

**2021 PROGRESS REPORT:  
TRANSFORMATION of the CURRICULUM and ALIGNMENT of the  
STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

**Table of Contents**

INTRODUCTION .....	7
1. THE NWU ENROLMENT TARGETS AND PROFILE 2020-2021 <sup>1</sup> .....	7
1.1 NWU 2020 AND 2021 CONTACT REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT NUMBERS (UG AND PG STUDENTS).....	8
1.2 BREAK-DOWN OF 2020 CONTACT ENROLMENTS: UG, HONOURS AND PG QUALIFICATION TYPES .....	11
1.3 2020-2021 STUDENT ENROLMENTS PER FACULTY .....	12
1.4 2020-2021 DISTANCE STUDENTS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT .....	12
1.5 2020 NWU GRADUATES .....	15
1.6 2020 NWU MODULE SUCCESS RATES.....	18
1.7 CONCLUSION .....	19
2. RACE AWARENESS WEEK .....	19
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	19
2.2 REGISTRATION, ATTENDANCE AND MARKETING .....	20
2.3 SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAW 2021 SESSIONS.....	21
3. GENDER AWARENESS WEEK .....	22
3.1 INTRODUCTION AND EVENT OVERVIEW.....	22
3.1.1 Programme and attendance numbers .....	23
3.2 OVERVIEW OF SESSIONS .....	23
3.2.1 GAW Non-Traditional Sexuality & Gender Identities Webinar .....	23
3.2.2 Modiragatsi youth innovation competition.....	24
3.2.3 Femmegineering Event 2021 .....	25
3.2.4 Philosophy and Gender .....	26

3.2.5	SCC NWU-PC diversity week: Gender equality: Legal and cultural tensions.....	26
3.2.6	NWU GAW Virtual presentation: Art, LGBTQ+ equality and the Constitution.....	27
3.2.7	Meet NWU women in STEM (throughout August 2021) .....	27
3.2.8	Personal Care Charity Drive .....	28
3.3	CONCLUSION .....	28
4.	LANGUAGE AWARENESS WEEK.....	28
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	28
4.2	EVENT OVERVIEW .....	29
4.3	STUDENT COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS.....	29
4.4	PROGRAMME AND ATTENDANCE.....	30
4.5	OVERVIEW OF SESSIONS .....	32
4.6	CONCLUSION OF EVENT AND PRIZE GIVING.....	38
4.7	LESSONS LEARNED .....	38
4.8	CONCLUSION .....	39
6.	THE 2021 UNIVERSUM SURVEY: SIGNIFICANT RESULTS IN REGARD OF STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE NWU.....	39
7.	OTHER 2021 T-L TRANSFORMATION AND ALIGNMENT FOCI .....	41
8.	FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES .....	42
8.1	INTRODUCTION.....	42
8.2	TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND SUCCESSES.....	42
8.2.1	Challenges .....	42
8.2.2	Interventions.....	43
8.2.3	Successes.....	43
8.3	FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS.....	43
8.4	STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES .....	44
8.5	STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES .....	45
8.6	CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION.....	46
8.7	BLENDED/HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.....	46
8.8	TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM .....	46
8.9	FACULTY-SPECIFIC INITIATIVES.....	47
8.10	CONCLUSION .....	47
9.	FACULTY OF EDUCATION.....	48
9.1	INTRODUCTION.....	48

9.2	TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND SUCCESSES .....	49
9.2.1	Challenges related to time .....	49
9.2.2	Interventions to mitigate challenges associated with time .....	50
9.2.3	Challenges related to promoting student engagement with module content .....	50
9.2.4	Interventions to promote student engagement with module content.....	51
9.2.5	Challenges associated with alignment.....	51
9.2.6	Challenges associated with connectivity and available devices.....	51
9.2.7	Interventions to mitigate problems associated with connectivity and use of devices .....	52
9.2.8	Challenges associated with modelling of teaching and preparing students for practice .....	52
9.2.9	Interventions to model teaching and good practice .....	52
9.3	SUCCESSES .....	52
9.4	2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS .....	52
9.4.1	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plan Semester 1INTRODUCTION.....	52
	RISK IDENTIFICATION.....	52
	GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSEMENT PLAN .....	53
	PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT (CONTACTAND DISTANCE LEARNING).....	55
	MODERATION.....	56
	MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	57
	STUDENTS' RETURN TO CAMPUSES .....	57
	CONCLUSION .....	58
9.4.2	Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plan Semester 2INTRODUCTION.....	58
	RISK IDENTIFICATION.....	58
	GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	59
	PRACTICAL GUIDELINES (CONTACT AND DISTANCE LEARNING).....	61
	MODERATION.....	62
	MONITORING AND EVALUATION.....	63
	CAMPUS ACCESS .....	63
	LIMITED AND PURPOSEFUL CONTACT SESSIONS.....	63
	WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL) .....	64
	CONCLUSION .....	65
9.5	2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES.....	65
9.6	2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES.....	65

9.6.1	Academic staff .....	65
9.6.2	Support staff .....	66
9.7	HOW CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021 .....	67
9.8	DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC .....	68
9.9	TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM (WITH GOOD EXAMPLES).....	69
9.10	FACULTY-SPECIFIC ADDITIONS/ HIGHLIGHTS/ SUCCESSES/ CURRICULUM INITIATIVES AND THE LIKE.....	70
9.11	CONCLUSION .....	71
10.	FACULTY OF ENGINEERING.....	72
10.1	INTRODUCTION.....	72
10.2	2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS AND SUCCESSES .....	72
10.3	FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS.....	73
	Electric, Electronic and ComputerEngineering.....	74
	Mechanical Engineering.....	74
	Industrial Engineering.....	74
10.4	2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES.....	74
10.5	2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES (ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF) .....	75
10.6	TOWARDS BLENDED LEARNING IN THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING.....	75
10.7	TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM (WITH GOOD EXAMPLES).....	76
10.8	FACULTY-SPECIFIC CURRICULUM INITIATIVES.....	76
10.9	CONCLUSION .....	77
11.	FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES.....	77
11.1	INTRODUCTION.....	77
11.2	2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING (T-L) CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND SUCCESSES77	
11.3	2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS .....	79
11.4	2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES.....	81
11.5	2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGESAcademic staff.....	83
	Support staff.....	83
11.6	HOW CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021 .....	84
11.7	DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC .....	84
11.8	TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM .....	84
11.9	FACULTY-SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS/ SUCCESSES/ INITIATIVES.....	86

11.9.1	Contents of SPSH webinars on digital work ethics and virtual literacy.....	86
11.9.2	Facing Race 2021 .....	87
	Health Sciences central theme for 2021: Binocular vision increases awareness .....	87
	Binocular vision disorders.....	88
	What influences your binocular vision? .....	88
11.9.4	The Africa Conference on Transdisciplinarity.....	89
11.9.5	New Qualifications in the planning phases .....	89
11.10	CONCLUSION .....	89
12.	FACULTY OF HUMANITIES.....	90
12.1	INTRODUCTION.....	90
12.2	2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND SUCCESSES .....	91
12.3	2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS .....	93
12.4	2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES.....	94
12.5	2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES (ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF) .....	95
12.6	HOW CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021 .....	96
12.7	DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC .....	97
12.8	TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM .....	98
12.9	FACULTY-SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS/ SUCCESSES/ INITIATIVES.....	100
12.10	CONCLUSION .....	101
13.	FACULTY OF LAW .....	101
13.1	INTRODUCTION.....	101
13.2	2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS AND SUCCESSES .....	101
13.3	2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS .....	102
13.4	2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES.....	102
13.5	2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES.....	103
13.6	CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021 .....	103
13.7	STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT .....	103
13.8	DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC .....	104
13.9	TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM .....	105
13.10	FACULTY-SPECIFIC PROJECTS .....	105
13.11	CONCLUSION .....	105

14.	FACULTY OF NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES .....	106
14.1	2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS AND SUCCESSES .....	106
14.2	2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS .....	110
14.2.1	Constraints.....	112
14.2.3	Monitoring and Evaluation.....	113
14.3	2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES.....	113
	Aspects of online learning enjoyed by students.....	114
14.4	ASPECTS OF ONLINE LEARNING FOUND TO BE PROBLEMATIC BY STUDENTS .....	114
14.4.1	Student suggestion to improve online learning experiences.....	114
14.5	2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES (ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF) .....	116
14.6	HOW CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021.....	117
14.7	DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC .....	118
14.8	TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM .....	119
14.9	FACULTY-SPECIFIC ADDITIONS/ HIGHLIGHTS/ SUCCESSES/ INITIATIVES.....	125
15.	FACULTY OF THEOLOGY.....	126
15.1	INTRODUCTION.....	126
15.2	2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND SUCCESSES .....	126
15.3	2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS .....	127
15.4	2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES.....	128
15.5	2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES (ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF) .....	129
15.6	HOW CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021 .....	129
15.7	DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC .....	129
15.8	TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM .....	130
15.9	FACULTY-SPECIFIC ADDITIONS/ HIGHLIGHTS/ SUCCESSES/ INITIATIVES.....	130
15.10	CONCLUSION .....	131
16.	CONCLUSION TO THE REPORT .....	131

## INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 turned out to be a year of accelerated change and required responsiveness as Covid-19 developed and subsequently changed our lives and the context within which we live and work. In 2021 we shifted energy to a focus on continued solidarity, a renewed focus on the ethic of care within all our environments as burn-out and isolation became matters of grave concern, but also a focus on hope as vaccine development progressed and close-knit communities of care were established to see our staff and students through another challenging year. The NWU again proved to be resilient and innovative in its response to all of these challenges, and the report that follows is a testimony to the hard work and endless hours put in by academics, professional T-L support and administrative staff, and by NWU students, to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning remained uncompromised, the transformation of the NWU curriculum received its due attention, and efforts to keep aligning student experiences across NWU campuses did not go amiss.

The Times Higher Education (THE) World Rankings by subject 2021 recently recognised the good standing of the NWU among the best higher education institutions, both locally and internationally, confirming that the NWU is the right place to be for a quality education in many coveted fields of study. The rankings measure a total of 1600 HE institutions' subject offerings across teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook. The NWU excelled in Clinical and Health Sciences, where it was placed — as it had been last year — in the 201 to 250 category. It also maintained its place in the 301 to 400 category for Psychology specifically. Furthermore, the NWU was ranked in the 401 to 500 category for Physical Sciences and in the 601 to 800 category for Life Sciences. The NWU has excelled among South African universities in the various subject areas. It was third overall in Physical Sciences as well as in Psychology, fourth in Clinical and Health Sciences and seventh in Life Sciences.

The THE World Rankings by subject will announce rankings in Engineering and Computer Science, Social Sciences, Business and Economics, Education and Law in October, and Arts and Humanities in November 2021. The NWU is looking forward to these results.

The above is a testimony to the NWU's commitment to one of its five long term Strategic goals, namely the promotion of excellent and high quality teaching and learning, a goal made possible also through excellent T-L support, and a strong continued commitment and dedication to quality from NWU staff and students. In this report we again substantiate our commitment to transformation, social justice and an excellent student experience for all who call the NWU their home.

### 1. THE NWU ENROLMENT TARGETS AND PROFILE 2020-2021<sup>1</sup>

#### **Definitions relevant to this report:**

**Registrations:** *All students that registered for a qualification in a year. This includes students that discontinue or drop out.*

**Enrolments:** *All students that **actively participated** in a qualification in a year. This is a subset of Registrations, but does not include dropouts.*

**Success rate:** *Completed Module Full-time Equivalent divided by Enrolled Module Full-time Equivalent. This is according to DHET and HEMIS definitions of module success.*

**Graduation rate:** *A calculation based on the number of students who have graduated in a particular year, irrespective of the year of study, divided by the total number of students enrolled at universities in that particular year.*

---

<sup>1</sup> Year of reporting is dependent on audited figures and may thus not always be for the year 2021

## 1.1 NWU 2020 AND 2021 CONTACT REGISTRATION AND ENROLMENT NUMBERS (UG AND PG STUDENTS)

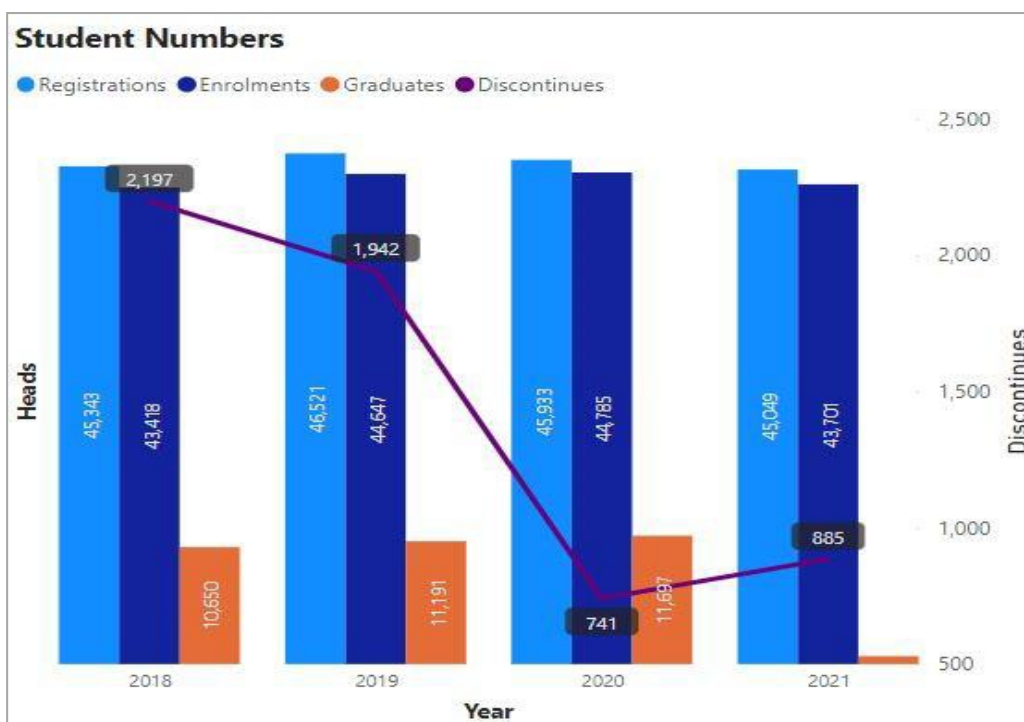


Figure 1: UG & PG Contact enrolments per year 2018 - 2021

As demonstrated in Figure 1, whereas the number of registered contact students decreased with 588 UG and PG students from 2019 to 2020, the contact student enrolments during 2020 showed a healthy upwards curve with a total of 726 more students who actively participated in their academic programmes during 2020 in relation to 2019. This figure may seem surprising as during 2020 the academic programme had to be moved into the online environment due to the Covid-19 pandemic that crippled not only South Africa and its HE environment, but the whole world. It would be interesting to see the longer term effects of the pandemic on student enrolments, as by now in 2021, we have already noticed a decline in the emotional well-being of our students, an area of grave concern that is receiving due attention.

Figure 1 is also indicative of an increase in graduates by the end of the 2020 academic year, despite the small decrease in registrations from 2019. All in all, it would seem that students fared well in terms of participation and graduations for the 2020 academic year.

Further breakdown in terms of race and gender enrolment figures are depicted in Tables 1 and 2, Figures 2 and 3 respectively. Other than within the Faculties of Law and Theology, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of African enrolments from 2020 to 2021. Figure 3 is indicative of relative stability in the enrolments numbers of males and females from 2020 – 2021. It is heartening to see a slight rise in female enrolments in the Faculties of Education, Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Engineering, and Economic and Management Sciences from 2019 – 2021 (Table2).

*(Student numbers linked to “No Faculty” refer to occasional students; race/ gender unknown means that a registered student has taken a decision to not disclose race or gender for statistical purposes)*



Sum of Enrollments Faculty	Year	Race				
		*Unknown	African	Coloured	Indian/Asian	White
000 *No Faculty	2019	1	27	2	1	46
	2020		3		0	4
	2021		7	1		13
<b>000 *No Faculty Total</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>63</b>
7500 NWU Faculty of Law	2019	5	1939	124	34	1055
	2020	2	1937	126	40	1025
	2021	3	1868	137	38	874
<b>7500 NWU Faculty of Law Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>5744</b>	<b>387</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>2954</b>
7700 NWU Faculty of Theology	2019	6	233	18	31	224
	2020		271	20	26	198
	2021	1	238	17	24	175
<b>7700 NWU Faculty of Theology Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>742</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>597</b>
7800 NWU Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences	2019	26	7055	268	149	4149
	2020	11	7338	311	181	3988
	2021	16	7477	327	153	3643
<b>7800 NWU Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences Total</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>21870</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>11780</b>
8000 NWU Faculty of Education	2019	6	4824	432	49	2260
	2020	3	5469	476	47	2141
	2021	6	5493	475	48	1934
<b>8000 NWU Faculty of Education Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>15786</b>	<b>1383</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>6335</b>
8200 NWU Faculty of Humanities	2019	13	4721	240	36	1211
	2020	1	4494	226	30	1120
	2021	4	4622	186	22	964
<b>8200 NWU Faculty of Humanities Total</b>		<b>18</b>	<b>13837</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>3295</b>
8400 NWU Faculty of Engineering	2019	16	271	25	17	1506
	2020		290	30	29	1429
	2021	1	333	42	23	1392
<b>8400 NWU Faculty of Engineering Total</b>		<b>17</b>	<b>894</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>4327</b>
8600 NWU Faculty of Health Sciences	2019	16	3469	340	125	3114
	2020	1	3414	314	136	2820
	2021	14	3448	306	123	2558
<b>8600 NWU Faculty of Health Sciences Total</b>		<b>31</b>	<b>10331</b>	<b>960</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>8492</b>
8800 NWU Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences	2019	15	4263	119	80	2086
	2020	1	4575	123	84	2051
	2021	8	4557	116	86	1928
<b>8800 NWU Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Total</b>		<b>24</b>	<b>13395</b>	<b>358</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>6065</b>

Table 1: UG & PG Contact enrolments per Faculty and race for years 2019 - 2021

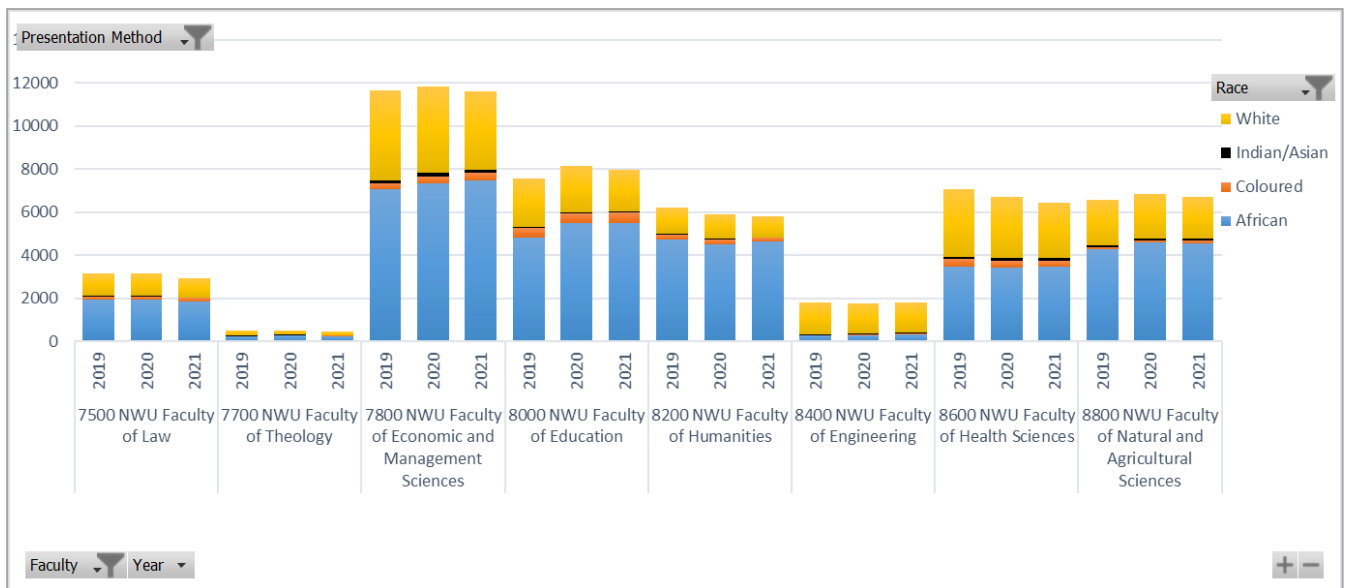


Figure 2: UG & PG Contact enrolments per Faculty and race for years 2019 – 2021

Sum of Enrollments		Year		
Faculty	Gender	2019	2020	2021
000 *No Faculty	Female	45	5	13
	Male	32	2	8
<b>000 *No Faculty Total</b>		<b>77</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>
7500 NWU Faculty of Law	Female	1732	1719	1640
	Male	1425	1411	1280
<b>7500 NWU Faculty of Law Total</b>		<b>3157</b>	<b>3130</b>	<b>2920</b>
7700 NWU Faculty of Theology	Female	189	225	216
	Male	323	290	239
<b>7700 NWU Faculty of Theology Total</b>		<b>512</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>455</b>
7800 NWU Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences	*Unknown	1		
	Female	6052	6257	6170
	Male	5594	5572	5446
<b>7800 NWU Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences Total</b>		<b>11647</b>	<b>11829</b>	<b>11616</b>
8000 NWU Faculty of Education	Female	5162	5510	5396
	Male	2409	2626	2560
<b>8000 NWU Faculty of Education Total</b>		<b>7571</b>	<b>8136</b>	<b>7956</b>
8200 NWU Faculty of Humanities	Female	4069	3921	3893
	Male	2152	1950	1905
<b>8200 NWU Faculty of Humanities Total</b>		<b>6221</b>	<b>5871</b>	<b>5798</b>
8400 NWU Faculty of Engineering	Female	362	377	399
	Male	1473	1401	1392
<b>8400 NWU Faculty of Engineering Total</b>		<b>1835</b>	<b>1778</b>	<b>1791</b>
8600 NWU Faculty of Health Sciences	*Unknown	1		
	Female	5106	4833	4652
	Male	1957	1852	1797
<b>8600 NWU Faculty of Health Sciences Total</b>		<b>7064</b>	<b>6685</b>	<b>6449</b>
8800 NWU Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences	Female	2863	3081	3004
	Male	3700	3753	3691
<b>8800 NWU Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Total</b>		<b>6563</b>	<b>6834</b>	<b>6695</b>

Table 2: UG & PG Contact enrolments per Faculty and gender for years 2019 - 2021

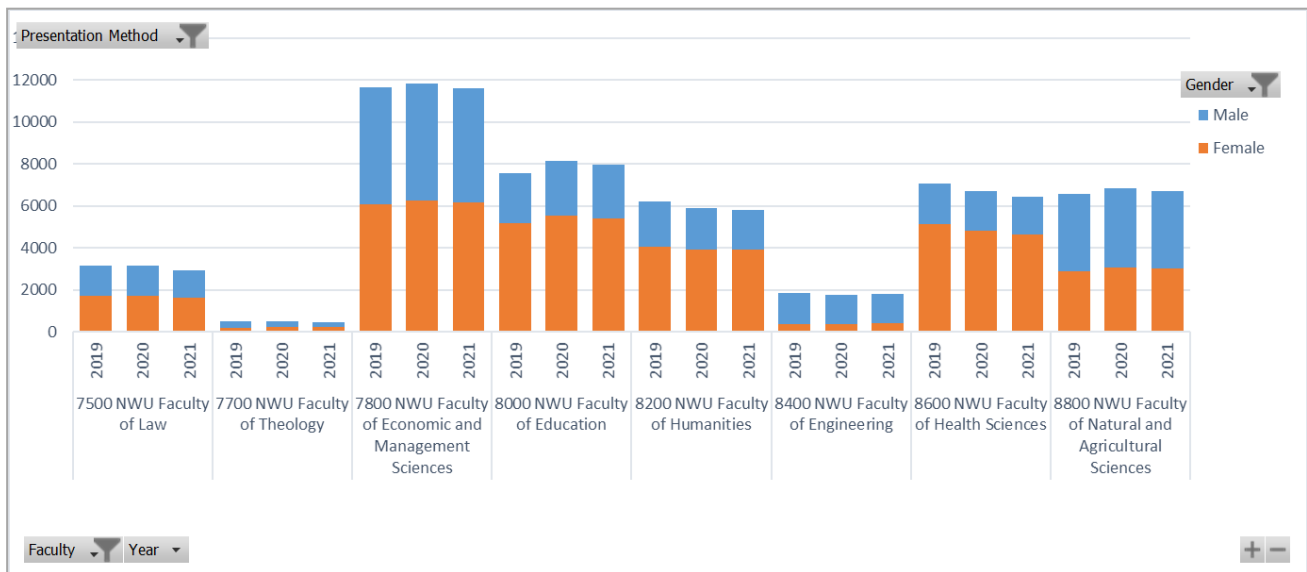


Figure 3: UG & PG Contact enrolments per Faculty and gender for years 2019 - 2021

## 1.2 BREAK-DOWN OF 2020 CONTACT ENROLMENTS: UG, HONOURS AND PG QUALIFICATION TYPES

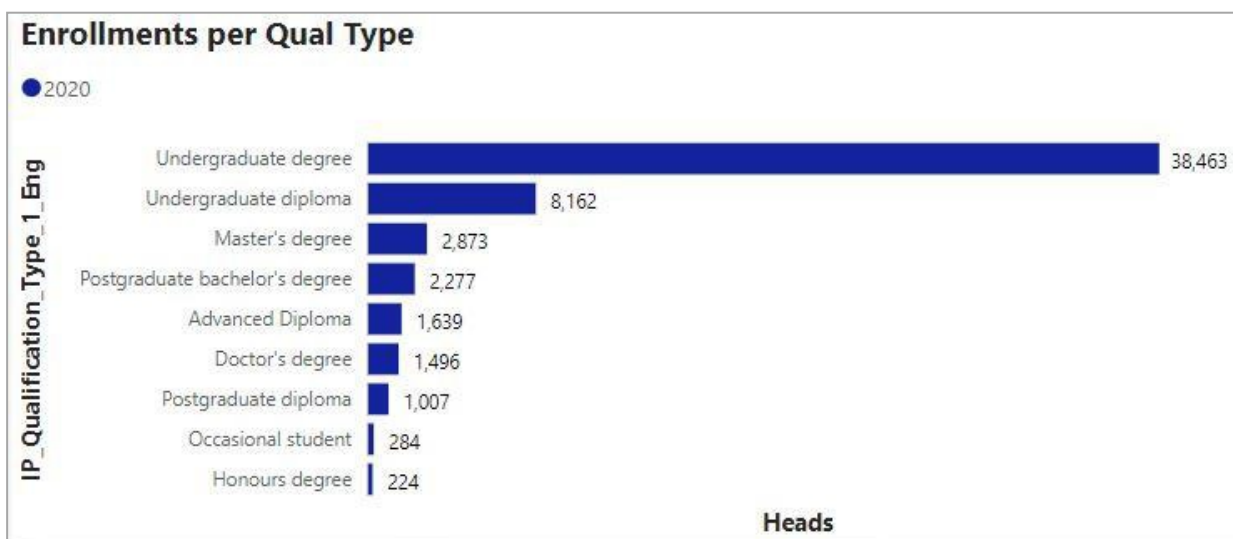


Figure 4: 2020 Enrolments per qualification type

As demonstrated by Figure 4, undergraduate enrolments remained high (Total N = 44 986), with most of the undergraduate diplomas and advanced diplomas being offered via the distance mode of provision. This is a matter that needs to be addressed with the upcoming PQM review (commencing in September 2021 as a 3-4 year project). During the PQM review, one of the issues to be considered, is the proliferation of UG qualifications on the NWU PQM, and the need for a stronger and less specialised offering at the UG level, with specialisation at the PGDip and Honours degree level. From 2024 onwards, the NWU should see a better balance in terms of student numbers at the UG and the PG level.

Another reason to drive towards a better balance of UG and PG students, is the non-sustainability of NSFAS funding over the long-run, and that while more than 20 000 students of the NWU are currently relying on NSFAS funding to be able to study. The NWU has some work to do in this area.

### 1.3 2020-2021 STUDENT ENROLMENTS PER FACULTY

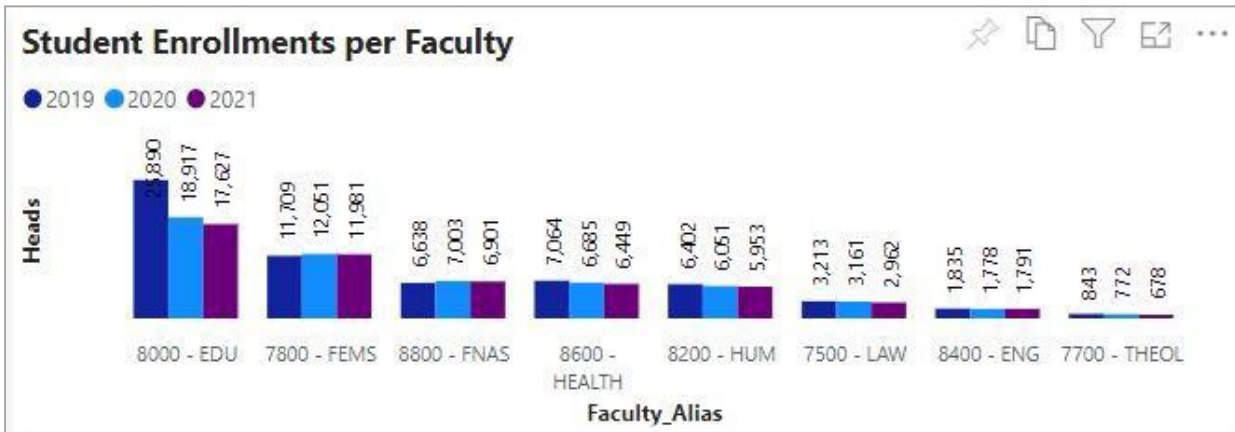


Figure 5: Enrolments per Faculty and qualification type 2019, 2020 and 2021

Enrolment figures per Faculty were much aligned with 2020 enrolment planning targets. There was an overall decline in enrolments from 2020 to 2021 (mostly ascribed to the Covid-19 pandemic and the influence thereof on the income of the missing middle group), with the exception of Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences and Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (both with programmes in the SETH areas of study, thus positive to have seen growth in these faculties).

### 1.4 2020-2021 DISTANCE STUDENTS ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN TEACHING, LEARNING, AND ASSESSMENT

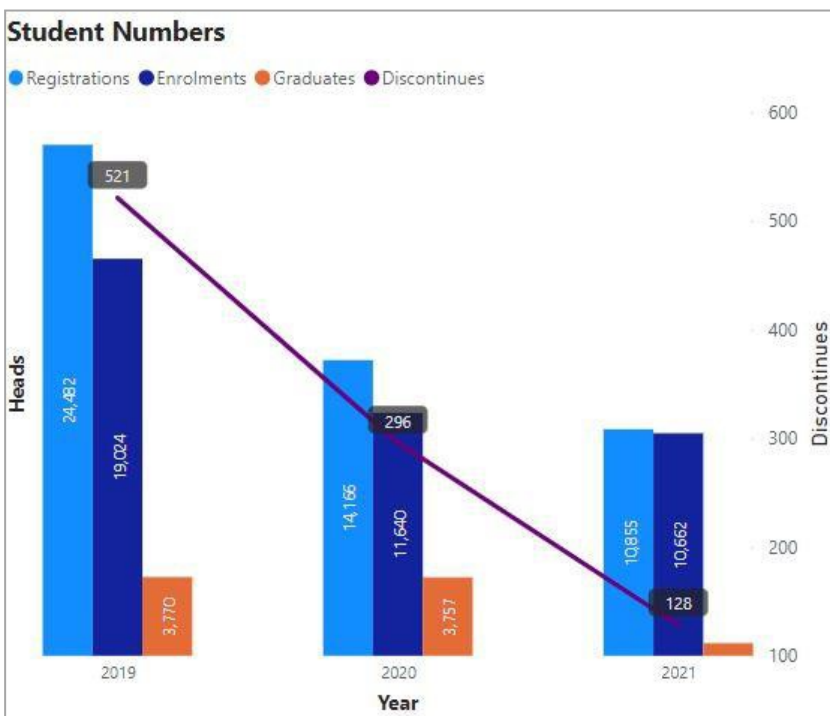


Figure 6: Distance registrations and enrolments 2019 to 2021

Figure 6 depicts the exact number of distance registrations in 2020. The drop in registrations is due to non-HEQSF aligned Education programmes that reached their end date and was removed from the NWU PQM (e.g. NQF level 6 ACE programmes and the NQF level 7 BEd Hons). While there was a great decrease in registrations in 2020, the number of distance students who actively participated in teaching, learning and assessment compared to 2019, increased, with only 21.7% of registrations becoming inactive as compared to 28.7% in the 2019 academic year. This is a positive sign that more distance students are working towards

completing their qualifications within the allowed duration of study as per the requirement of the General Academic Rules.

