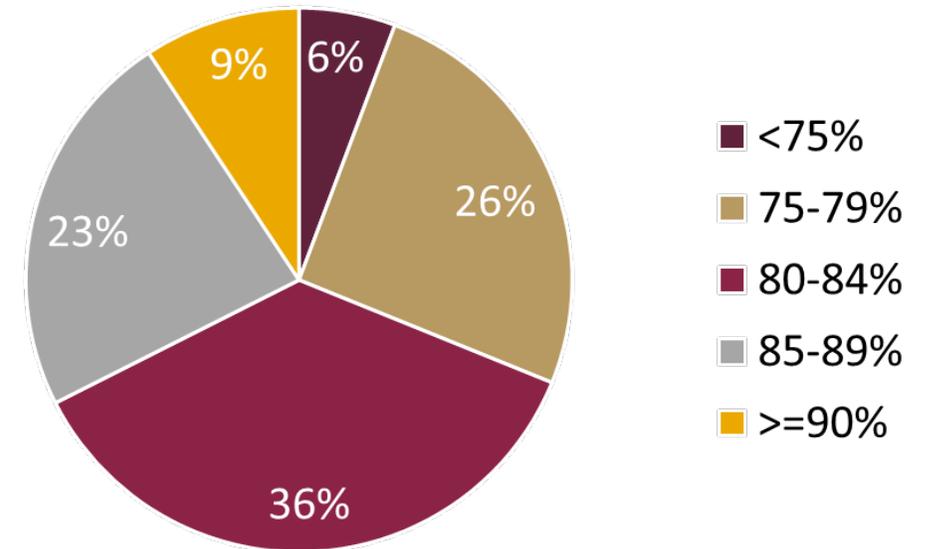
Prof Celeste Viljoen: Vice-dean: Teaching and Learning

2 February 2026

CONGRATULATIONS

- Your matric results were excellent
- You are one of a select group
 - In excess of 26 000 applications received for about 950 places
 - 64% of our first-year students had Matric average $\geq 80\%$

Matric Averages 2025 cohort



TODAY'S TALK

- Background about the Faculty
- Undergraduate programmes
- Advice
- Important information
- Questions

TODAY'S TALK

- We want our students to do well
 - To educate as many competent engineers as possible
- We know you want the same for your future career in Engineering as well
- We should approach this as a team, **Team Stellenbosch Engineering**

DEAN OF ENGINEERING

- Prof Wikus van Niekerk
 - General management of the Faculty
 - “Guardian” for the 1st year students
- The Dean’s office regularly meets all 1st years
 - Weekly, during the first semester: “Dean’s Lecture”
 - Part of the Intercultural Communication module
 - Advice on effective study methods
 - Having a balanced life as an engineering student
 - Offers advice and refer to further help at the University



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT STAFF

- Ms Natalie White
(natalies@sun.ac.za)
- Mr August Engelbrecht
(august@sun.ac.za)
- Two educational psychologists (part time)
 - Ms Inez Saunders and Ms Annette du Plessis
 - Arrange appointments through Ms Natalie White



BACKGROUND ABOUT THE FACULTY



VISION STATEMENT

To be the **leading Engineering Faculty** on the African continent, recognised globally for excellence, innovation and inclusivity in education, research and societal impact.



