**Quality Enhancement Project**

**Institutional Reports: Phase 1**

**Extended Due Date: 15 January 2016**

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| **Name of Institution** | *Stellenbosch University* |
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| **Date of submission** | *15 January 2016* |

The aim of the institutional report is to demonstrate efforts to bring about enhancements in each of the four Quality Enhancement Project (QEP) focus areas since the beginning of Phase 1 of the QEP in February 2014, reflect on the journey towards enhancement and assess the extent to which the efforts have resulted in improvements.

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| 1. **INTRODUCTION (suggested length 2-5 pages)**
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| **Indicate how the report was prepared. Include a list of the people that were involved, their designations and their roles in the preparation of the report.***This report was prepared by four theme groups and collated by the Head of the Centre for Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (APQ), in consultation with the Senior Director of the Division for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (LTE) and the Vice Rector (Learning and Teaching).**Unlike the September 2014 institutional submission that was written by one person only, we followed a more participatory approach to develop this report, by utilising teams of academic and professional academic staff members assigned to each of the QEP themes, with a theme leader and a report-writer per team, and overseen by four senior directors reporting to the Vice Rector (Learning and Teaching).**2015 saw high levels of [student] activism at SU (in line with the trend nationally and abroad), initially focused on institutional culture, inclusion and access with the Open Stellenbosch collective emerging alongside and partly as a result of the #RhodesMustFall movement at UCT and culminating in the #feesmustfall and #endOutSourcing protests. This high level of activism has placed strain on the capacity of the Student Affairs Division whose staff have been central role-players in the institutional response, coordination and disruption mitigation efforts, and with key role-players also involved in the enrolment planning and management at SU, due to the shortened time-frame between the postponed examination period(s) and the graduation ceremonies in December 2015. This has resulted in a time-constraint that has made broad consultation difficult for themes 2 and 4. The final report will only serve at the SU Committee for Learning and Teaching in February 2016, with further dissemination to faculties, Senate and the Student Representative Council yet to follow.**The four theme groups were:* ***GROUP 1:*** *ENHANCING ACADEMICS AS TEACHERS*

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***GROUP 2:*** *ENHANCING STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT*

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| *Botha* | *Ludolph* | *Dr* | *Senior Director of the Division for Student Affairs* ***(theme leader)*** |
| *Dunn* | *Munita* | *Dr* | *Director of the Centre for Student Counselling and Development* |
| *Kloppers* | *Pieter* | *Mr* | *Director of the Centre for Student Structures and Communities* |
| *Smorenburg* | *Mathew* | *Mr* | *Listen-Live-and-Learn Coordinator* ***(report-writer)*** |

***GROUP 3:*** *ENHANCING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT*

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| **Surname** | **First name** | **Title** | **Designation** |
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| *Smit* | *Joe* | *Mr* | *Director at the Division for Information Technology* |
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***GROUP 4:*** *ENHANCING MODULE AND PROGRAMME ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT*

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| **2. FOCUS AREA 1: ENHANCING ACADEMICS AS TEACHERS (suggested length 10-20 pages)*****Includes: professional development, reward and recognition, workload, conditions of service and performance appraisal.***This section of the report should make reference to all of the sub-topics listed above, either by discussing them individually or by integrating them. Note: it is not necessary to respond to each of the questions below for every sub-topic. |
| **2.1 Summarise what the university considers to be the key issues in enhancing academics as teachers in one or two paragraphs.***The key issues in enhancing academics as teachers are informed by this excerpt from the Stellenbosch University (SU) Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2014-2018, which states that:**For the University to support graduates to becoming enquiring, engaged, dynamic and well-rounded, the teaching and learning arrangements of the University, as well as the arrangements governing all aspects of the student experience, need to be aligned to such a vision. The following is required to achieve this: Critical and scholarly lecturers. For SU to provide the maximum in opportunities for students to engage appropriately in a research-infused and enquiry-based learning experience, requires lecturers who are role models, leaders, experts, partners and facilitators. They are critical scholars, enquiring into their own disciplines and into the scholarship of teaching and learning. They are reflective and open to critique about their practice. The education context needs to provide conditions in which lecturers may flourish, and share their curiosity with their students.**One of the key issues in enhancing academics as teachers is a process of change management that needs to be enhanced at the University. Ongoing research at the University has found that academics generally feel that there are enough opportunities to enhance their teaching practice and overall they appear to be satisfied with the quality of these opportunities; however, they have raised some concerns about relevance, which suggests the need for more targeted activities, e.g. of a faculty/discipline-specific nature. By far the overriding issues, however, were related to time, and the (lack of) stature for teaching and learning (T&L). It is clear that the University needs to create the necessary structures (e.g. ring-fenced time for people to complete short courses in T&L) and shift the university culture of how teaching is valued. The latter is probably more difficult than the former. So a key issue confronting the University is the necessity for a shift both at the structural level (for example policies, strategies and task teams to support the recognition of good teaching), and the cultural level (where we start changing the nature of the discourse – which is much more difficult) by ‘living’ the policies and strategies. This requires that an appreciation of teaching is articulated at the senior level. The research clearly showed that this level really influenced thinking in faculties, and there needs to be a focus on engaging with people at this level on the issue of enhancing academics as teachers.**Another key issue is a widespread concern, expressed by academic staff, regarding insufficient resources (such as teaching staff, support staff and classroom infrastructure) allocated to teaching. These concerns were evident in the perceptions of teaching staff that the high (and apparently ever-increasing) workload experienced by teaching staff prevents effective teaching in some contexts and impedes innovation and renewal of teaching. In addition to human resources, the provision and maintenance of physical infrastructure has a direct impact on the quality and effectiveness of teaching. The high workload experienced by staff should, however, be considered in the context of the reduction (in real terms) of government subsidies per student and the increase in costs external to the University. Therefore, the University as a whole (management and teaching staff) must strive to balance its endeavours to improve T&L, with the challenges of allocating its limited resources in an equitable and sustainable way.***2.2 During Phase 1 of the QEP, what changes at institutional level (a) have been made, (b) are in progress, or (c) are in the planning stages that relate to enhancing academics as teachers?**1. *One of the significant* ***changes that has been made*** *at institutional level, which relates to enhancing academics as teachers, is to the annual PREDAC (Professional Educational Development for Academics) programme for new academic staff at Stellenbosch University (SU). Previously this programme was offered as a four-day immersion event at a breakaway venue for all new staff. The numbers vary between 70–90 staff members each year. In October 2014 the institutional Committee for Learning and Teaching (CLT) considered a draft proposal about possible changes to the format of PREDAC 2015. The proposal was accepted by the CLT. In short the proposed changes involved combining centralised and faculty-based activities. The rationale behind this was that new academic staff should be inducted into the teaching and learning culture at SU at both an institutional and a faculty level. The revised PREDAC programme comprises a year-long programme with both inter-faculty and intra-faculty opportunities. In the course of 2015 programme participants were given the opportunity to reflect on their views, knowledge and assumptions about teaching, learning and assessment within the context of current thoughts on university teaching. Practical and innovative approaches towards teaching and assessment tasks were addressed throughout the course. National and institutional frameworks which direct Higher Education in South Africa and at SU were also covered. Participants were challenged to judge how knowledge and policy could be applied in a meaningful way in their own subject areas. Participants were exposed to conceptual frameworks that enabled them to reflect on teaching, learning and assessment in order to plan and expand their own teaching practices. The programme also provided a unique opportunity for participants to forge relationships with colleagues from their own faculty as well as other departments and faculties in a collegial atmosphere. In addition, they were introduced to the institutional culture of SU. The revised PREDAC programme ran from January to December 2015, and combined centralised and faculty-based activities in the following way:*
* ***PHASE 1: An introductory session at the start of the academic year (January/February 2015)***

*At the start of the academic year there is an introductory session during which new staff are introduced to PREDAC as a year-long programme and where the first task, “Reflecting on teaching practice”, is discussed.* * ***PHASE 2: Completion of the first task: “Reflecting on teaching practice” (February – June 2015)***

*Professional dialogue and feedback, together with reflective practice, are important foci of this phase. In the course of semester 1 PREDAC participants engage in a process of ‘talking about teaching’ with each other in their faculties. This takes the form of reciprocal classroom visits, peer observation and feedback on each other’s teaching, reflection on the process, and culminating in a written reflective piece which feeds into phase 3.** ***PHASE 3: A two-day immersion programme for all new staff across all faculties (14&15 July 2015)***

*These two days comprise six sessions, three on each day, with a sleep-over at a breakaway venue. The themes covered during these two days include: The Ideal Lecturer; The SU Context; How do we Learn; Planning a module (Outcomes); Assessment, and Introduction to Design for Learning (an activity that continues through semester two).** ***PHASE 4: Completion of the second task: “Design for learning” (August – October 2015)***

*The design of learning activities is an important focus of this phase. In the course of semester 2 PREDAC participants work in small groups to research and discuss a teaching or learning topic/question of relevance to their group, focusing on solving ‘real’ in-class challenges. This group research activity culminates in the preparation of a 20-minute teaching experience during which the group uses active learning techniques to share what they have learned with the rest of the PREDAC group. This sharing takes place during Phase 5.* * ***PHASE 5: PREDAC Mini-conference (19 November 2015)***

*The year-long PREDAC programme culminates in the PREDAC mini-conference in November, where each group from Phase 4 presents their 20-minute teaching experience based on the research they did. Participants also receive their certificates of completion at this event.*1. *The biggest* ***change that is in progress*** *at institutional level that relates to enhancing academics as teachers is a change to the student and lecturer feedback system at the University. The University is currently in the process of revising the Student Feedback Policy, the questionnaires for student feedback on their teaching and learning experiences in modules and programmes, as well as a questionnaire for lecturers to provide feedback on how they experience teaching on certain modules. A key priority of the process is to develop an information producing system that will focus on aspects of teaching that are closely linked with improved learning. The new questionnaires should provide both lecturers and students with the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations to work towards effective, quality teaching. Moving towards an electronic system will create the opportunity for a more flexible system which could contribute to such teaching and learning conversations. It will allow lecturers greater access to formative feedback possibilities, for reports to be made available quicker and at multiple stages in a semester, so as to enable lecturers to respond to feedback, if necessary. Students will then be able to experience the outcomes of their feedback.*
2. *The biggest* ***change that is in the planning stage*** *at institutional level and relates to enhancing academics as teachers is the implementation of an institutional system for the reward, recognition and promotion of good teaching. In 2014 the Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching) appointed a task team to investigate the implementation of an institutional system for the reward, recognition and promotion of good teaching. The overall purpose of the task team was to develop institutional guidelines for the promotion, recognition and reward of good teaching at SU. The Task Team met several times in the course of 2014 and 2015. Faculties were also invited to provide feedback on the work of the task team. The final report and its recommendations were tabled at the CLT in April 2015 and approved for tabling at senate. Senate approved the following recommendations of the task team on 6 June 2015:*
* ***Peer review and 360° evaluation:*** *The scope of a 360° evaluation of a staff member's teaching, and therefore also peer review of teaching, should be tailored to the particular review objective (e.g. formative feedback, annual performance appraisals, promotions or awards).*
* ***Career pathways:*** *Teaching staff can choose, within the constraints of their faculty context, to what extent they wish to focus their research and career development on the teaching of their discipline.*
* ***T&L hubs:*** *Each faculty should form a T&L hub as a central focus on teaching that generates interest, energy, guidance and leadership.*
* ***Professional development of teaching****: Teaching research opportunities (as a specific category within existing research opportunities) should be introduced. Teaching fellowships and teaching research funding (FIRLT) should be maintained. The judicious use of teaching portfolios should be supported and teaching portfolios should be used as submissions for university-wide recognition and as contributors to professional development nationally.*
* ***Annual performance appraisal:*** *Teaching outputs should form part of annual performance appraisal processes of all academic staff who are involved in teaching. Each faculty should develop its own methods of appraising staff members’ teaching in accordance with the principles given in this document, but also with due regard for the variety of contexts in the faculty.*
* ***Promotions and appointments:*** *A summary of all activities, including teaching, should be submitted to the Appointments Committee of Senate as part of the person's abbreviated CV, since staff members’ whole range of duties have to be considered when assessing their performance and suitability for promotion. A set of tables for summarising teaching is proposed.*
* ***Recognising teaching excellence:*** *A number of dedicated internal institutional and external awards should be used that specifically acknowledge teaching achievements, with the HELTASA awards as an important point of reference.*