Further breakdown over a three-year period, in terms of Faculty, race and gender distance enrolment figures are depicted in Tables 3 and 4 respectively, with the largest distance enrolments in the Faculty of Education. African students make up the largest numbers in the distance enrolment environment, and for 2021, there was a further increase in African enrolments in the Faculties of Economic and Management Sciences and Natural and Agricultural Sciences (BSc IT). In regard of distance enrolments, there was a rise in female student numbers for all Faculties concerned (Table 4).

Sum of Enrollments		Year		
Faculty	Race	2019	2020	2021
7500 NWU Faculty of Law	African	41	26	25
	Coloured	5	4	7
	Indian/Asian	1		0
	White	9	1	10
<b>7500 NWU Faculty of Law Total</b>		<b>56</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>42</b>
7700 NWU Faculty of Theology	*Unknown	1		
	African	188	149	134
	Coloured	34	26	26
	Indian/Asian	9	7	7
	White	99	75	56
<b>7700 NWU Faculty of Theology Total</b>		<b>331</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>223</b>
7800 NWU Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences	*Unknown			4
	African	29	150	235
	Coloured	1	11	25
	Indian/Asian	1	2	12
	White	31	59	89
<b>7800 NWU Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences Total</b>		<b>62</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>365</b>
8000 NWU Faculty of Education	*Unknown	33	1	9
	African	15516	8046	6936
	Coloured	1011	705	687
	Indian/Asian	142	176	156
	White	1617	1853	1883
<b>8000 NWU Faculty of Education Total</b>		<b>18319</b>	<b>10781</b>	<b>9671</b>
8200 NWU Faculty of Humanities	*Unknown			1
	African	151	147	127
	Coloured	22	26	23
	Indian/Asian	1	1	1
	White	7	6	3
<b>8200 NWU Faculty of Humanities Total</b>		<b>181</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>155</b>
8800 NWU Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences	African	23	36	59
	Coloured	5	13	15
	Indian/Asian	5	6	8
	White	42	114	124
<b>8800 NWU Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Total</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>206</b>

Table 3: Distance enrolments per Faculty and race for 2019 to 2021

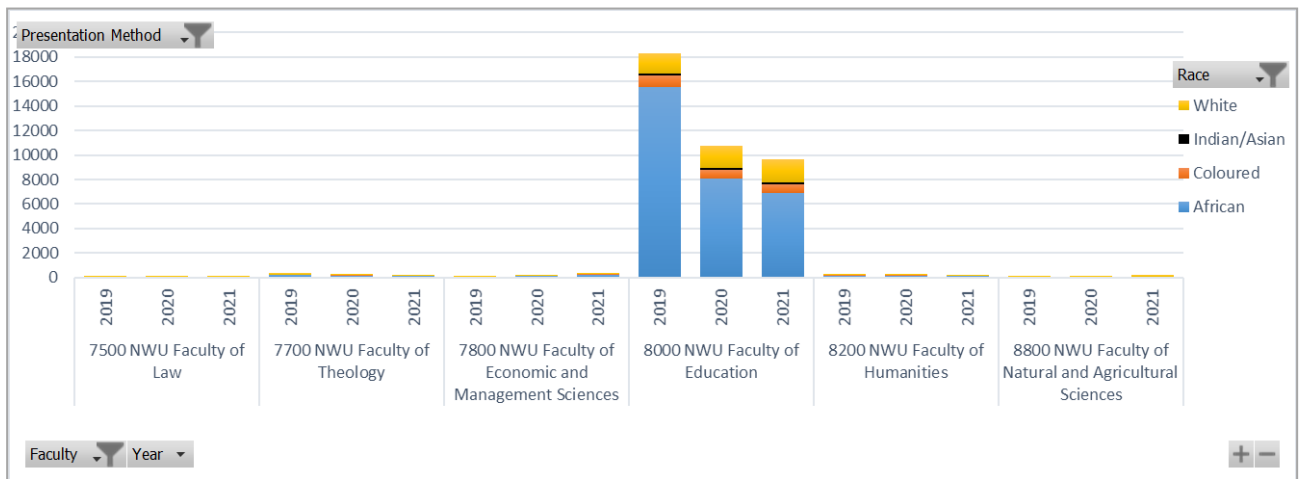


Figure 7: Distance enrolments per Faculty and race for 2019 to 2021

Sum of Enrollments		Year		
Faculty	Gender	2019	2020	2021
7500 NWU Faculty of Law	Female	17	16	20
	Male	39	15	22
<b>7500 NWU Faculty of Law Total</b>		<b>56</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>42</b>
7700 NWU Faculty of Theology	Female	103	84	70
	Male	228	173	153
<b>7700 NWU Faculty of Theology Total</b>		<b>331</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>223</b>
7800 NWU Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences	Female	32	103	167
	Male	30	119	198
<b>7800 NWU Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences Total</b>		<b>62</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>365</b>
8000 NWU Faculty of Education	Female	15518	9665	8640
	Male	2801	1116	1031
<b>8000 NWU Faculty of Education Total</b>		<b>18319</b>	<b>10781</b>	<b>9671</b>
8200 NWU Faculty of Humanities	Female	84	83	75
	Male	97	97	80
<b>8200 NWU Faculty of Humanities Total</b>		<b>181</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>155</b>
8800 NWU Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences	Female	17	36	44
	Male	58	133	162
<b>8800 NWU Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Total</b>		<b>75</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>206</b>

Table 4: Distance enrolments per Faculty and gender for 2019 to 2021

Figure 8 shows the break-down of enrolments and thus of the activity of distance students in different qualification types during 2020. Growing the distance offering of the NWU is still one of our strategic initiatives, and faculties will have to consider with care whether this growth over the next 3 years should be in the UG or the PG environment, identifying specific target markets, and preferably for fully online distance offerings.

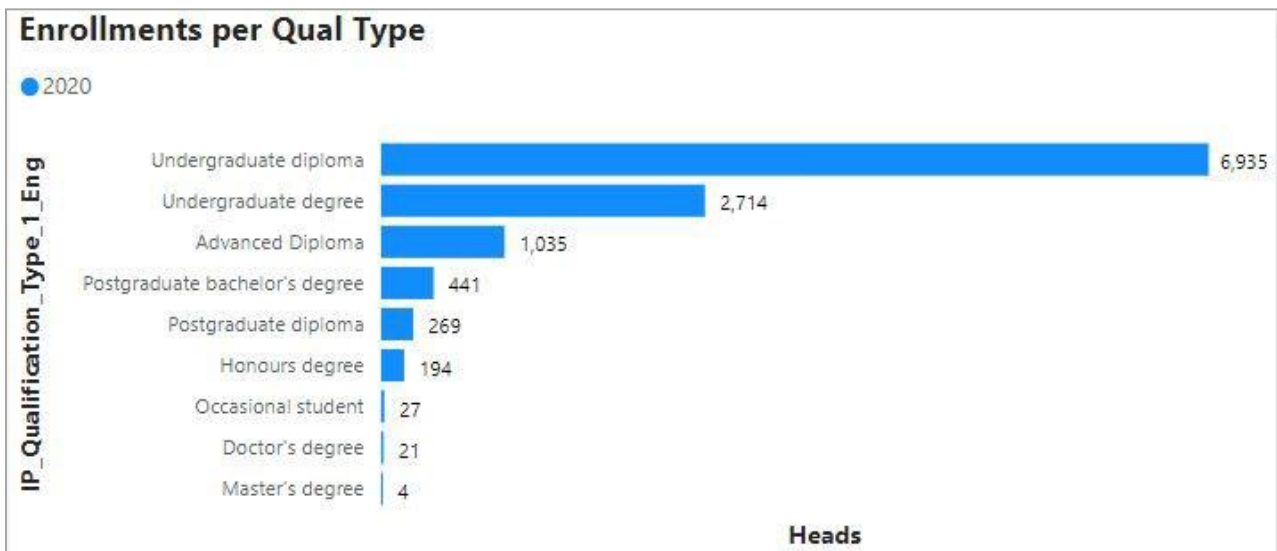


Figure 8: Activity indication of distance students by qualification type in 2020

The positive effect of the General Academic Rule changes and stricter process requirements on distance student activity can be seen when looking at the number of annual discontinuations of study in Figure 9 below. In the past a significant number of discontinued records were due to distance students not writing examinations. Pre 2019, this trend continued over a significant number of years due to the open distance learning policy. From 2019 onwards, a student registered for a distance module had to either participate and write an examination, or fail the module (after the second opportunity). The discontinued records declined by almost 6 000 from 2018 to 2019 and from 2019 to 2020, declined with 225 records.

The fact that the NWU Senate approved for 2020 the continuous assessment modality during the Covid-19 pandemic where learning support centres had to be closed down, impacted the further decline in these records as students submit assessments at more regular intervals and in 2020, did not sit for final traditional examinations.

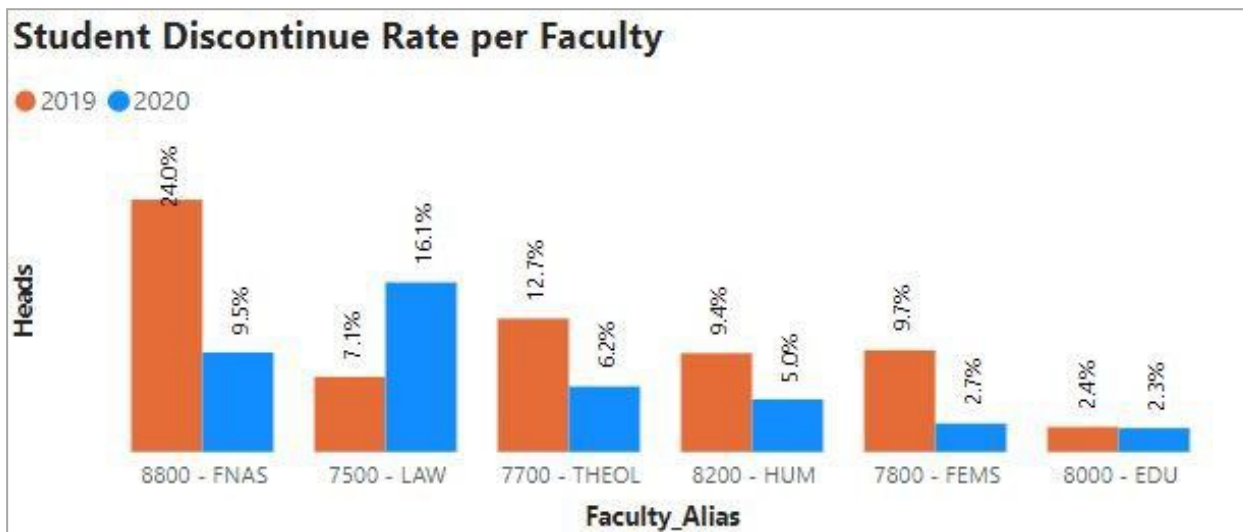


Figure 9: Distance discontinued records 2019 and 2020

## 1.5 2020 NWU GRADUATES

As per Figure 10, contact student graduation rates increased with 4.5% from 2019 to 2020, with a slight increase in graduates as a % of enrolments indicated as 26% for 2020, versus 25% in 2019. This is also an indication that the NWU navigated the move from contact teaching and learning to emergency remote teaching and learning in a positive manner, with sufficient student support to uphold academic quality.

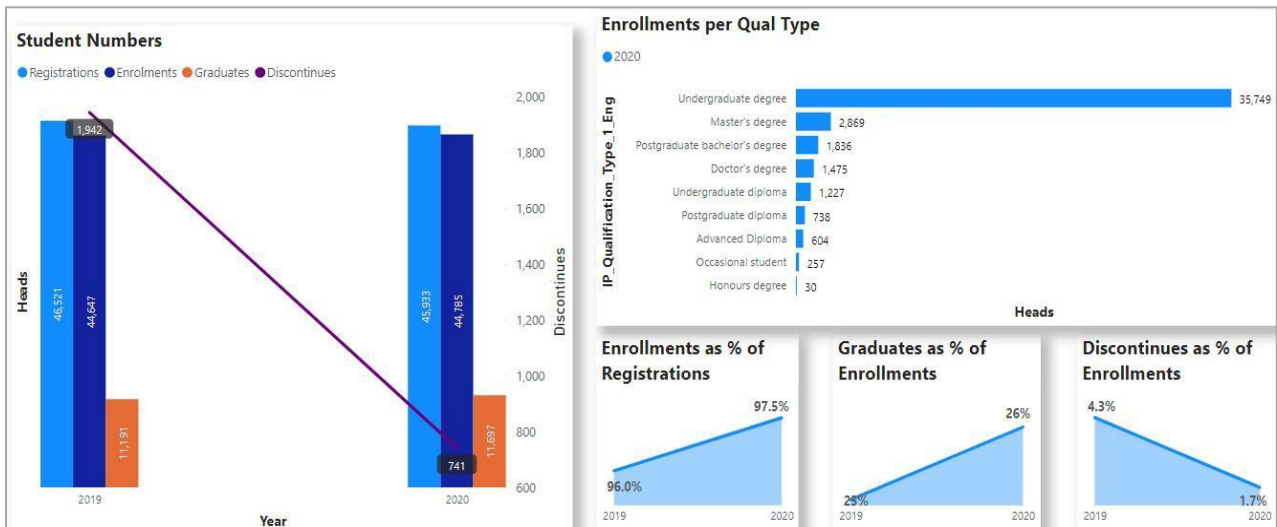


Figure 10: Contact graduates as percentage of enrolments 2020

Figure 10 illustrates the contact student graduates per Faculty and gender for 2019 and 2020.

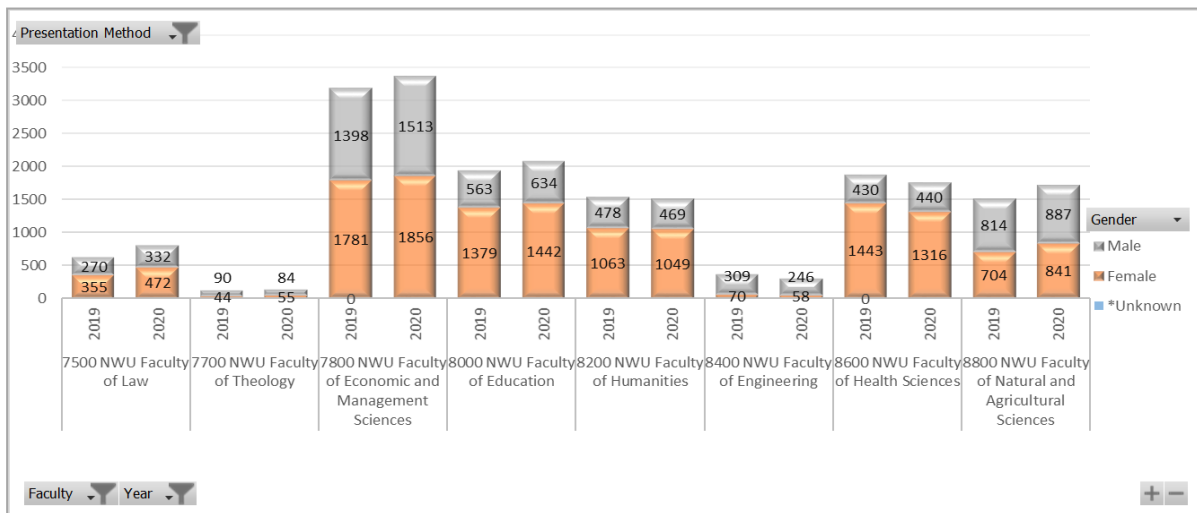


Figure 10: Contact graduates per Faculty and gender 2019 and 2020

Figure 11 illustrate the contact student graduates per Faculty and race for 2019 and 2020.

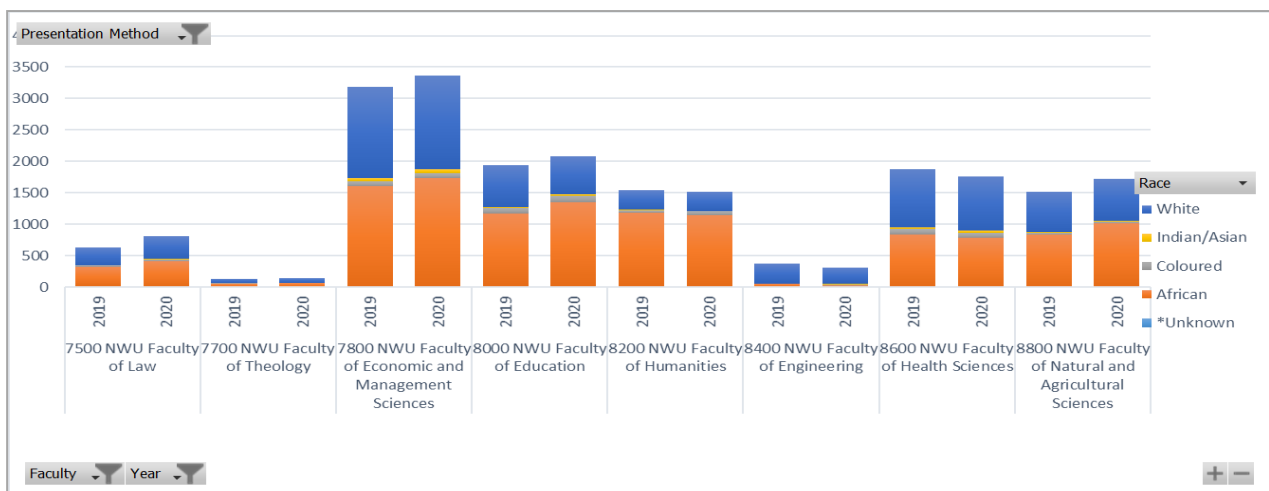


Figure 11: Contact graduates per Faculty and race 2019 and 2020



Figure 12 indicates the distance student graduates as % of the distance student enrolments for 2019 and 2020.

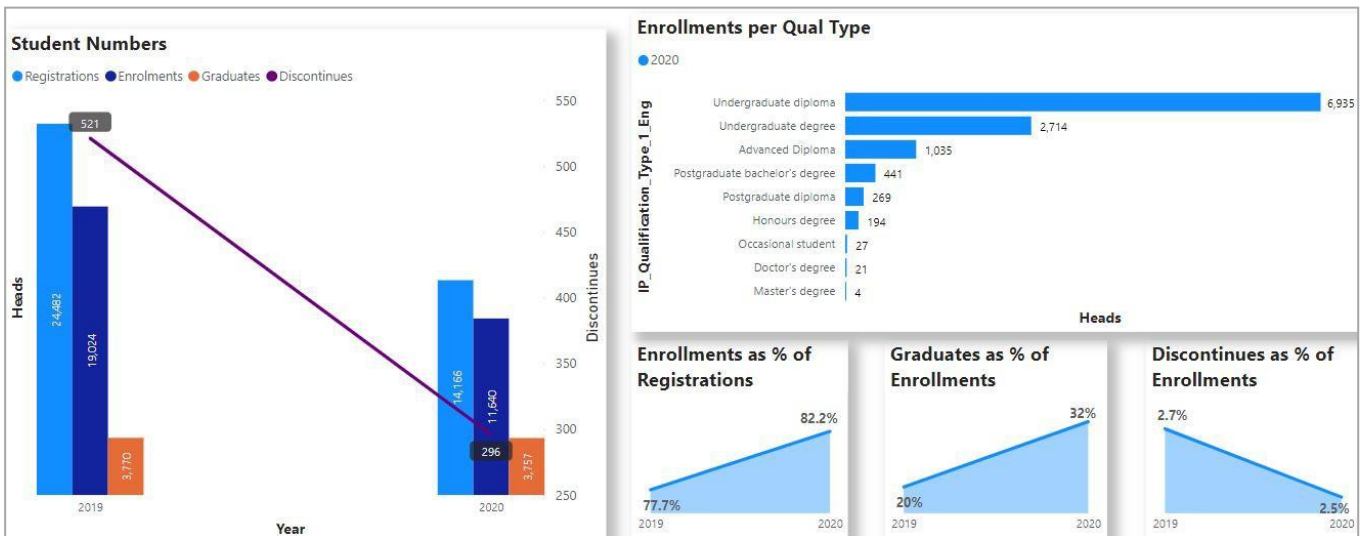


Figure 12: Distance graduates as percentage of enrolments 2020

As per Figure 12, distance student graduates declined ever so slightly, with 0.34% (only 13 graduates) from 2019 to 2020, but with an increase of graduates as a % of enrolments indicated as 32% for 2020, versus 20% in 2019 (keeping in mind the explanation on the decrease in distance registrations and the increase in distance enrolments in 2020).

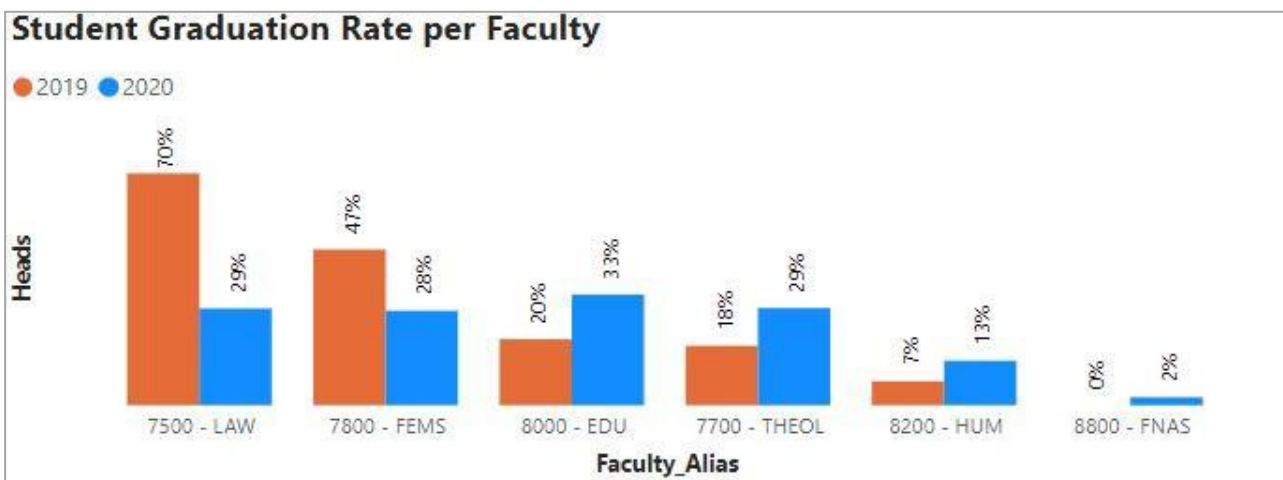


Figure 13: Distance graduation rate per Faculty 2019 and 2020

Figure 13 illustrate the distance graduation rate per Faculty for 2019 and 2020, noting a decline in the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

The graduates have been declining over the past few years (with N = 4 700 for 2018, 3770 for 2019 and 3757 for 2020). This is mainly due to a marked decline in distance graduates (also related to the huge decline in distance registrations), yet the contact graduates are still increasing annually. As already noted, the decline in distance graduates is related to the phasing out of non-HEQSF aligned Education certificates and diplomas as well as honours degrees, where the replacement programmes' cohorts are not at the stage of graduating yet.

## 1.6 2020 NWU MODULE SUCCESS RATES

Please note that when evaluating the module success rates, the DHET definition is used as required for HEMIS submissions<sup>2</sup>.



Figure 15: Undergraduate module pass rates 2018-2020

The university has maintained a good module enrolled success rate at the undergraduate level over past years, with a pass rate of 84.6% in 2019. The exceptional increase to 92.5% in 2020 (Figure 15) is worrisome to a degree, as the jump from the 2019 rate is simply too significant. This can mostly be ascribed to the adjustment to the continuous assessment modality that had to be instigated and approved at speed by the Senate, and implemented within a record time by faculties when the Covid-19 pandemic hit and the different lock-down levels were implemented. Semester 1 2020 was a steep learning curve for all faculties and their students, and it took time to find the right balance in scope, levels of difficulty, and type of assessments that were appropriate for the online environment. Students suddenly had at their disposal all kinds of resources to complete distance and online assessments – resources that would not have been available during a traditional sit-down assessment. As students needed to learn how to navigate their materials and TL support in a distance and online environment, lecturers had to figure out how to assess for quality in an environment where a summative assessment were no longer an option. Many valuable lessons have been learnt during the course of 2020, and even the module pass rates of the second semester of 2020 indicate a balancing out of the exceptional pass rates of the first semester. It would be interesting to see the pass rates of the first semester of 2021.

When comparing presentation methods, there remains a marked difference between the success rates of contact and distance students (Figure 16 and 17), yet the pass rates also in the distance environment has shown a significant increase. It is evident that students have taken to the continuous assessment modality, and while there is also cause for concern in regard of academic dishonesty, the NWU has invested in an online assessment platform and proctoring software to ensure that these types of assessments will be more controlled. Academics have also become extremely adept at developing assessments where students are actually allowed to work together and to use all resources at their disposal to complete an assessment.

---

<sup>2</sup> Completed Module Full-time Equivalentents divided by Enrolled Module Full-time Equivalentents = module success

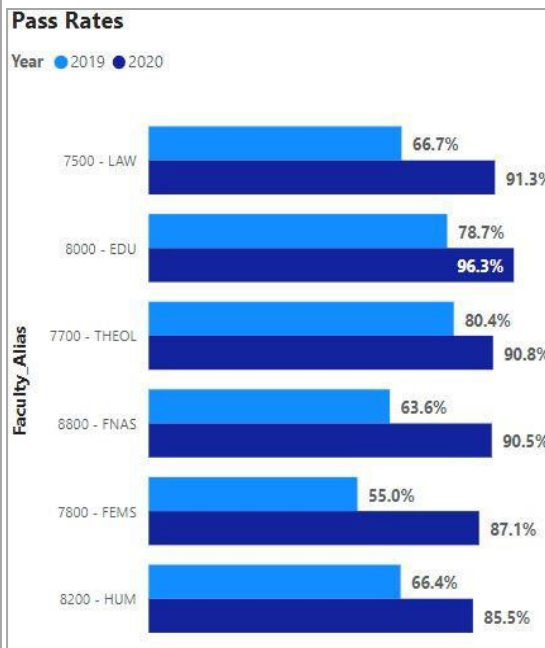
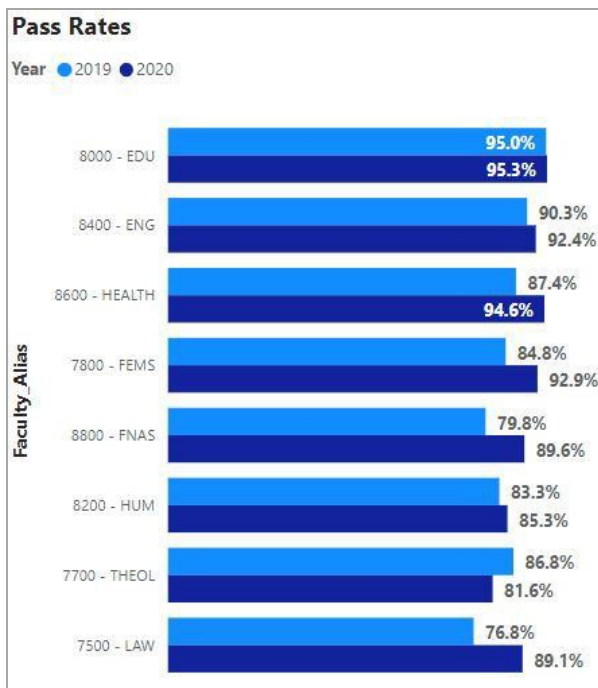


Figure 16: Contact pass rate per Faculty 2019 and 2020    Figure 17: Distance pass rate per Faculty 2019 and 2020

Figures 16 and Figure 17 respectively are simply included to demonstrate and offer a comparison of the annual module success rates per Faculty and presentation method from 2019 to 2020.

*Note: Before 2020, year modules in distance education was split into two different semester modules, thus pass rates for the Faculty of Education, cannot be compared between years.*

## 1.7 CONCLUSION

The NWU remains committed to continuously improving the quality of teaching, and of learning support, to ensure that module success rates remain of a highly satisfactory nature. Working collaboratively, teaching and learning support units and faculties will keep striving towards a culture of academic achievement where a diverse student body across the NWU campuses accomplishes outstanding academic results.

Whereas the 2019 report solicited the need for an investigation into more targeted support interventions, especially at the final year of undergraduate study, the 2020-2021 report must be read with the Covid-19 pandemic context and all the challenges that came along with the disruption. Many of these challenges resulted in exceptional innovation and an increase in academic and professional T-L support initiatives to retain the momentum of the 2021 academic project.

## 2. RACE AWARENESS WEEK

*Report by Michelle Groenewald*

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

*“Race Awareness Week at the NWU is a distinctive cross-curricular opportunity to listen to a series of presentations, to participate in panel discussions, contribute to creative production opportunities offered by a cross-section of academics and experts within and beyond the NWU. The cross-sectionality of students and staff engagement takes the form of a series of dialogues about race.*

*Race (racism, racialisation) remains a critical contestation and focus in South Africa and beyond, lying at the intersection of other identity markers including class, language, gender, and power. Indeed, the asymmetry of power-relations arises from, contributes to the social constructs of race, language, gender and class and that these, in turn, affect access to justice, welfare, economic opportunity, political representation and support. Many important studies both nationally and beyond suggest to us, is that*

society in general, and higher education institutions in particular, benefits from structured opportunities to provide for a deeper level of engagement through scholarship, creative work and dialogue with important issues like race or gender, which serve still as powerful fractures or fissures in our collective attempts to create a socially just, cohesive, mindful and caring society, in which difference need not function as a precursor to dissension, division, powerlessness or marginalisation. This event, and others like it at the NWU, are offered to the whole University community annually and set up in consultation with the University's leadership (both staff and students) and in consultation with the broad academic community. In each year the race, gender and language events promoted and offered by the NWU are differently themed and hosted organisationally by different Faculties with a view to structuring differences of perspectives on the topics, brought to them by the fields within host Faculty generally, but not exclusively so.

There is always a combination of scholarly and creative opportunities recognising that human identity is expressive, intellectual as well as and physical and by focusing energy on these themed weeks recognition is further lent to the fact that the issues themselves require trans, multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches to understanding, and further that the formal curriculum does not always provided for a focused engagement by students and staff of the University, outside of the prescribed nature of programmes (some of which are highly structured in terms of meeting the required of legislation, statutory or professional bodies). With the above in mind, I am pleased to invite our staff and students to Race Awareness Week, 2021 and thank in advance the team of academics, guest speakers from in and beyond the NWU, and student-team in the Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences, who made the programme possible for the NWU.”

Prof Robert Balfour

RAW 2021 was hosted by FEMS, with a focus on the intersections of race and economics.

As an overview, a very cross-disciplinary approach was taken to the whole program. There was definitely a focus on taking an economic angle to the topics chosen, but there was a wide and varied approach in choosing both the speakers and facilitators. This allows for richer, more relevant discussions, as well as allowing more students and staff to be interested and to increase attendance.

The format was 2 sessions per day of 1 hour and 30 minutes each.

## 2.2 REGISTRATION, ATTENDANCE AND MARKETING

The table below presents the registrations and attendance of persons in each of the sessions.