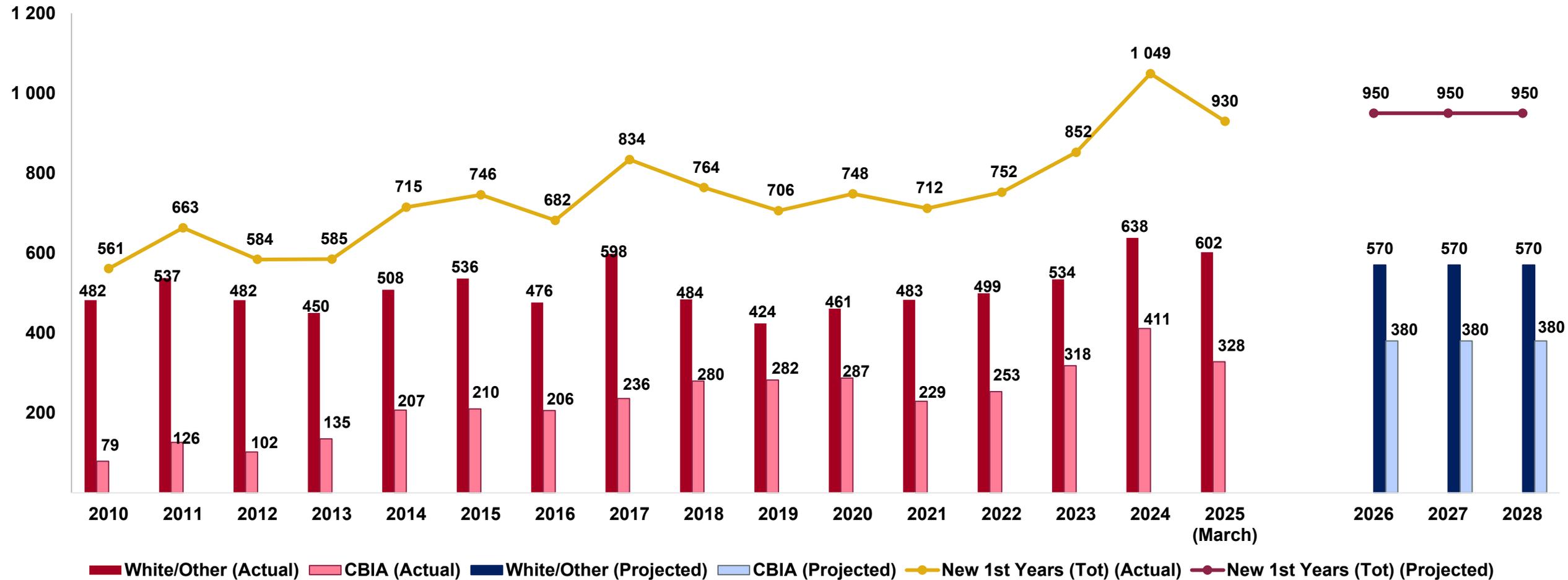
HISTORY

- Established in 1944
- Faculty is 82 years old this year
- First Afrikaans **Engineering** Faculty in South Africa, now multilingual
- Track record for producing excellent engineering graduates
- Outstanding research record in cooperation with industry

ENGINEERING FACULTY STATISTICS

- **Some numbers (2025)**
 - 3 507 undergraduate students
 - 1 646 postgraduate students
 - 2024 Graduates: 499 BEng, 280 Master's and 68 PhD's (Dec 2024 & March 2025)
- **Typical intake of about 950 first-years**
 - UG success rate of 75% (graduate after 4-6 years)
 - South Africa average 44%
 - About half of BEng 1st years graduates in 4 years

ENGINEERING FACULTY STATISTICS



ORGANOGRAM



Dean of Engineering
Prof JL (Wikus) van Niekerk
(021) 808 4204
engdean@sun.ac.za



Vice-Dean (Teaching)
Prof Celeste Viljoen
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Faculty Director
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Vice-Dean (Research)
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Student Support
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Student Recruitment
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Faculty Administrator
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Chemical Engineering
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Civil Engineering
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Industrial Engineering
Prof Joubert van Eeden
(021) 808 3970
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Electrical & Electronic Engineering
Prof Japie Engelbrecht
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ee@sun.ac.za



Mechanical & Mechatronic Engineering
Prof Johan van der Spuy
(021) 808 3742
mmchair@sun.ac.za

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES



ACCREDITATION: ALL OUR BEng PROGRAMMES

- Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA)
 - Registration as a Professional Engineer
- Washington Accord
 - Meet educational requirements in USA, Canada, Ireland, UK, Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Russia, Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey, etc.