*The Senate accepted the above recommendations and faculties were tasked with the refinement and implementation of these recommendations within their faculty contexts and environmental plans for 2016.***2.3 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars to illustrate specific aspects of the changes that are successful. Provide evidence for claims of success. Where an activity is in the planning stages, indicate what evidence will be collected**.1. *The change**to the annual PREDAC (Professional Educational Development for Academics) programme for new academic staff at Stellenbosch University was successful in a number of ways. The involvement of faculty management in Phase 1 of the programme, which took place within faculties (or clusters of faculties) during the first term of the year, proved to be valuable to participants. The direct involvement of deputy deans teaching and learning in PREDAC gave it credence and disciplinary relevance. The Phase 2 peer observations of classes were experienced as a positive learning opportunity even though lecturers usually do not look forward to it. These claims were evidenced in the participant feedback on these phases of the programme, such as the following quotation from one of the participants:*

*PREDAC was great (I’m not just saying that). The content helped me a great deal and I now feel I can face my impending undergrad teaching with less trepidation. Also, I connected academically with many interesting people which is important for me as I draw energy from being with others.**Similarly Phase 4 enabled new lecturers to work in groups within their faculty contexts and this work was presented at a mini-conference at the end of 2015 (Phase 5). The level of participation in this event was much higher than in previous years and there was a distinct improvement in the quality of the work presented. One of the possible reasons for this improvement might be the fact that CTL advisors were able to work more directly with lecturers in their faculty contexts and to facilitate in small groups at the two-day breakaway, as is evident in the quotation below from one of the CTL advisors:**Small group facilitation: The best part of this PREDAC, I think. They allowed me to really get a feel for what is going on in their hearts and minds (and lives), to ask a strategic question here and there, and to mediate how they respond to the process. To some extent. I would suggest allowing more time for discussion and asking for plenary feedback less often. In other words, to rather trust the process (and group facilitators). All in all, I really like this model.*  1. *As the changes to the student and lecturer feedback system at the University will only be introduced as from 2016, there are no exemplars of success, however the evidence that will be collected could include:*
* *A pilot phase during which the efficiency of the system could be evaluated,*
* *Comparison of response rates between previous paper system and new electronic system,*
* *Analysis of feedback data to gauge whether and how the average and content of feedback might be influenced by the use of the electronic system,*
* *Lecturers’ feedback on the value that they do or do not derive from the new system in terms of enhancing their own teaching. This could be done via a survey or by way of faculty feedback focusing on questions such as:*
	+ *Which aspects of the new questionnaire(s) do you find most useful in terms of enhancing your teaching practices?*
	+ *Which aspects of the new questionnaire(s) do you find least useful in terms of enhancing your teaching practices?*
	+ *Suggestions for improvement of the questionnaire(s).*
	+ *Which aspects of the electronic student feedback system do you find most useful in terms of enhancing your teaching practices?*
	+ *Which aspects of the electronic student feedback system do you find least useful in terms of enhancing your teaching practices?*
	+ *Suggestions for improvement of the electronic system.*

*There are however exemplars of success from the current paper-based system:****Example 1: Lecturer teaching for 5 years at SU*** *(From the PhD study of a CTL staff member, which was presented at HELTASA)**This lecturer did not find the institutional feedback system as useful but still values the importance of feedback. In addition to institutional system, she has her own weekly feedback system. She values students as a rich source of information about teaching (the most important thing of feedback is the people giving it). Responding to student feedback is a value decision to her because she wants her teaching to mean something to the students and to be a contribution to the sector that she is preparing her students for. She would also meticulously read all the feedback comments and identify pertinent issues. For her the feedback process is relational and conversational, so she talks to her colleagues as well as the students about it. For example, she asks her students to qualify their feedback. These conversations give her deeper insights and help her to reflect on her teaching and to come up with ways to improve the things that have not worked so well. “[Student feedback] probably makes up about 60 – 70% of what guides my teaching, but I’m also careful that we don’t buy in to this philosophy that the students must dictate what we teach to them”. “And understanding how the system works, I can choose to engage with the system in a positive way for the benefit of the students and for myself, and as a platform for the Dean and my supervisor, and my HOD to see what I am doing. It’s like a lens through which they can look, and that’s what the system means for me. So it has value in the world – for sure.”****Example 2: Professor teaching at SU for 33 years*** *(From the PhD study of a CTL staff member, which was presented at HELTASA)**This lecturer explained that student feedback was constructive in nature, whether it was positive or negative in nature. For him there was a close correlation between student feedback and his teaching practice. “I take it very seriously, especially where I see clear themes, where students react either positively, then it serves as motivation to strengthen that practice or, if it is negative, then I sit and think, where did I make mistakes, where did I think that I acted correctly but the students obviously experienced it negatively.” “In identifying where there were obvious themes, and when I started to do it more objectively in that way, the value of student feedback started to kick in for me. Because then I could clearly identify where there were strong points within the modules and where there were gaps.”*1. *The implementation of an institutional system for the reward, recognition and promotion of good teaching is still at the planning stage within faculties, so there are not many exemplars of success at this stage. Some of the recommendations, however, are being implemented successfully, such as the establishment of T&L hubs in certain faculties and the institutional recognition of teaching excellence through the awarding of Teaching Fellowships annually. Three Teaching Fellowships were awarded in the course of 2015 and two more are in the process of being awarded for 2016. Our SU teaching fellows also often become recipients of the national awards. Such an example is Professor Geo Quinot of the Law Faculty, who was a winner of the HELTASA distinguished teacher award in 2012, was awarded the SU Teaching Fellowship in 2013, and then went on to become an awardee of the National TAU Fellowship in 2014. The Centre for Teaching and Learning is also currently working centrally on aligning the criteria for success, recognition and promotion of good teaching at SU and plotting out a career path for staff who wish to focus on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. Participation in PREDAC is seen as the first stage in such a career path and the proposed route beyond PREDAC would include applications for small-scale, classroom-based research projects, presentations at the annual Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) conference, applications for a SU teaching fellowships, compiling of a teaching portfolio, applications for national teaching fellowships, as well as the possibility of research leave for educational research and applications for teaching awards.*

**2.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.**1. *The change to the annual PREDAC (Professional Educational Development for Academics) programme for new academic staff at Stellenbosch University was problematic in some ways as well. A number of changes were made to Phase 3, the two-day immersion programme in the middle of the year. Some of these changes were more successful than others. Shortening this phase to two days, for example, caused the facilitators and participants to experience a feeling of being ‘rushed’, as evidenced in the quotations from participant feedback:*
* *Enigste verbetering wat ek wil aanbeveel is meer tyd by Goudini, om moontlik die vorige dag te arriveer. Een middag sessie te hê voor aandete en sodoende meer tyd in te ruim vir ander sessies (nie noodwendig meer sessies nie).*
* *Opmerking oor sessie 1 – 5: tyd is ’n faktor. Alles baie “rushed” gevoel*

*It was decided that this would be addressed in future by bringing the participants in the previous afternoon so that they can settle into their accommodation the evening before and have their welcome dinner, instead of having them leave their homes at about 05:00 in the morning on Day 1 and only finish the day after dinner at around 20:30 the evening. Since this programme also draws a mix of participants, some of whom have never taught before and some who are new to SU but with teaching experience, the nature of the programme needs to be flexible enough to address the needs of both sets of participants.* 1. *The changes to the student and lecturer feedback system at the University started with a revision process, to both the questionnaires as well as the system. This was quite a long and tedious process, and some of the reasons for this were:*
* *academics’ hesitation / distrust / dislike towards changing from a paper-based to an electronic system,*
* *various approaches to the use of student feedback across the various faculties, leading to difficulty with coming to a satisfactory agreement across the board in terms of which question items to include in the questionnaires,*
* *the workload of the IT department, which causes delays in the processes of implementing a user friendly electronic feedback system.*

*Some other challenges with changes to the student and lecturer feedback system at the University are variations across the University in management’s utilisation of student feedback results, especially how it is used in performance appraisals, as well as a disjuncture between how lecturers believe student feedback should be used and how management uses it. These challenges are exacerbated by the current lack of recognition and reward for teaching at the University. However, these concerns will be addressed by the planned implementation of an institutional system for the reward, recognition and promotion of good teaching at SU.*1. *As mentioned under section 2.1, the biggest concern regarding the implementation of an institutional system for the reward, recognition and promotion of good teaching relates to insufficient resources (such as teaching staff, support staff and classroom infrastructure) allocated to teaching. Academic teaching staff feel that the high (and apparently ever-increasing) workload prevents effective teaching in some contexts and impedes innovation and renewal of teaching. It is clear that an institutional system for the reward, recognition and promotion of good teaching will not successfully address these concerns. Such concerns will require an intervention at national level which examines the ever-increasing workload placed on academics as a result of the massification of higher education and seeks national solutions to the current funding formula. Other possible challenges to the implementation of an institutional system for the reward, recognition and promotion of good teaching is the direct linking of remuneration to performance appraisal, which should be reconsidered. Performance appraisal of teaching to a large extent relies on subjective measures and the cost of implementing more reliable measures (e.g. by combining extensive 360° evaluations over an extended period and by numerous participants) is prohibitive. Current perceptions amongst many teaching staff members, namely that one or two overall average numbers from student feedback have a strong influence when assessing their teaching, leads to teaching practices that please students, rather than effective learning.*

**2.5 If possible, identify one or more promising practices related to this focus area. Describe the practice and provide evidence for success. Suggest what the key features might be.***The promising practices relate to promoting the Scholarship of Educational Leadership at SU and the process of programme renewal. Towards these ends eleven academics including the Vice-Rector (Learning and Teaching), the Senior Director of the Division for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (LTE), four Vice-Deans (Teaching), three senior academics, the Head of the Centre for Academic Planning and Quality Assurance (APQ) and a senior advisor from the Centre for Learning and Teaching (CTL) have enrolled for the* **University of British Columbia (UBC) Certificate on Curriculum and Pedagogy in Higher Education** *as part of* The International Faculty SoTL Leadership Program(see [*http://international.educ.ubc.ca/sotl/program-of-study/*](http://international.educ.ubc.ca/sotl/program-of-study/)). *The main aim of the programme is to prepare academic leaders to develop expertise for scholarly approaches to and the scholarship of teaching, learning and curriculum practice in contextually-bound higher education settings. The programme focuses on four main themes:*1. ***SoTL Leadership Context****, including research-informed, evidence-based, effective and strategically-aligned educational leadership practices in diverse higher education settings.*
2. ***SoTL Leadership Research Methodology****, including the development and refinement of practice-based SoTL Leadership inquiry.*
3. ***Pedagogical Leadership****, including theories of student learning & teaching perspectives in higher education, technology-enhanced learning-centred teaching practices and authentic assessment and evaluation of teaching and student learning in higher education.*
4. ***Curriculum Leadership****, including the scholarship of undergraduate/graduate degree program reform, curriculum contexts and communities of practice, technology-enhanced learning-centred curriculum practices and curriculum development/ renewal/implementation/ evaluation.*

*As part of the requirements of the certificate course the participants are required to submit a capstone project for assessment. As a group the participants decided that instead of developing new institutional/faculty projects for the course they could rather present a reflection on the programme renewal process that is already happening at SU, imagine a possible more ideal process and identify the gaps between the current process and the projected ideal process. This aligns with one of the Vice-rector’s (Learning and Teaching) strategic initiatives, namely programme renewal. This requires, inter alia, various consultative processes in order to determine what is being done in terms of programme renewal and what the obstacles are which prevent SU from engaging in meaningful and effective renewal processes.**The research question that guides the investigation is:* ***How does Stellenbosch University conceptualise and implement a more strategic approach to effective and sustainable programme renewal in a broad sense?*** *The anticipated outcomes of the collaborative project are:** *A mapping of / appreciative enquiry of the existing programme renewal processes within faculties as well as the institutional process*
* *A discussion document for Stellenbosch University programme renewal including the overarching capstone project as well as seven faculty based capstone projects*
* *Professional development of participants and promotion of academic leadership*
* *Dissemination of results at Scholarship for Teaching and Learning Conference (October 2015)*
* *A Research base to start the institution-wide programme renewal project*