Date	Session	# of attendees	# of RSVPS
Thursday : 8 April 2021	Spoken word poetry workshop with Puno Selesho	36	102
Monday: 3 May 2021 (10h00-11h30)	How to be an anti-racist: reflecting on the work Prof. Ibram X. Kendi - Facilitated by Mr Sysman Motloung	61	102
Monday: 3 May 2021 (13h00-14h30)	Mr Ndumiso Hadebe - The journey of a young, black professional in the South African financial sector	32	55
Tuesday: 4 May 2021 (10h00-11h30)	Dr Musawenkosi Saurombe - How race intersects with the economy: "Its not how theysee you, it's how you see them"	47	82
Tuesday: 4 May 2021 (13h00-14h30)	Land reform discussion with Prof Elmien Du Plessis and Prof Wandile Sihlobo	67	88
Wednesday: 5 May 2021 (10h00-11h30)	Prof Nomalanga Mkhize - The end of Azania: How the global corporation killed the ancient African market economy and lessons for us today.	61	127

Wednesday: 5 May 2021 (13h00-14h30)	Book Club - Black Tax; Burden or Ubuntu? edited by Niq Mhlongo - Facilitated by Mrs Kgomotso Malinga	74	95
Thursday: 6 May 2021 (10h00-11h30)	Book Club - What if there were no whites in South Africa by Ferial Haffajee - facilitated by Dr Carike Claassen and Ms Roslyn Lodewyk	76	88
Thursday 6 May 2021 (13h00-14h30)	Cross disciplinary panel: bringing race, gender and economics into dialogue with one another: Mr Lindokuhle Njozela, Dr Natalia Flores, Mx Emil Gouws and Dr Wemar Strydom.	53	98
Friday: 7 May 2021 (10h00-11h30)	Ilobolo round table discussion: economics and your lived reality - Facilitated by Mrs Phindile Mdluli-Maziya and Dr Precious Mncayi	61	82
<b>Total</b>		<b>532</b>	<b>919</b>

One of the main foci of the RAW is to get students involved. For RAW 2021, an organizing committee of post-graduate Economics students was established. These students could help with the conceptualisation of the program (as academics are not always aware of the topics that students are keen to discuss in the specific discipline). Students were also particularly helpful in ensuring that more marketing happened using student networks and social media. During RAW itself (whether it be online or face to face) the coordinator is going to need extra hands and if one is willing to write a letter of reference for students and explain that they can put this on their CV, students seem to be genuinely helpful, engaged and ready to assist, during the week of RAW especially.

When conceptualising what items might be part of the program it is important to consult widely. Reach out to colleagues, to student leadership, to students in the Faculty, academic societies, and university management. This should not be a program that is only set up based on your ideas as a coordinator of what should be discussed. If no one comes back to you, then at least the emails exist indicating that every attempt was made to involve as many stakeholders as possible.

Do ensure that the marketing team is on board early. Digital marketing is much more cost effective than having to print and put up posters (so even if RAW happens face to face), it is valuable to have a strong digital presence. Marlize from Creative Coffee Bean's details are included below; this service provider did an outstanding job of creating both general posters and banners. It is also useful to create individual posters for each of the events which ended up particularly helpful with targeting specific audiences. So too, having an interactive program that has clickable links which allow people to immediately RSVP ended up being the most used item of marketing (this also makes it useful to share quickly via Whatsapp), therefore making sure something like this is designed – is vital to ensure marketing occurs on various platforms.

### 2.3 SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT THE RAW 2021 SESSIONS

- All of the RAW 2021 sessions were recorded and are available on the NWU Youtube channel. It would be recommended to view the link below to see at least one session in order to get a feel for the way an online session takes place if one is trying to encourage engagement, ensure nuance and depth to the topic, whilst still keeping to a time limit. Below is a link to one of the sessions on Land Reform for reference purposes:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcVKaZUPozk>

- The point of departure of the RAW 2021 team was the attempt to strike a balance between ensuring that people are respectful towards one another at all times, whilst still ensuring that robust and engaging discussions which push the boundaries, are taking place. The introductory video of each session encouraged participants to be “comfortable with the uncomfortable”.
- It is worth noting that participants are likely to attend sessions for different reasons. Some people will genuinely be attending as they are hoping to sit, listen and learn. This requires not making people feel as if they must participate by typing a comment or unmuting their mic. So too, one does want to create an online environment (or an in person one if that is the plan for the upcoming Awareness Weeks), that does make people feel that this a safe space to engage, comment, question and to have a differing view point.

- The decision that was made was to have pre-recorded videos, as well as live participation. This allows for some level of certainty that even if speakers can't make it on the day due to bad connectivity, one will at least have some part of the event that can take place. Then having speakers live, does encourage people to ask questions and engage.
- It was a deliberate decision to have chosen to have at least 1 facilitator for each session who would first engage with speaker/s in a 10 -15-minute dialogue with prepared questions and comments, to give the audience time to reflect on what they have heard in the pre-recorded videos, and then to type up a question or to raise their hand.
- It must also be noted, that for some people (who did email stating so, and as can be evidenced by the dozens of people who have watched the uploaded videos), the time of a session might not suit them to join live. This is one of the benefits of having an online and recorded component to the program. One of the detriments of this, is that more natural and organic engagement is lost when events do not happen face to face.
- Having had the sessions recorded, the idea behind the RAW 2021 sessions was to have this repository of knowledge on the NWU YouTube channel on topics that might also be discussed further in both the formal and informal curriculum. This would allow for an additional resource and could potentially be used a starting point for further initiatives.
- An important point to note on the value of having these sessions available to watch again or at a later stage; these sessions were all exactly that – discussions. This has immense value (and when paired with the Efundi site that we created which also had additional resources), it can be a very valuable and enriching experience. However, discussion alone is not enough. This most clearly came through in the “How to be an antiracist” session. There were many calls to action, as well as the important role that organizing must play beyond Race Awareness Week. I would encourage this call to action and encourage future co-ordinators to think more explicitly around ways in which people can get involved in activities, organizations and initiative beyond Race Awareness Week.

### **3. GENDER AWARENESS WEEK**

Due to an increase in the number of GBV incidents at institutions of higher learning, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) sent all universities across the country a policy framework to guide them in creating policies that will address GBV at their institutions. The North-West University (NWU) recently adopted and approved its GBV policy that aims to create an enabling environment for staff and students to inform, prevent, support and monitor GBV on and off its campuses. This policy will protect all gender identities and sexual orientations, including LGBTQIA+ individuals and marginalised minorities, from all forms of GBV, sexual discrimination, violence and harassment.

*The report that follows was developed by Prof Leenta Grobler*

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION AND EVENT OVERVIEW**

The NWU subscribes to the values of inclusivity and an appreciation for personal differences. One of the initiatives to underscore these values is the annual Gender Awareness Week (GAW), which was presented from 6 to 13 August 2021. The theme of this year's event was *Superheroes of everyday life* in recognition of the strength and braveness required to own and celebrate one's own gender identity.

FEng reached out to FNAS, FHS, FHum to create a truly multi-faceted programme. The organising committee decided to identify broad themes collectively and then arrange appropriate sessions within each Faculty, ensuring that there were no two sessions happening at exactly the same time, allowing participation for all in the entire programme as and when they wanted to.

### 3.1.1 Programme and attendance numbers

In the table below the programme, theme and number of registrations and number of eventual attendants for each GAW 2021 session can be found.

Date	Theme	Registration (#)	Attendees (#)
6 August 2021	GAW Non-Traditional Sexuality & Gender Identities Webinar	260	260
9 August 2021	Modiragatsi Winners Announcement	215	261
9 August 2021	Femmeengineering Opening Ceremony & Virtual Self Defence Class	200	178
10 August 2021	Femmeengineering: Chemical Engineering	220	290
10 August 2021	Philosophy and Gender	34	30
11 August 2021	Femmeengineering: Electrical, Electronic, Computer & Mechatronic Engineering	220	205
12 August 2021	Femmeengineering: Industrial Engineering	220	195
13 August 2021	Femmeengineering: Mechanical Engineering	220	200
13 August 2021	Virtual presentation: Art, LGBTQ+ equality and the Constitution	35	18
19 August 2021	SCC NWU-PC Diversity week: Gender equality: legal and cultural tensions	25 (Zoom) 1260 (YouTube)	25 (Zoom) 1260 (YouTube)
August 2021	Meet NWU women in STEM	N/A	N/A
August 2021	ASA/SC charity drive: collect various female toiletries, focusing specifically on sanitary products	N/A	N/A

While Corporate Relations and Communication department assisted with great enthusiasm to advertise the events, the attendance of certain sessions was still low. Making the material available (with consent from all role-players) on YouTube after the event, however, made a significant difference in the number of consumers of the content. Nevertheless, recording the webinars and making it available on YouTube infringes on the "safe space" for discussion that one would like to create during such a week." Hence, the hope is expressed, that in the future, physical meetings and discussions will be possible.

## 3.2 OVERVIEW OF SESSIONS

### 3.2.1 GAW Non-Traditional Sexuality & Gender Identities Webinar

The week kicked off with a session focused on understanding sexuality and gender identity in society and the workplace. The presenters endeavoured to create a better understanding of terminology & concepts regarding human sexuality and to promote understanding & acceptance; empowerment towards a healthier, accommodating, constructive working environment.

This session was presented as an online webinar (via zoom and live YouTube streaming) with an interactive question and answer session (including anonymous questions). The topics and speakers included:

1. Basic concepts of sexuality – Prof T Brink (NWU)
2. Psychology: understanding the person – Mr X Flemming (NWU)
3. "Straight expectations" in higher education - Prof J Rothmann (NWU) & L Smuts (UJ).

The online format (zoom & live streaming via YouTube) proved successful thanks to good planning. The speakers were well prepared and knowledgeable. The webinar was well attended by both NWU staff and students.

### 3.2.2 Modiragatsi youth innovation competition

The NWU Faculty of Engineering and the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) joined forces in 2019 to discover, develop and support future female innovators through the Modiragatsi innovation competition. In 2021, SIEMENS and KISCH IP came on board, to further augment the experience. Prof Leenta Grobler, Director of Business Development and Stakeholder Engagement of the NWU Faculty of Engineering, consequently expanded the initial offering into a fully-fledged innovation incubator for South African youth.

Modiragatsi gives high School learners between the ages of 15 and 18 the opportunity to try their hand at, and shine in, the one thing engineers are known for – problem-solving. Participants entered by identifying a problem in one of 5 categories that they care deeply about. They then had to submit a 250-word summary and either a two-minute video or a 15-slide slideshow explaining the problem and the proposed solution to the problem they identified. They could enter as individuals or teams of 2 along with a teacher from their School.

In the winter recess of 2021, 120 high School learners and 80 university students completed the training for semi-finalists. All Semi-Finalists received a *goodie-bag* to stimulate their creativity for the training. This training involved an extensive online course design thinking, computational thinking, user experience design, mobile application development, intellectual property protection and start-up conceptualisation and pitching.

- SIEMENS facilitated the Mobile Application Development training through the Mendix platform.
- KISCH IP developed custom content on the Protection of Intellectual Property.
- The NWU Business School curated the Business Pitching content.

After the 2-week online training, teams had to submit a report and a 2-minute video pitch of their idea for judging. The submissions were judged based on the following criteria: Inspirational Idea, Potential Impact of Solution, Passion for STEM and Communication ability. The 25 finalist entries were evaluated by a panel of judges, 1 category winner was selected for each of the categories, and from the 5 category winners, an ultimate winner was selected.

**Category winner** ~ Food, Energy & Water: Onkagile Baraganye & Refentse Lekgoane from Setswakgosing Secondary School with their Agro-Tswaing Food Security App. In this category, honourable mention was made of the Smart Water Meter concept of Christine Esterhuizen & Emma Nel from Eunice High School for Girls.

**Category winner** ~ Gender-Based Violence prevention: Neo Thobejane from Marobathotha High School with her GBV navigator.

**Category winner** ~ Healthcare: Paballo Diyase from The High School for Girls, Potchefstroom with her Nutri-spoon.

**Category winner** ~ Nature Conservation & Tourism: Hesme van Aswegen & Isabella Ramos from Eunice High School for Girls, Potchefstroom with their home-use waste to energy concept.

**Category winner** ~ Township Economy: Hannia Kempen & Kerryn Hodgson from The High School for Girls, Potchefstroom with their sorting recyclable material collection trolley.

The category winners each won a free Intellectual Property Evaluation by KISCH IP Director *Ursula Baravalle*, who heads up the Patent Department and Izaan Kuschke who is a senior associate. They will also be aided in the development of a prototype of their idea by the NWU Faculty of Engineering and receive entrepreneurship mentorship by *Prof Leenta Grobler*.

The ultimate winner was Paballo Diyase from The High School for Girls, Potchefstroom. As the ultimate winner, she won (in addition to the prizes of the semi-finalists), a SIEMENS scholarship of R80k to study Engineering, and an all-expenses-paid technology tour to Europe for her and her teacher.



### 3.2.3 Femmegineering Event 2021

The Femmegineering event is annually hosted and in 2020 we moved online in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since we were able to reach a much wider audience of girls from all over South Africa and our neighbouring countries, we decided to host it virtually again this year. The 2021 Femmegineering event took place between 9 and 13 August in celebration of Women's Month with the theme: SEE YOU BE BRAVE!

Participation in the Femmegineering event was free of charge, thanks to the generous sponsorship received from merSETA and each participant received a *goodie-bag*, apart from the exciting line-up of speakers, hands-on projects and entertainment.

This year the line-up comprised the following: Monday 9 August was kicked off with a keynote address by Sabine Dall'Omo Chief Executive Officer of Siemens Southern and Eastern Africa. She inspired girls to pursue a career in STEM and served as an incredible role model for the girls who participated.

Aligning with the theme, the girls also participated in a virtual self-defence class, presented by Gerhard Visagie from Badger Tactical.

On 10 August the focus shifted to Chemical Engineering and the girls were introduced to three Chemical Engineers: Corneels Schabbort, who is a Senior Lecturer within the School of Chemical and Minerals Engineering. Before joining the Faculty, he worked at Sasol as a Process Engineer. He is interested in Biofuels, Biodiesel and Renewable diesel and he is one of the most engaging lecturers in the Faculty of Engineering.

Joani Bijzet, another NWU trained Chemical Engineer who, after completing her Master's degree studies in Chemical Engineering from the North-West University in 2017, Joani Bijzet joined Anglo American through their flagship graduate programme, BLAST (Building Leaders and Shaping Talent). During her studies at North-West University, she had the opportunity to be part of the International NWU Solar Car Team and held various leadership positions – a definite launching pad for her career in Anglo American. Caitlin van der Merwe current Master's degree student in Chemical Engineering then guided the girls through a hands-on project... using baking to explain WHY PROCESSES MATTER.

On 11 August, the girls were hosted by the School of Electrical, Electronic and Computer Engineering with Prof Johann Holm who is an Electronics Engineer focussing on electronic product development for various different sectors introducing the girls to the three programmes presented within the School. Mrs A van Coller, an Electrical and Electronic Engineer currently working at Sasol joined as an industry speaker.

Finally, current Master's degree student Ian Thomson, guided the girls through a hands-on project of writing their own computer game.

On 12 August the girls were hosted by the School of Industrial Engineering. Mia Mangaroo-Pillay is a dedicated and hardworking Industrial Engineering lecturer, who strongly values communication and ethics. She firmly supports the idea that the correct systems can solve the majority of problems, showcased within any industry. She is currently researching the cultural implications of Lean, within the Operational Excellence field of Industrial Engineering. Joining the conversation from industry was Mrs Lize Pieters who graduated from the NWU in 2018. She is currently working in the Technology & Strategy area at Deloitte, with the main focus on IT Operations, IT Service Management and Enterprise Architecture.

To make the experience more tangible, Mia helped the girls see how the simple act of making coffee can be used to understand what Industrial Engineers do in practice.

On the fifth and final day of Femmegineering 2021, the girls paid a visit to the School of Mechanical Engineering that present the programmes in Mechanical and Electromechanical Engineering. They were introduced to the School's competence in thermodynamics and advanced manufacturing (3D printing, extrusion technology and lightweight structures) by a Senior lecturer, Dr M du Toit, who obtained degrees in Chemical Engineering, a Master's in Nuclear Engineering and a PhD in Nuclear Engineering.

Joining as an industry speaker was Mrs Marne van Niekerk who studied Mechanical Engineering and completed her master's degree at the NWU. She fell in love with thermodynamics in her second year and have a passion for energy in all shape and forms; renewable energy, thermal energy and energy efficiency.

The day ended with a hands-on project presented by Ms Karin Schutte, a current third-year mechanical engineering student who guided the girls to draw a snowman in 3D and then have it 3D printed by the Faculty.

### **3.2.4 Philosophy and Gender**

The Faculty of Humanities used a webinar format to consider gender as it relates to philosophy. The topics included:

Gender in philosophy: How far have we come? – Prof. C Gray: This talk gave a broad overview of gender-related issues in philosophy, tackling issues like representation in curricula and conferences; citational politics; theoretical developments and persistent obstacles.

Women in environmental philosophy – Dr Y Coetzer: It is no secret that philosophy has, for literal millennia, been a male-dominated field, and the relatively young field of environmental philosophy is no different. In this talk, however, she aimed to highlight the contributions of women philosophers to environmental philosophy, showing how the contributions of women have been necessary to grow the related fields known as ‘ecofeminism’ and ‘eco-womanism’. This talk showed how these scholars have challenged the patriarchal assumptions inherent in the field, and how their perspectives differ from the dominant male voices.

Queerness and the digital frontier – Dr J du Toit: In his talk, Jean argued that the virtual has become a new space for ideological heteronormativity and that cyberspace increasingly plays host to insidious rhetoric that exhorts heterosexuality as a norm. However, by rethinking the virtual we may mobilise it to support and facilitate queering in contemporary societies and may positively counter such fixed heteronormative categories of social life.

Women’s (in)visibility in African Philosophy – Aïda Terblanche-Greeff: She presented that great strides have been made in the decolonisation of philosophy, with African philosophy receiving more attention. It must, however, be noted that we still have a long way to go with regards to women in African philosophy which remains in the shadows. By refocusing on female philosophers, we can significantly contribute to the global academic discussion. The presentations were well received, and there was a good engagement session at the end.

The Faculty also had a social media campaign (Facebook and Instagram) to create awareness on the GAW webinars. As a result, they had an average engagement per post of 250 – 300 people.

### **3.2.5 SCC NWU-PC diversity week: Gender equality: Legal and cultural tensions**

The event included three videos. Two videos were made by experts on the legal and cultural tensions related to gender equality in South Africa: Prof Christa Rautenbach (NWU) and Prof Deevia Bhana (UKZN). The third video included the views of NWU-PC students on the issue of gender equality in the context of legal and cultural tensions. There was a live discussion after the videos played.

Professor Rautenbach (NWU) is a well-known expert in legal pluralism and she addressed the following questions in her presentation:

1. What is the Constitutional position about gender equality in South Africa?
2. What is the Constitutional position about traditional practices in South African, specifically those related to gender equality?
3. What are the implications of the potential tensions between the Constitutional and Traditional perspectives on gender equality?

Professor Bhana (UKZN) is the SARChI chair for Gender and Childhood Sexuality and her work focuses on the perceptions of learners and teachers in South Africa to understand how they think about, perceive and construct gender relations. She addressed the following questions in her presentation:

1. What are the beliefs about gender equality of male and female teachers in South Africa?
2. How do the beliefs about gender equality of male and female teachers relate to Constitutional and to Traditional values?

3. What are the implications of the potential tensions between the Constitutional and Traditional perspectives on gender equality?

The views of some NWU-PC students on the matter were included in a third video recording. The students (there were 8 participants) were asked to reflect on the following 2 questions:

1. Traditionally, what role do the man and the women play in South Africa?
2. In the Constitutional era, is there gender equality? If not, why? If yes, why?

The following ideas were discussed during the live discussion:

- The participants felt that South Africa made great strides towards Gender Equality, referring to the leading role that South African laws play in enshrining equality in the workplace, for example.
- However, it was acknowledged that as long as there remains gender-based violence and gender-based murders in South Africa, we cannot stop talking about gender equality.
- The idea that culture is dynamic was discussed. There has been progress towards gender equality in South Africa – this is evidence that cultural views about gender can change and are changing.
- One of the most important notions that emerged was that we should have conversations about gender in our homes and in our networks. While we speak about gender equality, we shape our views and there is the potential for these views to change.
- The idea that culture is not monolithic was discussed. There is a lot of diverse ideas about gender within broader cultures (also in extended families).
- It was also agreed that we should have respectful conversations about gender equality and be open-minded.

In conclusion, the idea was raised that the perspective of religious and cultural leaders on gender equality could be a productive, albeit very sensitive, topic as a focus for the SCC-PC Diversity week in 2022.

### **3.2.6 NWU GAW Virtual presentation: Art, LGBTQ+ equality and the Constitution**

This presentation explored how queer rights are visualised at South Africa's highest court, through artworks that form part of the Constitutional Court Art Collection (CCAC) that speak to LGBTQ+ and gender issues. The equality clause in the Constitution and related landmark Constitutional Court cases for LGBTQ+ equality was also addressed. The notion of inclusive spaces was also touched on, including the architectural design of the Constitutional Court and the work and exhibitions of the NWU Gallery.

The presenter was Francois Lion-Cachet, who completed his LLB and LLM at the NWU, and he is a former public programme coordinator at the NWU Gallery who has since 2018 worked as assistant curator at the Constitutional Court Trust, custodian of the Constitutional Court Art Collection (CCAC). His research interests include how constitutional democracy is visualised in South Africa and what this aesthetic conception means for our understanding and the deliverance of justice. He is part of the NWU Gender Benefit Network, of which a delegation met with LGBTQ+ rights champion Justice Edwin Cameron at the Constitutional Court in 2019.

### **3.2.7 Meet NWU women in STEM (throughout August 2021)**

The event included five videos.

- Prof Leenta Grobler, Engineering: Motivational message to all females who wish to pursue a career in the sciences  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bn-agcmmky4>
- Mrs Mia Mangaroo-Pillay, Industrial Engineering: Inspirational message for young girls who wish to pursue a career as an engineer  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgJ4\\_6-h1p4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xgJ4_6-h1p4)
- Prof Sithandiwe Mazibuko-Mbeje, Physical and Chemical Sciences - Accomplishments and a message to our youth  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clgMi-CbdYE>
- Dr Christine Taljaard-Krugell, Nutrition - Optimum nutrition for all  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqOvDEvDRxY>

- Mrs Martine Vorster, Pharmacy - The Reality of Intangibles (The Role of Gender in Mental Health)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xykQ2ya\\_GSs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xykQ2ya_GSs)

### 3.2.8 Personal Care Charity Drive

In association with the Faculty of Health Sciences and Humanities, all FNAS and FHS ASA/SC's over all three campuses to run a charity drive from mid-June to end of July. The objective was to collect various female toiletries, focusing specifically on sanitary products, for girls in disadvantaged Schools in our communities.

### 3.3 CONCLUSION

The existence of Race, Gender and Language Awareness Weeks at the NWU are vitally important to realise NWU values as espoused in our Strategy, yet we fear that the importance is lost on those who need the awareness and sensitivity most. How to address this within the curriculum remains a challenge. Many of the participants in this year's program emphasized their appreciation for the efforts of the NWU in the sessions that were organized for GAW 2021.

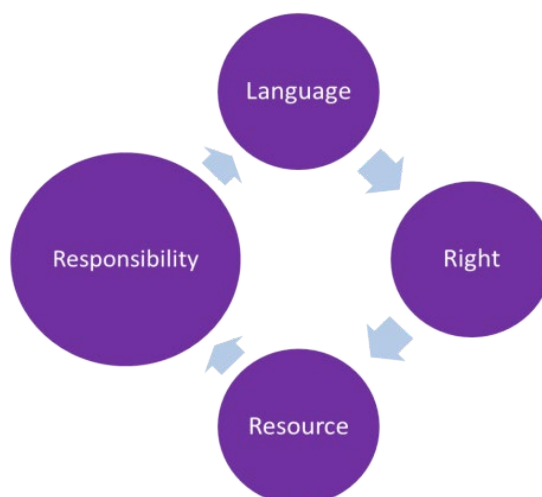
## 4. LANGUAGE AWARENESS WEEK



### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The NWU is proud of its multilingualism. It depicts our beautiful cultural diversity, enabling us to broaden our horizon, grow in respect for one another and renew our ideas. While it is true that we come from different backgrounds and speak different languages, it is also true that language brings us all closer.

Based on work done by Ricento and Hornberger (1996), our theme for this week of celebrating multilingualism at the NWU was Language as a Right, a Resource and a Responsibility.



## 4.2 EVENT OVERVIEW

The School for Language Education (SLE) in the Faculty of Education hosted this event in coordination with the Faculty of Humanities, the Language Directorate and other faculties. On the one hand the organising committee focused on the celebration of different languages represented across the campuses of the NWU and on the other, on the celebration of unity across linguistic borders based on the fact that in the South African context people may typically use multiple languages interchangeably and in strategic ways to make meaning (Wildsmith-Cromarty & Balfour, 2019:296). This notion manifested at the start of each morning session in the welcoming message of one of our multilingual junior lecturers, Ms Shereen Mogorosi. Ms Mogorosi embraced the opportunity to share her passion for the different languages that are part of her linguistic repertoire. Monday's message was focused on all languages of South Africa, probing the attendees on the use of languages. Tuesday focused on language as a unifying symbol/tool similarly to music and sport. Wednesday's message concerned proverbs that are only beautiful and unique to us as South Africans. On Thursday the beauty of words that are only understood by South Africans no matter where we find ourselves in the world was highlighted, and on Friday the focus was on how languages unite us.

We furthermore identified the importance of including the student voice and launched a variety of competitions and events for students to take part in before the start of the live event.

## 4.3 STUDENT COMPETITIONS AND EVENTS

Dr Salomé Romylos took responsibility for the following:

### Voices

The subject group English for Education has been compiling a booklet, called *Voices*, since 2015 as part of an effort to encourage creative writing among our students. In preparation for LAW 2021, the initiative was open to all 3 subject groups of the SLE in the Faculty of Education, including Afrikaans for Education and African Languages for Education. Students were requested to write their own poems and short stories on a specific topic. These poems could have any chosen structure without exceeding one page; whereas the short stories had to be no longer than 1000 words. In our adjudication, we looked at aspects like adherence to theme, creativity, use of diction, figures of speech and other stylistic devices. We found that there was a dire need for students to express themselves creatively, and we have had various themes, such as hope, animals, unity, COVID-19, artificial intelligence and this year, which actually builds on last year, Adaptation. The work of the students sheds light on their thoughts and feelings and their resilience during turbulent times. This is also an opportunity for prospective teachers to acquire skills in creative writing in order to motivate their learners to write once they are in the profession.

All suitable submissions are included in the electronic booklet, which is available on the NWU website. Lecturers from all campuses were asked to be adjudicators so that we could ensure that the process was fair and transparent.

This event was very successful and the end product is testament to it. The submissions of students are of a high quality and they participated with vigour and enthusiasm. Lecturers got insight into their worlds. This is a way of attending to the affective development of our students.

The winners received prizemoney that was paid over into their student accounts. Winners were as follows:

English Poetry: 1. Meagan Marcus: Musings of a millennial 2. Shimoné Nel: Adaptation 3. Juandré Nell: Unyielding

English Short stories: 1.Carolynn Brunsdon: My 10 days 2. Gerco Wagenaar: I am a peppered moth 3. Amoré van der Merwe: We will adapt and overcome, like we always do

African languages: Setswana Poko: 1. Maida Pietersen: Tlwaelo ya botselo jwa segompiano

Setswana Thothokiso: 1. Thabang Bala: Lefu se qeta maphelo

isiZulu Ubunkondlo: 1. Thenjiwe Radebe: Ukujwayelo komfundi omusha esikoleni

isiZulu Dikgangkhutshwe: 1. Setswana : Primrose Mooketsi: Ke bone ka nna!

Afrikaans gedigte:1. S.M. Theron: Jan tuisbly

Afrikaans kortverhale:1. Ernst Nebe: Ons kyk anders

#### Celebration of different languages video

Students, here had to create a video of no longer than one and a half minute (90 seconds) where they recite or rap or say a short speech about their language. This could include, among other things, their thoughts and feelings about their language or languages, how their language can be seen as a tool for communication and reconciliation, and interesting facts about their language. They could use only their home language or a combination of languages. This could be an individual, pair or group effort. Staff members from the subject groups English-, Afrikaans- and Setswana and African languages also contributed and made videos. This was a fun activity and greatly contributed to bring some comic relief to more serious sessions as these were played every morning prior to sessions. Messrs Johan Zerwick and Lebohang Mathibela were asked to adjudicate this competition.

This was a successful endeavour. Students and staff alike enjoyed making these short videos. There were also used to kindle interest every morning before sessions. The collaboration among different students was also very positive.

The four winners of prizemoney were as follows:

Celebration of different languages video:

1. Afrikaans: Khali Young
2. English: Frances Bredekamp
2. Setswana: Lesego Motlhankane
3. Sesotho: Mosia Monare

#### Translation of audio recording

Staff members of mainly the SLE and a few others made an audio recording where they have a discussion about different languages in a very natural way. These languages include: Setswana, Sepedi, isiZulu, Afrikaans, English, Greek, Portuguese and German. The main aim was to get students to listen to the conversation and recognise their lecturers and then attempt to translate the entire text into English. Another aim was to for students and staff that it is possible to have meaningful conversations with persons speaking other languages and that we can learn from one another.

The main aim was to focus on our diversity in languages, and for students and staff to see how we can have meaningful conversations around language. This initiative should not have been a competition as it was quite a daunting task to translate the entire dialogue into English. However, as mentioned, the main aim was to listen and see the ease of communicating among staff members while speaking 8 different languages, both local and international.

A PowerPoint Presentation was made including the photos of the winners in each category. The students were invited to the closing ceremony and they expressed their gratitude for having been able to participate in these competitions.

An event was organised by Mr Leroux Malan inviting students to contribute co-curricular terminology from student life in four languages: Afrikaans, English, Setswana and Sesotho. This list was added to the LAW 2021 website and is available at

[https://www.nwu.ac.za/sites/www.nwu.ac.za/files/files/calendar/2021/Student-Life-Co-Curricular-Terminology\\_digital.pdf](https://www.nwu.ac.za/sites/www.nwu.ac.za/files/files/calendar/2021/Student-Life-Co-Curricular-Terminology_digital.pdf)

#### **4.4 PROGRAMME AND ATTENDANCE**

Details of the event (e.g. the programme) are available here: <https://www.nwu.ac.za/language-awareness->

week-2021. In the table below the programme, theme and number of registrations and number of eventual attendants for each GAW 2021 session can be found.

Date	Theme	Registration (#)	Attendees (#)
<b>13 September 10:00 – 12:00</b>	Live session: Presentation on Language Portraits	123	31
<b>13 September 14:00 – 16:00</b>	Live session: Discussion of language portraits that have been completed and submitted	123	31
<b>14 September 2021 10:00 – 12:00</b>	Pre-recorded session: “Authors’ Day” in collaboration with NB publishers.	59	48
<b>14 September 2021 14:00 – 16:00</b>	Live session: Writing and publishing in African Languages.	35	21
<b>15 September 2021 10:00 – 12:00</b>	Live session: The TRC from the perspective of the interpreter/translator  Input from panel members, panel discussion and Q&A	44	38
<b>15 September 2021 14:00 – 16:00</b>	Pre-recorded session:  How language is used to manipulate  Live and pre-recorded session Puisano le Lesego Motlhankane / In conversation with Lesego Motlhankane, BEd III student winner of AVBOB literary award.	44	38
<b>16 September 2021 10:00 – 12:00</b>	Live session: Presentation on Multilingual Pedagogies.	52	30
<b>16 September 2021 14:00 – 16:00</b>	Pre-recorded session: Showcasing work done by lecturers on MP	48	30
<b>17 September 2021 10:00 – 12:00</b>	Live session: BAQONDE PROJECT  Sharing video recordings followed by live panel discussion	55	36
<b>17 September 2021 14:00 – 16:00</b>	Live session: Wrapping up the week.  Announcing winners of Voices, winners of ‘My Language’ competition, winners of student translations of academic concepts.	55	48
<b>Total unique attendees over 5 days</b>			<b>120</b>

The final editing of the sessions needs to be done before uploading it to YouTube and the website for general viewing. We received the recordings of the sessions in separate cuts and these cuts need to be edited in a continuous video. This will be done as soon as possible. The rendering process for the video editing is time-consuming but will be completed as soon as possible. As an example of what will be uploaded, the videos of Monday 13 September, 2021 have been completed.

Monday 13 September, 10:00: <https://youtu.be/QW1qwPAaxZc>

Monday 13 September, 14:00: <https://youtu.be/8--XhWluLAc>

This week in September proved to be an extremely busy week on the university calendar. This posed an additional challenge for interested parties to commit their attendance of and engagement during sessions on the LAW programme. NWU Corporate Communications assisted with great enthusiasm to advertise

the events, yet the attendance of certain sessions was dismally low. We trust that making the material available on YouTube after the event, will reach more people and will raise awareness of the use and role of languages at the NWU and in the wider South African context. All of the live sessions lead to interesting and stimulating discourse – it is a pity that these could not be attended by more people.