DATA SCIENCE

- All BEng programmes introducing data science elements
- BEng Electrical and Electronic with focus area *Data Engineering* introduced in 2020
 - ECSA accredited
 - *As part of the BEng E&E with a focus on Data Engineering*
 - Not a common 1st year
 - Substantial statistics and computer science content
- PGDip and MEng (Struct) in Data Science

COMMON 1ST YEAR FOR ALL BENG

Except Data Engineering

1ST SEMESTER

1. **Engineering Maths 115**
2. **Applied Maths B124**
3. Eng Chemistry 123
4. Eng Drawings 123 or **Probability Theory and Statistics 114**
5. Eng Physics 113
6. Intercultural Communication 113

2ND SEMESTER

1. **Engineering Maths 145**
2. **Applied Maths B154**
3. Comp programming 143
4. Electrotechnique 143
5. Strength of Materials 143 or **Data Science 141**
6. **Programme-specific module**

EXTENDED CURRICULUM PROGRAMME (ECP)

- Bridging year followed by normal 4-year BEng programme
- Modules
 - **Mathematics 186**
 - **Chemistry 176**
 - Physics 176
 - **Computer Skills 176**
 - Scientific Communication Skills 116, 146
 - **Preparatory Technical Drawings 146**
 - University Practice in the Natural Sciences 176
- Required to proceed after 1st year
 - **Pass all modules**
 - **Average mark above 65%**

1ST YEARS' SUPPORT

- **Normal offering**
 - Lectures, tutorials, online material
 - Appointment to see lecturer
- **Group learning sessions**
 - After normal classes, facilitated by teaching assistant
- **Video recordings of key topics**
- **Dean's lectures**
- **Educational psychologist**
 - Time-management, stress management, and study methods
- ~~Private, individual tutors~~

LANGUAGE POLICY

- **1st year: Parallel Medium**
 - Separate Afrikaans and English classes in all subjects, except for electives in second semester
- **2nd year**
 - Parallel medium: Large modules with multiple class groups
 - Other: Lectures in English, with support in Afrikaans
- **3rd year**
 - Lectures in English, with support in Afrikaans
- **4th year**
 - Lectures in English
- **General**
 - Textbooks all in English
 - **Tests/exams questions in English and Afrikaans**
 - 4th year Afrikaans on request
 - **Answers in English or Afrikaans**

ADVICE



SUCCESS FACTORS

- Aim to be a **GOOD engineer**
 - Learn to solve new, technically demanding problems under significant pressure
- **Learn to do as many problems as possible YOURSELF**
 - Not only by following worked examples - also engage with the theory
 - Some group learning: build an academic support structure
- **Aim to do well (aim above 60%)**
 - Marks below 60% imply that a student is at risk

WHAT DO WE EXPECT?

- 15 credit module \Rightarrow 150 hours of work in total over a semester
- Time budget per lecturing week
 - 32 hr in contact sessions
 - 16 hr after hours
- Test week assessment (A1) per 15 credit module
 - 12 hr preparation
 - 2 hr writing
- Exam assessment (A2) per 15 credit module
 - 18 hr preparation
 - 3 hr writing

WHAT DO WE EXPECT?

- That students should ...
 - Work 5 evenings per week, 3 hours per evening
 - Start studying at 19:30
 - On weekend: also 3-4 hours preparation for Monday (*That adds up to 50 hours per week!*)
 - Keep up with the work
 - Do not waste time during the day
 - Relax - daily between 17:00 and 19:30
 - Maintain lifestyle (social, exercise, spiritual...)
- Weekends, public holidays, vacations:
 - Take time off - if up to date
 - Otherwise: weekends = catch up time!

SECRET:
Time management for a
healthy balance



SOME CHALLENGES

- **Emotional problems/depression**
 - Negative emotions
 - Irritable or always tired
 - Cannot sleep and difficult to concentrate
 - Change in appetite or weight
 - Depression
- **Seek help at**
 - Faculty's educational psychologists
 - contact Ms Natalie White (natalie@sun.ac.za)
 - Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD/SSVO)!