*The plan is also to use these eleven academics as core group to further the scholarship of educational leadership at Stellenbosch University. They will form the core group in 2016, but the Vice-Deans (Teaching) and senior academics involved in teaching and learning of the other faculties will also be invited to become part of the group through monthly discussion forums. The evidence of the success of this promising practice is:* * *Monthly meetings of the eleven academic leaders to discuss the institutional programme renewal project,*
* *Skype and face-to-face institute meetings with the coordinator of the* UBC Certificate on Curriculum and Pedagogy in Higher Education *programme,*
* *A draft institutional project proposal, entitled:* ***Toward a strategic approach for effective and sustainable programme renewal in a South African Research-intensive University Context****,*
* *Presentation of preliminary results at the SU SoTL conference in October 2015,*
* *E-portfolios of participants which have been submitted for external review and assessment in January 2016.*

**2.6 Identify the main challenges the university still faces in relation to this focus area.***Quality teaching and learning is a key responsibility of university lecturers. Quality teaching and professional learning for teaching are interconnected and therefore SU has a responsibility to support its lecturers in this endeavor.* *The University has adopted a new Strategy for Teaching and Learning and is also in the process of discussing the value attached to teaching and its related activities by describing what is meant by ‘good’ teaching and ‘good’ lecturers and how these are measured, recognised and rewarded. It is important for the CTL to support lecturers in their ‘becoming’ in a way that would lead towards the kind of ‘good’ teaching as described and ascribed to, by the institution. The academic leadership provided by management is of particular importance in strengthening lecturers’ agency to deal with fewer resources, a more diverse student body and academic renewal should be placed at the core of the institutional activities. The CTL could play an important role in the professional learning of middle management, especially through the Deputy Deans (Academic / Teaching & Learning).* *Teaching is an emotional endeavour. Positive professional learning environments should be created attentive of both the cognitive and emotional aspects of learning. The measuring and recognition of ‘good’ teaching (as an emotional endeavour) in an environment where notions of performance, outputs, quality assurance and bureaucracy prevail, pose a potential challenge. The measurement of quality teaching has to be aligned to the University’s teaching and learning strategy, with quality assurance measures including aspects of innovation, curriculum, scholarship, workload and time spent on teaching and its related activities. If we conduct our work from a relational space it implies that the primary focus of professional learning needs to be on the flourishing of the individual academic, with a secondary focus on efficiency. Professional learning practitioners could act as change agents and critical friends who initiate and sustain dialogue between lecturers and management – thus they should play the role of ‘path clearers’, fore-runners or ‘task forces’ in the field of teaching and professional learning for teaching.* *One of the main challenges the University still faces in relation to this focus area is the workload and time of academic staff members, especially those who are teaching large undergraduate classes. In this regard the findings from a doctoral study undertaken by one of the CTL staff members into professional learning for teaching, list the following considerations from the* ***professional sphere*** *of the life-world of lecturers at SU, which are perceived as potential constraints to making decisions about becoming involved in the process of professional learning (PL) for teaching:*

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| ***Theme*** | ***Consideration*** |
| *Teaching (and professional learning (PL) for teaching) not perceived as valued)* | *Good teaching not valued* |
| *PL for teaching not valued but included in performance appraisal* |
| *SoTL not recognised as research* |
| *No career prospects in teaching* |
| *High opportunity cost* |
| *No regard and reward for teaching* |
| *Misalignment of priorities* | *Time spent on teaching and teaching-related activities a moral dilemma* |
| *Research-teaching tension* |
| *The use of student feedback* |
| *Perceived lack of support* | *Role of middle-management* |
| *No encouragement from colleagues* |
| *Lack of administrative and support staff* |
| *Unrealistic expectations* |
| *Setting of expectations without having relevant support structures in place* |
| *Perceived teaching competence and confidence* | *Feeling ‘ill-equipped’* |

*Findings from the same doctoral study list the following considerations from the* ***personal sphere*** *of the life-world of lecturers at SU, which are perceived as potential constraints to making decisions about becoming involved in the process of professional learning (PL) for teaching:*

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| ***Theme*** | ***Consideration*** |
| *Work-life balance* | *Lack of time* |
| *High workload* |
| *Own PhD studies* |
| *No career prospects in teaching* |
| *Family commitments* |
| *Personal wellness* | *Feelings of disillusionment* |
| *Feelings of being overburdened* |
| *Absence of intrinsic motivation* |

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| **3. FOCUS AREA 2: ENHANCING STUDENT SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (suggested length 10-20 pages)*****Includes: career and curriculum advising, life and academic skills development, counselling, student performance monitoring and referral.***This section of the report should make reference to all of the sub-topics listed above, either by discussing them individually or by integrating them. Note: it is not necessary to respond to each of the questions below for every sub-topic. |
| **3.1 Summarise what the university considers to be the key issues in enhancing student support and development.***The SU Institutional Intent and Strategy 2013-2018 (IIS) envisions SU as an inclusive, innovative, and future focussed institution and outlines Broadening Access, Sustaining Momentum on Excellence, and Enhancing Societal Impact as the three overarching strategic priorities to achievement of this vision. Alongside this vision and set of priorities the graduate attributes of SU graduates (thought leaders that have an enquiring mind, are engaged citizens with the skills to be a dynamic professional and the values required to live life as a well-balanced individual) need to be considered as the starting point when considering student support and development (SSD).**SU has made a number of strides to reconsider student support and development over the last number of years and a few key issues underpin the general approach in this regard.****Holistic Development*** *A student experience at SU and subsequent effect on their success cannot be effectively seen in a set of discreet silos but needs to be examined holistically if it is going to be impacted successfully and in turn for the University to succeed in achieving its vision. It is for this reason that the institution has moved away from the deficit model with regard to academic and social interventions. As an alternative, we subscribe to the holistic development of all students, based on positive psychology principles, that allow students to flourish in their academic and personal lives. This approach (which is also largely preventative in nature) is specifically at the heart of our BeWell mentor programme, tutoring and welcoming programmes while ensuring that ‘at risk’ students are still catered for.****Value driven management****The choice to move towards value driven management in and within student affairs started more than a decade ago and has made large strides, and general student conduct at SU during the #feesmustfall protests attests to the entrenchment of this system within the student communities. The most important reason for moving towards this system of management was outlined in the Report of the Task Team into Unacceptable Welcoming Practises of October 2014 which states:**“… the value-driven system or approach applied or pursued in the student communities is**aligned with our constitutional democracy. This not only presents a vital opportunity for students to get acquainted with the functioning of a constitutional democracy, but also makes certain demands on the ethos as regards the exercise of authority and the implementation of management at the University, and how we conduct ourselves in student communities. Consequently, a hierarchy of power in any form is experienced as being in opposition to the ethos and rights entrenched in the Constitution.” (page 15)**The change to value driven management rather than power hierarchies remains specifically important to SU, not only as a result of our institutional history but also the desire to ensure a* ***welcoming culture*** *amidst an ever changing student demographic.****Diversity****Increasing the diversity profile of both the student and staff component is one of the stated objectives of the institution and specifically on the student front large strides have been made in this regard. The reason, however, that increased diversity is important from an SSD perspective is outlined in the latest Residence Placement Policy:* *“Enhancing excellence through diversity is a guiding policy principle and both these dimensions are consistently taken into account along with all the other provisions. Diversity is regarded as an extremely important factor in developing excellence among students. Opportunities to learn from people who are different from you are greater than they would be in a homogenous group.**Furthermore, coping with diversity offers an excellent preparation for dealing with South African and international realities. This is why the University wants to create opportunities that are rich in diversity within its student communities. This also acknowledges the fact that students are diverse in many respects (not only as far as ethnicity is concerned) and that diversity needs to be reflected in the composition of student communities.” (pages 2-3)****Student Communities****A* ***welcoming culture*** *that caters for all students, whether they are in residence, live privately near campus or commute is essential for the success of each of those individual students. An increased sense of belonging and decreased degree of social isolation precipitates increased performance and reduced numbers of ‘at-risk’ students. Since 2006 when* ***clusters*** *(i.e. grouping students from SU residences and private student entities together in organisational units) were introduced, SU has made advances in the implementation of this collegiate model as a organisational method. In doing so it divides the large University into a number of smaller communities with increased overlap of identities and affiliation with the purposes of building community and fostering a sense of belonging.* **3.2 During Phase 1 of the QEP, what changes at institutional level (a) have been made, (b) are in progress, or (c) are in the planning stages that relate to enhancing student support and development?**1. ***Completed:***
	1. *Reorganisation of Student Affairs*

*In August 2012, the Division: Student and Academic Support was restructured leading to the establishment of the Division: Student Affairs consisting of the Centres for Student Counselling and Development (CSCD), Student Structures and Communities (SSC) and Mentor-Tutor Leadership (MTL). Subsequent to the first phase of the QEP being completed, MTL disbanded and organisational objectives and staff relocated into CSCD and SSC. Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee was appointed as the Director: CSCD on retirement of Prof Charl Cilliers and Dr Ludolph Botha will be replaced on his retirement (as of 1 January 2016) by Dr Birgit Schrieber as Senior Director: Student Affairs. The purpose of the restructured Student Affairs division is to provide a One Stop support service for the co-curricular development of currently enrolled students.** 1. *BeWell Mentor Programme*

*Mentoring at SU has been in existence in some form for over forty years. Traditionally (before 2013) the objectives were, broadly speaking, to help first-year students to adjust to university life, to overcome personal barriers (by referring them to professional staff) and to provide general psycho-social support – mainly a deficit or problem-focused approach that assisted the needy but did not have real meaning to the rest who were ‘sort-of-okay’. In 2013 the University changed its approach to a developmental approach that still catered for adjustment and problem-solving, but also focused on the optimisation of the potential of all students in the system, including both the mentees and mentors (senior students) – a more holistic and systemic approach that concentrates on developing the whole person instead of only addressing problem areas.**An already existing campus-wide peer mentoring system was complemented with new wellness-based face-to-face mentoring sessions, personalised and gamified developmental wellness websites for each mentor and mentee, and a sophisticated tracking and management information system.**To quote from an overview report on the BeWell Mentor Wellness Project:**Overall Stellenbosch University’s wellness approach has the aim of creating a ‘flourishing’ campus culture. Because Stellenbosch University is now in its third year of implementing this approach it means that the majority of her undergraduate student population now had some kind of exposure to it – a world’s first, and a good start in building a flourishing culture. (Extracted from: The BeWell Mentor Wellness Project at Stellenbosch University: An Overview, Dr Alten du Plessis, 2015.)** 1. *Frederik van Zyl Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership Development*

*The FVZS Institute was officially launched in March 2011 as one of the HOPE projects of Stellenbosch University. Through its ongoing development of new program offerings the Institute creates various platforms through which students and young people in general can expand their learning experiences and leadership skills.* *The FVZS Institute currently boasts with 13 accredited Stellenbosch University short courses, which on completion are now listed on the academic transcript of participants, and 2 programmes. It currently serves more than 3500 students per annum (predominantly from Stellenbosch University). There is a growing number of participants from the University of Cape Town, the University of the Western Cape as well as other Institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa.**The program offering of the FVZS Institute is structured around the following pillars:** + - *Democracy and Human Rights*
		- *Active Citizenship and Social Responsibility*
		- *Mentorship and Coaching*
		- *Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation*
	1. *Residence Placement policy*