## **4.5 OVERVIEW OF SESSIONS**

### **4.5.1 MY LANGUAGE PORTRAIT EXPERIENCE**

#### EVENT DETAILS

**Facilitators: Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy and LeRoux Malan**

Date and time slots on LAW 2021 programme: Monday, 13 September 2021, 10:00 – 12:00 (session 1); Monday, 13 September 2021, 14:00 – 16:00 (session 2)

#### PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE SESSION

The purpose of the session was to provide an opportunity for participants in the LAW 2021 to reflect on their multilingual repertoires with the help of the creation of language portraits. The aim of the session was to help set the tone for the language awareness sessions that would follow during the rest of the week and to inform the participants of the NWU's multilingual language policy.

#### MAIN ACTIVITIES

##### Session 1:

In session 1, an overview was presented about the status of multilingualism across the world, in South Africa and at NWU. The focus was on making participants aware of the different roles and functions played by languages in the repertoires of multilingual people. After the overview, participants were informed how to create a language portrait and were invited to create their own language portraits to use in the reflection session in the afternoon. Participants were provided with digital materials to complete their own language portraits, and were invited to submit their own language portraits should they wish to do so.

##### Session 2:

In session 2, the language profiles of participants were discussed. These language profiles were based on a quantitative questionnaire circulated prior to the sessions to the group of participants who had confirmed their attendance. After the language profiles, a reflective discussion followed where participants reviewed their own language portraits as guided by the facilitators. The reflective conversation included the discussion of some pre-session language portraits and encouragement by the facilitators for participants to view their own portraits and to reflect on the roles and functions that the languages in their repertoires play.

With the reflection as background, the facilitators shared an audio file with participants which illustrated how language terminology can be developed in African languages in a practical and intellectual manner. This was followed by a discussion of the NWU's multilingual language policy and focused on multilingual policy arrangements in the Teaching and Learning domain, as well as in the Student Life domain.

#### Outcome of the event

The sessions were attended by 31 participants who all participated actively. Many participants voiced their surprise at the complexity of their own language profiles and portraits. Participants were of the view that creating a language portrait is a fun and very effective way to reflect on the roles and functions of languages in their repertoires. Participants also stated that they understand more clearly why the NWU opted for a multilingual language policy and how the implementation of this policy is possible and beneficial for teaching and learning and social cohesion at the NWU.

### **4.5.2 AUTHORS' DAY**

#### EVENT DETAILS

**Facilitator: Ms Carmen du Plessis**

Date and time slot on LAW 2021 programme: Tuesday 14 September 2021, 10:00 – 13:00 (session 1).



## PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE SESSION

To highlight the availability of dictionaries for the promotion of African languages in the Foundation Phase and the Intermediate Phase. Raising awareness of published texts in the genre of young adult literature.

The subject group Afrikaans for Education, Faculty of Education, in collaboration with NB Publishers, presented an online writers' day as part of the NWU's Language Awareness Week. The presentations were in Afrikaans and English to support multilingualism. Although the presentations were online, good interaction was created in the audience by the facilitator, Ms Carmen du Plessis. What contributed to the cozy atmosphere of the Writers' Day were the ten draws for book prizes. The book prizes were sponsored by NB Publishers.

The aim of the Writers' Day was to involve teachers, students and subject advisers for the sake of creating an interest group for Afrikaans, but also for multilingualism and the promotion of reading.

Session 1 = Delana Fourie, Pharos lexicographer, talked about the bilingual dictionary for the Foundation Phase (Afrikaans and English), as well as the Setswana and Sesotho dictionaries.

Session 2 = Carin Krahtz, the compiler of the short story collection *Ingonyama en ander maats met leueharte*, talked about this collection and conducted interviews with co-authors Nelia Engelbrecht and Cecilia Steyn.

Session 3 = Helen Moffett introduced the English short story collection that she compiled with the title: *Going wild and other stories*.

Session 4 = Constant van Graan discussed his trilogy *Jungu Josh*. The theme music, the creation of a new language and the map of Kalimba testify to the multimodal nature of this trilogy.

Session 5 = Henk Viljoen from NB Publishers presented on the value of picture books in the classroom.

The Authors' Day was definitely a huge success. The virtual nature of such a day will definitely be explored in future.

### 4.5.3 WRITING AND PUBLISHING IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES

#### EVENT DETAILS

**Facilitator: Mr Kaka Mokakale**

Date and time slot on LAW 2021 programme: Tuesday, 14 September 2021, 14:00 – 16:00.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE SESSION

The purpose of this Session was to hear from different experts about the writing, publishing and distribution of creative texts in African Languages. The aim was to provide information to students as potential writers in African languages. Stories of successful authors were shared. The young student writer from the NWU, Mr Lesego Motlhankana, a prizewinner of the AVBOB poetry competition, contributed to motivating students to start working on creative outputs in African languages.

Panellists responded to the following four questions: (*Panellists were Prof Shole Shole of the NWU and Ms Gobonamang Mookapilo of Sol Plaatje University*)

- How can the language policies of public HEIs support the development of literary texts in African languages?
- In your view, what are the main reasons for the lack of creative texts in African languages?
- What can be done to ensure that more texts are generated, marketed and purchased?
- How does Repatriation benefit the growth and development of African texts?

#### ○ THE TRC FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE INTERPRETER

#### EVENT DETAILS

**Facilitators: Susan Coetzee-Van Rooy and Johan Blaauw**

**Expert panel members: Lebohang Mathibela and Johan Blaauw**

Date and time slot on LAW 2021 programme: *Wednesday, 15 September 2021 (10:00 – 12:00)*

#### PURPOSE AND AIM OF THE SESSION

The purpose of this session was to highlight the importance of interpretation at the historical event of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa. The session linked to the LAW 2021 themes in that it highlighted the ideas of languages as rights (embodied in the rights of TRC participants to use their home languages when they contributed), resources (embodied in sharing the experiences of 2 TRC interpreters that used their multilingualism and interpretation abilities as resources that made it possible for TRC participants to effectively exercise their rights to use their home languages during proceedings) and responsibilities (highlighting the responsibility of bodies like the TRC to facilitate the use of home languages in the proceedings). The aim of the session was to provide information about the TRC and the important roles played by interpreters to the next generation who might not be knowledgeable about this important event in South African history; and to inspire the interpreters of the future to continue with honing their skills.

#### MAIN ACTIVITIES

The session consisted of 4 activities:

1. The facilitator introduced the TRC and the role of interpreters to the participants. A brief video clip was played to provide participants with examples of reporting and the type of hearings that happened during TRC event.
2. A pre-recorded video was played where the facilitator interviewed Lebohang Mathibela, who played an important role in the recruitment and training of TRC interpreters with the colleagues at the UFS centre where he worked at that stage. He responded to the following questions during the interview:
  - Who were the TRC interpreters and translators, and how were they sourced?
  - What can you tell us about the TRC logistics?
  - What types of hearings were held by the TRC?
  - Upon reflection many years later, how did involvement with the TRC shape you / transform you as an interpreter/translator?
3. A live session followed where Johan Blaauw provided background details to the participants about the rationale for the TRC, the duration of its activities and details of types of hearings that took place. He also shared experiences from his own TRC interpretation and his understanding on the value of the TRC today.
4. The concluding session was a Q&A session where participants could ask questions to the panellists (Lebohang Mathibela and Johan Blaauw). This was a lively conversation where the panellists answered such questions as: did the audience ever correct your interpretation at the TRC; how did your involvement in the TRC influence your career as interpreter; what do you think is the status of the TRC in South African history?

#### OUTCOME OF THE EVENT

The session was attended by 38 participants. The session ended where especially younger participants expressed their surprise at the history of the TRC, which they were unaware of. Furthermore, the interpreters in the audience expressed their appreciation and gratitude to the two panellists for sharing their personal interpretation experiences at the TRC, as this provided a lot of insight into the nature and challenges of interpretation at these high-stake events. Overall, the approach to discuss the TRC from the perspective of the interpreters was perceived as a novel and worthwhile experience by the audience.

- **TOPIC 2: In conversation with Lesego Motlhankane, BEd III student winner of AVBOB literary award.**

#### EVENT DETAILS

**Facilitator: Dr Dolly Dlavane**

Date and time slot on LAW 2021 programme: Wednesday, 15 September (Topic 1: 14:00 – 14:25; TOPIC 2: 14:25 – 16:00)

**Topic 1: Presented by Prof Liberty Hove**

An audio presentation was pre-recorded. Prof. Hove focused on the manipulative use of languages in different situations and spaces.

**Topic 2: Presented by Lesego Motlhankane and Kacelo Duncan Kgatea**

A live presentation was combined with a pre-recorded video. The session was about showcasing the BEd III Setswana student, Lesego Motlhankane, who won the first prize for Setswana Poetry in the 2020 AVBOB Competition for Poetry and the North West Setswana Spelling Bee Competition. Mr Kabelo Duncan Kgatea, an experienced and respected Setswana author, published an anthology of poetry with Lesego, after the competitions.

Lesego Motlhankane was asked to respond to the following questions:

1. Please tell us about the all the literary competitions that you entered since your started your studies at the NWU.
2. Let us begin with the AVBOB Literary Awards (poetry) then the Setswana Spelling Bee. How did you know about these competitions?
3. For which of your poems did you win the first prize? Can you share with the audience what you think could have made you win the first prize?
4. Spelling is a challenge to most Setswana students. What contributed to you winning the competition?
5. Why would you say poetry may not be appreciated by the average student?
6. There are other literary genre. Why did you choose to write poems?
7. What do you think is important to the poet in writing poetry?
8. You have published your anthology called *Pitsana ya Poko* (Pot of Poetry) with the distinguished Setswana author, Mr Kgatea. This is interesting as you are only a third-year student. Can you share your experiences about meeting with Mr Kgatea, working with him and finally publishing an anthology with him?
9. Can you share your experiences in publishing a Setswana literary text. Was it a smooth ride? If there were challenges, can you share them with the audience?
10. Share with us what you have learnt from the process – starting to write, finding yourself with Mr Kgatea and publishing.
11. We live in modern times which affect the language proficiency of most African Languages students. This is a concern since these students are going to be teachers of Setswana in 2023. As a young writer and student teacher, what do you think can be done to attract students to love their home languages, use them, and participate in developing them.
12. As a developing writer, where do you see yourself in five years?
13. Which of your poems are closer to your heart? Justify.
14. Can you recite one of them?

The interview was followed by a pre-recorded session that Dr Dlavane had with Lesego before LAW resumed. After the pre-recorded video play, Dr Dlavane invited Mr Kgatea to join in the interviews to share with the audience his experiences in writing and producing an anthology. He was also requested to indicate which areas of the BEd poetry modules he thought should be focused on.

Lesego Motlhankane's work will be available on Youtube shortly after LAW 2021.

- **MULTILINGUAL PEDAGOGIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

#### EVENT DETAILS

**Facilitators: Dr Kotie Kaiser and Dr Dolly Dlavane**

Date and time slots on LAW 2021 programme: Thursday, 16 September 2021, 10:00 – 12:00 (session 1); Thursday, 16 September 2021, 14:00 – 16:00

**Morning Session: Multilingual Pedagogies in Higher Education:**

This session combined a pre-recorded presentation on the U-shaped model for discourse presented by Prof. Wildsmith-Cromarty, Prof Reyneke, Dr Dolly Dlavane and Dr Kotie Kaiser and responses from Prof Theo du Plessis from UFS and Prof Langa Khumalo from SADILAR on issues related to the role and application of multilingual pedagogies in Higher Education. A panel, consisting of Dr Dolly Dlavane and Dr Kotie Kaiser (from NWU) as well as Dr Nomakhosazana Rasana (from NWU) discussed the following topics in response to the pre-recordings:

- Multilingual pedagogies as a feasible option to promote multilingualism in Higher Education;
- The role of different languages in student learning;
- Utilising multilingual repertoires during lectures;
- African languages as academic languages.

For the last 30 minutes of the session, participants joined a table of their choice and interacted with three lecturers from the NWU who took part in the short course on Multilingual Pedagogies for lecturers in 2019/2020. Mrs Danel Kruger focused on how she utilised GSuite and Mentimeter to promote multilingualism during online teaching in her Business Studies class while Mrs Erika Potgieter focussed on utilising multilingual SI facilitators and translators to scaffold assessment in a Mathematics classroom, and Ms Chantelle Kruger discussed the use of language portraits to understand the student profile better and to promote awareness of multilingualism among students.

The session was attended by academics and postgraduate students from several language backgrounds and contexts, and they engaged with the topics during the panel discussion as was evident from the comments and suggestions in the chat box. There was a lively discussion about language as responsibility of the speakers and the importance of raising awareness and presenting students with options and examples of the benefits of a multilingual repertoire in the course of their learning.

**Afternoon session: Showcasing of multilingual pedagogies at the NWU**

This session showcased short, pre-recorded presentations by lecturers from NWU, CUNY and Texas University who are currently utilising different multilingual pedagogies in their classrooms. Each recording was viewed and aspects of the application of multilingual pedagogies in Higher Education were discussed. These aspects included:

- The relevance of specific strategies to different contexts in Higher Education;
- The ease and effectiveness with which the showcased strategies can be utilised in a blended environment;
- The challenges of applying strategies that did not work and adapting your teaching accordingly;
- The role of certain strategies to utilise the multilingual repertoires of staff members;

Prof Nico van der Merwe from the School of Accounting Sciences at the NWU and his colleagues discussed their project on utilising translated PPT voice-overs in the training of accountants. Dr Alyssa Cavazos from the University of Texas discussed how she utilised students' Spanish repertoires in a writing class and Prof Lucy McNair and Prof Leigh Garrison-Fletcher at the City University of New York discussed how they trained lecturers in utilising diverse languages across the curriculum in their Language Across the Curriculum course for lecturers. Mrs Erika Potgieter from the Vaal Campus of the NWU discussed her use of translation and student facilitation to scaffold assessment in her Mathematics classes and Ms Chantelle

Kruger, an Afrikaans lecturer in the School for Language talked about the value of utilising language portraits to get to know the students and to promote awareness of the benefits of multilingualism in classes. Mrs Danel Kruger discussed how she used the GSuite and Mentimetre in her Business Studies classes for contact and distance students in her online teaching during the Covid pandemic. Lastly, Prof Alfred Brunsdon discussed how the Faculty of Theology went about implementing the language policy and shared an idea on developing terminology from the bottom up in a faculty.

There were 30 participants during this session and it was less interactive than the morning session, but attendees still commented in the chat box and expressed their interest in and respect for lecturers who are piloting different strategies and sharing their experiences to promote multilingual teaching in Higher Education.

- **BAQONDE PROJECT**

#### EVENT DETAILS

**Facilitator: Prof Rosemary Cromarty-Wildsmith**

Date and time slot on LAW 2021 programme: Friday, 17 September 2021, 10:00 – 12:00

Prof Wildsmith-Cromarty introduced the session which was on the use of Multilingualism in Higher Education and the introduction of a new EU Erasmus+ funded project, BAQONDE, which is focused on supporting the use of African languages in Higher Education. A short video was then played in which the two Co-Investigators of the BAQONDE project, Dr Pedro Alvarez Mosquez (University of Salamanca, Spain) and Mr Johan Blaauw, (Language Directorate NWU) introduced the main focus of BAQONDE and the other partner institutions, which are: Groningen University, Netherlands, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland, University of KwaZulu-Natal, University of the Western Cape and Rhodes University. Their presentation focused on the main aims of BAQONDE, which is to set up African Language Development Units (ALDUS) in the partner institutions, which can then be shared with other institutions at a later stage; materials and resources development in the African languages and training of both African language teachers and teachers of multilingual pedagogies. The longer term aim of the project is to create a wash-back effect to schools, where the African languages need to be far more visible. The session then moved to pre-recordings by invited experts of their responses to three questions:

- In your opinion, in which ways can the African languages be used for learning and teaching in the academic domain at tertiary level?
- If they can be used, then which varieties should be used at tertiary level: the so-called “standard” varieties developed by Language Boards or Bodies, or the less formal but more familiar varieties that students (and some of their lecturers) use at home and in their communities?
- What place or role does Afrikaans have in the academic domain at tertiary level?

The experts who answered these questions were: Prof Langa Khumalo from SADIaR; Prof Coetzee-VanRooy from NWU, Dr Lolie Makhubu-Badenhorst from UKZN and Dr Dion Nkomo from Rhodes University. Three of these experts are also part of the BAQONDE project. Once the audience had listened to the responses to the three questions, the host opened up the floor to the audience and panelists for a live Q & A session. The panellists included staff and students from the NWU as follows: Prof Nico van der Merwe (School of Accounting Sciences, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, NWU), Dr Luzaan Hamilton (School of Accounting Sciences, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences), Dr Dolly Dlavane (Subject Head for African languages, Faculty of Education), Dr Matome Mabilietja (Languages department, Faculty of Education), Ms Boitumelo Swartbooi, Nicolus Thambe, Cebisile Mthethwa and Thabang Mathetha, from Languages. The discussion focused on the pre-recorded answers to the questions and also on staff and student experiences of learning and teaching through multilingual pedagogies. A lively debate ensued on the issue of standard versus non-standard varieties and how the implementation of the faculty language plans was being experienced. All in all, feedback was very positive and participants enjoyed the session. In her closing remarks, Prof Wildsmith-Cromarty thanked all the participants (presenters, panellists and audience) for their participation and stated that the implementation

of multilingualism at NWU, together with the support of the BAQONDE project which will end in November 2023, augurs well for continued support for the African languages in higher education, and, hopefully, in schools.

#### 4.6 CONCLUSION OF EVENT AND PRIZE GIVING

Prof Maryna Reyneke concluded LAW 2021 by giving an overview of events and thanked all facilitators, presenters, panel members and attendees for their contributions. The winners of the student competitions were welcomed and congratulated. Dr Romylos gave an overview of the competitions. A PowerPoint presentation with pictures of all the prize-winners was shown. Dr Kea Sheshoka did the virtual prize giving.

All presenters and attendees received badges via e-mail.

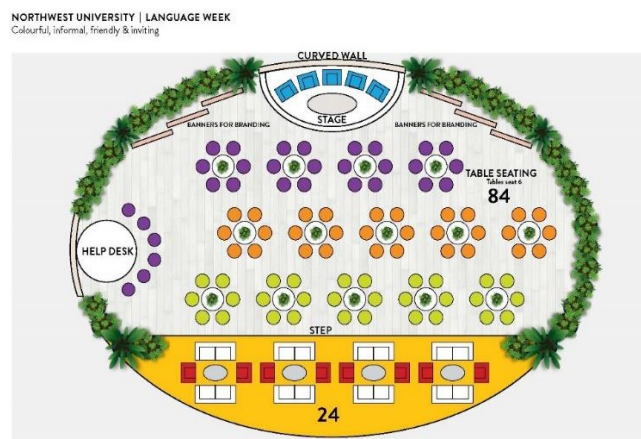


#### 4.7 LESSONS LEARNED

Planning for LAW 2021 started in June. It was an immense task to put everything together via virtual meetings. The contribution of each and every team member was vital for the successful presentation of the event. Future organising committees should take note of the following:

##### TIPS for future offerings

- ✓ For an online event, you need a reputable service provider. We used Millennium Travel from Cape Town who offered a professional platform with a variety of functionalities such as participant registration, confirmation of registration by e-mail, uploading of video and audio recordings, and activation of recordings, dry runs, direction of all sessions and statistics for each session on each day. This was the most expensive budget item. Millennium created the following floorplan for LAW 2021:



- ✓ Get a team of academics and support staff together. Assign roles.
- ✓ Select a theme and plan accordingly.
- ✓ Ensure that each person knows exactly what he/she is responsible for.
- ✓ Request the design of a banner and logo in time to be used for marketing purposes.

- ✓ Regular meetings aid in maintaining momentum with the planning of the programme.
- ✓ Clear and direct communication between all stakeholders is important. This includes Corporate Communications responsible for marketing the event.
- ✓ Facilitators/presenters also play a huge role in marketing their own sessions.
- ✓ Make recording available on YouTube afterwards.
- ✓ Incorporate the student voice.
- ✓ Ensure that the topics to be covered are pertinent.
- ✓ Plan for no more than two sessions per day.
- ✓ Obtain information on the available budget for hosting this event.

#### 4.8 CONCLUSION

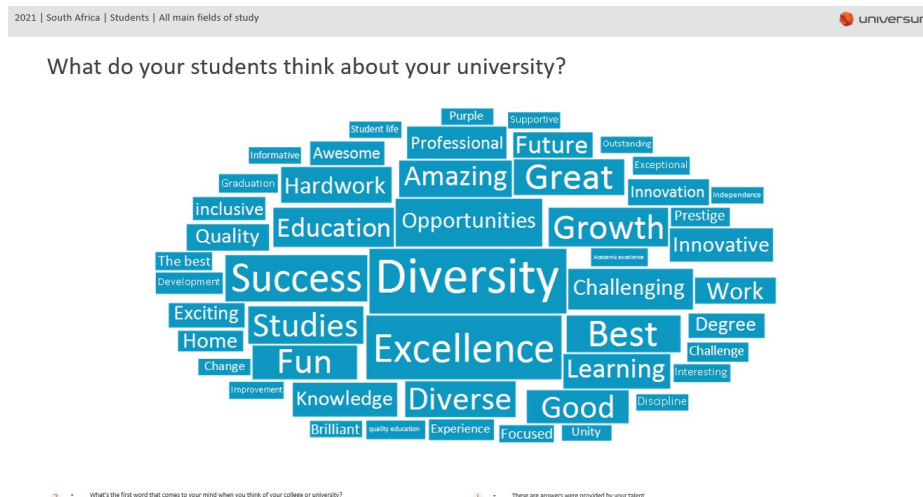
It is important for the NWU to continue to raise awareness of the importance of language at the institution and in the wider community. LAW gave us the opportunity to focus on language as a right, a resource and a responsibility. There is a sense of disappointment when one looks at the total number of attendees over the week. However, based on the positive feedback that we received from those who attended and engaged during sessions, we believe that it was worth all the time, energy and money that we spent on organising and hosting the event. The timing of the event is important but then again, it is hard to find a 'quiet week' on the NWU calendar.

Finally, the line managers of members of staff who are prepared to assist in organising/presenting/hosting LAW should note that this is a huge responsibility to be added to their workload.

Should any further assistance be required, please feel free to email Professor Maryna Reyneke at [maryna.reyneke@nwu.ac.za](mailto:maryna.reyneke@nwu.ac.za)

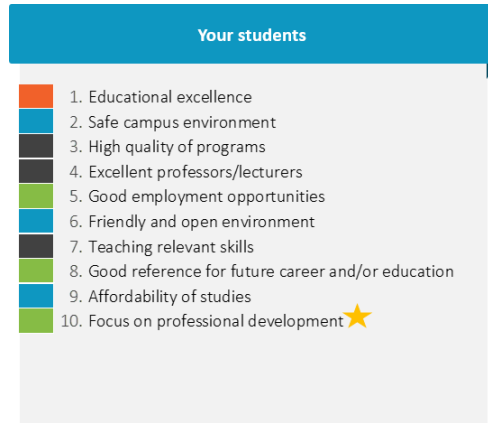
### 6. THE 2021 UNIVERSUM SURVEY: SIGNIFICANT RESULTS IN REGARD OF STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE NWU

The results of the 2021 Universum survey is another highlight to be shared in regard of how NWU students view the University during a time of tremendous challenge. The NWU sample size was significant, with 8125 NWU students engaging with the survey to provide the reassuring inputs. The NWU is proud of these results and plan to build on the ethic of care and of excellence in quality that it has become known for.



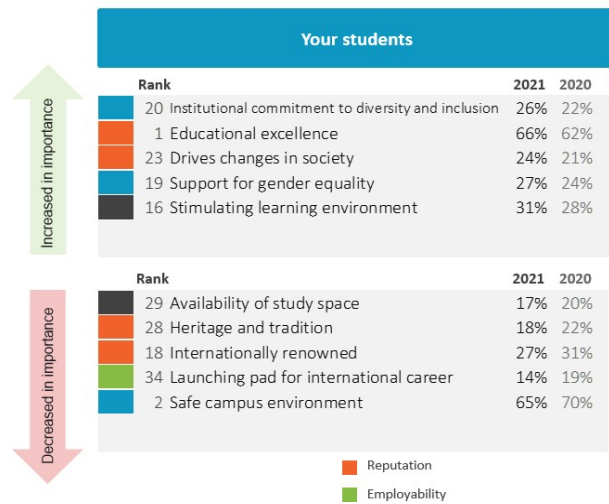
As the NWU prides itself in its endeavours to ensure a focus on both diversity and excellence, the above word cloud outcome is supportive that our efforts are not in vain.

Further aspects that came from the Universum survey results, demonstrate the most important attributes of the NWU that makes it attractive to its students:



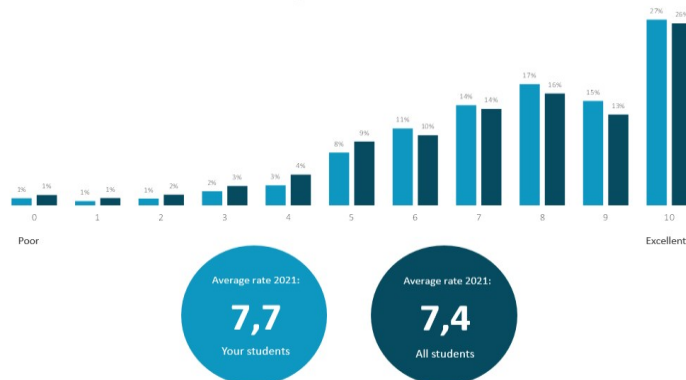
The following results in regard of the biggest changes experienced by NWU students from 2020 to 2021, is also demonstrative of the NWU ethic of care and social responsiveness, while maintaining a strong focus on academic excellence.

### The biggest changes from 2020 to 2021 - I



Also in regard of student satisfaction with the manner in which online classes were conducted in 2021, the NWU was rated as excellent. This is another testimony to the hard work of NWU academics and CTL support endeavours.

### Satisfaction with online classes during COVID-19



How satisfied are you with how your university or college handled offering online classes during the COVID-19 situation? (0 - Poor, 10 - Excellent)



Finally, NWU students also ranked the NWU among the best of the best, among the cream of the crop of South African universities when it comes to student experience and remote learning. This is according to the newly released StuDocu World University Ranking 2021.

The NWU received an impressively high remote-learning score of 9 out of 10 and ranked fourth overall in the country. The ranking survey asked current students and recent graduates to rank their universities on a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 being the lowest and 10 being the highest. This indicates the quality of NWU students' perceived experience during remote operations during the pandemic.

The StuDocu World University Ranking is different from other rankings. Although it looks at academic reputation, it also includes campus life and factors that are specifically important in the student experience. It is the first time that South African universities have been included in the ranking.

This ranking takes into account the experiences of more than 45 000 students from 1 800 universities across 30 countries. The NWU was ranked 34th in the EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa) region.

Read More: <https://bit.ly/3nu4OQH>

## **7. OTHER 2021 T-L TRANSFORMATION AND ALIGNMENT FOCI**

During 2021, the Office and Portfolio of the DVC T-L also focused specifically on the assurance that the T-L regulatory environment was reviewed to align with the approved T-L Strategy (2021-2025) and to account for the contextual realities of the Covid-19 pandemic that catapulted the University forward with regard to support strategies for improved academic integrity, in conjunction with research productivity. Academic integrity is not simply related to research, but extends to all our processes and practices as support and academic staff, and so it is important in our work going forward that we protect the University by observing its processes concerning research ethics, ethics in the classroom, and in the workplace and that we alert authorities to the risks concerning our ethics.

The revised Strategy and the changes brought about in the T-L environment by the pandemic, required a revision of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Rules, the Glossary for T-L related acronyms, and the Faculty's Integrated Teaching-Learning Plans. Together with an integrated quality assurance system, as fundamental component of our Strategy, the scope and form of our Programme and Qualification Mix will be receiving careful attention and deliberation over the next 3 years so as to ensure the best possible balance between undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications and fields of specialisation that will be most beneficial to our future student cohorts and the South African economy and communities at large.

The next section of this report offers a summary from the viewpoint of each Faculty regarding innovation, transformation and alignment matters.

## SECTION B:

# FACULTY REPORTS: TRANSFORMATION OF THE CURRICULUM AND ALIGNMENT OF THE ACADEMIC OFFERING AND THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE ACROSS CAMPUSES

## 8. FACULTY OF ECONOMIC AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES



### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

The 2021 academic year, in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (F-EMS), commenced as a fully online year in most of the programmes, with the hope of some student re-integration during the year. However, with the fluctuating levels of lockdown announced by the Government to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, bringing our students back to campus for face-to-face engagements could not materialise. Nevertheless, some of the challenges and success achieved in the Faculty were not unique to the current modality as each academic year, irrespective of the mode of delivery, do present its challenges. The following sections discuss the Faculty: (i) teaching and learning challenges, interventions, and successes; (ii) the assessment plans; (iii) staff experiences and challenges; (iv) blended/hybrid learning and innovation during the pandemic; (v) transforming by decolonising the curriculum; and (vi) unique achievements during the 2021 academic year.

### 8.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND SUCCESSES

#### 8.2.1 Challenges

- One of the most significant teaching and learning challenges F-EMS experienced in the online environment was that students did not attend and use the provided opportunities to engage lecturers during the scheduled online sessions. They also found it challenging to engage, work with, and learn in collaboration and their peers, which is fundamental to social constructive learning.
- The lack of "human interaction" and, secondly, self-discipline, were the two main challenges we experienced in 2021. Motivating remote/online students to engage with online material timeously seems to be a challenge. In general, students struggle to become self-directed in their learning endeavours, and time management is an ongoing barrier on all levels.
- The most significant miss for the 2021 first-year cohort was that there was no face-to-face orientation programme or in-person contact sessions to help the transition from School to university.
- NSFAS bursary challenges made many students register late in the first semester, influencing their progress and assessments. In turn, these late registrations put more pressure on the students to catch up on work, and a lot of these students felt overwhelmed by all the work.
- Connectivity problems and family/personal challenges had a ripple effect as many students could not submit their assignments on the due dates. In addition, many students do not have laptops, so they complete their online assessments (quizzes and tests) on their mobile phones, which is also not the ideal method of engagement with online content.

- In the School of Accounting Sciences (SAS), during the first semester, a timetable was developed with one subject per day to enable students to work systematically through online material with a lecturer, clerk or SI-leader in Zoom enabled classes, question and answer sessions, etcetera. Unfortunately, most of the students only watched the videos before assessments and felt overwhelmed with the workload.

### 8.2.2 Interventions

To mitigate these challenges, Schools have put the following interventions in place:

- A model with live online lectures via Zoom/Teams instead of pre-recorded videos/podcasts was implemented from the beginning of the second semester of 2021. The idea is to make recordings of the sessions only available for a limited time to students who had a valid reason not to attend the lecture in real-time to ensure that students get back into a routine of attending classes in a structured timetable.
- Honours classes in SAS continue in a hybrid model of limited, purposeful face-to-face contact, supplemented with online learning. This approach made a huge difference in the progress and performance of the honours students in SAS.
- Facilitation of small groups on eFundi and WhatsApp were implemented. However, it is still not as effective as peer interaction during contact classes.
- Several assessment opportunities were provided to enable students to have as much chance as possible to demonstrate competency.
- At-risk students were identified early and sent a letter requesting them to contact each lecturer. As the semester continued, these letters were followed up. In addition, students were asked to return to campus where possible to attend contact sessions or online Zoom/Team sessions facilitated by either the lecturer or a tutor. Unfortunately, the initial letter did not have the effect we hoped for, and not many students followed up with their lecturer after sending them letters.
- Supplemental instructors and tutors were appointed for complex modules (e.g. risk management).
- Schools found Zoom licences to be most helpful as students quickly mastered the use of Zoom, especially as the cell phone interface is user-friendly.
- A diversity of assessment tasks and opportunities ensured that students had ample opportunities to master the outcomes of the modules.
- Lecturers utilise the Lessons and other interactive tools on eFundi, which many did not use effectively before the start of the COVID pandemic.

### 8.2.3 Successes

The pandemic allowed the Faculty to find innovative ways to manage the teaching and learning process, communicate with their students, and develop and structure their assessments. Lecturers started to engage more frequently with their students using various eFundi tools as well as messenger tools. Furthermore, lecturers began to structure their eFundi sites to ensure students had a positive teaching and learning interface and experience. As a result, F-EMS could successfully mitigate the challenges within our means to complete the first semester of the academic year. The first semester undergraduate pass rates were 87% (MC), 92% (PC), 90% (VC), and an overall pass rate were 90% for the Faculty.