RESOLVING CLASS/PERSONAL PROBLEMS

- **If a class has a problem:**
 - **Class representative** speaks to the lecturer(s) or Dean
 - Speak to the Engineering Student Council
 - Once per semester class reps meet Dean and lecturers
- **If you have a problem**
 - Speak to the lecturer
 - Speak to Ms Natalie White
 - Make an appointment to see the Dean
 - Visit the educational psychologist or Centre for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD)
 - **Take responsibility** to solve problems before asking parents to help
- **Do not wait until the problem becomes a crisis**

IMPORTANT INFORMATION



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

www.su.ac.za/en/faculties/engineering/current-students/2026-first-year-engineering-students

This page brings together all the essential information to help newcomer first-year students navigate their first year.

The screenshot shows the website for the Faculty of Engineering at Stellenbosch University. The page title is "2026 First-Year Engineering Students" with the Afrikaans slogan "Forward together. Saam vorentoe." Below the title, a welcome message states: "We're thrilled you've joined the Faculty of Engineering. This page has all the essential information to guide you through your first-year experience." The page features several navigation buttons: "Engineering Welcoming Programme", "Newsletter for First-Year Engineering Students", and "SU Welcoming Programme". A vertical list of resources includes "Textbooks", "Laptop guide", "Assessment Rules", "Guide to Timetable (tbc)", and "Funding Opportunities". On the right side, there is a photograph of students walking outside a building, and buttons for "ECP Presentation (tbc)", "Presentation to Parents (tbc)", and "Presentation to Students (tbc)". The top navigation bar includes links for "About us", "News", "Prospective Students", "Current Students", "Departments & Centers", "Research", "Staff", and "Contact".

TIMETABLE AND GROUP ALLOCATIONS

- Group allocations will be done **before classes start on 9 February**.
 - Please register before then.
 - Please select the correct language preference for teaching upon registration.
- Your personal timetable, per group allocations, will be available on **My.SUN on Sunday, 8 February**.
- Obtain your class timetable **BEFORE** classes start on **Monday, 9 February**.
- Stay in your groups you were allocated to for the whole year.
- An example of the personal timetable can be found here:
 - www.su.ac.z/en/faculty | **Current Students** | **First-Year students** | **Guide to Timetable**

TENTATIVE GROUP ALLOCATIONS

Make sure to check your timetable one day before classes start.

| GROUP | STUDENTS' LANGUAGE STUDENTS' PROGRAMME | VENUE |
|-------------|--|-------|
| 1 | Afrikaans: All programmes | S2001 |
| 2 2 | English: Civil Eng English: Chemical Eng | S2024 |
| 3 3 | English: Electrical & Electronic Eng (incl Data Eng) English: Industrial Eng (surnames A - L) | E1025 |
| 4 4 4 | English: Mechanical & Mechatronic Eng English: Industrial Eng (surnames M - Z) English: BSc Forestry & Wood Sciences | S1018 |

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- **MY.SUN.AC.ZA**
(not for ECP students)

The screenshot shows the MySUN Menu website interface. At the top, there is a search bar labeled "Search links..." and a language dropdown set to "English". The main navigation area includes a left sidebar with user roles: Undergraduate, Postgraduate, Staff, and Researcher. The "Undergraduate" role is selected. The main content area features several service tiles: SUNStudent - Registration Portal, SUNLearn, Application Postgraduate study, Manage Password, Students with Disabilities, and a grid of dropdown menus for General, Studies, Finances, Accommodation, Administration, Campus, and Services. Below these are "Links:" which includes SUNLearn, Yearbook (Calendar), EMSLearn, Student feedback, STEMLearn, Library, SOCSILearn, Application Postgraduate study, FMHSLearn, Class Timetable (First Years), Class Timetable (all modules), Timetable Information, Class Timetable (per module), Translation of module names, Assessment Timetables (all modules), and Tests and Exams: Policy and Information. Three yellow arrows point to the "Undergraduate" role, the "Studies" dropdown menu, and the "Library" link.