*Policy for placement in Residences, and in Listening, Living and Learning houses, as well as allocation to PSO wards and Clusters was adopted in 2013 for implementation from the 2014 intake. The purpose of redrafting policy was to bring it in line with the IIS (Institutional Intent and Strategy document of Stellenbosch University) and the institutional approach to SSD. The stated objectives of the policy are:**“… that students should be placed and allocated in such a way that it will contribute positively to the formation of sound, diverse communities that will in turn contribute to optimal growth and development in the out-of-class context and to eventual success (academically and otherwise). Another objective is striving as far as possible to allocate a place in a residence to the most vulnerable students, whose chances of success will improve if they are in a residence. In this regard new first-year students will be firstly considered but also, for example, EDP (Extended Degree Programme) students, students requiring financial support bursaries as determined with the aid of a means test and students with special learning needs (disabilities) for whom residence accommodation is essential. The policy also offers management an instrument to help ensure that diversity objectives with respect to Black, Coloured and Indian (BCI) students at undergraduate level can be achieved.” (page 2)**The result of the implementation has seen a large and rapid change in demographics of residences with specifically the ‘more traditional’ residences seeing Black, Coloured and Indian (BCI) numbers increasing by more than 15% from 2013 to 2014. This demographic shift along with the report into unacceptable welcoming practises resulted in some large changes in undergraduate residential spaces and specifically ‘res culture’. With the 2015 intake following similar lines and 2016 expected to follow the trend it has also resulted in increased representation of BCI students in formal leadership positions as previously held dominance over residence culture in certain spaces is systemically undermined.*1. ***In progress:***
	1. *Addressing Unacceptable Welcoming Practices*

*With regard to welcoming of newcomers to SU the SAHRC report (Wessels, 2001:18) has the following to say about institutions where unacceptable practices are the order of the day: “The development of a culture of human rights and the infusion of the values that underpin the Constitution such as equality and dignity appear to be lacking from the institutional culture of many (of) those institutions that are the subject of the SAHRC investigation.”**While the implementation of value driven management had greatly changed the welcoming practices of the respective residences and PSOs (private student organisations) at SU a number of unacceptable practices persisted. In 2014 the VR (L&T), Prof Schoonwinkel, instituted a task team on unacceptable welcoming practices at the institution with the following mandate:**“The time has come to reflect critically on our practices in our residences and PSO houses during the welcoming period (as well as generally, thereafter). Based on our experience with the 2014 welcoming period, there is a definite need to provide even stronger leadership and value-driven guidelines to our staff (resident and visiting heads), student leaders and student body as regards this important matter. Together with student leaders and SU staff who have been tasked with establishing healthy student communities, we want to identify what we are doing wrong and how this can be changed in future.”**The resultant effort delivered the Report of the Task Team on the Inquiry into Unacceptable Welcoming Practices in October of 2014 and placed even further emphasis on the lack of a willingness to compromise from the side of the institution in achieving a fully welcoming culture. The report defined unacceptable welcoming practices as:“any attitude, action, rule or practice that typifies a hierarchical power system and does not promote a value-driven system.” The report goes on to say: “In the context of the welcoming of newcomers, the aim is to establish a welcoming campus free from any hierarchy of power.”**The report was operationalised for the 2015 intake of newcomers by which time all of the student leaders who were involved in welcoming of newcomers had been familiarised with the full contents of the report and its implications.* * 1. *PSO Task-Team*

*The structure of PSO wards has been investigated and recommendations contained in the report titled The future utilisation and organisation of Private Student Organisations (PSOs) to enhance student success in the context of the cluster initiative propose a new structure for PSO wards within clusters. Amongst other recommendations, it entails the formulation of objectives for PSO wards that must take into account the development taking place in clusters, the infrastructural changes that have been made and are intended to let PSO students feel more at home, and the aim to be more inclusive and embrace diversity in multiple forms. The Task Team also made recommendations for a sustainable model for PSO structures and management mechanisms to ensure that it supports the new objectives.**The most immediate outcome of the task team report has been the discontinuation of service of the visiting-heads of the Stellenbosch campus PSOs (effective March 2016) and the creation and appointment of two full time PSO coordinator positions within SSC who will facilitate the implementation of the other recommendations.* * 1. *Co-Curricular Transcript*

*In July 2015, the Rectors’ Management Team approved the code governing the issuing of the co-curricular transcript at SU. The principles and provisions outline the achievements of students, within the co-curriculum, that can appear on the co-curricular transcript that will be issued with the degree certificate.**The acknowledgement of the achievement in the co-curricular environment on this transcript will be a differentiating feature of SU and is one manner in which co-curricular excellence can be acknowledged in line with similar practices internationally (e.g. the diploma supplement that is issued in the European Union).**Implementation of the co-curricular transcript starts in 2015 and will expand as co-curricular activities align themselves with the listing provisions outlined in the code.** 1. *Listen, Live & Learn Initiative (LLL) Co-Curricular Framework*

*The LLL initiative is the flagship residential experience offered by Stellenbosch University to senior students. The LLL philosophy and approach to the co-curricular education of senior students is grounded on four existing principles: experiential learning, andragogy – adult learning theory, the pedagogy of hope, and the intergroup contact theory.**This approach to adult teaching and learning within LLL requires its students to design their own learning experience based on experiential learning – focussing on skills and behaviours students would like to develop and acquire from a range of programmatic and co-curricular offerings.* *As part of the ongoing development of the initiative, the development of a full co-curricular framework to formalise the structure, objectives, learning outcomes and methods to verify learning was started in 2014. The initial pilot started in 2015 and is in process of refinement.** 1. *Centre for Student Counselling and Development*

*Since a change in director in January 2015, the CSCD has embarked on a process of realignment and refocusing in line with the IIS. One of the most notable changes has been a far greater focus on being more proactively engaged within the co-curricular and residential student space. Another change include rebranding the units of the centre namely: Unit for Academic Counselling and Development (academic guidance and development); Unit for Psychotherapeutic and Support Services (therapeutic, crisis and social work services); Disability Unit (support to students with special needs); and the Unit for Graduate Career Services (preparing students for the world of work).* *As of 1 December 2015 the Office for Institutional HIV Co-ordination joined CSCD as a fifth unit and is currently being named as it will also serve as a one stop-service for complaints against unfair discrimination, victimization and harassment.** 1. *Residential Education (ResEd) Clusters*

*The seven ResEd clusters are under constant development as the University reorganises its student operations gradually over to the collegiate model to enhance the student communities. The recent appointment of highly distinguished professors as ‘academic principals’ to each of the respective clusters is aimed at increasing the links with and cooperation (and decreasing the divide) between the curricular (or academic) and co-curricular (residential) spheres. This along with the decision to complete the physical construction of hubs for each of the clusters places them firmly in position to become the primary organisational units of the student experience in the near future.*1. ***In planning:***
	1. *Power, Privilege and Protest (PPP) training*

*In 2016, to utilise the Saturday morning section of the welcoming program that previously has been used for language proficiency testing of all newcomers at the institution – there will now be a live streamed PPP training session for the 5500 first-years, in cluster groups simultaneously. This initiative organised by the newly appointed Coordinator: Multicultural Education aims at preparing newcomers for what is expected to be an active year in terms of student activism. This will help to ensure a basic set of concepts and common language regarding these issues are shared and it is expected to assist in aiding the newcomers to more rapidly integrate and make sense of situations on campus and change in process.** 1. *Senior University Experience*

*The first year experience was, in part, developed out of the realisation of the need to facilitate the transition from school to university for newcomers. The status-quo of an accelerating rate of change in the world of work, combined with reduced career path certainty but increased flexibility thereof; need to ensure achievement of graduate attributes for sake of labour market competitiveness, and the general preparation in all forms needed to enter life after graduation, is taking its toll.* *Work being done in LLL, Russel Botman House senior residence and in other areas of the Centre for Student Structures and Communities form the ground work for what ideally will form part of a formal ‘senior university experience’ at SU. The plan is to ensure an experience that offers, in measurable benefit to the graduates, an experience akin to that of the first year experience for newcomers.***3.3 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars to illustrate specific aspects of the change(s) that are successful. Provide evidence for claims of success. Where an activity is in the planning stages, indicate what evidence will be collected.**1. *BeWell mentor wellness project*

*The change in mentorship methods at SU to the BeWell model has resulted in an international award at the 2015 Reimagine Education conference. While the gathering of longitudinal data will take more time, preliminary data presented by Dr Alten du Plessis in The BeWell Mentor Wellness Project at Stellenbosch University: An Overview (2015) provides a good overview.*1. *Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership (FVZS) Democracy and Citizenship short course*

*This is one of the flagship short courses offered by FVZS and participants are from SU, UCT, UWC, Tsiba and Boland College and is offered in blended medium instruction rated NQF level 6. The target group is students and youth who question their role as citizens and what active citizenship entails. Participants explore critical questions relating to democracy, accountability and citizenship while addressing the South African and African context. The theoretical element of the course is complemented by practical experiences.**Course attendance, assessments and participant feedback constitute formal evidence of success while the number of participants involved on campus (specifically in formal leadership structures) subsequent to completing the course provide anecdotal evidence.* 1. *Welcoming Culture*

*The implementation of value driven management has led to a steady improvement in the welcoming practices as measured by the annual monitor reports and number and severity of complaints received by SSC. The marked improvement of the report for 2015 and receipt of no complaints on the 24 hour complaint line are attributed to the impact of the definition of unacceptable welcoming practices and utilisation of the report and its recommendations.***3.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.***Dean of Students position**The position of Dean of Students was removed during the restructuring of the Division for Student and Academic Support of August 2012 with the functional roles of the position being largely managed by the Senior Director: Student Affairs and Director: Student Structures and Communities respectively. However increased pressure from mainly student groups and the SRC have led to the position currently being reconsidered. The most likely reason for this drive to have the position to be reinstated under students is a combination of a need for an individual who fulfils a student chaplaincy role and who simultaneously sits on management level. The title also holds weight amongst students who still see the organisational hierarchies as being weighed against them in terms of high level representation.***3.5 If possible, identify one or more promising practices related to this focus area. Describe the practice and provide evidence for success. Suggest what the key features might be.***Value-driven management**Value-driven management was introduced into student communities over a decade ago and has been taking root due to sustained systemic attention in this area. It is described in the Report of the Task Team into Unacceptable Welcoming Practises of October 2014 as:**“A value-driven form of governance is that of a constitutional democracy (South Africa since 1994), where the values of the constitution carry more weight than the wishes or word of the head of state or even parliament. In the business world, this is epitomised by companies such as Wikipedia and Google, and also constitutes the underlying principles of institutions such as the internet. It is the preferred model for the era of an economy of knowledge, innovation and thought leadership. It is also the preferred model for higher-education institutions. In the context of Stellenbosch University’s Vision 2030, it translates into the following (IIS, 2013-2018; our translation): ‘It is wise to move away from a situation where planning and decision-making occur exclusively at management level. Everyone who works at SU should feel that, since they are co-owners of the University, they are also co-responsible for the institution’s success’.”**As described above, there have been a number of successful changes at the institution, specifically within the co-curricular environment due to the implementation of value-driven management. However the recent #FeesMustFall protest proves a good case study of the results of successful implementation and the resultant benefits.* *During the #FeesMustFall protests country-wide a group of students formed a collective under the hastag #StelliesFeesMustFall and began protesting. They decided on a completely non-power hierarchical leadership model with chair persons being selected at each gathering and no one was allowed to chair at more than one session in a row. The collective adopted values which were continuously reiterated using the chant ‘High discipline, high morale!’. This chant was used as a tool to reign in members who started deviating from the course and who started behaving in a manner contrary to this. This was significantly evident when one or more members tried to disrupt a speaker or vandalise property. The overall result was a significantly different picture on SU campus than elsewhere in the country. Protesters cleaned up as they moved around, generally leaving the place in at least a good condition than when they arrived. This lack of conditioning, in line and familiarity with a value-driven approach, was evident in the subsequent worker led #EndOutsourcing protests, which were at times violent and destructive of property.***3.6 Identify the main challenges the university still faces in relation to this focus area.*** + - 1. *Institutional culture change*

*Despite many changes SU’s institutional culture is still seen by many as exclusionary and unwelcoming. Given the institution’s history it is also not surprising that this would be one of our biggest ongoing challenges. The issue remains how to overhaul the problematic aspects of institutional culture given its intangible inertia-prone nature. Many structures and bodies within the University utilise a power-hierarchical modus operandi which, while incompatible with the University’s Institutional Intent and Strategy (IIS), have not been adequately disempowered systemically.** + - 1. *Capacity*