Even though the Faculty faced challenges, we managed to find solutions and even outsmarted the students who tried to manipulate the current pandemic status quo. Moreover, the assessments are becoming more geared towards a future skills focus (e.g. critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity).

## 8.3 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS

Most of the Schools within F-EMS opted for the continuous assessment approach for the 2021 academic year, except SAS and the Human Resource Development (HRD) programme in the School of Industrial

Psychology and Human Resources Management.

As assessments were amended in the first and second semester of 2020 to continue online, the 2021 academic year was no different. It took some effort from the lecturers to further adjust and improve the quality and variety of assessments online, and specifically with a view to curb academic dishonesty. In addition, students had to submit their assignments online and written tests and quizzes on either eFundi or the Cirrus online assessment platform. It was easier to ensure that outcomes were assessed at the correct NQF level and it was noticeable that staff and students had become more accustomed to the online teaching, learning and assessment modality.

The weights of each assessment opportunity were calculated according to the approved assessment plan of the School and published and communicated to students early on in each semester to allow students to manage and plan their time per assessment to maximise their success opportunities.

The SAS follows a formative/summative assessment approach (not continuous assessment) with two exam opportunities. All formal Honours assessments were conducted as sit-down assessments on campus (except those influenced by the last level 4 lockdown, which was invigilated via Zoom). The important third-year formal evaluations were conducted as sit-down assessments on campus and various UODL distance centres. All other assessments in the School were conducted as online assessments, primarily on a "remote writing" basis (i.e. by students writing out their answers and scanning and uploading their answers back onto eFundi).

The biggest challenge with assessment remains student dishonesty. The SAS is in the process of piloting the "Invigilator app" to see if this will make a difference in the curb of such dishonesty in assessments written in the online modality. This is an easy-to-use, low-data app that assists lecturers in curbing student dishonesty during an online assessment. Another challenge was continued connectivity issues/ power outages; many students struggled with uploading assessment answers in time. If students do not upload in-time on eFundi, lecturers must manually check each email for students' submissions, which remains a tedious process.

#### **8.4 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

The biggest challenge with the first-year student group was getting them on-board with online teaching and learning, via eFundi or other platforms, while they have never set foot on a campus and did not know or understand the HE environment. When the semester started, students were not comfortable with eFundi, and they were unsure how to use their eFundi credentials to access tools such as Zoom and MS Teams, and even how to find basic information. However, later in the semester, a number of interventions ensure that first-years could catch up with the assistance of lecturers, and ended the semester with success.

Even though the NWU provide data to more than 25 000 students on a monthly basis, which is extremely helpful, many students reported that they still struggled with access. It is not always easy to determine who needs what, but the NWU communicates through all its social media platforms in regard of the processes to request data and the persons to be in touch with when they struggle with connectivity issues.

Access to infrastructure (e.g. computers) and internet connection and power outages were other challenge especially to students in rural areas. The NWU invited all students back to campuses should they experience any of these challenges. Yet not all students elected to return. On-campus computer labs could also remain open in accordance with national lock-down regulations and only if these remained Covid-19 compliant. The Faculty did its best to accommodate and support students.

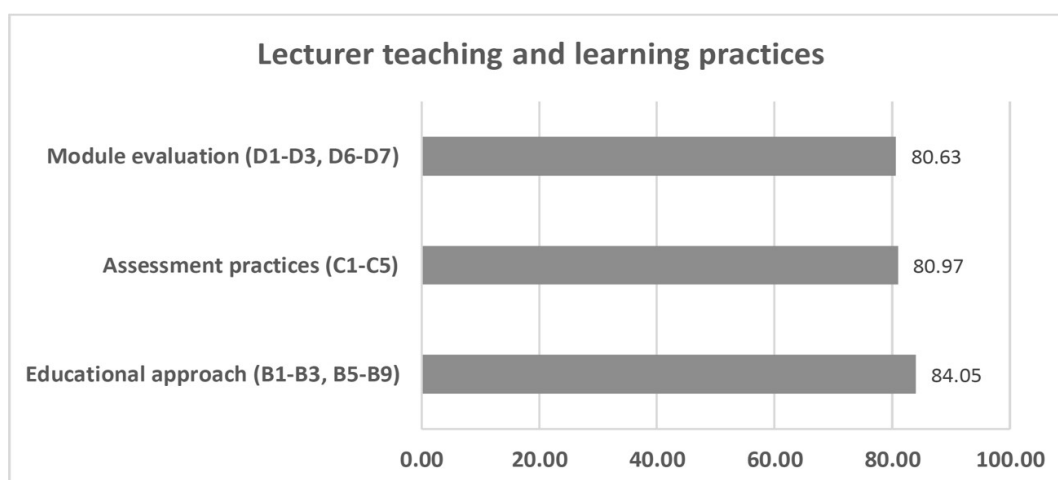
It was acknowledged that especially senior students needed to take more responsibility for managing their studies and their academic successes. Planning has become one of the much sought after transferable skills during this time of challenge, as we are well aware that students need to secure time for their studies as well as for other home chores and responsibilities in terms of taking care of siblings, the elderly and the sick.

It was therefore also recommended that lecturers emphasise to students explicitly that they should feel free to share challenges in their home environment early so we can be aware of it. Students were also made

aware of and encouraged to use the university's services in terms of counselling, time management support and other wellness initiatives free of charge.

Even though the university has made very possible provision for students to complete their academic year, many students crave the normal interaction with lecturers and miss face-to-face classes, social interaction and the overall struggle to manage their time. Therefore that Faculty planned for more purposeful contact interventions especially for students who seemed to become at risk of failing their modules. It was shocking though, to see the low uptake of these offers of assistance amongst students. Academic staff feel that students do not spend enough time working through their materials and do not prepare for virtual synchronous sessions. They sometimes attend, but often do not engage at all.

Despite the above challenges, the overall student evaluation feedback indicated a positive teaching and learning experience for F-EMS students. Figure 1 summarises the student experience: educational approach (84%), assessment practices (81%), and module evaluation (81%) in the Faculty.



**Figure 1: Student teaching and learning experience results**

### 8.5 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES

Many of our academic and support staff are experiencing fatigue as many currently cannot find a good work-life balance. In addition, lecturers are under tremendous pressure to ensure that teaching and learning run smoothly, given all the challenges students face outside the lecturers' control, like load shedding and connectivity issues. Students seem to complain more, while everything is being done to assist them with opportunities to succeed.

It takes much longer for lecturers to prepare for online facilitation. Even though the WhatsApp communication group is beneficial, it can also be exceptionally draining as it almost feels like you are working in a call centre. Students take advantage of this and send messages late at night and complain if lecturers do not respond immediately.

Teaching and learning cannot be divorced from the realities of doing research. Still, the feeling of Academic staff is that there should be a realistic balance between the expectations of teaching, learning and research during performance management evaluations.

The hard work and effort that goes into managing a successful teaching and learning programme are sometimes overlooked by management, and definitely by students. As a result, the recognition goes to the researcher instead of the excellent teacher. The general feeling amongst academic staff is that too much emphasis is placed on research and research outputs, especially during this time of extreme challenges in the T-L environment.

## **8.6 CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION**

As cross-campus alignment practices were established before emergency remote teaching and learning was required, academic staff had no problems collaborating with colleagues across campuses since the pandemic disrupted the academic environment.

Most of the modules in F-EMS are 100% aligned, and colleagues have access to each other's eFundi sites. In addition, in 2021, some Schools started with monthly meetings (per subject group), in which cross-campus collaboration was discussed and monitored.

Schools have the same assessment schedule, and students from all three campuses write the same tests simultaneously. Any challenges on one campus, i.e. power failures, are communicated to other campuses and students.

The SAS year group coordinators are also very much involved in facilitating the learning experience across the campuses to ensure that all our students, to the best of their ability, have the same experience, irrespective of the campus.

Overall, there is good interaction between the lecturers, and work is divided evenly to improve efficiency and shared workload.

## **8.7 BLENDED/HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Covid-19 created the perfect breeding ground for innovation in teaching and learning. The pandemic forced lecturers and staff to come up with innovative ideas in ensuring students have a positive teaching and learning experience, achieving the outcomes of the modules whilst maintaining the standard of teaching and learning in the Faculty. Combining synchronous face-to-face and online teaching and learning is the next challenge to be addressed as soon as lockdown levels are dropped.

Most lecturers used a combination of resources available on the eFundi platform, live Zoom classes and social media platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram. It seems as if the chatroom and forums on eFundi were not the preferred engagement methods with students. However, the use of both live interaction sessions and pre-recorded material in addition to supplementary materials proved very effective. The Business School's Potchefstroom site of delivery installed a ZOOM room. It allowed for a hybrid approach to T-L (face-to-face and online lecture attendance), which could be recorded and made available to students who cannot attend the scheduled synchronous Zoom classes.

Currently, the Faculty is creating a multi-purpose hybrid venue on the Vanderbijlpark campus, which might be duplicated on the other two campuses with lessons learnt.

## **8.8 TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM**

The module lecturer in ECON 312 included a specific section on pandemic economics to show that the curriculum is relevant and flexible to the realities around us. Lecturers in Investment Management (EKRP 611) also arranged a webinar with national experts on the effect of COVID-19 on investment and wealth in South Africa.

In modules like ECON 312 and ECON 611, attention is thus drawn to the work of a decolonial scholar, Sabelo Ndlovu Gatsheni, who calls for epistemic freedom in prioritising knowledge in the plural. The practical implication of that is that no textbook is used in any of those modules. Instead, the core content is assigned each week that might take many forms, where the lecturer explicitly explains to students that the aim is to point them to current SA bits of knowledge that exist. A similar approach is followed in various modules, including academic and news articles, book chapters, podcasts, video debates, and Twitter threads. The process also emphasised that contributions from classmates are knowledge too and that the lecturer is not the sole source of all knowledge.

In line with the decolonial approach, students in ECON 312 and ECON 611 were invited to co-create their curriculum with the lecturer. They were allowed to suggest any topic they would be interested in learning more about. These suggestions were then compiled into an eFundi poll, and students voted for whichever topic they would most like to have included. They were encouraged to gather resources on this topic and

share it, and the lecturer used this as a basis for teaching and learning. Students were also allowed to make short presentations and comments on the chosen topic. In ECON 611, students were encouraged to choose how they would like to be assessed in one of the assessments for the semester. These assignments were some of the most creative and high-quality work the lecturers received the entire semester.

The HR programmes are currently undergoing an IPE with one of the objectives to ensure the programmes are aligned with the SABPP. A new diploma in Psychometrists Training is under development as per HPCSA requirement.

## **8.9 FACULTY-SPECIFIC INITIATIVES**

Several webinars were arranged: (i) The effect of COVID-19 on investment and wealth in South Africa; (ii) The greatest economic discoveries of all times and how money made it possible; (iii) Graduate employment opportunities, the South African edition; and (iv) Work Readiness Masterclass with the National Treasury and Dananda Global Talent Solutions.

The CTA class of 2020, who wrote the SAICA (South African Institute of Chartered Accountants) Initial test of Competence (ITC) in April 2021, achieved the fourth position out of eighteen universities countrywide, with only one per cent difference between the second and fourth positions. Ninety-five per cent of the NWU's first-time candidates and 100% of the NWU's ICAN (Institute of Chartered Accountants of Namibia) first-time candidates passed the April 2021 ITC exam, against a national pass rate of seventy per cent. When all candidates are considered (not just first-time writers), the NWU achieved the third highest pass rate countrywide.

The CIMA programme invited various guest speakers to talk to our students including, Dr Frans Cronje, Roelof Swanepoel and Korsten Bezuidenhout, professionals in business who availed their time to give some valuable insight to our students. The programme also hosted a successful online employability event where various employers spoke to our students.

The Faculty, under the leadership of Michelle Groenewald, also successfully hosted the virtual Race Awareness Week.

New teaching and learning projects, namely, Digital Assessment, CoP in innovative T-L, Simulations for International Trade, Videos for Accounting, Short concept videos in different languages, Games for Tourism, Mobile Invigilator Apps were some of the initiatives F-EMS are busy with.

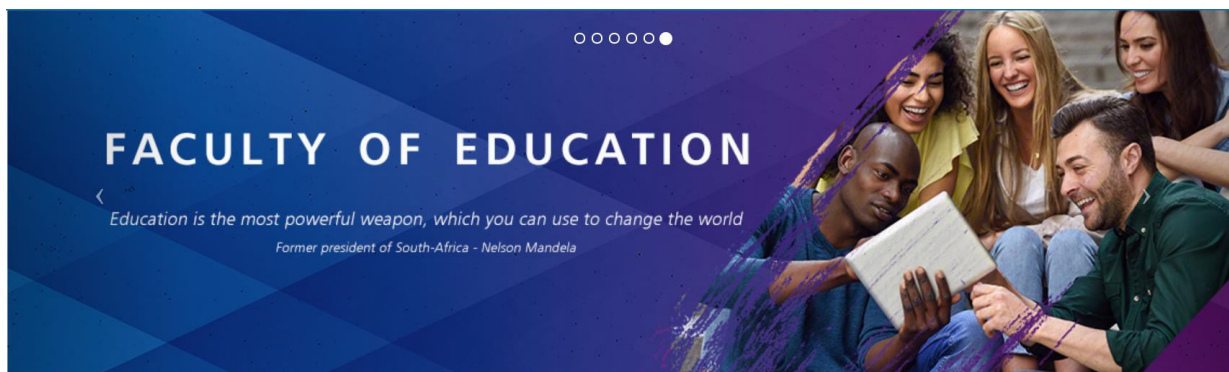
## **8.10 CONCLUSION**

Even though the 2021 academic year started with many uncertainties, the Faculty could embrace and mitigate the challenges with the necessary interventions. We explored and adopted technology to enhance the teaching and learning experience, celebrate the successes and milestones achieved during the year, and are ready to embrace the possibilities of the future.

Before COVID-19, many of the lecturers did not consider alternative methods and models of teaching and learning. However, lecturers are now more than ever ready to explore alternative modes of delivery, the integration of micro-credentials, the use of OERs, and adopt a more transformative decolonised curriculum where students became active co-creators of the curriculum in some modules.

Even though change does not occur overnight, the Faculty is putting strategies in place to live our mission to become a leading Faculty in innovative education, internationally known for its scholarship in teaching and learning in all modes of educational delivery. F-EMS is ready to embrace the future of higher education.

## 9. FACULTY OF EDUCATION



### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

In reflection, The Faculty of Education could rely on lessons learnt from emergency remote teaching, learning, and assessment in 2020 not only to empower staff with advanced knowledge and skills for more effective online programme and module delivery but also to improve the student experience of online learning in 2021. It was a relief to progressively rely less on contingency planning that arose from the initial disruptions and emergencies in March 2020 as our staff became more adept in offering a quality experience to students.

Some of the programmes in the Faculty, such as the bulk of the BEd programme continued to be delivered completely online. It was only for BEd modules with practical components that students were requested to go to their different campuses. With our paper-based programmes, such as the Grade R diploma and the ACT, we had no choice but to add online components such as communication through e-mail as the learning centres could not be accessed due to lockdown regulations.

During semester 2 of 2021, lecturers in Schools across the Faculty and campuses increased their online presence by offering more synchronous sessions through Zoom or Teams. These came with their own challenges which will be elaborated on later. There was also an increase in the offering of face-to-face (f2f) sessions in the Faculty across our campuses. Whereas during semester 1 these sessions were only scheduled for modules with practical components, during semester 2, f2f sessions were also offered to smaller groups of at-risk students and when challenges arose with particular study units in some modules. Block sessions were also presented to students registered for the BEd Foundation Phase Programme.

The information shared in this report is based on data gathered by means of an anonymous survey on Teaching and Learning in the Faculty of Education, generated on survey monkey. This survey, in which more than half of all academic staff members took part, was done at the start of Semester 2. Additional information on Teaching and Learning in the Faculty was collected from all subject group leaders during the second week of September 2021.

It should be noted that on a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 indicating that a person is not coping emotionally at all and 10 indicating that a person feels emotionally fine and in control regarding current expectations in terms of teaching, learning, and assessment), the overall score that academics in the Faculty who took the survey

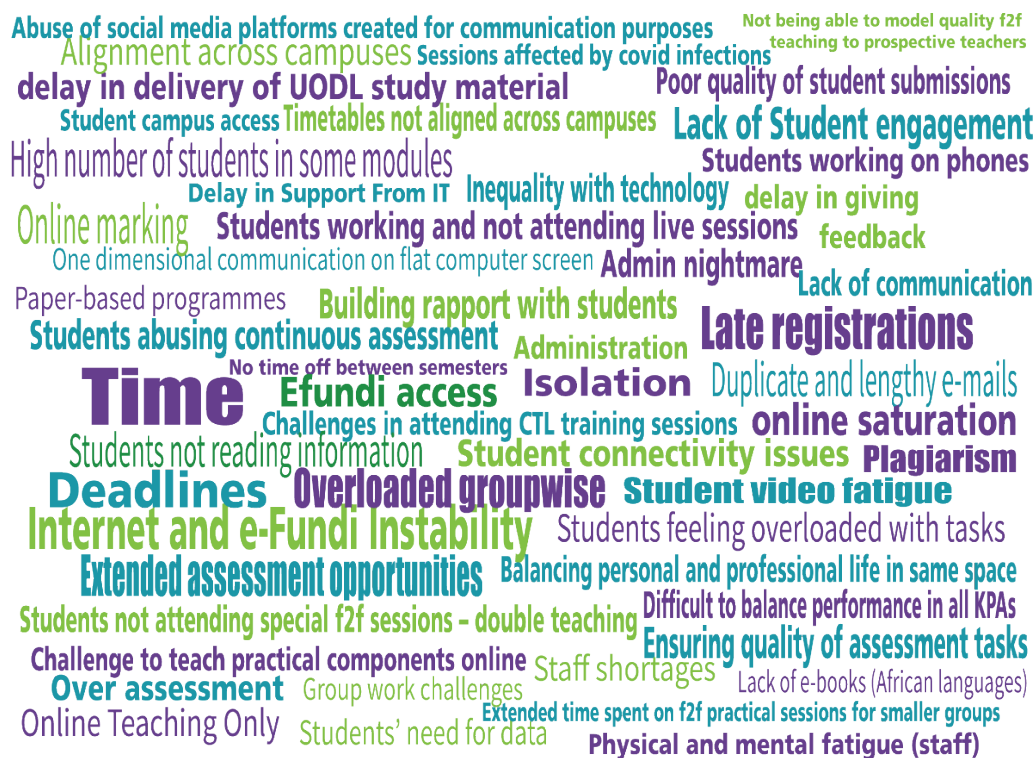


gave themselves, is 5.2.

The challenges that academics identified and their ways of dealing with these challenges, will be discussed in the next section.

## 9.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND SUCCESSES

The words in the word cloud below indicate the challenges as experienced in 2021 by academic staff members across the Faculty.



### 9.2.1 Challenges related to time

The word that stands out from the cloud is TIME. Many of the challenges experienced with teaching, learning, and assessment are linked to the concept of TIME.

Late student registrations at the beginning of the 2021 academic year meant that lecturers had to spend additional time on administration and teaching as they needed to assist students in catching up. Academics were stretched in presenting double lessons. At the UODL, late registrations resulted in study material being delivered to students even later than what is normally perceived as problematic. Thus, there were further delays in teaching, learning, and assessment. Also, first year students, who were not familiar with working online needed additional assistance. In the end, the extended time that went into the first semester meant that there was basically no time off between the first and the second semester. Intervention strategies include allowing students more time to catch up and to submit assessment tasks during the process of continuous assessment. Lecturers across the Faculty report on working more closely together in subject groups across campuses and sharing responsibilities. They started sharing teaching and learning resources and those that had not done so yet, started sharing their eFundi sites.

Throughout, administrative duties have been reported as extremely time consuming due to the downloading and uploading of student assignments on eFundi, lecturers' inboxes constantly being flooded with e-mails from students (these are often lengthy or duplicated) while communication groups that have been created on WhatsApp or Telegram to ensure regular and effective communication never seem to go quiet with students seeking assistance even during night times and over weekends. Online marking is perceived as

challenging and time consuming, especially in cases where there are high numbers of students enrolled for compulsory modules or in languages. In all modules presented in the Faculty, quality feedback which is crucially important during the process of continuous assessment, aimed at promoting learning, takes time. Voiced-over feedback, for example in language education, is not ideal. Lecturers need to comment extensively on language errors and edit assignments. This at times, results in feedback not being provided timeously, even in modules with fewer students. Lecturers furthermore need time to reflect on their own teaching, based on the feedback generated from assessment tasks turned in by students, for there to be a constructive washback effect in their pedagogy.

### **9.2.2 Interventions to mitigate challenges associated with time**

To mitigate the risk of lecturers being overburdened with assessment, some subject groups managed to appoint marking assistants or recruit and train external markers. While the marking of some of these external markers may not be up to standard at the moment, in time they will be able to take on more marking. Available marking funds are utilised for the external marking of less complex assignments that still take much time to mark, but where the responses are more structured. Rubrics were developed that tally up the totals automatically. There are efforts to 'standardise' the responses and marks on the rubrics as much as possible. Assessment plans in some subject groups have been revised to move essay assignments earlier in the semester, so that there will be sufficient time for marking and for the students to digest the feedback. Available capacity from administrative staff have been utilised to assist with downloading assignments and rubrics to eFundi and that also saves academics some time, especially for the bigger groups. The use of platforms other than eFundi allows for assessment and feedback without the lecturer having to download or upload any documents.

### **9.2.3 Challenges related to promoting student engagement with module content**

Most lecturers heeded the call for an online presence only to be confronted with poor student attendance because students are working full time at Schools or elsewhere. This specifically pertains to 2nd, 3rd and final year BEd students who are currently teaching full time and who let their lecturers know that they do not have time for their studies, because of all the responsibilities at School. On average, student attendance of synchronous online sessions ranges from 40% for compulsory modules to 50% for majors. In some modules, lecturers wanted to accommodate the contact students, who are also working full-time, and scheduled classes after 17:00. Students who do not work complained, as they felt that they were available for contact classes during the day (rightfully so). However, when classes were scheduled in slots allocated on the official timetable, and to avoid clashes with other modules, attendance remained poor, even though it was made clear that classes are compulsory and not optional. It was also mentioned that students seem to just log in for registration purposes, as they do not participate. They are 'present' online but are not engaging.

Students likewise find excuses for not attending f2f sessions that are being presented during the second semester. Those who do attend consistently report positive experiences. There were f2f sessions, especially in the honours programme that had to be cancelled as a result of students testing positive for Covid-19.

It is also challenging to ensure that students engage effectively with each other in group projects. However, some lecturers' express admiration for the creative ways in which students continue to ensure effective collaboration with their peers.

Available data from one of the modules presented in the School for Language Education show that a number of students do not engage fully asynchronously either. Based on student feedback there is reason to believe that this is the case with many modules presented in undergraduate programmes in the Faculty. Statistics from this particular module indicate that the Pdf version of documents was accessed more regularly than video recordings. It is not possible to say how much time students spent on these documents. It might be that they only downloaded the information without necessarily engaging with it. Especially in terms of assignments and tests, students did indicate that they prefer printed material as they look for key words when they need to complete assessment tasks. In this module on average, each student accessed

the printed texts 8 times. Students who have limited data available, and who do not necessarily enjoy reading seemed to prefer listening to the audio recording that was made available by the particular lecturer. This option, however, was least favoured. Although statistics indicate that 90% of students in this module clicked on the available video, it became apparent that they did not watch the video in its entirety. Viewing decreased drastically after 2 minutes. Only 27% of longer videos were watched. Students skipped through the videos which meant that they could miss important information. In this module, 60% of students on average, watched videos on their phones and 40% used their computers. Findings are aligned with what was reported by students at the CTL T-L Colloquium, indicating that students seem to have reached a point of video saturation.

Lecturers, furthermore, note that some students fail to read for information as they turn in assessment tasks of poor quality, not heeding to instructions or not engaging with available reading material. This however, is often also the case in normal f2f teaching circumstances.

#### **9.2.4 Interventions to promote student engagement with module content**

In an online environment some of the intervention strategies in the Faculty include online meetings with students at the start of the semester explaining clearly what is expected of them, following up personally with students, especially with those identified as at-risk, or those who inform the lecturer that they are struggling/going through a difficult time, motivating them to continue with the work or making suggestions how they may improve upon time management/submission of assignments etc., allowing students more time to submit assignments

In addition, lecturers, maintained a continuous online presence (i.e. on Telegram / WhatsApp and eFundi), reacting quickly to student inquiries and putting them at ease which assists them to complete work more successfully, arranged (lecturer) individual and/or group virtual sessions with students to clarify, give personal and/or group feedback, report on errors, etc.

In some modules students were expected to reflect weekly in their eFundi blogs on the challenges they experienced and the teaching and learning experiences. This gave each student a voice and allowed the lecturer to gauge the levels of student engagement.

Some subject groups contact CTL to arrange for student mentors to assist students with particular challenges. CTL assisted in assigning mentors to specific modules. These mentors revised statistics on eFundi and contacted students who were not participating. In addition, SI facilitators were appointed to provide more assistance to students.

Lecturers indicated that PowerPoint presentations are compiled in such a way that students are not spoon-fed, but are rather provided with guidance and critical questions. They also designed and utilised eGuides and weekly announcement using lessons to guide students on a weekly basis

Another way in which lecturers provide opportunity for engagement is by dividing students into smaller base groups. These developed into small WhatsApp support groups where students support each other without lecturer involvement.

As a way of promoting student engagement with feedback one of the subject groups provided a feedback infographic instead of uploading memos, and requested students to critically review their submissions, marks and the feedback and then to attend an online session to discuss their performance. This proved successful in fostering critical reflection.

#### **9.2.5 Challenges associated with alignment**

With aligned modules, where a particular lecturer takes responsibility for a certain unit of work, it was not possible to schedule one synchronous session across campuses as campus timetables differ. This also means that fully aligned tests cannot be written if they are not written at the same time.

#### **9.2.6 Challenges associated with connectivity and available devices**

A challenge that remains, is that some students still do not have computers to work on and continue to use their phones for learning and assessment. Internet connectivity is often either unavailable due to power

outages or unstable because of poor signal or issues with the network which means that students do not always have access to eFundi. Students also use the lack of data as an excuse for not turning in tasks on time while some tend to abuse the system of continuous assessment.

The subject group for African Languages highlighted the fact that there is a lack of e-books in Setswana, Sesotho, Sepedi and isiZulu for online teaching and learning.

### **9.2.7 Interventions to mitigate problems associated with connectivity and use of devices**

Lecturers assisted students with challenges by chunking learning material and by accepting assessment tasks turned in via WhatsApp and other platforms. Lecturers who teach technical subjects had to be innovative, resorting to using their cell phones to make videos to explain difficult concepts of drawing and calculations in all their modules.

In the African languages, the lack of e-books was mitigated by providing scanned copies of parts of text on eFundi.

### **9.2.8 Challenges associated with modelling of teaching and preparing students for practice**

A final challenge pertains specifically to teacher training and the fact that lecturers do not get the opportunity to model to students how to teach and interact in the physical teaching and learning space.

### **9.2.9 Interventions to model teaching and good practice**

Specific efforts are made by subject groups to support final year students while they are engaged in Work Integrated Learning with the process of simulated teaching. Subject Groups such as English for Education continue with the presentation of synchronous sessions focused on the development of students' Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) and their pedagogical skills. These sessions are presented at 17:00 in the afternoon and are repeated at night for UODL students to attend.

## **9.3 SUCCESSES**

Lecturers made huge strides in learning how to use technology to present their modules online. The continued support from CTL is highly appreciated although it remains a challenge to find the time to attend workshops online or to work through tutorials.

The student throughput rate in the honours programme remains consistently high. In both the PGCE and the BEd programmes there were some students who were identified as at-risk. In the BEd programme this includes students in all year groups but more so in the first and second year. The academic performance of these students are closely being monitored by programme leaders.

## **9.4 2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS**

### **9.4.1 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plan Semester 1**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

In the light of the national COVID-19 pandemic situation, the NWU decided that teaching remains mainly online for the first semester of 2021. Students were encouraged to pursue their studies at home where they are able to do so. Students who need or choose to return to campus for access to infrastructure, were also allowed. Provision is made at the NWU for a limited contact teaching-learning modality for those programmes with practical or laboratory work in strict compliance with all COVID-19 protocols, regulations and directives.

The Faculty of Education's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plan intended to provide guidance in terms of concept understanding, possible risks to account for, guiding principles, practical guidelines, moderation as part of quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation, students' return to campus and important dates of the academic calendar for semester 1, 2021.

#### **RISK IDENTIFICATION**

The following risks for the first semester 2021, were identified and should be timeously addressed by those in the responsible domain.

Although lecturers gained valuable experience during the previous two semesters of teaching, learning and assessment in an online and continuous assessment modality, some lecturers were still in need of training to make the most of the potential that online teaching, learning and assessment technologies and virtual platforms may offer.

The stability of Internet connection was critical for a successful and effective teaching, learning and assessment plan. Staff and students should ensure a stable Internet connection with sufficient data to complete the academic programme successfully.

The correct contact detail of students is key for teaching and learning communication and interaction. The establishment of learning/study groups, such as WhatsApp groups, is helpful in this regard.

Students were using the incorrect communication channels and, more than often, communicate directly with NWU and Faculty top-management. Clear directives should be given to students about the steps to follow for queries - which is in all cases the module lecturer as first point of contact. The email contact detail of the Module Lecturer, Module Leader and Subject Group Leader should form a key part of the module content information.

It was recognised that submission dates for assignments from various lecturers may overlap with unrealistic pressure on students to complete and submit too many assignments in a short space of time. Lecturers should avoid a 'bottle neck' situation of assessment submissions, especially at the end of the semester. A Faculty-specific **online plotting calendar** for submission dates of assignments is available on the **Faculty of Education's eFundi Staff site** to plot or 'map' submission dates for assignments in the beginning of the semester. This action is strongly advocated for all academics in the Faculty to avoid unrealistic and unfair expectations for the completion and submission of assignments. The link for direct access to the *eFundi* site is (log in required):

<http://efundi.nwu.ac.za/portal/site/e50288f8-4ee0-4ac4-96ad-883249aa0e77>

The link to a helpful and guiding video of this procedure is:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Wgjlh3DgnzxQuuwBJNWUCEcyK\\_2k5mPQ/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Wgjlh3DgnzxQuuwBJNWUCEcyK_2k5mPQ/view?usp=sharing)

Meeting the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications in terms of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) remained a major challenge during the lockdown period. The Faculty was in contact with both the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education's (DBE) to get support for innovative measures for the implementation of alternative WIL practices at the Faculty.

The ODL paper-based programmes needed special intervention to ensure a fair and just teaching, learning and continuous assessment plan. The UODL Academic Manager for the Faculty of Education plays a key managerial role to ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment in the Faculty's three ODL paper-based programmes (Grade R Diploma, ACT & ADE).

The turnaround time for feedback and results after the marking of assignments during the online and continuous assessment modality, had to be monitored. Students needed constructive feedback from their module lecturers about their submitted assessments in order to improve for the next assignment submission. Since there was no sit-down or second examination opportunity, the turnaround time for assessment feedback was crucial.

Academic integrity, and especially *plagiarism* was recognised as a major risk in the online and continuous assessment modality. Preventative steps were taken to avoid this risk.

## **GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSEMENT PLAN**

The *health* and *safety* of staff members and students is the highest priority and all who are able to be operational from home, should continue to do so – pending on institutional directives. All COVID-19 precautions, regulations, protocols and directives should be strictly adhered to at all times.

An important lesson learnt from the change from formative and summative assessment to continuous assessment during 2020, was probably a too strong and narrow focus on only assessment. The online teaching practice should not be compromised in an effort to implement continuous assessment. Students are entitled to a positive and quality *teaching and learning experience*. Caution should be taken that the teaching, learning and assessment plan for the first semester of 2021 is implemented in a *well-planned, balanced and structured* manner. In this sense, the following basic guidelines area again affirmed: i) *eFundi-based*; ii) *mobile friendly*; iii) *low tech*; iv) *low data* and vi) *low immediacy*.

*Ethical standards and academic integrity* are expected from all staff and students in accordance with the NWU values, Faculty of Education's Code of Ethics, and SACE Professional Standards. Ethical matters such as inclusivity (equal treatment), transparency, honesty, prompt response, responsibility and accountability are of particular importance. *Plagiarism* is a real threat in the online modality and students should be cautioned in all module information sources of the seriousness of this offense.