SUNLearn (STEMLearn): YOUR MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFO

- <http://learn.sun.ac.za>

- Modules are automatically added a day or two after registration
 - Problems: contact info at bottom of landing page
- **Login:** student number
Password: your email password
- DO NOT GIVE YOUR PASSWORD to anyone else
 - You will be breaking your promise to abide by the SU IT policy

EMAIL: YOUR SECOND MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF INFO

- <http://www.sun.ac.za/webmail>
- **MUST** check your @sun.ac.za email regularly
 - The Faculty uses **ONLY** this address to communicate with you
- When communicating with staff: **ONLY** use this email address

SAFETY

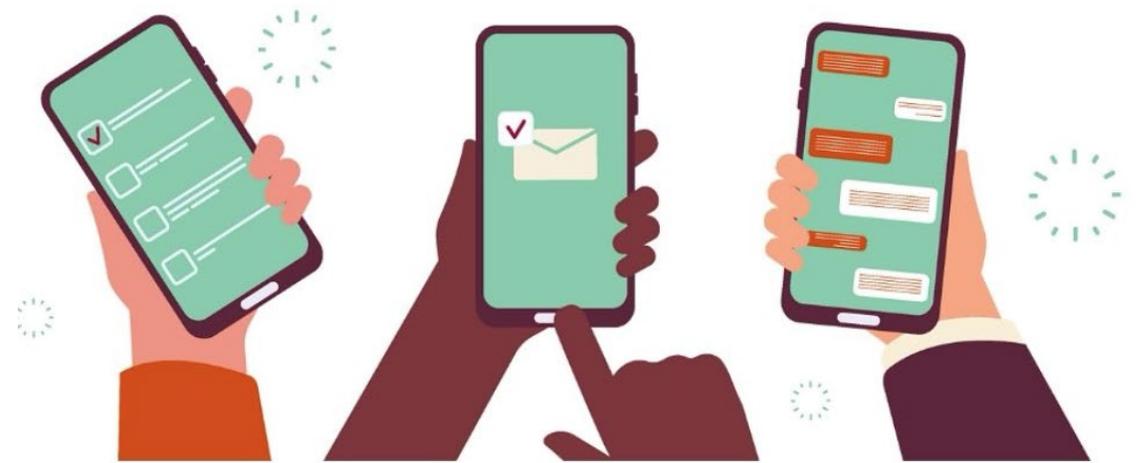
Stellenbosch probably not more dangerous than any other town in South Africa, but ...

- Please take reasonable safety precautions
 - Major risk:
 - Pub crawls and then vulnerable to crime on the way home
- Don't walk around alone late at night
 - Especially not in isolated spots!
 - Form and move in groups
 - Call Campus Security

CAMPUS SECURITY

- Emergency number:
021 808 2333
- Toll free number:
0800 02 58 27
- WhatsApp:
082 808 2333
- Enquiries / Reporting /
Pedestrian service:
021 808 4666

Report safety concerns



Report safety concerns to Campus Security
24-hour emergency numbers

Stellenbosch campus
0800 02 58 27 (toll-free)
021 808 2333

Tygerberg campus
0800 00 67 67 (toll-free)
021 931 5111

IN CONCLUSION - Student Support and Enquiries

If you need help or advice,
contact the Dean's Office

Tel: 021 808 4204

Email: engdean@sun.ac.za

For an appointment with the Educational
Psychologist, contact:

Ms Natalie White

Tel: 021 808 3614

Email: natalies@sun.ac.za

Presentation Copy

To request a copy of this presentation, please email: natalies@sun.ac.za

May our students all be successful.



Stellenbosch
UNIVERSITY
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UNIVERSITEIT

Thank you
Enkosi
Dankie