*The student support and development (SSD) approach of SU is generally modelled on the American model of student affairs and support yet, apart from the professional staff within CSCD, none of the student affairs staff have any formal qualifications in the field (partly due to the lack of option to do postgraduate studies in student affairs in South Africa). This alongside the far lower staff to student ratios of its American counterparts stretch the capacity of the Division for Student Affairs relatively thin. The recent protests have shown the significant contribution that these staff bring to ensure that the core business of the University can continue relatively normally and reduce and deal with the resultant conflict, trauma and turmoil felt by both individuals and the community. However, this firefighting approach is not sustainable and in the event of sustained increase in student activism, significant harm may be done to existing support programmes due to insufficient staff numbers. This has been registered as a risk at SU and some additional posts have been created, however, it is arguably not sufficient.** + - 1. *Faculty and staff buy-in*

*Getting buy-in from all faculties and staff, based in those faculties, remains a difficulty along with huge need to consistently drive each initiative. The conception of zero-sum competition between the in- and out-of-class learning environments remains while they are deemed distinct and separate and this is often transferred from either parents or lecturers to students. The appointment of the ‘academic principals’ is aimed at further addressing this issue.* |

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| **4. FOCUS AREA 3: ENHANCING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT** **(suggested length 10-20 pages)*****Include: teaching and learning spaces, ICT infrastructure and access, technology-enabled tools and resources, library facilities.***This section of the report should make reference to all of the sub-topics listed above, either by discussing them individually or by integrating them. Note: it is not necessary to respond to each of the questions below for every sub-topic. |
| **4.1 Summarise what the university considers to be the key issues in enhancing the learning environment.***At SU we approach the learning environment from a very comprehensive and holistic viewpoint. The typical borders between on- and off-campus, face-to-face and virtual, residential and non-residential, as well as in-class and out-of-class learning environments are explicitly softened. The judicious use of ICT’s (Information and Communication Technologies) also plays an important role in making traditional boundaries between different types of learning environments more ‘porous’. Furthermore the learning environment is defined and designed taking pedagogical considerations as the point of departure. Lastly the learning environment is usually described using terms like ‘flexible’, ‘mobile’ or ‘adaptable’. In this sense the learning environment is seen as an all-encompassing term and not only confined to a physical space such as a lecture hall. This way of thinking about the learning environment is confirmed in the strategic documentation of ICT in Teaching and Learning (T&L), Facilities Management, Student Structures and Communities, and Library and Information Services:** ***From the ICT in T&L Strategy:*** *“Stellenbosch University has a 21st Century ICT-enhanced learning and teaching environment that uses ICTs effectively and efficiently to extend the reach and richness of its academic offering … Stellenbosch University recognises the potential value of ICTs (information and communication technologies) to transform education from the traditional methodologies and approaches to a more contemporary, open, responsive and flexible learning system. In this way, ICTs are used to improve the flexibility (anytime access) and mobility (anywhere access) of formal and non-formal programmes. The judicious utilisation of ICTs can therefore play an important role in improving the learning experience of the residential student’s on-campus experience as part of a blend of face-to-face and technology-enhanced learning opportunities, as well as broadening access to higher education by offering lifelong learning opportunities to the non-residential learn-and-earn student market.”*
* ***From the Facilities Management Master Plan:*** *“Teaching Spaces will provide a holistic, pliable tool that will support the pedagogical process [to] … Address the didactic and technological needs of existing and future lecturing staff; Address the growing disparities in the way the latest generation of learners will be taught; Provide both student and lecturer with teaching spaces of excellence that address future pedagogical needs, and Provide teaching spaces that are adaptable and flexible in line with trends and drivers emanating internationally and locally”*
* ***From the Library Strategic Plan****: “Develop and sustain flexible digital and physical spaces that are informed by advances in higher education and new technologies, and that will support the teaching, learning and research priorities of the SU”*
* ***From the Think Tank Classrooms of the future report:*** *“One cannot assume that students currently or in the future will learn in just one space. One therefore needs to be flexible in one’s thinking and focus on a continuum / scenario approach because there will never be just one reality. The students’ context (e.g. undergraduate (UG)/ postgraduate (PG), discipline, academic year) is important, but these contexts (UG/PG, disciplines, academic year) should not be taken as fixed points of departure, because the blurring of these categories will increasingly become a reality and the integration between all the spaces and approaches is critical for present and future.”*

***Key issues****Against this understanding of the learning environment the current key issues that can be identified are:****Key issue 1:*** *One residential/ non-residential (including on-campus/ off-campus) experience:* *SU is designing the living and learning environment as one seamless environment. There are promising practices emerging and new ideas planned around giving all students the same rich campus experience whether they physically live on- or off-campus. This means that students in residences on campus, students in private accommodation in Stellenbosch, as well as students who commute to campus, will have the opportunity to experience a rich learning environment that includes not only formal academic activities but also co-curricular learning opportunities by being integrated into the cluster-based student communities ecosystems of the institution.****Key issue 2:*** *Addressing the special needs of ‘Mode 2’ students:* *Mode 2 students at SU are typically those student who ‘learn-and-earn’ and are only on campus at limited times during the year and supported through technology-mediated learning activities the rest of the time. For them the differentiation between virtual and physical and place of provision becomes irrelevant as the same synchronous and asynchronous learning experience can be achieved through a combination of physical and virtual contact. The learning spaces of the future for both campus-based and Mode 2 students are therefore seen as on a continuum rather than as a dichotomy of on- and off-campus. Although these boundaries may in future not exist at all, for the present however it is necessary to distinguish between the two modes and identify and address the Mode 2 students’ special needs[[1]](#footnote-2).****Key issue 3:*** *Library as critical resource and place:* *Usage statistics for the library has shown that even though there has been a radical escalation of electronic resources, the physical library space is still of critical importance to students. This is true throughout the year both for using the physical (for studying, group work and of course specially for exam preparations) as well as for the ICT infrastructure (the Learning Commons, as well as the computers and being able to use their own devices because of good Wi-Fi connectivity).****Key issue 4:*** *ICT infrastructure:* *In all spheres of the University, the meaningful use of ICT plays a role in future planning. This is also true for the learning environment. For the judicious and integrated use of ICT in all aspects of the University a robust ICT infrastructure is of critical importance. This starts with the renewal of classroom technologies, but more importantly calls for providing internet, intranet and Wi-Fi connectivity in class as well as across campus (in buildings, in living spaces etc.).****Key issue 5:*** *Physical Learning Spaces infrastructure:* *Although ICTs play an important role in creating a supportive and conducive learning environment, the renewal of the physical teaching and learning spaces of the institution is still of critical importance. This needs to be done in accordance with the (changing) pedagogical need of lecturers and students. A design for learning approach that follows the universal design philosophy is gaining ground as important indicator for future planning. This coupled with flexible learning spaces that can serve multi-modal teaching and learning needs places one on a solid foundation for planning future learning environments.****Key issue 6:*** *Learning Technology Support:* *As stated in the broader understanding around our learning environment, the fact that SU takes the pedagogical needs of lecturers and students as points of departure implies that there should be excellent support for the use of learning technologies. This is both from a technical as well as a pedagogical point of view. Lecturers and students should be able to access just-in-time support when they need it. This includes digital literacy (i.e. how to use different learning and teaching technologies for academic purposes) as well as pedagogical insight into how to integrate different learning-teaching technologies in the learning environment/ curriculum.***4.2 During Phase 1 of the QEP, what changes at institutional level (a) have been made, (b) are in progress, or (c) are in the planning stages that relate to enhancing the learning environment.***The changes that: (a) we made, are (b) in progress or are (c) being planned at institutional level will be discussed with regard to physical teaching spaces, the Library and ICT in learning and teaching.****Physical learning spaces:***1. ***Changes made:*** *New classrooms or old ones that are revamped are built around internationally and nationally benchmarked specifications and according to a universal and pedagogically informed design approach. This means that learning spaces are built to be flexible (meaning that different types of teaching and learning can be facilitated in the same room, e.g. more traditional lectures as well as more interactive group work); adaptable (meaning that a classroom can in future be rebuilt with ease to serve a new pedagogic need that might emerge), and to support interactive learning. Classrooms are designed according to universal design approaches and in essence are friendly to students and lecturers with special needs (i.e. disabilities).*
2. ***In progress:*** *An important work group comprising of staff from facilities management, IT and learning and teaching enhancement are meeting on a regular basis to discuss the current and future needs of students and lecturers and how we should plan for these emerging futures. This includes the continuous evaluation of classroom technologies.*
3. ***Being planned:*** *An experimental classroom (teaching and learning incubator) is planned where lecturers can engage with new technologies (e.g. new wireless projectors or smart boards) and new learning space elements (e.g. new kinds of chairs for group work) for iterative feedback around the future learning environment needs. Lecturers can also get orientated to the pedagogically sound use of the technologies or elements.*

***The library:***1. ***Changes made:*** *Flowing from the design initiatives and approaches above it can be stated that the library forms part of the master plan for facilities. The by now well-established learning and research commons in the library have proved so successful that all renewal projects include redesigning towards a more collaborative/group study affordance model. This moves the traditional model of the library as place for individual study to a more social model.*
2. ***In progress:*** *The library is already one of the most technology friendly spaces on campus and plans are to make it more so by focussing on saturated Wi-Fi coverage, repurposing existing breakaway rooms to include power outlets for student devices and screens for group work presentations and improving the 4G/LTE cell phone signal in the subterrestrial library space.*
3. ***Being planned:*** *Quite a few libraries are now in line for renewal according to the principles stated above. Specifically the main JS Gericke Library, where the interior learning environment is going to be redesigned towards a more collaborative/group study design (it was traditionally designed for individual study). The idea is to revamp the interior to be more contemporary and socially friendly.*

***ICT in Learning and Teaching:***1. ***Changes made:*** *Considerable progress has already been made with the ICT in Learning and Teaching Project since the funding was approved by Council in May 2014. This includes the establishment of a rigorous governance and financial management structure, as well as progress in terms of the achievement of the promised deliverables within the Council-approved funding. Some important developments include: the establishment of a ICT T&L (or Blended Learning) coordinator/ team in all the faculties that work with each faculty’s T&L hub to integrate ICT into the curriculum; blended learning initiatives and strategic plans in all the faculties (including the development of blended learning resources and case studies of blended learning); growing examples of programme renewal through ICT; the establishment of a robust learning technology ecosystem (like the LMS), and extensive growth with regards to the network infrastructure (especially w.r.t. Wi-Fi provision in classrooms). The progress that has already been made is a meaningful step in the greater process of transforming Stellenbosch University in support of the University’s Institutional Intent and Strategy and the faculty-specific plans.*
2. ***In progress:*** *The IT network is being upgraded as a matter of urgency as so many of the other initiatives (e.g. academic programme renewal and the accelerated use of learning technologies in class) depend to a large extent on the availability of Inter- and Intranet access. Because the focus of the project is on academic programme renewal and many of the initial blended learning changes being designed centre around improving the classroom learning experience, the roll-out of Wi-Fi across campus, but specifically in classrooms, is being expedited.*
3. ***Being planned****: Some important short term plans around ICT in T&L include finalising the integration of our LMS (called SUNLearn and built on the Moodle platform) with the Moodle Mobile App as well as building an offline syncing system/ facility so that students can access and archive all their learning material for off-line use.*

**4.3 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars to illustrate specific aspects of the change(s) that are successful. Provide evidence for claims of success. Where an activity is in the planning stages, indicate what evidence will be collected.*****Exemplar 1:*** *Physical spaces – academic****Flexible, adaptable and universal design approach****: It has already been mentioned that our Facilities Management team, in conjunction with the work group around T&L spaces, are revamping, building and planning learning spaces according to the principles of:*1. ***Pedagogical need****: The acceptance of the reality that different programmes and lecturers have a different approach to teaching forms the basis of our approach. This means that we are continually investigating which new pedagogies and (especially) classroom teaching methodologies are emerging so that our classrooms can support and respond to the need of new initiatives. The bottom line is to support and design for interactive learning, collaborative and group work approaches, as well as enhancing the presentation of information in all classrooms.*
2. ***Flexibility and adaptability:*** *Because pedagogies differ so much it is imperative that we design classrooms in such a way that they are flexible (i.e. one can e.g. give a more traditional lecture to 300 students in the one period and facilitate a more group work oriented learning experience in the next in the same venue) as well as adaptable (i.e. an auditorium style classroom with a terraced seating arrangement can with minimal cost and effort be reconstructed to become a flat room with lots of small group work enabling tables and chairs, or even a laboratory).*
3. ***Universal design:*** *Our focus on providing classrooms that are accessible to learners and academics with physical disabilities, as well as provide support, as far as possible to other special needs students (e.g. hearing loop technologies for hearing impaired individuals) is something we are proud of. All new and revamped classrooms include where possible the provisioning of support for special needs students. This design thinking even extends to the open spaces on campus. An exciting example of this is the visually impaired-friendly ‘tactile tiles’ outside the Wilcocks building that indicate where the entrance of the building is situated.*