*Alignment* across campuses is of paramount importance and regular liaison and communication among subject colleagues and subject groups across campuses are required.

One of the Faculty's key strategic teaching and learning drivers is *Self-Directed Learning (SDL)*. This particular teaching and learning focus should be explored to its full potential as part of the Faculty's online teaching, learning and assessment plan. The end goal is to provide a quality and positive teaching and learning experience to all our students – despite the disruptive circumstances due to the pandemic.

An *online mode of teaching, learning and assessment* is followed for the first semester 2021, with consideration for the implications for the ODL paper-based programmes.

Assessment for the first semester will be based on *continuous assessment*. There is no formal, (sit-down) examination/assessment for the first semester, with the implication of no participation or examination marks. The academic calendar dates (par. 9) as provided by the Registrar are applicable. Continuous assessment should be *fair, just* and should ensure academic quality and integrity.

Continuous assessment further implies that there is no second examination opportunity. There is no special mid-semester assessment period (test week) and no additional assessment period (for example a Winter School). Module lecturers should ensure multiple and ample assessment opportunities to provide students with an optimal chance to complete registered modules successfully. The final module mark is based on the *weighted average* of the assessments prescribed for the module. The method of calculating the final module mark must be communicated to the students as soon as the teaching of the module commences.

A *Dean's Concession Examination* (third examination opportunity) is scheduled at the end of the semester and will be in the format of a comprehensive assignment, project or portfolio. Students in their final year of study who actively participate in the continuous assessment process with one module outstanding, may apply to the Executive Dean to be granted a final assessment opportunity in the outstanding module, provided that:

- The student participated in the continuous assessment process;
- The student must be registered for the particular module in 2021;
- The student failed the outstanding module with a final mark of no less than 40%.
- The maximum mark that can be obtain in the outstanding module is 50%;
- Only the mark for the final assessment is taken into account. The marks and weighting of the other continuous assessment tasks are not taken into account;

*Internal and external moderation processes* should proceed during the continuous assessment modality and prioritised as part of the mandatory quality assurance processes.

The *Examination Committees* should proceed according to the set dates of the academic calendar for 2021, to ratify results and to follow up on risk modules and students.

## **PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR ONLINE TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT (CONTACT AND DISTANCE LEARNING)**

An *innovative, creative and problem-solving* approach to online teaching, learning and assessment practices is required that meets all quality standards for teaching, learning and assessment activities. Such an approach requires professionalism and the willingness to adapt to the demands and circumstances due to the pandemic.

The *module outcomes* should be covered in full.

The *NWU COVID-19 website* provides valuable information for staff and students and should be regularly consulted.

Collaboration with the *Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)* is strongly advised. Instructional Designers and Academic Developers are available for expert advice and assistance. The CTL website *Keep on Teaching* is a helpful source with dedicated sections for staff and students.

A key aspect to successful teaching, learning and assessment is *clear and regular communication* to all staff and students affected by the disruption due to the pandemic. Responses and feedback should be done in the shortest time possible.

Procedures for *module queries* by students should form part of every module's study material information. The email contact detail of the Module Lecturer, Module Leader and Subject Group Leader should form an important part of the module content information. Query procedures should follow the same steps as those in the Faculty's Grievance Procedure, i.e. the Module Lecturer is in all academic matters the person to contact, followed by the Subject Group Leader, the School Director, the Deputy Dean Teaching and Learning and finally the Executive Dean.

*Study material* should be available in the online modality and should guide students to follow a structured, online teaching, learning and assessment plan in an aligned manner across campuses. Additional study material may be made available to students within the DALRO Copy Right policy framework. No paper-based provision of study material for contact students will be made available as in 2020. Students are expected to access the NWU web-based platforms to participate in the online modality.

Close cooperation with the *UODL Academic Manager* is required to ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment for students in ODL programmes. The number of continuous assessments for ODL students are critical aspects to account for, because of ODL logistical reasons. Special arrangements are made for the Faculty's ODL paper-based programmes (Gr R Dipl; ACT; AD) where challenges are experienced in respect of access to ODL Learning Support Centres and online platforms.

The official NWU *Learning Management System (LMS)*, *eFundi* platform should be used for all teaching, learning and assessment practices. Valuable tutorial resources are available for the optimal use of the *eFundi* platform and *functionalities* at the following links - which are strongly recommended for all academic staff and students:

Students

<http://services.nwu.ac.za/centre-teaching-and-learning-ctl/student-tutorials>

Staff

<http://services.nwu.ac.za/centre-teaching-and-learning-ctl/lecturer-efundi-support>

The *subject group* is the core academic structure that assures *academic quality* in a specific subject and therefore, special arrangements should be made for effective communication across campuses.

Valuable experience was gained during the previous two semesters in the online and continuous assessment modality. The teaching, learning and assessment should be academically rigorous, in-depth and of the required quality. Students should give notice prior to a *submission date of assignments* if they experience difficulty in this regard and proof of medical conditions is required if applicable. Due dates for the submission of assignments should be strictly adhered to, with consideration of the merit of each case. Penalty in relation to results for late submission should be clearly discussed and approved in the Subject Group.

*Academic integrity* is fundamental to teaching, learning and assessment, especially in the online and continuous assessment modality. *Plagiarism* is a most serious offense and students should be informed in all module information sources of the risk and consequences of this serious offense. Academic staff may consider the use of the *Turnitin* setting to enable and require the submission of assignments (for example, of exit modules) *via* the *TurnItIn* functionality of the *eFundi* platform.

Caution should be taken not to negate the difference in total between distance learning and full time contact students in an online modality. Distance learning students are required to submit a limited number of extensive, in-depth assignments, which may be a combination of a number of less extensive assignments for the full time contact students. Furthermore, the UODL has specific logistical and administrative systems in place for the distance learning students. Although in need for an update, the Faculty of Education's Assessment and Moderation Procedures (2018) is a valuable document for guidelines in this regard.

Feedback to students in the shortest possible time after the marking of assignments is of critical importance in an online, continuous assessment modality. In the absence of a summative examination, second examination opportunity and additional assessment opportunity (Winter School), it is crucial for students to receive constructive feedback from their lecturers on submitted assessments in order to eliminate similar mistakes during the next submission. Timely and effective feedback ensure an optimum opportunity for students to successfully complete all registered modules. A period of two weeks is provided as guideline for feedback from the lecturer.

The Module Leader is expected to submit a *two-weekly teaching, learning and assessment report* to the Subject Group Leader who reports to the relevant School Director on related matters.

The ODL programmes is offered in the same manner as in 2020. ODL students are not able to attend the NWU Learning Centres during the current lockdown situation and whiteboard sessions are not possible. UODL communicated with all relevant academic staff members that the recording of module presentations needs to be done according to the ODL time table in order to record the module presentations for placement on the Web to enable access for ODL students. ODL students in the paper-based programmes (Grade R Diploma, ACT, ADE) receive their communication for the academic and continuous assessment programme through the UODL. Assessments are submitted at the NWU Learning Centres and couriered to the UODL for distribution to the module lecturers. Students in the paper-based programmes have an additional assessment opportunity because of online constraints.

The difference in the academic cycles between senior and first year students should be account for in the academic programme planning in semester 1, because the senior students commence on 15 February and the first year students on 17 March with their respective academic programmes.

## **MODERATION**

Moderation, as an integral part of the assessment process, is compulsory as part of the NWU quality assurance process and General Academic Rules (A-rules). The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provided a proposed template for internal and external moderation that can be adopted or amended according to specific module needs. In accordance with the General Academic Rules (2.5.1), there should be *one internal examiner* and *one internal moderator* for every module. For every **exit-level module**, there should be *one internal examiner*, *one internal moderator* and *one external moderator*. Exit-level modules are externally moderated in a two-year cycle for contact modules and a three-year cycle for ODL modules. The programme administrators will provide guidance in respect of the external moderation cycles.

Technology application plays a key role in the moderation process of continuous assessment for both online and paper-based teaching and learning. Consequently, support measures and basic training for academic staff (and where applicable, support staff) are needed to ensure consistency and effectiveness in the moderation process across Schools. Subject Groups may take the initiative in this regard. The functionalities of *eFundi*, the official learning management system (LMS) of the NWU, offer useful 'tools' for the moderation process. The internal moderator, as well as external moderator, can be linked to a module's *eFundi* site to enable an integrated, continuous moderation process. Regular assessment reports and



statistics are available on the LMS platform during the course of continuous assessment that also support a process of continuous moderation. A variety of technology applications can be explored and utilised for external moderation such as *Google Drive* to avoid an overload of email inboxes. The Google Drive option also has the advantage that the moderation process can be integrated into continuous assessment and does not necessarily be at the end of the process. It is crucial to communicate in advance to all external moderators about the moderation methodology and timelines.

Innovative moderation practices within subject groups should be shared with all in the Faculty to promote effectiveness and teamwork.

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Faculty's teaching leadership (Module Leaders; Subject Group Leaders; Programme Leaders, School Directors, Operational Managers and Deputy Dean Teaching and Learning) has an important monitoring role to fulfil in accordance with the key performance areas of task agreements. The regular monitoring of the implementation of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plan during the pandemic is of particular importance to provide leadership and guidance in 'abnormal' circumstances. Regular reports from Subject Groups to School Directors and then to Faculty Management are essential to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the online continuous modality.

A specific programme for reflection and evaluation of the implementation of the Faculty teaching, learning and assessment plan during the pandemic should be conducted at the end of the academic cycle. The purpose of the reflection and evaluation is to determine best practices and lessons learnt and will be an ideal opportunity to refine future plans to deal with similar circumstances.

## **STUDENTS' RETURN TO CAMPUSES**

Only registered students are allowed to return to campus and permission letters for access to the campus will only be issued to registered students.

All NWU students receive communication from a NWU central point about the process to apply for a permission letter *via i)* a USSD message and *ii)* a Web link. If no communication in this regard is received, then the contact detail on the NWU DIY system must be corrected. The following link is also applicable in this regard:

[https://efundi.nwu.ac.za/access/content/group/479a4b05-2442-471d-9d47-52cf7c521271/Images\\_and\\_Links/page3-1.html](https://efundi.nwu.ac.za/access/content/group/479a4b05-2442-471d-9d47-52cf7c521271/Images_and_Links/page3-1.html)

The permission letter is issued by the Campus DVC with contact information of the relevant NWU officials for specific enquiries as well as information about data provision. THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION DOES NOT ISSUE PERMISSION LETTERS.

Three categories of returning students were identified:

- *Category 1:* Those students electing to return to campus accommodation for whom letters of permission will be issued, but to whom no data will be issued.
- *Category 2:* Those students electing to return to private accommodation in the towns, but who will need access to the campuses, for which letters of permission, as well as data, will be issued.
- *Category 3:* Those students electing to remain at home for which data will be issued, but no letters of permission are required.

The Schools in the Faculty identify those students to attend practical, laboratory and workshop sessions for limited contact classes. Communication in this regard will be sent to the students by the Faculty.

## **CONCLUSION**

The current academic situation of online teaching, learning and assessment is a major challenge for both staff and students and therefore the support, collaboration and a problem-solving approach is key to ensure a positive and successful teaching and learning experience for all in the Faculty of Education.

### **9.4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plan Semester 2**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and third wave of infection still affect the teaching, learning and assessment plan of the Faculty of Education, which is mainly based on an online modality and a continuous assessment strategy for the second semester of 2021. Pending national alert levels and safety measures, while programmes remain primarily online, students that cannot learn effectively from remote locations, are encouraged to be resident on campuses, or in private accommodation near the campuses, because this has all the advantages of accessibility to campus facilities, and access to academics and support staff, for limited contact to teaching-learning support if so required. Furthermore, based on academic performance at the end of semester 1, 2021, the Faculty may require all at-risk students to return for contact interventions (subject of course to the national conditions pertaining to Covid-19 in its third or subsequent waves. The Faculty of Education is planning to present limited contact (face-to-face) sessions for those programmes with practical or laboratory work as well for small groups of students-at-risk in strict compliance with COVID-19 protocols, regulations and directives.

The Faculty of Education's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plan intends to provide clarity in terms of concept understanding, possible risks to account for, guiding principles, practical guidelines, moderation (quality assurance), monitoring and evaluation and important dates of the NWU academic calendar for semester two.

#### **RISK IDENTIFICATION**

The following risks for the second semester are identified and should be timeously addressed by those staff members in the responsible domain.

Capacity building to address the challenges of remote online teaching, learning and assessment is a constant need. Academics are strongly encouraged to equip themselves with the required skills and knowledge to meet the pedagogical and technical demands of a variety of virtual platforms to ensure effective online remote teaching, learning.

Access and stability of Internet connection is critical for a successful teaching, learning and assessment plan. Staff and students should ensure a stable Internet connection with sufficient data to complete the academic programme successfully. The fact that approximately 113 communication infrastructure sites, such as cell phone towers, were damaged during the recent period of unrest in Gauteng and Kwazulu-Natal, may have an impact on the connectivity of students residing in those provinces.

The correct contact detail of students is key for effective communication and interaction. Students should update their student detail on the NWU DIY system should it have changed. The establishment of learning/study groups, such as WhatsApp and Telegram groups, are also helpful in this regard.

Students are not following the prescribed grievance procedures and communication channels and, more than often, communicate directly with NWU and Faculty top-management instead of the relevant module lecturers. Clear communication and directives to students are once again needed to ensure that the correct steps are followed to solve any challenge or problem as quickly and as effectively as possible. The contact details of the Module Lecturer, Module Leader and Subject Group Leader should form a key part of the module content information.

Non-participation by some students in the academic programme of the Faculty has been experienced from the implementation of a remote online teaching and learning modality. Module lecturers should monitor the active participation of students in the academic programme of modules and timeously identify students at risk for intervention initiatives. Academic-related communication and clear instructions are essential with

specific reference to due dates for assignment submissions and clear indications of the consequences if submission dates are not adhere to.

Submission dates for online assignments may overlap amongst modules - with unrealistic pressure on students to complete and submit several assignments in a short and uncoordinated period. Lecturers should avoid a 'bottle neck' situation of assessment submissions, especially at the end of the semester. A Faculty-specific **online plotting calendar** for submission dates of assignments is available on the **Faculty of Education's eFundi staff site** to plot or 'map' submission dates for assignments at the beginning of the semester. This action is strongly advocated for all academics in the Faculty to avoid unrealistic and unfair expectations for the completion and submission of assignments. The link for direct access to the *eFundi* site is (log-in required):

<http://efundi.nwu.ac.za/portal/site/e50288f8-4ee0-4ac4-96ad-883249aa0e77>

The link to a helpful and guiding video of this procedure is:

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Wgjlh3DgnzxQuuwBJNWUCEcyK\\_2k5mPQ/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Wgjlh3DgnzxQuuwBJNWUCEcyK_2k5mPQ/view?usp=sharing)

The continuation of the service of temporary academic staff is essential during the online and continuous assessment modality.

Meeting the Minimum Requirements for Teacher Education Qualifications in terms of Work Integrated Learning (WIL) remains a major challenge for teaching practice at Schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Faculty's WIL management team consults regularly with both the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for support to implement innovative measures for alternative WIL practices.

The ODL paper-based programmes need special intervention to ensure a fair and just teaching, learning and continuous assessment plan. The UODL Academic Manager for the Faculty of Education plays a key managerial role to ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment in the Faculty's three ODL paper-based programmes (Grade R Diploma, ACT & ADE).

The implementation of an online modality may lead to the negation of the differentiation between Open Distance Learning (ODL) and contact modes of delivery. The qualification obtained after completion of ODL and contact programmes is the same and the outcomes to be achieved are also the same. However, the mode of delivery and context of ODL students differ fundamentally from that of full-time contact students and the logistical and administrative systems of the Unit of Open Distance Learning (UODL) should also be accounted for. (Also see par. 5.8 & par. 5.13)

The turnaround time for feedback and results after the marking of assignments during the online and continuous assessment modality, may be compromised due to work pressure. Students need constructive feedback from their module lecturers about their submitted assessments to improve for the next assignment submission. Since there is no sit-down or second examination opportunity, the turnaround time for assessment feedback is crucial for a successful academic semester. (Also see par. 5.14)

Academic integrity, and especially *plagiarism* is a major risk in the remote online and continuous assessment modality. Preventative steps should be taken to avoid this risk. (Also see par. 4.3 & par. 5.12)

Lecturers should also ensure regular online presence e.g. by posting messages or regular videos and/or audio recordings to inform students of what is to be expected in dealing with new study units, sharing information regarding general mistakes being made in assignments, etc.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- The *health* and *safety* of staff and students are the highest priority. All COVID-19 precautions, regulations, protocols and directives should be strictly adhered to at all times.
- The Faculty of Education follows for the second semester 2021, a **remote online teaching-learning** and **continuous assessment strategy** with **limited face to face interaction for practical sessions** and **support for at-risk students**. The implications for the ODL paper-based programmes should be

accounted for in close cooperation with the Faculty's ODL Academic Manager. The situation is fluid and might change on short notice in accordance with national and institutional directives.

- The online teaching endeavour should not be compromised in an effort to implement continuous assessment. Students are entitled to a purposeful and quality *teaching and learning experience*. The teaching, learning and assessment plan for the second semester should be implemented in a *well-planned, balanced and structured* manner.
- *Ethical standards and academic integrity* are expected from all staff and students in accordance with the NWU values, Faculty of Education's Code of Ethics, and SACE Professional Standards. Ethical matters such as inclusivity (equal treatment), transparency, honesty, prompt response, responsibility and accountability are of particular importance. *Plagiarism* is a real threat in a remote online modality and students should be cautioned in all module information sources of the seriousness of this offense. (Also see par. 5.12)
- *Alignment* across campuses is of paramount importance and regular liaison among subject colleagues and subject groups across campuses is essential.
- One of the Faculty's key strategic teaching and learning drivers is *Self-Directed Learning (SDL)*. This particular teaching and learning focus should be explored to its full potential as part of the Faculty's online teaching, learning and assessment plan. The end goal is to provide a quality and positive teaching and learning experience to ALL our students – despite the disruptive circumstances due to the pandemic.
- Assessment for the second semester is based on *continuous assessment*. There is no formal, (sit-down face to face) examination/assessment for the second semester, with the implication of no participation or *examination marks*. Specific dates from the academic calendar (par. 10) are provided as announced by the Registrar. Continuous assessment should be *fair, just* and should ensure the required academic standard, quality and integrity.
- Continuous assessment further implies that there may be extended assessment opportunities, but no second examination opportunity. There is also no mid-semester assessment period (test week) and no additional assessment period (for example a Summer School). *Module lecturers should ensure multiple and adequate assessment opportunities to provide students with an optimal chance to complete registered modules successfully*. The final module mark is based on the *weighted average* of the assessments prescribed for the module. The method of calculating the final module mark should be communicated to the students as soon as the teaching of the module commences.
- A *Dean's Concession Examination* (third examination opportunity) (A-rule 1.13.6) is scheduled at the end of the semester and will be in the format of a comprehensive assignment, project or portfolio. Students in their final year of study who actively participated in the normal continuous assessment process with one module outstanding, may apply to the Executive Dean to be granted a final assessment opportunity in the outstanding module, provided that:
  - The student participated in the continuous assessment process;
  - The student must be registered for the particular module in 2021;
  - The student failed the outstanding module with a final mark of no less than 40%;
  - The maximum mark that can be obtain in the outstanding module is 50%;
  - Only the mark for the final assessment is taken into account. The marks and weighting of the other continuous assessment tasks are not taken into account;
  - Applicable fees are payable.
- *Internal and external moderation processes* should proceed during the continuous assessment modality and prioritised as part of the mandatory quality assurance processes.

- The *Examination Committees* should proceed according to the set dates of the academic calendar for 2021, to ratify results and to follow up on risk modules and students.

### **PRACTICAL GUIDELINES (CONTACT AND DISTANCE LEARNING)**

- An *innovative, creative and problem-solving* approach is required that meets all quality standards for teaching, learning and assessment activities. Such an approach requires professionalism and the willingness to adapt to the demands and circumstances of the pandemic.
- The *module outcomes* should be covered in full.
- The *NWU COVID-19 website* provides valuable information for staff and students and should be regularly consulted.
- Collaboration with the *Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL)* is strongly advised. Instructional Designers and Academic Developers are available for expert advice and assistance. The CTL website *Keep on Teaching* is a helpful source with dedicated sections for staff and students.
- A key aspect for successful teaching, learning and assessment, is *clear and regular communication* with all staff and students affected by the disruption due to the pandemic. Responses and feedback should be done in the shortest turn-around time possible.
- Procedures for *module queries* by students should form part of every module's study material information. The email contact detail of the Module Lecturer, Module Leader and Subject Group Leader should form an important part of the module information. Query procedures should follow the same steps as those in the *Faculty's Grievance Procedure*, i.e., the Module Lecturer is in all academic matters the person to contact, followed by the Subject Group Leader, the Deputy School Director, the School Director, the Deputy Dean Teaching and Learning and finally the Executive Dean.
- *Study material* should be available in the online modality and should guide students to follow a structured, online teaching, learning and assessment plan in an aligned manner across campuses. Additional study material may be made available to students within the DALRO Copy Right policy framework. No paper-based provision of study material for contact students will be made available. Students are required to access the NWU web-based platforms to participate in the online modality.
- Close cooperation with the *UODL Academic Manager* is necessary to ensure effective teaching, learning and assessment for ODL students. The number of continuous assessments for ODL students are critical aspects to account for, because of ODL logistical reasons. Special arrangements are made for the Faculty's ODL paper-based programmes (Gr R Dip; ACT; AD) where challenges are experienced in respect of access to ODL Learning Support Centres and online platforms.
- The official NWU *Learning Management System (LMS)*, the *eFundi* platform must be used for all teaching, learning and assessment practices. Valuable tutorial resources are available on the NWU Support Portal and CTL website for the optimal use of this learning management platform and relevant functionalities.
- The *subject group* is the core academic structure that assures *academic quality* in a specific subject and regular communication across campuses is essential for an aligned offering of modules.
- The teaching, learning and assessment should be academically rigorous, in-depth and of the required quality. Students should give notice prior to a *submission date of assignments*, if they experience difficulty in this regard and proof of medical conditions is required if applicable. *Due dates for the submission of assignments should be strictly adhered to*, with consideration of the merit of each case. Penalty in relation to results for late submission should be clearly discussed and approved in the Subject Group. Students should be made aware of their academic responsibility and the academic consequences if submission dates are not adhere to.
- *Academic integrity* is fundamental to teaching, learning and assessment, especially in the online and continuous assessment modality. *Plagiarism* is a serious offense and students should be informed in

all module sources of the risk and consequences of this serious offense. Academic staff may consider the use of the *Turnitin* setting to enable and require the submission of assignments (for example, of exit modules) *via* the *Turnitin functionality* of the *eFundi* platform. Care should be taken in setting assessment tasks on cognitive levels that minimise the possibility for copying and pasting from internet sources.

- Caution should be taken not to negate the difference between distance learning and full-time contact students in an online modality. Distance learning students are required to submit a limited number of extensive, in-depth assignments, which may be a combination of a number of less extensive assignments for the full-time contact students. Furthermore, the UODL has specific logistical and administrative systems in place for the distance learning students. The Faculty of Education's Assessment and Moderation Procedures (2018) is a valuable document for guidelines in this regard.
- Feedback to students in the shortest possible time after the marking of assignments is of critical importance in an online, continuous assessment modality. In the absence of a summative examination, second examination opportunity and additional assessment opportunity (Summer School), it is crucial for students to receive constructive feedback from their lecturers on submitted assessments to eliminate similar mistakes during the next submission. Timely and constructive feedback, focusing on what is to be done to close the gap between poor performance and academic achievement, ensures an optimum opportunity for students to successfully complete all registered modules. A period of two weeks is provided as guideline for feedback from the lecturer.
- The Module Leader is expected to submit *a two-weekly teaching, learning and assessment report* to the Subject Group Leader who reports to the relevant School Director on related matters.
- ODL students may not be able to attend the NWU Learning Centres during lockdown conditions and whiteboard sessions may therefore also not be possible. In this case, the UODL will communicate to all relevant academic staff that the recording of module presentations needs to be done according to the ODL timetable to record the module presentations for placement on the Web. ODL students in the paper-based programmes (Grade R Dip, ACT, ADE) receive their communication for the academic and continuous assessment programme through the UODL. Assessments are submitted at the NWU Learning Centres and couriered to the UODL for distribution to the module lecturers. Students in the paper-based programmes have an additional assessment opportunity because of online constraints.

## MODERATION

- Moderation, as an integral part of the assessment process, is compulsory as part of the NWU quality assurance process and General Academic Rules (A-rules). The Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) provided a proposed template for internal and external moderation that can be adopted or amended according to specific module needs. The General Academic Rules (2.5.1) prescribe *one internal examiner* and *one internal moderator* for every module. For every **exit-level module**, there should be *one internal examiner*, *one internal moderator* and *one external moderator*. Exit-level modules are externally moderated in a two-year cycle for contact modules and a three-year cycle for ODL modules.
- Subject groups are responsible to ensure academic quality in their respective disciplines, while the module leaders fulfil a crucial role to ensure quality control at module level. The programme administrators will provide guidance in respect of the external moderation procedures and cycles.
- Technology application plays a key role in the moderation process of continuous assessment for both online and paper-based teaching and learning. The functionalities of *eFundi*, the official learning management system (LMS) of the NWU, offer useful 'tools' for the moderation process. The internal moderator, as well as external moderator, can be linked to a module's *eFundi* site to enable an integrated, continuous moderation process. Regular assessment reports and statistics are available on the LMS platform during the course of continuous assessment that also support a process of continuous moderation. A variety of technology applications can be explored and utilised for external moderation such as *Google Drive* to avoid an overload of email inboxes. The Google Drive option also has the

advantage that the moderation process can be integrated into continuous assessment and does not necessarily be at the end of the process. It is crucial to communicate in advance to all external moderators about the moderation methodology and timelines.

- Innovative moderation practices within subject groups should be shared with all in the Faculty to promote effectiveness, coherency and teamwork.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Faculty's teaching leadership (Module Leaders; Subject Group Leaders; Programme Leaders, School Directors, Operational Managers and Deputy Dean Teaching and Learning) has an important monitoring role to fulfil in accordance with the key teaching and learning performance areas of task agreements. The regular monitoring of the implementation of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Plan is of particular importance to provide leadership and guidance. Regular reports from Subject Groups to School Directors and then to Faculty Management are essential to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation of the online continuous modality.

A specific programme for reflection and evaluation of the implementation of the Faculty teaching, learning and assessment plan during the pandemic should be conducted at the end of the academic cycle. The purpose of the reflection and evaluation is to determine best practices and lessons learnt and will be an ideal opportunity to refine future plans to deal with similar circumstances.

## CAMPUS ACCESS

- The NWU requires that students return to campus, even for the online programme, because the university is better able to support the teaching-learning programme on its three campuses and to maintain a programme of academic and student life that contributes to academic success. It is important to note that **General Academic Rule 1.12** requires of students to attend classes, and this rule is as important for online classes as for face-to-face teaching-learning interventions (VC Communique to students and staff – 14 July 2021).
- All registered NWU students receive communication from a central point about the process to apply for campus access *via i) a USSD message and ii) a Web link*. If no communication in this regard is received, then the student contact detail on the NWU DIY system should be updated/corrected.
- Campus access is managed centrally. *The Faculty of Education does not issue permission letters for campus access.*
- Staff should follow the institutional prescripts and protocols for campus access.
- Line managers should ensure a support presence of administrative and academic staff on campus. The current situation may change on short notice as circumstances change.

## LIMITED AND PURPOSEFUL CONTACT SESSIONS

- The Central NWU lecture timetable forms the basis to plan and implement all academic activities, whether online or purposeful contact (face-to-face) sessions, interventions or practical work.
- The Schools in the Faculty identified specific modules and students to attend limited, purposeful contact (face-to-face) sessions as well as practical, laboratory and workshop sessions.
- Based on the academic results from the first semester, at-risk students may be identified to attend contact intervention sessions.
- The limited contact sessions must be scheduled in accordance with the NWU central timetable for semester two to ensure optimal use of available teaching and learning time, enable health and safety measures, and to ensure alignment across campuses (as in 9.1).
- The limited venue capacity that meet the health safety measures (e.g. sanitising), necessitates that those venues for contact sessions should be booked on the central Integrated Work Management

System (IWMS) in accordance with the communique about the second semester's timetable and the reservation for purposeful face-to-face contact time.

- Schools should clearly communicate comprehensive and detailed information about contact (face-to-face) sessions to those students involved.

### WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL)

Due to COVID-19, the decision was taken not to place all BEd and PGCE students in Schools. Only BEd 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year students as well as PGCE students will be placed in Schools during two periods between 6 September and 4 November.

The MRTEQ makes provision for learning *from* practice as well as learning *in* practice. Thus, communities of practice will be created by grouping 4<sup>th</sup> year students, with 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students to complete a collaborative learning group project focused on the classroom and the teacher.

In order to minimise risk, lecturers will not visit Schools to evaluate lesson presentations. Instead simulated teaching will be used, as in 2020 and the first semester 2021. Mentor teacher assessments will be required as well. Third year and PGCE students, as well as 4<sup>th</sup> year students who did not perform satisfactory in the first semester, will be allocated to lecturers for simulated teaching.

The following table presents the WIL programme for the second semester in the Faculty of Education.

Prog	Components of WIL	Dates	Mark allocation
BEd 1	Cooperative learning group project	Group constitution: 28 July – 13 August Contract submission: 16 August Project submission: 20 September Marking: 20 Sept – 30 Sept	100% of module mark
BEd 2	Cooperative learning group project	Group constitution: 28 July – 13 August Contract submission: 16 August Project submission: 20 September Marking: 20 Sept – 30 Sept	100% of module mark
BEd 3	School-based placement	6 Sept – 1 Oct	
	Mentor teacher assessment		
	Simulated teaching	16 August – 27 September	
	Adapted portfolio		Completion, not marked

Prog	Components of WIL	Dates	Mark allocation
BEd 4	Cooperative learning group project	Group constitution: 28 July – 13 August Contract submission: 16 August Project submission: 20 September Marking: 20 Sept – 30 Sept School based placement documents – 12 November	80% of module mark
	School-based placement	11 October – 5 November	
	Mentor teacher assessment	Once during School-based placement	20% of module mark
	Simulated teaching (ONLY STUDENTS WHO SCORED LESS THAN 55% IN SIM TEACHING IN THE FIRST SEMESTER)	16 August – 27 September	Need to pass in order to pass module
PGCE	School-based placement	6 Sept – 1 Oct	
	Mentor teacher assessment	Once during School-based placement	20% of module mark
	Simulated teaching	16 August – 27 September	80% of module mark



## **CONCLUSION**

The current academic situation of online teaching, learning and assessment is a major challenge for both staff and students and therefore the support, collaboration and a problem-solving approach is key to ensure a positive and successful teaching and learning experience for all in the Faculty of Education.

### **9.5 2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

Face-2-Face practical sessions during 2021 and f2f block sessions and sessions for smaller groups of students during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester have been well received by students who express their gratitude for being able to engage with their lecturers and peers.

Some students face ongoing struggles with internet connections and power interruptions, especially those living in remote areas, e.g. farms and rural areas. Some have their own struggles while living at their family homes in terms of being afforded time to work. Data remains a big problem for some students while some lack the necessary technology and resources to learn remotely. First year students are faced with serious challenges in getting used to learning at tertiary level and in getting to grips with what is expected from them in an online environment.

Attendance of synchronous online sessions is poor. Not all students that have been invited to attend f2f sessions, act on the invitation. On the other hand, there are students who want personal interaction with the lecturers.

Students report that they are overwhelmed with video material on all platforms. Some also feel overwhelmed with work and fail to meet deadlines. Lecturers from all subject groups report that they are aware of students who are teaching full time or started working elsewhere and who do not attend to their studies as they should. Online learning requires extreme discipline, which some of the students do not have. Due to the inability to manage time and procrastination students tend to miss deadlines.

Overall, students express the need for continuous communication with their lecturers. They tend to rely more on their lecturers for guidance and support and appreciate it when activities are explained in more detail than before. Students need affirmation and therefore online meetings and sustained communication on various platforms is crucial in a faceless, virtual environment. WIL and simulated teaching bring additional challenges.

There have been isolated instances where students lashed out at each other on WhatsApp. Lecturers, with the assistance of subject leaders and School Directors managed these instances effectively reminding students of the rules for communication on social media platforms for academic purposes. Faculty rules will be drafted as soon as possible and taken through Faculty structures before being communicated to students. There were also instances where unhappy students lodged complaints with the VC, any of the DVCs and with the Executive Dean instead of adhering to the Grievance Procedure of the Faculty of Education. A new Complaints Procedure has been drafted and will serve on the Teaching and Learning Committee meeting on 21 September 2021.

Based on data gathered with the Student Teaching and Learning Experience Survey during semester 1 of 2021, students generally feel positive about teaching, learning and assessment in the Faculty.

### **9.6 2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

#### **9.6.1 Academic staff**

It was mentioned in the introduction that the average rating for the emotional well-being of academic staff members, on a scale of 1-10, is 5.2. Staff members indicate that they are emotionally and physically fatigued as they find it nearly impossible to take leave. There seemed to be no time off between semesters, and again the second semester stretches well into December. Managing simulated teaching during WIL among all other responsibilities, adds to the challenge.

Mental health becomes an issue due to isolation and the pressure to perform in all key performance areas. Whereas previously one could 'escape' to a conference and leave everything behind as you got onto a plane, now you need to do an international conference presentation online while trying to quieten the children or the dogs. This needs to be fit in somewhere between teaching, assessment, online meetings

and dinner time as one tries to balance one's professional and personal life in the same space. Previously one had the luxury to communicate with a staff member in the office next door about work related as well as personal matters. This is not possible now. Inability to meet in person due to Covid-19, keeps lecturers strangers to one another, especially those who have been newly appointed. This makes it extremely difficult for lecturers to solve problems which could have been easily solved if there was regular/daily face to face interaction. Getting back to the office on certain days to have more contact is a certain option.

Some lecturers do not respond promptly to emails or WhatsApp messages and this can be cause of great irritation to others working together on modules. Some staff reported that they got no response after weeks of requests.

Some subject groups in the Faculty experience severe staff shortages which means that available staff has to take on additional work and responsibilities. At times this situation get worse with some staff members (both academic and administrative) or members of their immediate families contracting Covid. The Faculty also had to deal with the death of staff members or their immediate family members.

In some cases, temporary staff members were appointed. They had to be orientated in the use of our learning management system as well as our online marking tool, which is an overwhelming experience that some permanent staff still haven't even mastered. This results in permanent staff simply uploading and supplying teaching resources to temporary staff members to save time and to ensure timely delivery to students.

Not all colleagues are au-fair with eFundi which means that they rely on those who are able. Half of the time, the assistance is not once-off or one-time. Even though fulfilling to assist, it takes time, effort and a lot of emotional intelligence to do it, especially with all that it involves in virtual connections.

Subject groups also reported on some colleagues not pulling their weight in aligned offerings across campuses.

### **9.6.2 Support staff**

Challenges included the following:

- struggling with internet connectivity
- dealing with ineffective admin systems
- late and incorrect student registration that had to be sorted out
- having to deal with emails flooding in
- managing different streams of communication
- having to schedule meetings and events when staff members take leave at all times during the semester as opposed to taking leave during times of recess pre-Covid
- dealing with the office phone being diverted to one's cell phone with calls coming in during all hours of the day and night
- meeting deadlines with finalising certain documents
- dealing with stressed and confused students
- dealing with parents who complain about paying for contact services when almost everything is online and insisting that their children immediately switch over to distance education
- lack of communication with colleagues
- delayed feedback from academic and support staff on certain urgent matters
- problems with connectivity
- trying to balance one's personal life and professional life with working from home
- managing adds and drops
- delays in mark submissions by academics
- using 'slow' computers
- data expenses
- dealing with students who struggled with access to efundi because of temporary status
- different sets of student information on systems (VSS and efundi)

- lecturers submitting marks with incorrect weightings
- struggling to get assistance from IT
- following all the protocols for Occupational Health and Safety
- not being able to take a break
- staying motivated
- staying organised
- time management
- being able to switch off from work
- being isolated
- receiving emails in Afrikaans while I am an African language speaker who does not understand Afrikaans
- people do not even know my name
- academic staff members expecting admin staff to meet deadlines that are unfair
- not having proper office furniture

Staff members share positive experiences in terms of:

- the opportunity to work from home and getting more done due to fewer interruptions at the office
- meetings being more productive
- stable internet connectivity
- being better prepared than when lockdown started in March 2020
- having the opportunity to attend training sessions
- coming to grips with new online programmes
- learning to apply self-discipline to adhere to 'office hours' from home
- learning to think more creatively in order to solve problems
- saving on fuel and expenses for office clothes
- being able to assist students and parents online in solving queries
- better alignment of admin processes across campuses
- being able to go the office when needed
- helping out at the call centre

## **9.7 HOW CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021**

Regular communication, sharing, and trust are key to successful cross-campus collaboration.

Colleagues typically join an inter-campus meeting at the end of the previous semester/start of the next semester to discuss module content under the leadership of the subject group leaders, deputy subject group leaders and module leaders. Input is invited from everyone, especially with regard to campus-specific challenges. Colleagues discuss the roles and responsibilities of each of the lecturers who share aligned modules. Some subject groups set up a 'role and responsibility document' prior to the start of the semester with all dates and important info as well as responsible persons featuring on this document. This gives an overview of how modules are mapped across the semester as well as provides a kind of pace setter to ensure that content is covered within time across campuses. These initial meetings are followed by regular scheduled online meetings to discuss problems that may be experienced, share ideas of best practice, share interesting and useful material that anyone might have found and discuss content for the next period of time. Some lecturers furthermore make use of WhatsApp groups to communicate. Others use Telegram to address questions and share content. Lecturers often share eFundi sites or add colleagues to their sites as additional instructors which helps to assist colleagues who might feel unsure or is less skilled. Project eFundi sites are also used to share all resources. Sharing modules may mean that lecturers take turns for adding Announcements and uploading Resources (including study unit videos) and Assessment Tasks for the different Study Units to the same or different eFundi sites. Some time is freed up for colleagues to ensure the quality of material for the study units that they are responsible for. It assists in decreasing the stress of working too many hours producing, editing and converting eFundi video presentations. Even though a particular lecturer might not be responsible for uploading all material for a particular study unit,

such a lecturer would still take responsibility to scheduling Zoom sessions to connect with the students from their campus to render assistance.

Challenges include reaching common understanding, taking action and contributions by all to the functioning of the process, getting to a point of 100% alignment, some colleagues not being trained or skilled in using eFundi, lack of work ethics from colleagues, differences in staff and students numbers across campuses that influences work division, ensuring the alignment of assessment and LTSM, coming up with the teaching strategies that suite the dynamics of each campus.

One of the subject groups in the School of Language Education tried inter-campus classes where students could all join the sessions of one lecturer on a specific unit. This was found to be very useful in reducing the workload for lectures, as this meant that one lecturer presented one unit and another a next for all students across campuses. It ensured alignment and the same experience for students across campuses and exposure to different lecturers. This also left time for lecturers to assess assignments. Unfortunately, this was stopped as full-time students complained that they wanted sessions in the time slots as per their campus timetables. It would help if timetables across campuses could be aligned as far as possible, so that this can be an option to lecturers. This also helps in emergency cases where a lecturer is taken ill or has other challenges and cannot present.

Another subject group in the School for Commerce and Social Studies in Education implemented Team Teaching during semester 1 where each lecturer took responsibility for a specific study unit and designed the PowerPoints and video lessons for that study unit, as well as the eFundi test questions and essay questions. They moderated each other's work knowing that they could depend on each other and support each other. It was reported as a great experience.

## **9.8 DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Practices include:

- using a flipped classroom approach where students work self-directedly through content and on activities before meeting lecturers online via MS Teams, Zoom or Google Meet - this hybrid mode ensures self-preparation and students are forced to engage with content in order to be active during the on-line sessions
- during online sessions the break-out rooms work well, where students are forced to engage and give feedback to the larger group. It is useful to allocate specific problems to specific students and allow them to discuss the outcome. In this way cooperative and collaborative learning is enhanced
- combining asynchronous and synchronous teaching
- practical blocks on campus aid to address content concerns of students as they have access to the lecturer
- PowerPoints and eGuides (lessons in eFundi) focus on providing guidance, scaffolding, and critical questioning and not content.
- using *Kahoot* for formative assessment and integrate an element of fun
- micro lessons are still being done, but now focus on online facilitation and based on WIL simulated teaching requirements
- finding innovative ways like gamification to ensure that module content is presented in a creative and effective way
- employing differentiated teaching and assessment strategies
- continuous communication with students via *WhatsApp*, *Telegram* or *eFundi* (focusing on the chat function)
- informal assessments via Google Forms are done continuously to ensure that students remain on track
- providing eFundi tests after each study unit with a question pool of about 20 questions (randomised questions and answers)
- using the peer assessment function on eFundi

- fostering collaborative learning through eFundi Forum tool
- live artmaking workshops and demonstrations via Google Meet and Zoom using a tripod and ring light
- critical and collaborative reflection encouraged via blogs and forums
- virtual group performances.

## 9.9 TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM (WITH GOOD EXAMPLES)

The Faculty can report on various initiatives to transform by decolonising the curriculum. These include:

- integrating ethno-mathematics, coding and robotics into assignments (keeping in mind that students have limited access to resources)
- fostering a Pedagogy of Play where students have to make Mathematics fun, meaningful and accessible by integrating indigenous stories and mathematising content that way
- with didactical parts of training, challenging students to set assignments and tests wherein they add the contexts of their cultural backgrounds and indigenous knowledge
- with assignments that focus on subject methodology, students are challenged to showcase creative methods in which they are able to teach using minimal technological resources or a shoe-string approach. This contextualises teaching and supports creativity and innovation in teaching
- inclusion of a project of indigenous storytelling as a teaching tool in 4th year B Ed Physics module
- focusing on how subject related concepts can be connected to learners' knowledge of their world and their contexts. Using authentic examples that fit in the context of students and learners
- designing assessments that allow students to use indigenous strategies to complete
- implementing multilingual pedagogies such as inviting students to contribute to high frequency subject specific terminologies for each study unit. Google Sheets is used to combine the different concepts and definitions in various official languages
- ensuring that teaching and learning material fits into an African and South African context
- linking content to students' real lives by means of pertinent questions
- fostering a welcoming atmosphere and an ethic of care
- moving away from traditional methods such as only relying on ppts with voice-overs and including various materials
- promoting inclusive practices by making a variety of assessments available and giving students choices for assessments
- in ART for education, covering topics such as cultural responsiveness and socially engaged art-based practices as part of the service-learning approach in the final years of study. The focus is the professional development of students, equipping them with skills to practise leadership in their careers in participatory and engaged ways. Art project work is aligned with the LEGO foundation's quest to encourage playful project-based learning. Students learn to work in collaboration with participants/children addressing social issues outside the classrooms. Opportunities are created for students to engage with older and legendary artists – with the theme – Learning from Legends: transferring artistic skills to the youth
- moving History for Education into the space of socio-cultural discourse; the honours programme already provides introspect on socio-cultural dynamics within History teaching and learning
- experimented with puppetry to convey rather controversial and sensitive matters within History teaching and learning. Puppetry enables the participants to share their stories and voice their views and perceptions about the past in a way that shields the individual behind the puppet from judgement an in-depth insight into the matter
- including a variety of African and South African texts with literature study in Languages for Education
- addressing prescriptive and descriptive grammar in the first years English linguistics course in terms of teaching students to accommodate a wider range of accents, as RP is not ideal for the South African context

## 9.10 FACULTY-SPECIFIC ADDITIONS/ HIGHLIGHTS/ SUCCESSES/ CURRICULUM INITIATIVES AND THE LIKE

The hard work that went into the successful transition from contact to online teaching, learning and assessment is to be acknowledged and applauded. This involved each and every lecturer and the valuable assistance of support staff across the Schools of the Faculty and at the UODL.

Support staff (admin and SALA staff) together with programme leadership, with the assistance of programme Directors, did a great job in managing enrolment targets, online registrations and curriculum control. Mark capturing, commission statements and examination committee meetings were completed as per the university timeline.

A highlight during semester 1 was the TEA ceremony during which 16 staff members received awards. Two academics were nominated for Distinguished Teaching Excellence Awards.

In terms of innovative pedagogies, the **Six Brick Project** is being rolled out as part of the Work Integrated Learning Professional Orientation Programme (POP). In this programme, all first-year students will receive a set of six bricks and will be trained on how to use these manipulatives as a teaching tool in the Schools they visit and in the lessons they teach in the Foundation and Intermediate phase. The Faculty is combining the national roll-out underpinned by the LEGO Foundation and supported by Care for Education with its Work Integrated Learning curriculum.

In the Foundation Phase and the Intermediate Phase activities have been developed that align with the national curriculum. The bricks will be also be used in the Senior Phase training programme to facilitate the development of students' 21st-century skills like collaboration, problem solving and creativity. The programme aims to align with the national roll-out driven by the Department of Basic Education and by doing so, support the Department and communities to prepare our students to use the resources that will be used in our Schools by training them in undergraduate programs. Enabling our students to take this resource to all Schools will allow the university to support more communities.

Curriculum initiatives include the development of modules in the newly approved Honours Programme for Language Education which will be a unique offering in that the programme will allow students to specialise in either English, Afrikaans, Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, isiZulu and isiXhosa. Students should be able to register for the new Honours in Language Education by 2024.

Module development in the new BEd for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as well as in the new Diploma Programme in ECCE is well under way. These new qualifications should be offered in 2023/2024.

From 13 to 15 September an **ECD-COMBER Learning Festival** was presented in collaboration with PanSALB.



The ECD COMBER festival took place on 13, 14 and 15 September on an online platform using Microsoft Teams. The ECDE partnered with COMBER and PanSALB. Partnering with COMBER meant the involvement of keynote I speaker, Prof Christine Pascal from the United Kingdom while partnering with PanSALB (Pan South African Language Board) allowed for the inclusion of community members who are hard of hearing by having sign language interpreters available throughout the festival – of this we are extremely proud.

The festival attracted 80 presenters, who presented across four sessions/rooms that ran concurrently from 14:00-18:00 each evening. We welcomed presenters from the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Health Sciences, presenters from non-governmental organisations, from non-profit organisations, from students in music and African languages and from teachers and principals that are passionate about sharing knowledge and making and promoting change to benefit children in South Africa to name a few.

Some of the topics that were presented included becoming an activist for ECD; technology integration and online teaching strategies to support teaching and learning in ECD; wellness, wellbeing and special needs education in ECD; learning, language and literature in the ECD, and teaching Mathematics.

Positive feedback has been received from both presenters and attendees. In time, recordings of the sessions will be made available on social media such as You Tube and on the ECD facebook page: (<https://www.facebook.com/ecdcomberfestival>).

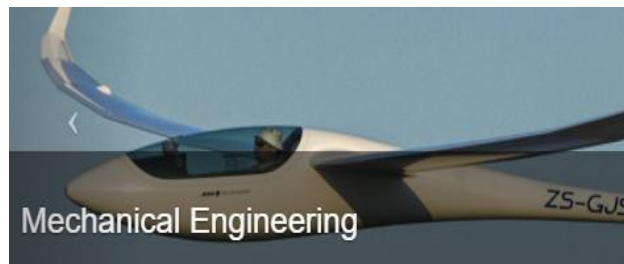
## **9.11 CONCLUSION**

Reflecting on the past nine months of 2021, Faculty management can only express its appreciation for the dedication of academic and support staff to ensure quality service delivery. Our staff proved to be flexible and resilient during extremely challenging times. They found innovative ways of improving online teaching and assessment, and scaffolding student learning since the pandemic hit in March 2020. They managed to implement continuous assessment successfully, focusing more on assessment for learning instead of seeing assessment only as final and summative. Strangely enough, working in a virtual environment assisted in fostering collaboration in subject groups across campuses. Colleagues learnt more about each other's' contexts and circumstances and found ways to assist each other. Colleagues made big strides in learning more about the functional use of technology to promote their pedagogy.

In general, our students managed to stay focused and continue to perform well academically, portraying the necessary soft skills to deal with a variety of challenges. They find ways of collaboration with their peers, they offer solutions to problems that some might experience with online learning. Some of our students struggle with the unavailability of computers, poor internet connectivity and challenges at home. Some took on full time jobs and seem not to prioritise their studies. We will continue engaging with our students to ensure the development of a clearly differentiated student value proposition, fostering the graduate attributes that we wish them to gain as future teachers. We believe that the young people that spent their time as students in the Faculty over the past months during the pandemic acquired valuable academic and soft skills that will equip them for the dynamic global world of the future. It is true indeed that teachers (both university teachers and School teachers) affect eternity and that no one can tell where their influence stops.

We are sad about the loss of people due to Covid-19 and other reasons such as motor vehicle accidents – this includes staff members, family members of staff members, students, and family members of students. Our hearts go out to each and every person that has to deal with immense loss and sadness during this trying time.

## 10. FACULTY OF ENGINEERING



### 10.1 INTRODUCTION

The teaching, learning and assessment project for the Faculty of Engineering was again hampered by the ongoing global pandemic. The planning of returning to limited contact teaching and learning could not realise as was planned initially, forcing staff and students to continue in the online modality, apart from some practicums and invigilated sit-down assessments. Even with the adjustment to the teaching modality, the staff showed resilience to develop and transform the material for online teaching, helping to ensure the successful completion of the first semester. Some challenges were experienced by both staff and students, internal to the Faculty and central to the NWU, but most of them were resolved to the betterment of the students.

In addition to the presentation of the modules for the first semester, Faculty were able to submit accreditation documentation to the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA), develop/finalise two Postgraduate Diplomas, train staff members that will be integral in redevelopment and amalgamation of two engineering programmes and present a newly developed module in Understanding the World.

### 10.2 2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS AND SUCCESSES

This first semester started with the expectation of possible face-to-face classes and assessment being reinstated. It was however quickly realized that this will not happen as predicted when a next wave of the pandemic hit the country early in the year. The increased lockdown level at the start of the year forced the faculty to commence with online classes with provision for practicums within each module where required. Lecturers had to fall back on the planning of 2020 in terms of the mode of delivery, which in turn necessitated the adaptation of learning material for the first half of the semester to be fully online.



An ease in the lockdown restrictions allowed for mid-term sit-down assessments. This was very important for the faculty since it help to proof to the accreditation panel that visited the Faculty during August that quality assessments were administered, and that the Faculty was committed to deliver engineering graduates that adhere to the ECSA requirements even within these uncertain times. In addition, the Faculty used this round of assessments as a gauge to identify high-risk modules for which contact classes were made available on request.

The introduction of contact classes for high-risk modules proved to be a success. The lecture rooms on the N-campus of the NWU were recently upgraded with new audio-visual equipment that allows for lecture capturing to take place. Students were therefore given the choice to attend the classes under strict COVID protocols or could listen to it online after completion. An estimated 40-60% of students elected to attend the contact sessions and had the opportunity to interact with the lecturer. This helped especially with the practical application of the underlying theory and showed a vast improvement in grades obtained for the end of semester sit-down assessments.

The end of semester sit-down assessments gave the opportunity to apply the principle of summative assessment within the continuous assessment context. As per the faculty assessment plan, all modules made use of continuous assessment, but could assign up to a 35% contribution to the final module mark for a single assessment.

### **10.3 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS**

For the 2021 academic year, the Faculty of Engineering again opted to make use of continuous assessment approach. However, this time around the plans allowed for at least two sit-down invigilated assessments, each contributing no more than 35% to the final module mark. It allowed for a form of summative assessment combined within the continuous assessment model. This approach to assessment resulted in module marks that aligned well with module marks obtained pre-COVID. Apart from three modules across the entire Faculty, a pass rate above 75% was obtained for semester 1 modules. These three at risk modules have been reported to the School Directors concerned to investigate and determine the type of assistance that will be needed to successfully support students in these modules in 2022. The 2021 results are in contrast with 2020 where certain module marks were inflated and an abnormal number of distinctions were reported across the Faculty. As noted in the 2020 report, this was due to staff and students having to adjust to online teaching and learning, and valuable lessons were learnt from mistakes made in regard of continuous assessment and the type, scope and level of assessments in 2020. Figure 1 offers a summary of the pass rates of all modules presented in the first semester of 2021.

A challenge that had to be dealt with in regard of the first semester assessment period, was due to the sudden change in lockdown level announced by the President in the middle of the sit-down assessments period. A number of sit-down assessments could therefore not take place and had to be moved into the online context. This change in assessment modality resulted in a change in the significance of the assessment and did away with some of the summative qualities thereof. This held true for the additional/ second assessment opportunity which had to be conducted online as well.

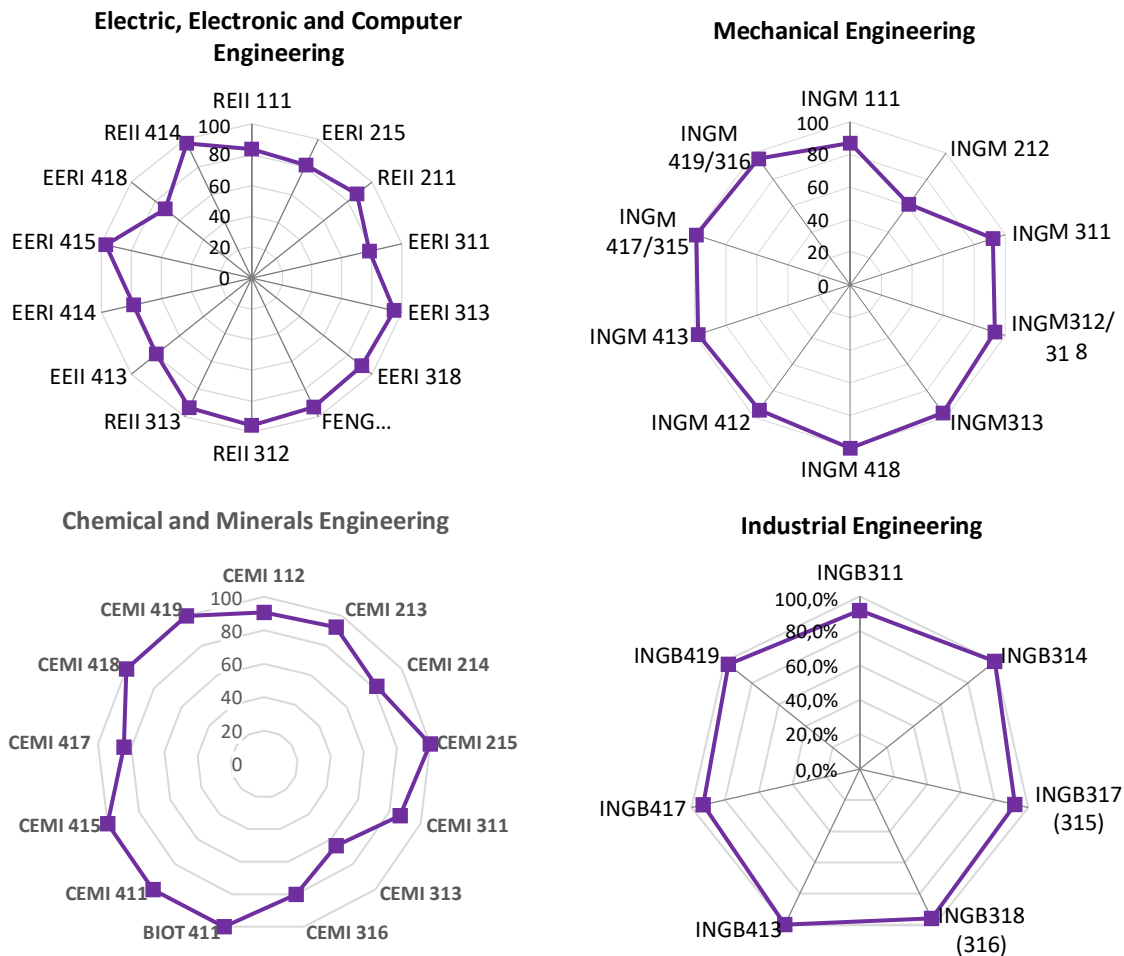


Figure 2: Pass rates of all modules presented in the Faculty.

#### 10.4 2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES

Probably the most significant issue at the beginning of 2021 was student registration, or a noticeable lack thereof. This was a general problem experienced across the NWU, and mostly due to NSFAS funding approvals for returning students happening at a very slow pace, and matric results only becoming available late in February, again resulting in NSFAS funding for first year students being approved very late in March. This had a severe negative impact on the commencement of the academic year and getting all students on-board with classes. Also, timetable openings for students to do practicums were negatively affected, since conditionally registered students could engage in online classes through a special Senate decision, but were not allowed on campus before fully registered. Students with connectivity issues who remained conditionally registered for the first month, could also not participate fully in the online classes. This also affected participation in the first of the continuous assessment opportunities, a matter that needed to be were handled internally, with students being offered additional assessment opportunities.

The absence of nearly all of our students on the campus also remained a challenge for the Faculty at the onset of the 2021 academic year. This is largely due to the required extended practical training that forms part of our programme offering. Practicums again had to be adjusted and concentrated to such an extent so as to address multiple outcomes within a single session; not ideal for skills training that takes time to master.

While beneficial to quality and monitoring, the re-introduction of sit-down assessments proved to be a major stumbling block for many students, especially during the mid-semester assessment period. Students struggled to make the shift from online assessments to test/examination type sit-down assessments which

is much more summative in nature. The low marks obtained during the mid-semester sit-down assessments in most modules testify to this challenge. Lecturers were requested to support students by working through past exam papers with students during online synchronous or, in some cases, smaller group face-to-face sessions. This aided effectively in preparing students to be familiar with the expectation of summative type sit-down assessments. The results of this effort was a general increase in the marks obtained during the end of first semester sit-down assessments.

A final challenge experienced by students, especially first-year students, was the amount of work that needed to be completed within a shortened semester because of the late start. Numerous complaints about the workload experienced by the first-year students were received. Although many interventions were put in place, the number of students who cancelled their studies was higher than previous year and can be attributed to this phenomenon.

Other minor complaints received from the students can be summarized as follow:

- Lack of communication from lecturers to students, including timeous feedback on raised questions and assessments. This point was constantly addressed during Faculty meetings and information sessions.
- Connectivity problems experienced by students not on campus. These students were referred to the applicable support services for assistance. All students who requested to return to campus were accommodated to do so.
- The difference in difficulty experienced by the students between online assessments and sit-down assessments.
- Uncertainty of module information like the composition of the module mark, number and type of assessments, outcomes and applicable content. This boils mainly down to poor communication between lecturers and students.
- Students complaining about the unethical behaviour of fellow students with regards to assessments.

#### **10.5 2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES (ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF)**

For a third semester running, face-to-face contact between lecturers and students were hampered due to the ongoing COVID-19 induced restrictions. At the end of 2020, the Faculty of Engineering prepared and planned for partial return of face-to-face contact in combination with online classes. However, another spike in the infection rate coincided with the start of the semester, and the planned face-to-face contact were replaced by full online teaching, learning and assessment, with exceptions made for practicums and required sit-down assessments. This necessitated a change in the planning of lecturers who had to adapt module presence in eFundi to adhere to the needs for the online modality. Lecturers were fortunate to be able to fall back and improve on experience gained in 2020. The quick movement to the online environment again played a role during the end of semester sit-down assessments as mentioned above. This highlighted the need for even more training of academic staff in terms of online teaching and learning and especially online assessment. It furthermore emphasized the need for proper secure online assessment software. All of these matters have been addressed during the course of the year.

Apart from the above-mentioned problems, no major challenges were reported by academic staff. A couple of staff members did report emotional challenges which affected their ability to conduct their work optimally. These were handled within the Schools, support was provided to the staff and workload distributed to other staff members or temporary appointments to ensure that students were not negatively influenced by it.

#### **10.6 TOWARDS BLENDED LEARNING IN THE FACULTY OF ENGINEERING.**

Even before the onset of the pandemic which resulted in reverting to the online modality, the Faculty of Engineering has set itself a target to progressively move towards blended learning. In a way COVID 19 resulted in a much more aggressive and progressive approach towards blended learning to the point where all modules presented within the Faculty now has some presence on the eFundi LMS. However, not all lecturers fully engage with the concept of blended learning and what is required to make it a success. Initiatives that were put in place last semester to help to reach this ideal include the following:

- Dr Teresa Hattingh made extensive use of Cirrus in the module INGB417 which she presented. The reaction of the students was positive towards this software and the manner in which it was used. The next step in the Faculty will be to utilise the software in other modules as well.
- The FMC has approved a budget to install two recording stations (one in building N1 and one in building G15) where lecturers can capture high quality concept videos to incorporate in the Lessons pages of the different eFundi sites. During 2020, emergency video material were created to ensure that students have access to the material and online classes. Lecturers can now plan the videos and make use of studios to create a high-quality product.
- The intervention classes that occurred after the mid-semester sit-down assessments naturally introduced blended learning to those modules. Lecturers had limited time with students during face-to-face contact and as a result had to take care of the fundamentals of the modules online, while using the contact time to install deeper knowledge and application of the concepts. This will be carried over to the second semester of 2021 where more lecturers will be involved. It is envisaged that several of the lecturers will implement this teaching modality also “post-COVID 19”.

### **10.7 TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM (WITH GOOD EXAMPLES)**

Under the guidance of Dr Willem van Niekerk, the Faculty has formulated a position paper stating its understanding of decolonisation and how it is applied in the engineering curriculum. This paper is currently under scrutiny within the Faculty, and a second version will follow in due course. One of the recommendations in the paper is to focus on the community and determine the needs of the community when developing engineering knowledge. This is done by including community engagement as part of the module outcomes for one of the newly developed Understanding the World of Engineering modules. The Faculty has established ties with Engineers without Borders to take part in the yearly design challenge. Students of the Faculty participated in this challenge for the first time in 2020. This was informal and a late decision at the start of the semester but allowed students to be placed inside the top five design for the South African chapter. This participation was formally written into the module during the first semester of 2021.

### **10.8 FACULTY-SPECIFIC CURRICULUM INITIATIVES**

The first half of 2021 was mainly focussed on preparing for the upcoming ECSA accreditation visit which occurred in August of this year. Therefore, at undergraduate level, very little curriculum transformation was done. The following are examples of transformation and renewal that happened during this period:

- The School of Chemical and Minerals Engineering started with a long term project in redesigning the two programmes that is offered, namely BEng Chemical Engineering and BEng Chemical Engineering with Minerals Processing, to be a singular presentation from 2023 onwards, adhering to all requirements from the professional body and industry. To assist in this process, many of the staff members attended the Rhodes University SLP in curriculum development.
- The two modules in Understanding the World were finalized and the first one of these was presented to all second-year engineering students. Feedback from the students showed that it was well received and reached the desired outcomes. Students testified that after the module they understand the importance of incorporating different world views as part of technical solutions.
- The PGDip in Nuclear Engineering went through an external programme evaluation (EPE) in 2020. Several recommendations resulted from that evaluation to be implemented in the programme. These recommendations were rolled out during the first semester of 2021.
- The PGDip in Industrial Engineering received its final SCAS approval, after obtaining a SAQA ID. Marketing for this programme immediately started and at present have received several applications for the programme for the 2022 academic year.

## 10.9 CONCLUSION

Considering the circumstances and the way everyone had to adapt, it can be concluded that the first semester of the 2021 academic year was successfully completed by the Faculty of Engineering at the North-West University. Students were afforded to complete all the modules they enrolled for under creditable assessment strategies. This was verified by comparing the 2019 data with that of 2021. In addition to the completion of the semester, development occurred for some undergraduate programmes and modules and was carried over to the two mentioned PGDip's in Nuclear and Industrial Engineering. Finally, the Faculty has taken its first steps towards decolonizing aspects of the curriculum, but this will be an ongoing exercise as it becomes clear how to implement it in a scientifically orientated programme.

## 11. FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES



### 11.1 INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) consists of five (5) Schools, which include the following: School of Pharmacy (Potchefstroom Campus only), School of Human Movement Sciences (footprint on Mahikeng and Potchefstroom Campus), School of Psychosocial Health (footprint on Potchefstroom, Mahikeng and Vanderbijlpark Campuses), School of Physiology, Nutrition and Consumer Science (PC, one lecturer for Physiology on the Mahikeng Campus), and Nursing Science (footprint on Mahikeng and Potchefstroom Campuses). All the cross-campus programmes are fully aligned in all aspects of teaching and learning, assessments, practical classes, and timetables.

### 11.2 2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING (T-L) CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND SUCCESSES

Registration of returning students (especially nursing students) at the start of both semesters created huge challenges as prerequisites were violated whereby students (who received dean's warning letters for poor performance) registered online for higher level modules as well as lower-level modules they were not eligible for, while some of these modules were phasing out and not offered anymore. The registration system was not adequately blocked for admission to these students. With the assistance of SALA an investigation was launched to rectify the issue and to account for careful managing of this matter for 2022 registrations.