*These principles have guided SU over the last few years to build and revamp classrooms and other learning and teaching spaces that enable lecturers to teach in innovative and effective ways, and students to learn in engaging and comfortable spaces. The good practice lies both in the way we e.g. provide the seating in big venues (i.e. put in seating that allows a lot of students in the room, but still allows for the lecturer to walk in between the rows, and enables quick in-class group discussions as the seats are able to turn around to the peers behind them), as well as the state of the art teaching technologies we provide as part of the lecturer’s desk and presentation equipment (two projectors are standard, as well as a document camera, a touch screen computer, and good voice-lift sound equipment). The provisioning of Wi-Fi in classrooms is also part and parcel of new classrooms as well as revamping projects.**The idea of the learning commons approach also guides many of our new projects. Creating opportunities for learning in informal spaces (e.g. by putting couches in the entrances to academic buildings and putting in Wi-Fi, and providing fixed tables and seating under the trees outside academic buildings) should be mentioned. This applies to postgraduate learning spaces as well where the newest design philosophy is to provide ‘hot desks’ for students close to and in possible interactive distance to their lecturers. This promotes knowledge exchange and interaction which normally would not occur.****Evidence:*** *Two-yearly benchmarking visits to top international universities in Europe and the USA provides us with evidence that our physical learning spaces are on par with best practice internationally. Nationally we are proud to say that many other South African universities are now visiting us in their benchmarking projects, and are implementing some of our concepts as well as appropriating our principles of design.****Exemplar 2:*** *Physical spaces – out-of-class****The concept of clusters as bridges between in-class and out-of-class experience:*** *The thinking around out-of-class spaces (i.e. non-academic, e.g. residences on campus or private accommodation in town) extends from the principles of the design of physical spaces. The main philosophy of provisioning a residential and non-residential campus experience that has the same positive effect on student success is built on extensive international research that shows the positive impact of staying in a residence on campus. Students usually fare better because they are in a residence, and not necessarily because they were selected/placed in a residence on academic merit. There are five reasons why residences provide more potential for success: (1) It is a smaller environment (you feel that you belong as part of a community); (2) Time and space overlap (when together in time and space more often your chance of experiencing just-in-time support or learning is so much greater); (3) It is a diverse living and learning space (excellence is enhanced by diversity); (4) It lowers the social barriers to academic discourse (if students know each other group work and other collaborative or cooperative activities become easier and more meaningful), and (5) Peer-support can more easily be organised in such a smaller community than randomly (practical issues like a venue, availability of nourishment, connectivity etc. e.g. around group work are addressed).**To amplify this positive effect the student communities at SU are organised around clusters. A cluster is a collection of 4-5 residences as well as 2-3 private student communities. Each cluster has an academic principal, mentors, tutors, and hubs (essentially residences without bedrooms) that are meeting spaces communal to all the students in the cluster. At the hubs there are deli-type foods or even residence-made meals available, connectivity, and spaces for academic discourse and collaboration. For the on- as well as off-campus non-residential students their cluster with the available hubs provide a home during the day and the possibility of having the same experience of academic support as students in a residence.**The innovation and good practice around this is that this organising principle is now not only used for the out-of-class experience, but increasingly also for the in-class learning experience. The faculties are now able to assign students to groups according to their programmes as well as their clusters. This means that students in a small group are in the same cluster and have all the available support that the hubs in the cluster provide. They can easily meet, eat something together, be connected and do their academic work.****Evidence:*** *The Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences has implemented their group-assignments according to clusters and have seen good results. There has also been measurement and research on the efficacy of the cluster concept at the AmaMaties cluster which shows very good results. Continuous research from our tracking and development function indicates how this concept of clusters aligns with the research around improved student wellness, and successful mentor- and tutor relationships. There are already two hubs up and running and the last four are now planned to service the whole of the campus student body.****Exemplar 3:*** *The library****Access, support and renewal of interior space:*** *It is difficult to pinpoint one specific initiative regarding the library that can be seen as good practice, but it is rather the combination of four aspects that have proven to be of the greatest value to the library as being a critically important learning environment.*1. ***Access to electronic resources:*** *The library is constantly working on improving access to its vast range of electronic resources (e-books, e-journals, e-databases) through its public-facing website. Coupled with this is the implementation of contemporary discovery tools and index lists for electronic resources as well as discipline-specific library guides.*
2. ***Increased support:*** *The library has been provisioning a higher than usual number of student assistants. In-person support for IT and general library queries is continuously available, even after normal business hours.*
3. ***Longer opening hours:*** *There has been excellent uptake of the longer opening hours of the library during examination periods (including Sundays). This change addresses one of the most prevalent requests by students. The library is still an important space for studying and learning.*
4. ***Renewal of interior:*** *Increase in visitor numbers after major revamps of the interior of, e.g. the Engineering library, or even something more minor in the JS Gericke library, shows that the modernisation of the interior space of the library according to socially-focussed models of engagement, as well as provisioning of IT infrastructure and connectivity is important in the bigger picture of the learning environment.*

***Evidence:*** *The statistics around the exponential growth of electronic resources as well as the increase in the use of the online resources show the success of how the academic needs of students and lecturers are being addressed. The increase in visitor numbers to all the libraries (especially after renewal or being newly built) indicates a successful practice to provide the right kind of library space (with the focus now also on social study practices and not only individual) for enhanced learning.****Exemplar 4:*** *ICT in T&L****Wi-Fi access as necessary requirement for T&L innovation:*** *As part of the ICT in T&L project, there has been a noticeable growth in lecturers incorporating blended learning into their classes, modules and programmes. Many of the innovations happen in class (especially the use of in-class mobile devices) and also online. Although hard to prove direct influence, it is our contention that the provisioning of Wi-Fi in classrooms is a necessary requirement for successful in-class blended learning practices. Being connected to the Internet and Intranet while in a class enables lecturers to use active learning techniques that engage the students. A very common innovation is using an audience response (‘clicker’) type of system as an application on students’ mobile devices to measure their conceptual understanding and to enable peer-learning. Without Wi-Fi the feedback was almost always that the activity was not fully successful. With Wi-Fi the feedback is almost always that the activity was very beneficial and was successful.****Evidence:*** *As part of the ICT in T&L Project, 1200 Wi-Fi access points have already been provisioned across campus and this project has a very high priority. Where Wi-Fi works there are few complaints around T&L technology provision. Where Wi-Fi is not available, there is a huge outcry from academics and students (especially those who want to integrate ICT in their classroom teaching and learning practice). A good example is the library. Since the Wi-Fi in the library has been updated complaints or negative feedback on this issue have all but dried up. At the last Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in-house conference[[2]](#footnote-3) there was a whole stream (17 papers) dedicated to blended learning topics, of which four dealt directly with research on the use of tablets, apps and audience response approaches. The common theme in these papers where the enabling power and affordance of Wi-Fi access in class.***4.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.***Two initiatives that are not as successful as we have hoped are from the ICT in T&L sphere, namely off-campus connectivity and off-line syncing of learning materials:****Exemplar 1:*** *Off-campus connectivity**The so-called ‘last mile’ connectivity is a challenge, especially for students who are not residential and especially those who live off-campus and therefore have to rely on their own means of connecting to the internet. In our QEP Institutional Submission of September 2014 it was mentioned that there is a special cell phone data package deal with CellC. This deal is still available to students and the uptake is steady. The more promising type of future that was envisaged with cell phone network providers giving even more affordable packages, or even giving zero cost deals for data that flows to the universities’ domains (or e.g. all .ac.za domains) have not realised. We are trying to negotiate but it seems that the cell phone networks are not forthcoming with regard to very low 3G/4G costs. The discussion continues, but it is probably something that should be undertaken at a national level as it will provide a huge advantage for all higher education institutions.****Exemplar 2:*** *Off-line syncing**Although planned and being identified as an important learning tool for students, the ability to synchronise your learning content (mainly from the LMS, but potentially also from other sources) to your device (e.g. laptop or tablet computer) for off-line consumption is still not a reality. The focus until now has been very strongly on creating a robust LMS and then the mobile accessibility of the system. Off-line syncing is a very complex endeavour and more time, research and planning are needed to come up with a viable idea. There are many systems and tools that could be used, but the core challenge is that it should be one system that is user-friendly, and collects and systematically downloads, and updates (i.e. synchronise) all relevant learning materials.***4.5 If possible, identify one or more promising practices related to this focus area. Describe the practice and provide evidence for success. Suggest what the key features might be.*****Mobility plan for off-campus students:*** *Linking back to the cluster approach where giving all students (residential and non-residential) the same or at least similar residential campus learning experience, the emerging plan is one of mobility. This means that the University plans to provide public transport to the students who do not live on campus from their homes to the hubs. The ideal is that students who opt for cheaper accommodation off-campus, should also be offered a cheaper and safe way of getting to campus. This plan has already been tested and there is hope that it will become a reality in the not too distant future.****Wi-Fi rolled out even wider:*** *With the successful and critical provisioning of Wi-Fi in classrooms and in other academic buildings the next step is to roll out Wi-Fi connectivity even wider. The plan is to provide Wi-Fi in all the residences (at present connectivity is provided in the form of a fixed network point in the rooms), and further in all SU property where students live. Looking even more to the future, we envision this connectivity to even extend to the private residences of students.* ***Technology roll-out as part of programme package:*** *Related to the importance of connectivity for success in higher education, the packaging of technologies as part of a programme’s offering is showing promise. There has been experimentation with new programmes where students were given a laptop, a 3G router with data package and e-books and course materials pre-loaded on the laptop as part of the programme. The feedback was very promising, but a lot still has to be ironed out, and important questions around costing models for such endeavours must still be formulated and then answered. The examples were also on a small scale and the challenge of rolling it out to a bigger cohort of students (i.e. at scale) remains.****Video-streaming and archiving from the classroom:*** *A project that started as finding solutions for students with special needs (especially psychological inability to function well in a social setting like a typical classroom) ended up contributing important pointers for what the standard classroom of the future could look like. We experimented with live streaming (and then automatic archiving) of face-to-face classes to students who would follow in real time from their residence or anywhere with good internet access.* *We have also had new convergence programmes at the Business School that started offering a fully flexible, and so far very successful, PGDip programme. This means that the student has the choice to take part in the learning experience either by going to the class every Wednesday afternoon, or joining in through live streaming to a virtual classroom.**SU has also started a project involving a Google developing partner to design and develop an open source streaming and archiving system for higher education institutions. The flexibility of the live stream and the added benefit of an automated archive of the learning event, make it a viable future model for programmes – especially in terms of supporting students with special needs, providing valuable learning resources for students before and after class as well as the ‘learn-and-earn’ type programmes.****ICT Project: MOOC Pilot:*** *Building on the idea of video-streaming and how it opens up new modes of participation, we are also in the process of piloting a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) on the UK based FutureLearn platform. What is encouraging is not necessarily only the hype and promise of thousands of students engaging with SU, but also how it might prepare us for a future where the idea of the digital university is maybe not so far off. Through the MOOC our institution is learning what it means to ‘do digital’ and this is potentially very valuable in terms of accessing the learning analytics including when, how and what type of online resources learners access and find necessary to support their learning process as well as determining the unique learning environment and support requirements of these students.***4.6 Identify the main challenges the university still faces in relation to this focus area.*****General challenges for the whole learning environment:*** *Three broad challenges around the provisioning of the learning environment are:* 1. ***Funding****: especially critical and increasingly contested given what transpired around the October-November 2015 student protest around fees,*
2. ***Available space****: at SU Stellenbosch campus there is almost no more available space remaining for new buildings, and the usage of the current classrooms is so high that putting a classroom out of commission to revamp it is almost impossible,*
3. ***Change management of users****: with renewal comes change and our community of users sometimes exhibit a resistive reaction towards new approaches.*

***Other specific challenges include:***1. ***Renewal, maintenance and support of teaching spaces:*** *The cost and complexity of the renewal, maintenance, and support of learning spaces and the technologies housed in them will probably always be a challenge. We have taken big strides to address and plan for these issues but we still have a lot to learn. This reality and challenges are true for the physical as well as virtual learning environments, including the library.*
2. ***Internet access for all students:*** *Although being addressed in classrooms and academic buildings, and even planned for in all institutional and private residences, the importance of providing Internet access to all students (especially if the live in private residences and off-campus) cannot be stressed enough. The need is big but the challenge to do this in an affordable way is also massive.*
3. ***E-Books:*** *The phenomenon of e-books (especially e-text books) is an interesting one. Although we have dabbled with e-book provisioning on a small scale (e.g. the programme where we provided laptops and connectivity and e-books) as well as bigger initiatives planned for 2016 (e.g. the faculty of Law that wants all their first-year students to have all their text books in e-book format), there are a lot of challenges that remain. The prices are too high, all books are not always readily available in e-format, and there is a very confusing plurality in publishers’ e-book platforms. The library perspective confirms these challenges: “Furthermore we feel that the publisher model behind e-books is not made for the student market and that the indexing of and systems for the provisioning of e-books is not sufficiently geared towards academic use.” (LIS Quote).*
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| **5. FOCUS AREA 4: ENHANCING COURSE AND PROGRAMME ENROLMENT MANAGEMENT (suggested length 10-20 pages)*****Includes: admissions, selection, placement, readmission refusal, pass rates in gateway courses, throughput rates, management information systems.***This section of the report should make reference to all of the sub-topics listed above, either by discussing them individually or by integrating them. Note: it is not necessary to respond to each of the questions below for every sub-topic. |
| **5.1 Summarise what the university considers to be the key issues in enhancing course and programme enrolment management.***Focusing on the pre-university phase with regard to admission, selection and placement, including the management information systems supporting it, the key issues are as follows:* ***Key issue 1: Admission policies, race and socio-economic disadvantage circumstances****As a public higher education institution, Stellenbosch University (SU) is committed to the national objectives for higher education, including the objective of increasing the national higher education participation rate. For this reason, enrolment management at SU occurs within the framework of the national higher education system.**In addition, SU is committed to fulfilling its responsibility in respect of redress in the country, and aims to employ specific student diversity targets to create an excellent student body that is more representative of the South African society. Although race currently still serves as a broad indicator of past structural inequalities, SU foresees increased nuanced consideration of the factor of disadvantage in addition to (or rather than) race in student admissions, taking into account individual applicants’ socio-economic circumstances. SU remains heedful of the multifaceted and complex nature of the term ‘disadvantage’ in the South African context.****Key issue 2: Predicting academic success relative to context****At SU the demand for admission to university study exceeds the supply in terms of enrolment places available as set out by annual targets. Predicting academic success relative to an applicant’s performance is therefore becoming more important than ever in order to select students with the best possible potential for success.**All applicants to SU are currently writing the National Benchmarking Tests (NBTs). Although only the faculties of Law, and Medicine and Health Sciences are using the results as part of their selection criteria, most faculties take the results in consideration when making placement decisions for extended degree programs.* *An extensive analysis was done on the predictive value of both the NBT and National Senior Certificate (NSC), based on the first year academic achievement of the first two cohorts of SU applicants who wrote the NBTs in 2013 and 2014. The draft report formulated the following conclusions:** *In general the grade 12 results are still the single most important predictor with the highest correlation with first year university achievement.*
* *When combined with Grade 12 marks, the NBTs in general did not make a significant difference to the prediction of first year academic success.*
* *The most significant contribution of the NBTs was NBT Math in faculties where Grade 12 Mathematics is a prerequisite for admittance, e.g. Engineering, Science, and Economic and Management Sciences.*
* *The NBT Math performance bands could be used in combination with the Grade 11 Mathematics mark to provisionally admit students in programmes where a Mathematics mark of 70% or higher is required.*

*From these findings it is clear that the use of NBTs as an institutional measure for predicting success, is limited. The NBTs should be used in faculty-specific instances only, e.g. in faculties where Mathematics is a requirement, if the additional information can be used to identify academic under-preparedness of applicants in specific areas of numeracy, literacy and Mathematics. Such detailed feedback on the NBT results could open numerous opportunities for the development (or recurriculisation) of courses so that knowledge and skills gaps can be addressed.****Key issue 3: Limited pool of students with Mathematics****Grade 12 Mathematics is a requirement for a large proportion of programmes at SU. However, the pool of learners matriculating with Mathematics is limited and decreasing. Whereas the national number of NSC learners that qualified for Bachelor studies increased with 40% from the inception of the NSC in 2008 to 2014, the number of learners that passed Mathematics with at least 40% dropped with 12% over the same period. It remains a challenge to widen participation within this limited pool.* ***Key issue 4: #Feesmustfall****The financial accessibility of higher education remains a challenge. Not only in terms of class fees, but also in terms of accommodation costs. Although Stellenbosch University’s residence policy is focused on increasing diversity not only in terms of race, but also in terms of first generation status, language, internationality and financially vulnerable students, financial support is necessary to provide accommodation on a residential campus such as Stellenbosch.**Financial support to needy and deserving students is a top priority at SU. The University’s annual bursaries and loans award from NSFAS funding currently is the lowest of all universities in South Africa. The reason for this is simply that SU has the lowest number of registered undergraduate BCI students. In addition, there also is a two-year delay in the adjustment of the NSFAS award on the basis of changed (increased or decreased) student numbers in a given year.**The University therefore has established various bursary and loan schemes in order to assist its students, such as:* 1. *During 2015, the University availed more than R34m to assist needy students by means of a bursary loan scheme based on the NSFAS model and an Assistance Bursary fund to supplement the NSFAS-DHET allocation;*
2. *The University has a Recruitment Bursary Scheme for generic black students and in 2015, more than R80m was made available from the Institutional Budget;*
3. *Since 2013, we are considering only applicants for financial aid where their families have a gross income of less than R20,000 per month. This strategy excludes aid for students from the lower-middle class, but enables us to maximally fund our poorest students in terms of the means test.*

***Key issue 5: Central Application System (CAS)****The implementation of CAS has been envisaged for the 2018 intake. This will have an impact on enrolment management in the pre-university phase as it is currently done at SU. For SU the key questions are as follows:*1. *Will the SU target date (closing date) of 30 June be reached?*
2. *Will turnaround time for processing improve?*
3. *Will applicants have a freedom of choice in terms of [course or university]?*
4. *The e-application process is part of the recruitment strategy of the University. How will the central application system impact on this strategy?*
5. *The application form requires institution-specific information such as non-academic achievements and information on socio-economic status. How will CAS address this institutional need?*
6. *How will application for residence placement and financial aid be included in the central application system?*
7. *How will institutional information that is part of the application process, e.g. information on NBT, residences, student fees, bursaries, etc. be made available?*
8. *CAS will require a substantial organization in terms of technology and personnel to satisfy the needs of thousands of applicants applying yearly to all the HEI’s. What guarantees will there be that CAS would be able to effectively and timely distribute these applications to the HEI of the applicant’s choice? Infectivity will have a huge negative impact on the core business of HEI’s.*
9. *No workshops or planning sessions have been scheduled with IT or Student Information Systems at SU up to date. How will CAS integrate with the different student data systems used by universities?*

*The uncertainty related to the above-listed questions warrants further discussion in the sector.****Key issue 6: Adequate career advice and preparation****The lack of adequate career advice at school level, impacts on the preparedness of students for their study choices. The University’s Centre for Student Recruitment and Career Advice does offer an extensive career guidance service. And alternative career guidance options such as the PACE programme are also available online.* ***Key issue 7: Access to data (MIS)****In the past users such as faculty managers and enrolment planning officers at SU had to gather information regarding student applications, admissions and enrolment from different data sources, making it difficult to get a holistic overview of the enrolment process. Over the past two years a management information system (SUN‑i) has been developed to integrate institutional information from different data-environments, and to deliver the integrated data to users through new technology and interactive user interfaces.* *The initial focus of the SUN-i system was to report on undergraduate applications and admissions, placement in residences, enrolments and qualifications. The challenge was to provide not only accurate and integrated daily reports, but also historical reports on a monthly basis. The SUN-i system was recently extended to include student retention and throughput rates.* *From the faculties’ perspective, throughput rates, graduations rates, etc. can be defined in various ways. This puts a big responsibility on departmental and faculty management to ensure the correct targets are identified. There is a gap in the SU information systems with regard to the provision of appropriate data to faculties so that they can manage these challenges. More integration of information is still needed – faculties have a variety of systems for various data/information that is yet to be integrated.****Key issue 8: Determining overbooking targets and registration rates****The unpredictability of the student market in terms of the demand to enrol for particular programmes is a challenge for most faculties, and e.g. to predict which students from the admission pool will actually register; what the outcome of matric results on the registration ratings will be, and how the perceptions of higher education are influenced by external media, are difficult to manage. Registration rates remain a moving target and are impacted by factors beyond the University’s control.****Key issue 9: Integrated institutional approach to communication and enrolment of prospective students****Managing the whole application and selection process in an integrated manner is difficult. The processes involving bursaries, the setting and monitoring of programme targets, residence placements and diversity targets, etc. can happen in a fragmented way. Information between various role players who deal with our students becomes extremely complicated to coordinate. Staff at the coal-face is constantly at risk of providing the wrong information at any given time of the application process. This situation is more pronounced when a large number of people are involved.* *Ad hoc or special requests related to particular applicants (e.g. late applications with extenuating circumstances) necessitate an integrated approach with enough flexibility to intervene in a user-friendly manner outside of the standard selection criteria.****Key issue 10: Handling the increased number of students at risk****Currently all ‘re-admission cases’ are identified and then given the opportunity to appeal the decision not to be re-admitted. However, the number of students that fall into this category has increased, placing an ever-increasing burden on the re-admission committees that need to review the special cases (especially in large faculties). Each of these cases is typically dealt with by a faculty committee that includes the Deputy Dean (Teaching), a Clinical Psychologist and a senior academic. The process of re-admission is extremely taxing on all parties and very time- and labour intensive. Short deadlines typically add to the pressure as this process needs to be dealt with prior to registration. The increase seems to be happening even though there are many student support mechanisms in place (e.g. tutorials, module-mentor and tutor programmes) aimed at increasing students’ pass rates.***5.2 During Phase 1 of the QEP, what changes at institutional level (a) have been made, (b) are in progress, or (c) are in the planning stages that relate to enhancing course and programme enrolment management.**1. ***Changes that******have been made:***
* *The manual hand-process of managing admission documents have been upgraded to an electronic process using Sharepoint.*
* *The communication with prospective students has improved with regard to their application status from initial submission right through to final admission status. This happens after the release of the NSC results via the prospective students’ web portal.*
* *Monthly reports are provided through the SUN-i system in terms of the number of applications received and admissions approved relative to the enrolment targets.*
1. ***Changes that are in progress:***
* *We are currently creating an e-platform where applicants can upload their admission documentation electronically.*
* *Most of the development of the SUN-i student information system has been completed during the past year, and the components are already fully functional or within the final stages of completion. During 2015 the different components were made available to a selected group of users only for piloting and testing purposes. During 2016 SUN-i will be rolled out to a wider user group, and special attention will be given to user training.*
1. ***Changes that are in the planning stages:***
* *A CRM to manage application is not yet in the planning stage, but is envisaged.*

**5.3 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars to illustrate specific aspects of the change(s) that are successful. Provide evidence for claims of success. Where an activity is in the planning stages, indicate what evidence will be collected.**1. *Implementation of the new* ***Division for Prospective Students*** *that offers an integrated service to prospective students as part of the enrolment funnel:*

*The grouping of support services within the Division for Prospective Students is in line with what generally is known as the ‘admissions and enrolment funnel’ (see below) which provides a representation of the successive phases through which prospective students move in order to register as a student.****Figure 1:*** *Admissions and enrolment funnel**The phases cover the entire chain of recruitment, from general enquiries and the first opportunity for contact with prospective students, the generation of interest, advice about the choice of field of study, the application and admission process, and financial support, up to and including registration.**The phases therefore do not just imply a mechanical movement through the process up to and with registration, but it is backed up by integrated communication processes from the support service environments concerned in order to complete the transaction with the prospective student successfully. The institutional student recruitment activities and the faculties’ focused student recruitment initiatives, along with their school outreach programmes, play a primary role in ensuring that the recruitment process takes place seamlessly in order to achieve enrolment targets.**The application of sophisticated information communication technology such as websites, social media platforms, on-line application facilities, and telematic platforms for supportive tuition at schools, all contribute in a determining manner to interactive and persuasive communication between the University and prospective students.**The communication processes are supported further through all the levels by a wide variety of interactive events that create an opportunity for exposure to the University environment in order to direct the prospective student’s final decision to the benefit of SU. These interactive events include school visits, one-on-one advisory services, aptitude testing, written and electronic correspondence, open days, campus and faculty visits, school outreach programmes and winter schools. (More information can be found in the Student Recruitment Strategic Plan.)**Furthermore, cross-functional alignment with processes, procedures and systems between each phase of the funnel is important to ensure client satisfaction. The quality of communication with the prospective student market within each level naturally has an impact on the loyalty that the prospective student will develop towards the University.**We still have to test the students’ satisfaction levels with the new funnel system, but thus far the implementation went well, with increased communication between the different role-players and clear work agreements that ensure alignment between the strategic intent and the day-to-day operation within the new structure. More integration has been established on institutional level, but there are still challenges regarding faculty-specific needs, where course and programme enrolment management is complex and the procedures not yet fully integrated.**After two years the first concept of the University’s new Admission Policy is in the final stages of consultation. The policy plan highlights a way for the University to contribute to social redress, specifically in terms of socio-economic disadvantaged students.**New management information systems have been established and are being developed further to help with the management of admission and selection targets. We have positive – and critical – user-feedback that guides the further development of the SUN-i and related systems.** *Progress has been made with student information that is captured in a manner that provides decision-makers with a ‘decision register’ for each student.*
* *The Postgraduate Application System provides collated information on postgraduate students. (Operational problems still exist – but the system is an improvement on the information that was previously made available.)*
* *The SUN-i system makes it possible for daily reports on the monitoring of applications and admissions relative to the enrolment targets to be made available, as well as historical monthly reports with which to compare trends.*
* *The hand-processes of managing admission documents have been upgraded to an electronic process using Sharepoint. This allows for better tracking and analysis of the number of applications we receive and better data integrity and security.*
* *Cell phone accessibility to career advice (registering for a career guidance or scheduling advice sessions via cell phone)*
1. *We have spent time and energy on our approach toward recruitment bursaries, focusing on increasing the registration rate for top achieving black applicants.*
2. *In terms of managing walk-ins, we seem to be successful, with an early closing date of 30 June and no late applications being accepted.*

**5.4 Provide one or more (but not more than 5) exemplars of changes that have not been successful and suggest reasons.**1. *Managing application documents electronically on Sharepoint did not alleviate the impact on the staff capacity of the almost 30% increase in the application pool. This may be because we now, for the first time, have reliable data on the number of applications we receive (and that we previously underestimated the number of applications), or it could be that there was a real increase in applications from 2014 to 2015.*
2. *The NBT as predictor of success has not been the most practical tool for selection purposes. There is a financial burden on poor students in term of travelling to the venues and writing the test, and it has not shown to be a better predictor than the NSC. SU has experienced some administrative challenges in terms of receiving all the results in time for consideration and admission decisions. Having to wait for the results also prevents SU from making early offers to identified applicants.*
3. *Although the integration of faculty-specific and institutional information relating to enrolment data has improved, access to student equivalent data on module level is still needed for improved decision-making at faculty level. Better communication between the admissions office and faculties is needed to pro-actively manage over-admission, and more up-to-date and appropriate indicators for student success is needed. In this regard the need still exists for the throughput rates of all programmes to be made available on an annual basis.*

**5.5 If possible, identify one or more promising practices related to this focus area. Describe the practice and provide evidence for success. Suggest what the key features might be.**1. *The ‘admissions and enrolment funnel’ approach seems to be a promising organisational principle with which to clarify roles and improve communication between role players who often report to different line functions.*
2. *The new Admissions Policy was thoroughly revised and may be a document worth benchmarking with in terms of definitions and approaches towards ‘redress’.*
3. *The management information systems, development of SUN-i, improving the e-application processes, the integration of the curricular and co-curricular environments for student support, the BeWell module-mentor programme that is run within the cluster environment, etc. are all promising practices that cater to SU’s context-specific needs. Improving the quality of the information that we make available (and the user-friendliness of the format(s) in which it is presented and can be accessed) for decision-making is an ongoing process – and it may be interesting to investigate the practices (and culture) that allow for such responsive development to take place incrementally over many years.*

**5.6 Identify the main challenges the university still faces in relation to this focus area.**1. *The Language policy and the difficulty of communicating the changing details thereof, and the perceptions propogated in the media, may still serve as barriers to access.*
2. *The affordability of higher education remains a challenge.*
3. *Enrolment management on programme level and the management of admission targets in the light of varied registration rates from year to year, are challenging.*
4. *Getting access to specific NBT data of the admitted student cohort has proven problematic. An analysis of such data will give a clear indication of the knowledge gaps of students in, for example Mathematics.*
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| **6. REFLECTION ON PHASE 1 OF THE QEP (suggested length 2-6 pages)** |
| **6.1 What has been the effect on the university of participating in the QEP for the past two years?***As mentioned in SU’s institutional submission of September 2014 the drivers at SU with regard to the enhancement of student success – and the four themes of QEP phase 1 – have mainly been in terms of our new policy documents, including the Institutional Intent and Strategy and the Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2014-2018, and the organisational repositioning within the line management structure of the Vice Rector (Learning and Teaching).* *In the drafting of SU’s institutional submission and with the compilation of this report, we have shared the practices, plans and processes that are ongoing at SU and have originated independently from the QEP – with no new initiatives that have been introduced as a result of our participation. As such the QEP itself has, thus far, had limited effect, apart from giving us an opportunity to reflect on and record some of the current practices at SU – and with some interaction with role-players from other universities. That said, we look forward to the wisdom that can be gleaned from the QEP phase 1 reports and hope to apply some new approaches to the challenges we all face.**At institutional level there has been minimal engagement with the QEP reports, e.g. the Content analysis of the baseline institutional submissions for Phase 1 of the QEP was not discussed within the University structures or widely disseminated. This might be due to the problematic nature of this document, which is essentially a summary rather than an analysis. (A summary of practices is not helpful when the contexts giving rise to these practices are so different and impact so directly on what is possible in any given context. A more useful document would have been one that provides an analysis of how the different contexts shape what is possible for quality teaching and learning in the different universities in the sector.)**Further reasons for the lack of ‘buy-in’ from the University can still be interrogated. To some extent the QEP process has not been regarded as ‘inclusive’, but rather as ‘imposed’ – with suggestions regarding the processes of engagement not taken into consideration, nor contextual differences across the sector taken into account.* *We trust though, that once the QEP phase 1 reports from all the institutions have been analyzed, the institutions will receive an analytical document gleaned from the institutional reports. Such a product, with information on good quality improvement practices at other institutions, will assist us to reflect on and improve our own University’s quality enhancement practices.***6.2 In what ways did the university’s involvement in the QEP promote or strengthen collaboration with other universities on specific issues?***The involvement of SU in the QEP did not significantly promote or strengthen collaboration with other universities. In the Western Cape SU forms part of the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC) and we have collaborated successfully with CPUT, UCT and UWC on e.g. the introduction of ‘graduate attributes’ prior to the QEP, but within CHEC we have not formed any QEP theme groups.**Perhaps the lack of collaboration stems from the contextual differences across the universities in the sector? The ‘best practice’ model adopted by the CHE ignores the reality of our different university contexts and the inequality across the sector. (Also, the baseline document does not seem to adopt a scholarly approach to teaching and there is an absence of theoretical framing to the report. The extrapolation of ‘promising’ practices to ‘good’ practices therefore lacks rigour.)* *This national project would be strengthened by going beyond a ‘sharing-of-practices’ approach to addressing the big national issues currently being raised across the sector, such as the ever-increasing workload of academic teachers resulting from the massification of the sector and the seeking of national solutions to the current funding challenges.***6.3 Looking back over the past two years, in a page or two, summarise the university’s main triumphs, improvements, changes and challenges related to the four QEP focus areas.***The past two years have been a turbulent time for universities in South Africa. In the case of Stellenbosch University (SU) we have, added to the multiple [student] protests, also welcomed a new Rector to our campus, focused on the operationalisation of the Institutional Intent and Strategy (IIS) towards a new vision of being an “inclusive, innovative and future focused … place of discovery and excellence”, and dealt with structural changes, especially in the Vice Rector (Learning and Teaching)’s line function, in order to align the support service functions with the IIS.**In terms of the philosophical underpinning for our pedagogical endeavours, we have crafted SU policy documents such as the Strategy for Teaching and Learning in which we articulate the graduate attributes that we want to cultivate holistically at SU. We have grouped students together in Residential Education (ResEd) ‘clusters’ that now form the organisational principle both in the academic and co-curricular spheres of student life; we have adopted a wellness approach from a Positive Psychology perspective in terms of student support and development, and designed and offered engaging short courses through the Frederik Van Zyl Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership.**Through the ‘admissions and enrolment funnel’ approach followed by the Division for Prospective Students we deliver an improved service to school learners, prospective students and those who register at SU. We have proof that our value-driven student leadership approach has worked well, especially with regard to the Welcoming Period for first-year students. But we have shifted our attention to the creation of a Senior University Experience as well, with promising practices abound in the Listen-Live-and-Learn initiative.**On the technological front we have addressed the key areas where development has been most needed. In developing the SUN-i platform we hope to empower faculties to manage their enrolments in a pro-active manner; accessing the necessary data for decision-making, and identifying at-risk students in time for suitable interventions. (The potential for mining learner/learning analytics and building predictive models will be explored tentatively, with the necessary ethical considerations taken into account.) The main challenges are financial: the costs of Wi-Fi coverage for the whole campus and e.g. the subscription costs to e-books.**We are venturing into the ‘learn-and-earn’ market and have experimented with new learning technologies. The challenge remains to bridge the gap between the on-campus residential student experience, and the off-campus non-residential experience – a physical design challenge that we try to resolve with the ‘hubs’ we have built within clusters, the refurbishing of faculty foyers, and the continuous improvements to library and lecture hall spaces.**From innovative teaching to scholarly reflections, we encourage our lecturing staff to practice the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), and deputy deans (academic) to cultivate an atmosphere (or ‘quality culture’) within faculties that promotes this. In this regard we have undertaken an institutional research project on programme renewal and enrolled eleven staff members in a University of British Columbia (UBC) short course on SoTL Leadership as part of our own professional learning – and we hope to form a strong community of practice (or ‘networked improvement community’) that can be replicated within and across all faculties.**The professional development of academics as teachers is a continuous process. Most attention has been spent on the PREDAC course for new lecturers, and evidence can be provided of a very active SoTL conference that happens on an annual basis. However, the challenge remains for academics to carve out the necessary thinking space to reflect on their teaching and the learning that happens. And as institution we have to create the incentives and rewards for academics to play, explore and experiment with their teaching, and we have to empower students to take personal ownership of their learning. In this regard we have reviewed the student and lecturer feedback system and are in the process of implementing an institutional system for the reward, recognition and promotion of good teaching at SU.* *The main challenges have been listed in the different sections of this document, as well as the successful practices of which we are proud. But what has been our ‘main triumph’? Perhaps in light of the student protests we see the progressive actions and thoughtful deliberations of – and with – our (positional and non-positional) student leaders as a significant triumph, for they are indeed demonstrating the qualities that we believe ‘good’ graduates should embody: ‘engaged citizens’ with ‘an enquiring mind’. Supporting them in their learning, remains our challenge.* |

1. From a workgroup draft document discussing the Mode 2 provision at SU (18 Nov 2015 version). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. [www.sun.ac.za/sotl](http://www.sun.ac.za/sotl) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)