The delivery of all programmes in the FHS relies heavily on the integration of theory and practice in almost all of its composite modules. Work-integrated learning and workplace-based learning components are thus an integral component in relevant modules and require compulsory practical hours during dedicated periods throughout the year. The different programmes have different requirements in this regard, for example, in

Pharmacy the students need to complete 400 hours of workplace-based learning during the 4 years of study with the third-year students working one day per week in a Sub-district pharmacy, and one day in a Primary Health Care Clinic. All the other hours need to be completed in community pharmacies. The WISL system is already used with great success to manage the WIL of Nursing and Pharmacy students, and the WIL component of students studying Biokinetics is currently being added to the WISL system functionalities.

Online classes still being the primary method used for teaching and learning in 2021, staff experienced less challenges than in 2020. Lecturers have mastered successfully online and blended T-L methods best suited to the delivery of their different. Face-to-face (F2F) contact sessions presented in smaller groups of students, according to the Covid Compliance policy for use of classrooms, at the beginning of each semester where general information and house rules pertaining to modules in different programmes were shared, contributed to a better understanding from the students of what was expected from them and was a valuable intervention in 2021. The initial suspension of F2F contact classes forced academics to explore technology to deliver academic content and lecturers are in general more confident with using technology and the functionalities of eFundi. Some lecturers also preferred the booking of weekly F2F contact sessions in the second semester to explain difficult concepts. These F2F sessions were compliant with Covid-19 protocols, and repeated at least 3 to 4 times per lecture, with bookings by the students for a slot *via* Google forms.

The School of nursing still experiences challenges regarding transport of students to and from the clinical platform which is also aggravated by social distancing for Covid19 in the vehicles. It impacts on the clinical training programme as they arrive late at clinical services and struggle to accrue sufficient practical hours at a specific placement. All the additional transport trips depleted the School's budget and ended with overspending.

One of the biggest challenges of the current teaching and learning environment that emerged during the year, was the attitude of a relatively large group of students across modules and Schools, who became very demanding and even disrespectful in their communication and engagement with lecturers. Lecturers perceived it as a constant demand of attention without regards for the privacy of the lecturer. This experience necessitated the drafting of specific Faculty guidelines for staff and students on ethics, complaints procedures, ethics of care, communication guidelines, professionalism, to name but a few.

Another consequence of the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the remote mode of teaching and learning was that students in general came over as unsure of themselves, a tendency observed especially in the practical sessions. The provision of clear and simple instructions and communication with students that do not always want to read instructions or look for it on their eFundi platform, was especially challenging. The fact that students were allowed to return to campus for the second semester was very important to manage the technical issues of poor connectivity, the lack of proper devices and difficult family environments which are not beneficial for studying.

Formal and informal engagement to simulate the classroom situation was achieved through Forums and Chatrooms on eFundi. Regular Zoom, MS Teams and Skype sessions were used to either facilitate learning in the form of questions and answers/discussions of important principles. The unlimited Zoom licences obtained by the University with simultaneous translation were of great benefit both for lecturers and students alike. In some modules in-time (synchronous teaching) lectures, were appropriate. The online teaching modality required the lecturers to extensively use the eFundi LMS platform as a means of online teaching and learning. To ensure that the purpose and outcomes of modules were reached, lecturers used other resources such as videos to explain the necessary concepts. The preferred mode of delivery was the provision of PowerPoint slides with basic elements of the work for the day presented in the slide, accompanied by audio narratives. This was presented as PowerPoint slides shows with voice overs or the conversion of these presentations to videos and compacting the video with the "Handbrake" application. Online learning requires a greater degree of remote follow-up, input and checking, since no hands-on knowledge can easily be gained as per the usual contact interaction. It is also difficult to get the necessary feedback from the students and it is easy for them to disappear in the virtual environment.

The introduction of hands-on practical sessions in almost all the modules in the Faculty were of great benefit and contact laboratory sessions could be conducted by reducing the group sizes. It however placed an enormous burden on staff members since the sessions had to be repeated 6-20 times depending on the size of the available venues, the number of enrolled students in a specific module, but staff agreed that these sessions were an absolute necessity in the adequate training of students in practical applications of theory. These modules may also, where applicable, use factually correct case studies, datasets, and reports to provide a real-life experience. In the nursing sciences, Covid 19 pandemic had drastically increased the workload of staff in the simulation laboratory whereby a group of 80 students needed to be divided in smaller groups to adhere to Covid 19 protocols. This resulted in having to repeat the same session several times during F2F classes in the simulation lab to teach clinical skills and do practical assessments.

Staff also welcomed the availability of sit-down assessments as of major importance to sustain better academic integrity of papers, which also resulted in more realistic results than in 2020, when module marks in general were 10-20% higher than usual. Besides new methods of assessment being applied, there were still some serious challenges. The biggest challenge was students missing assessments, because they did not have stable internet connections, and the occurrence of academic dishonesty during assessments.

Regarding on-line assessment, staff members have learned from each other, and would share their experiences and alternative "*plans*" they made to do good quality assessment during staff meetings. Randomised eFundi tests and individual assignments or projects are used regularly to test students' individual level of performance. Online assessment had improved greatly since 2020. Students were encouraged to return to campus to a more stable internet environment conducive to learning. Students who missed assignments due to connectivity problems, poor health or load-shedding were offered alternative assessments to make up for missed opportunities. Some students missed first semester due to ill health (mental problems) and some due to misuse of drugs or substance abuse and failed to attend the classes and complete assessments as required. Students with social and medical problems were identified and referred to the students counselling centre and psychiatrist for mental assessment and proper treatment adherence. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year levels students in Nursing are challenging the practice of sit-down assessments as evidenced by the letter that they wrote to FUNDISA and SANC complaining and registering their dissatisfactions.

Challenging during the pandemic also, is the communication from the NWU management directly to students without including or informing staff members of the content to be published beforehand, which caused confusion and even more demands from students. Staff members were left at a disadvantage and the Faculty of Health Sciences Deputy Deans, and the Executive Dean had to regularly respond to staff members on matters even they were not included in. Staff members had to read the same notices as students on the NWU news publications, usually after the fact and after students and parents started phoning for explanations.

The fact that nursing students are all back on the campus on weekly F2F classes in the simulation laboratory for clinical teaching and learning and practical assessment attributed to a more successful year so far when compared to 2020. Students with access to the campus can have one on one sessions with the lectures with scheduled appointment to discuss teaching, learning and assessments challenges. Improved teaching and learning opportunities for both students and lecturers were noticed during this semester. In most of the cases where sit-down assessments were done, it was well appreciated as this at least provided evidence to the School regarding the actual students' performance as compared to online assessment. The School of nursing managed to complete the first semester with good pass rates, more comparable to that of 2019, and few students received warning letters for poor performance and the lost time for practical exposure for 2020 was covered by most of the students.

### **11.3 2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS**

Lessons learnt during 2020 came in handy in 2021. All assessment plans were, as part of quality control, updated and evaluated by the Centre for Health Professions Education (CHPE), and recommendations and concerns were shared with the lecturers where necessary before final assessment plans were approved

and placed on <https://efundi.nwu.ac.za/portal/site/fca1fcb-374b-4bef-b501-a3889c2b41ec/tool/a1734851-5499-4faa-bacb-f254415b7a2e?panel=Main#/group/fca1fcb-374b-4bef-b501-a3889c2b41ec/Operating%20model/In%20progress/>

A Faculty rule was implemented for the second semester of 2021, for all modules using a continuous assessment modality, to ensure ongoing student engagement with all the material of a module as follows: *For a student to acquire a participation mark and consequent pass mark for the module, they should have participated in 80% or more of the assessments. If they lost some opportunities to participate in an assessment due to proven absences, they will be granted another opportunity to accrue the missing marks. This practice assisted in the continuous engagement with the work during the semester, and student participation increased exponentially.*

The following paragraphs explain some of the initiatives included in the assessment plans.

- The delivery of the BPharm-programme relies heavily on the integration of theory and practice in all modules. Work-integrated learning is an integral component of the delivery of the BPharm-programme and the work-based learning component is incorporated into the programme in selected modules and as compulsory hours during North-West University (NWU) vacations. Students need to complete 400 hours of work-based learning during the 4 years of study. Formal and informal engagement to simulate the classroom situation was achieved through forums and Chatrooms on eFundi. Regular Zoom, MS Teams and Skype sessions were used to either facilitate learning in the form of questions and answers/discussion of important principles or in some modules as an in-time lecture, where appropriate.
- Some lecturers also preferred weekly F2F contact sessions to explain difficult concepts. These F2F sessions were compliant with Covid-19 protocols, and repeated at least 3 to 4 times per lecture, with bookings by the students for a slot via Google forms. The introduction of hands-on practical sessions was of great benefit and contact laboratory sessions could be conducted in most modules with a practical component by reducing the group sizes.
- In the School of Human Movement Sciences, all lecturers had to compile their assessment plans for each of their modules using the standardised assessment plan template of the FHS. All assessment plans were internally moderated by allocated lecturers. The final moderated assessment plans were then evaluated and signed off by the Academic Manager for Teaching and Learning who then uploaded the assessment plans to the FHS eFundi Staff Commons site.
- The staff members from School of Psychosocial Health were well versed in remote teaching and learning assessment plans. Module teams collaborated and built on existing teaching and learning assessment plans from 2020 continuing to apply a continuous assessment model using the eFundi platform and tools. All assessment plans were aligned across PC, MC and VC on both undergraduate and postgraduate levels using shared eFundi project sites. Programme managers, respective module teams and representative campus Directors met with module teams to assist in finalising the assessment plans for both semesters of 2021. Many staff members attended CTL webinars to maintain their remote teaching acumen as well as improve their creativity on their module sites. Ms Tiiisetso Tshehle participated in two meetings with the South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) to ensure that statutory requirements for the clinical training of final year social work students was adhered to despite the continued changing clinical environment. Overall, across campus collaboration, especially within module teams, was improved and regular contact meetings were held. The NWU timetable was used to set up an assessments schedule in the School to minimize students having more than one assessment on one day and to enhance the promotion of fair assessment across campuses and lessening the burden on students. Concerns regarding academic integrity among students was raised and a task team from the senior management committee of the School was set up to establish an SOP for dealing with these transgressions in collaboration with CTL.
- In the School of Physiology, Nutrition, and Consumer Science (including Occupational Hygiene) the continuous assessment plan format developed in 2020 was used. Assignments and tests were compiled or constructed to be suitable for an online format. Bloom's taxonomy was followed to ensure



that assessments were kept according to the requirements for the different year levels. Assessments are only available for a certain period on a specific day, to increase academic integrity and to reduce academic dishonesty by students. A time limit was implemented, and students only have one opportunity to complete the test. Academic timetables were used to determine due dates for submission of assignments. Practical modules were presented in either block format, once a week repetitively till all students completed it adhering to Covid regulations regarding numbers and in Covid compliant labs. Videos of practical's were recorded and uploaded on the LMS eFundi to assist with either preparation or where practical classes were assessed through theoretical online assessments. Suitable for a particular outcome and groups of students, assessments were individual and/or group assessments. Most assessments took place online, apart from practical sessions where students are assessed in class during practicals. The number of practical sessions were decreased but more sessions were scheduled for skill development. Students' feedbacks were used to change assessment and make it more user friendly or understandable. Students had the opportunity to give input in due dates of assessments before the schedule was finalised.

- The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> years Bachelor of Nursing Science students' program and assessments were aligned for both Mahikeng and Potchefstroom campus, teaching and learning takes place at the same time and practical assessment are the same as part of transformation goals. Assessment plans for all modules in the School of Nursing Science (SONS) were uploaded at the start of the semester. Assessment plans included online tests, quizzes, MCQ, case studies, patient's scenarios, individual assignments, projects. Group assignments were changed to individual format to accommodate each student due to physical distancing. Assessment plans were revised in terms of number of assessments per module considering lower-order short, higher-order longer questions, short essays and MCQs. Weighting of assessments were readjusted to accommodate short and long questions. Online teaching included uploaded power point presentations with voice recorder and small video clips. F2F contact sessions in small groups improved teaching, learning and assessment in 2021 which resulted in less problems and complaint from students.

#### **11.4 2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

Since the start of the semester the Faculty followed up very closely on student participation. It was noticeable that several 1<sup>st</sup> year students across programmes went missing. The support system from each School did their utmost to communicate and reach these students. Some could be found and were assisted with adapted programs and timetables, but a few could not be reached at all. Some of these missing students were NSFAS bursary holders, and their studies were terminated after the 1<sup>st</sup> semester examination committee meeting, when they had no participation in any modules and according to the academic rules. Letters of support and information they could use to contact several of the NWU support divisions were supplied to all students after the first quarter and will be repeated after the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021. Dr Christmals from the CHPE, developed a unique student progress monitoring system in MS Excel which greatly contributed towards early identification of and support to at-risk students. Telephone calls were also monitored and recorder for information purposes and the staff followed up on these reports. Additionally, students from all year groups (including Honours) were invited back to campuses, but especially those that failed modules during the first semester, even though blended and hybrid learning, and classes remains.

All staff were readily available on email, cell phone, WhatsApp, eFundi, Telegram or other media platforms to assist with student queries. Students mainly communicated *via* email, cell phone calls or via WhatsApp groups. The class representatives also played a part in bringing academic matters/concerns to the attention of the lecturer. Zoom sessions facilitated communication especially regarding study content. Students preferred less group work because it was challenging for groups to gather (on any platform) to work on a project, many students complained about the number of activities in a module, while others felt that these activities assisted a lot in knowing what was expected from them regarding the outcomes of the modules. Most students enjoyed online teaching and learning as the classes and work were structured and they knew exactly what was expected from them. Although some students indicated that eLearning will never replace F2F interaction, students commended their lecturers for hard work and willingness to make the learning experience a success.

The online environment with demands such as data, stable internet connection and suitable devices to conduct online learning are still challenges for several students that have a great impact on student learning. Students were advised and encouraged to return to campus to be in a more stable online environment to conduct their studies in, but those who could not return to campus still experienced these challenges. The at-risk students are a very high priority in the FHS and we do everything in our power to assist them and to make sure that they have success with regard to their modules.

The sit-down tests were a major challenge for the students and many of them admit that they are not used to study for an invigilated sit-down test. The low averages across all modules for the sit-down assessments confirmed this. Time management is/was a big challenge for students, and they got behind schedule quickly. On the negative side, students were extremely demanding regarding more opportunities to improve grades towards the end of the semester, and it was also noted that students started “*abusing*” self-isolation.

Supplementary Instructors (SIs) were utilized on the MC, PC and VC in most of the 1<sup>st</sup> year modules and some of the senior year modules who requested the service. They were used to answer extra questions and assist with case study feedback, were available to assist with students that struggle with reaching the module outcomes. Positive feedback was received from students that attended SI sessions and SI support was requested for the second semester.

The site, *Reatsotella* (denoting “we care”) was launched in October 2020 as an interactive and supportive eFundi site for all students in the School of Psychosocial Health. The purpose of this site is to support students in life skills and mental health challenges during remote learning and the world of COVID-19. This site was developed by Miss Shanae Theunissen and the VC School in collaboration with School students. The site has been well accessed and has received positive feedback. It is regularly updated by the contributors as well as Miss Kgomotso Kibi, the Senior Administrative Assistant in Psychology on VC.

A student representative from the Schools on all campuses was invited to attend meetings of the FHS Teaching and Learning group (Deans and School Directors). These forums offered student reps an opportunity to contribute and highlight the collective student voice in the planning and execution of teaching and learning activities in the FHS.

Struggling students complained about the workload and could not apply self-directed learning. It was much more challenging for students with limited resources. Some complained about lack of connectivity, no electricity, and smart phones even those who had such devices and received data from the NWU.

Students also did not always follow the normal channels to report their challenges and problems, and some went missing through the cracks. A formal Faculty specific procedure for reporting of complaints were drawn up for students because these Faculty processes differ from those that the SRC uses. The SRC processes are painstakingly slow and takes too long which leads to problems being reported long after it should have been addressed and solved, with the student worse off. Many students also started working while staying at home to assist their family financially, and now only study part-time, although this is not recommended at all.

Some more general complaints by a small number of students included the following:

- Excuses from the students especially when they were expected to write a test or submit the assignment, asking for extensions.
- Complained about increased learning activities, lots of tests and assignment to be completed. Postponement of online tests and submission of assignments was at the order of the day.
- Some claimed they had no books and learning materials to prepare for test and assignments, although they received NSFAS bursaries to buy resources with.
- Even senior students in their final study year, wanted short quizzes and tests after every learning activity, which was on NQF level 5 or 6 and not up to par. Some senior students struggled to complete assessments and assignments on the higher levels of Blooms revised taxonomy, showing a lack of integration and other skills.

## **11.5 2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

### **Academic staff**

Staff were well equipped to again manage the demands of remote teaching and assessment through the first semester mostly since most staff up-skilled during 2020/21 by attending various CTL training opportunities and that aligned blended-learning eFundi sites were already available from 2020. Two in-house webinars were presented in the first semester of 2021 and two more are planned for the second semester (ATTACHMENT 1: programmes of the previous webinars). However, the workload was very high as Powerpoint® presentations needed to be adapted extensively to compensate for the absence of face-to-face contact sessions. Adding narration to the presentations were time consuming. The introduction of practical sessions was a great benefit even though the workload was so high. Staff experienced a high prevalence of academic dishonesty amongst students during online assessments, with students forming groups to assist each other.

Working hours were not limited to office hours and staff worked long hours and over weekends to get things done and answering students' queries. Students expected an immediate response on their emails and there is a general feeling that sending and answering of emails must be limited to office hours only. Staff also feel that the absence of F2F contact make lecturing very impersonal. There is a sense that the emotional burden and frustration levels of staff members are on the increase. Although there are still staff members who did not return following the last higher lockdown level during the third wave of the pandemic, most staff members are back on campus. Working within aligned module teams (identified as a challenge during 2020) was experienced as more positive with regular engagement in weekly or bi-monthly module team meetings. Staff were encouraged to make use of the Staff Wellness Programme, to attend webinars presented to aid in mental health and demands during COVID-19 and to take leave where possible to prevent burnout.

Of great concern is the 1st year students, which are mostly clueless, and it took many hours for staff members to teach them, orientate them and show them the way with regards to university teaching and learning and especially, assessment. This process of adaptation by 1st years are usually addressed during the R&O period at the start of the 1st semester where they should have been on campus for 2-3 weeks to receive a proper orientation to the world of higher education. First years were not ready for the very short first semester, the volume of work to be assimilated, the tempo of university life and learning, even those that did follow the online R&O period. All the 1st years who were not on campus, did take some time to settle in this new learning environment.

Online assessment was also one of the biggest challenges for staff members, as students have access to all kinds of resources when doing an online assessment. The main online learning platform academic staff used is eFundi and the teaching and learning activities varied in complexity and engagement, from basic uploaded Power Points and using Tests & Quizzes to active learning activities and synchronous teaching sessions.

The student through-put rates in almost all modules in the FHS in 2020 were higher than 2019. There are also more distinctions achieved the first semester in comparison with 2019. Learning from mistakes from 2020 and bending over backwards to accommodate students to succeed in difficult circumstances during 2019, the Faculty was more successful with adapting assessment with academic integrity and in a format that tested individual student's abilities.

There are several staff members pregnant, and they also were requested to continue to work from home. Staff with small School-aged children were especially challenged regarding returning to campus, as few day-cares or child-care were available, and some experienced financial challenges due to a spouse that lost his/her job during Covid 19 pandemic.

### **Support staff**

Experienced problems with internet connectivity, other technical problems, digital fatigue, and mental exhaustion, as well as a feeling of isolation when working from home. They were also challenged by an

environment where frequent change and uncertainty became the norm. Another challenge was the difficulties with communication between them and the rest of the personnel and with students. There were also very positive responses from support staff members finding the remote working without problems and easy to manage. Some staff had difficulties in balancing their work and family time.

#### **11.6 HOW CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021**

Aligned modules on PC and MC were managed by the relevant lecturers of each campus. The compiling of assessments and presentation of study units was done on a rotation basis by the lecturers across campuses. To ensure that students from both campuses have access to the same resources and assessments, a combined eFundi site for each module was created across campuses. The collaboration between lecturers across campuses are very positive and they work well together as a unit. This whole online learning experience has strengthened collaboration between campuses. Physiology appointed a Senior lecturer at Mahikeng campus. As the staff member only joined the university in June, she is being mentored by staff members from the Potchefstroom campus. She is also in the process of completing her Induction portfolio.

#### **11.7 DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

In 2020 the CHPE presented virtual lunch & learn sessions during the year, and this year they continue doing so. Lecturers were encouraged to attend these sessions to learn more about online learning and learn from their peers. Lecturers made use of a part time graphic designer appointed in the CHPE to provide individual support to improve their eFundi sites for better teaching and learning. In the School of HMS, four lecturers are this year part of the Faculties' Teaching and Learning Mentorship Programme which we believe will have a positive impact on blended/hybrid learning and innovation.

Videos and recordings were made for certain practical steps that can be watched at any time by students when continuing with preparing for practical sessions. This assisted especially 1<sup>st</sup> years who have never been to the laboratories where they were going to practically do their experiments.

The School of nursing is not doing well in terms of cross-campus collaboration as they are busy with Postgraduate Diploma curriculum and situational analysis in different hospitals and clinics. Collaboration is mainly online meetings regarding development of aligned study guides and driving blended/hybrid learning and innovation during COVID-19 pandemic. Both online and F2F methods are used for teaching and learning in the School of nursing. The innovations of lectures to reach students in teaching and learning were commendable. The lecturers uploaded the learning material on WhatsApp and eFundi during the lock-down stage 4, to afford the students equal opportunity to begin learning.

#### **11.8 TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM**

- Curriculum transformation and renewal is seen as a timely, evidence-based, pre-empted, and responsive process to address the changing and dynamic health care context and practice, to address current and espoused student needs and TL approaches, and to equip graduates to address the challenges of the 21st century society.
- The FHS is committed to and supports curriculum transformation through an engaged and systematic process, while ensuring that the transformed qualifications and/or programmes are coherently designed, intellectually credible and relevant.
- The FHS perceives curriculum transformation to be much more than meeting general "transformation targets", but a changed mind-set and the ability to be critical of traditional, westernised world views as knowledge base of choice in the South African context.
- Curriculum transformation is encouraged in the FHS through structured discussions, participation in local and national discourse, and focussed, project based strategic processes. One such process is the UCDG funded *Decolonising the Health Science Curriculum*. The three-year project aims to create a common understanding of what decolonisation is, to design a curriculum renewal framework for

health sciences, and to implement this framework in transforming current curricula in the Faculty.

- Health Science curricula are constantly in revised and adapted to address the fluid health context of our country, with an additional focus on sub-Saharan Africa and the global context. These changes are not only informed by the Professional and Statutory bodies but are also a direct reaction to the changes happening in the world around us. Health Science Curricula focus to develop leadership attributes in our students so that they can become change agents in the world.
- The Health Science Curricula have transformed from a focus on memorisation in the early years, to a dedicated drive of enabling students to search, analyse and synthesise information on which decision making is based.
- A competency-based model that supported professionalism, teamwork and scholarship further contributed to curriculum transformation, as these core competencies had to be developed from the first year onwards. In addition, students and academics had to integrate a fast-changing higher education environment with the increasing demands placed on health care (and preparing students to function successfully in this demanding health care environment). Professional practice (through work-integrated learning and service learning) enabled students to be immersed in different contexts to what they grew up in and what they may experience in the classroom. “Pedagogy of place” acknowledges the role of context in learning, and students’ world views are challenged through exposure to different health care setting (e.g. primary health care in rural areas, inter-professional education). As students enter the health care settings (whether it is a hospital, rural clinic, or social work offices), they are confronted with unfamiliar and sometime eye-opening experiences. These experiences are potentially transformative as students explore issues beyond the formal curriculum, for example social justice. In some modules, teaching strategies, such as case studies, are included that “disrupt” students’ thinking to enable critical self-reflection, resulting in both cognitive and emotional responses.
- The Covid-19 pandemic created a situation where academics were also forced to reflect on their own practices. They had to “think out-of-the-box” where curriculum was concerned, as many outcomes and pedagogical practices were focussed on face-to-face teaching, learning and assessment, especially where clinical skills were concerned. Many traditional approaches to teaching and assessment had to be transformed to the online environment, while still adhering to the requirements of the Statutory Bodies. Work-integrated-learning was drastically impacted with lock-down, as many WIL sites could not accommodate the students for their practical experiences. The use of Skills-labs, virtual learning experiences and alternative placement sites were all methods to keep the curriculum going.
- The B Social Work curriculum process is in its final stages. The design process was managed by a core curriculum committee over a combined period of two years, although the major components of the curriculum were designed over the past year. To date the module designs have been completed as well as the outcomes and assessment criteria are almost finalized. The core team recruited and utilized the assistance of an expanded team for developing the module outcomes and assessment criteria. It is envisioned to have the design finalized for input by all staff from the three campuses by Wednesday 8 September 2021 and to submit the final SCAS documents for the September/October approval cycle.
- School Social Work curriculum: The proposed Master of Social Work in School Social Work is to be housed on the VC. This curriculum is being planned to be presented online as to allow national and international students to apply. Colleagues have been meeting to discuss the conceptualizing and rationale behind the curriculum development of Master of Social Work. The most recent discussions which took place over the last two months were focused on completing Form 1 with the aim of presenting this at Faculty Board for approval by 10 September 2021.
- Bachelor of Health in Public Health Degree: The SPSH is actively involved in the consultation on and planning of the Bachelor of Health in Public Health degree.
- Alignment flagship: The module team of Psychology 111 can be highlighted as example of exceptional attempts to improve alignment. As mentioned, study guides, eFundi sites etc. were developed by the cross-campus module team, but they also implemented MindTap (a digital resource from Cengage

Learning based on the prescribed text book) as a form of blended learning / technology supported learning. It was unfortunate that the module team could not manage to find a budget to continue with the utilization of Mindtap this year.

- Master's in Clinical Psychology programme: The team involved in the Master's in Clinical Psychology programme on the PC and MC make use of team-teaching where students on both campuses have shared lectures either in contact (face-to-face) or distance (via Vido) mode. Students from the MC usually come to the PC for highly specialized blocks such psychopharmacology, presented by a psychiatrist from Klerksdorp, while students from the PC visit the MC for a workshop on African perceptions of mental health, presented by a physician, in collaboration with a traditional healer, from Mafikeng. The latter is an initiative towards Africanisation of parts of the curriculum. – This is still the case in 2021. Excellent progress was made on alignment in the M programmes. The VC has received site of delivery to present the Master in Clinical Psychology and the next step is to receive accreditation from the HPCSA once the Faculty of Health Sciences new building is completed on the VC in 2023.
- The School of nursing is still behind in terms of transformation and decolonising the curriculum and much energy is directed to phasing out the legacy programme and phasing in the new BNursing programme. The circumstances of our students are very diverse. This mean that methods of delivering academic content also needed to show flexibility to accommodate the diverse circumstances of our students. Students were able to draw from their personal experiences and backgrounds in their explanations of concepts like stigma, stress, non-adherence, and the social environments that influence a patient's illness experience and medicine taking behaviour. Students were expected to apply the theory covered in the current Covid-19 pandemic.

## 11.9 FACULTY-SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS/ SUCCESSES/ INITIATIVES

### 11.9.1 Contents of SPSH webinars on digital work ethics and virtual literacy



#### This webinar series aims to:

- Define the importance of sound work ethics in a COVID-19 virtual world work environment
- Consider general rules of virtual engagement for the SPSH
- Build an effective SPSH communication strategy for our virtual environment
- Provide skills for competent SPSH team virtual fluency
- Establish a professional, ethical and virtually literate SPSH team

## INTRODUCTION: 'SETTING' OURSELVES UP FOR VIRTUAL FLUENCY

### We need three sets:

- SET 1: An adopted skillset: How to manage the consequences of “virtual fatigue” and enable your skillset to adjust
- SET 2: A new toolset: Understanding Microsoft Teams
- SET 3: An Open Mindset: Discussion on the communication directive from FMS regarding digital communication

### 11.9.2 Facing Race 2021

Monday, May 3, 2021 - Friday, May 7, 2021

FACULTY OF HEALTH SCIENCES: Race Awareness Week 2021



*Our eyes speak their own language, above a masked nose and mouth.*

### Health Sciences central theme for 2021: Binocular vision increases awareness

Humans are largely binocular beings, regarding vision. We can maintain visual focus on an object with both eyes.

A single three-dimensional image is created, greatly improving vision. Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen, and experienced various challenges and we cannot deny the impact of it on our health and on the economy.

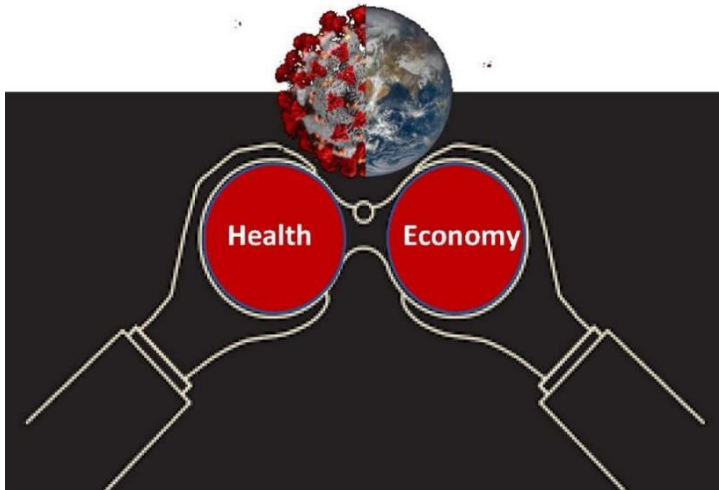
#### **We say:**

“Health and the economy together give us binocular vision. When either is affected, there are consequences.

When both is appreciated, hope is created, and healing occurs.

There are still large inequalities in South Africa, in terms of access to health services and ensuring we have an inclusive economy for everyone.

We all need to ask ourselves how we can become actively involved in better opportunities for those who have been disadvantaged.”



### Binocular vision disorders

These are conditions where the eyes are unable to align properly. This causes overcorrection or overcompensation for the misalignment.

The consequence is eye strain because the person is constantly trying to re-align the eyes to eliminate blurriness and double vision.

While this is a medical condition, it can also be a powerful image for how important it is for us engage as health practitioners, with the importance of race awareness.

#### *Take a moment and think...*

#### What influences your binocular vision?

Disorder	Medical Symptoms	Points to reflect on.	Potential Prescriptions?
Misalignment of eyes	Blurriness and double vision	Do we have misperceptions or ignorance of other races / ethnicities / cultures?	Expand your vision by respecting diversity. Actively engage with people of different races, ethnicities, and cultures.
Overcorrection or Overcompensation	Eye strain due to muscle fatigue.	Losing your individual voice because of structural inequalities.	Appreciating diversity in all its different forms. Recognizing the inequalities that exist and organizing to change that. Equity.
Monocular vision	Lack of 3D and depth vision. Limits field of vision. Cannot appreciate bigger picture.	The importance of focusing on the intersection of health and the economy and race.	Equality. Verify information before you react. Be open to really listening to each other.
Cracked lenses	Disturbed vision. Picture unclear and fragmented.	What previous experiences have	Take time to reflect.



shaped your lived reality.

Replace your cracked lens with an Ubuntu lens.

Video links

<https://youtu.be/z5IOAYW07Yw>

<https://youtu.be/lfl3KTLbdxQ>

#### 11.9.4 The Africa Conference on Transdisciplinarity



#### 11.9.5 New Qualifications in the planning phases

We are very excited to announce that we are in the process of developing three new qualifications in the School of Human Movement Sciences. We developed a new honours qualification, namely BHSc Honours in Human Movement Sciences and this qualification has already been approved by the Faculty and will be presented in 2023 on the Potchefstroom Campus, and hopefully in 2024 on the Mafikeng Campus. We are in the last stages for approval of a new 4-year degree, BHSc in Sport Science, and the enrolment plan for this qualification is in 2024. The final addition we are planning in our School is a 4-year BHSc in Kinderkinetics degree. We are still in the early stages, and the enrolment plan for this qualification will be in 2025 or 2026. With the development of all three new qualifications, we consulted with CTL and Q&APP to guide us in the processes. We were fortunate to have such an excellent team to support us all the way.

The highlights from the School of Nursing are the introduction of F2F sessions in the simulation laboratory specifically for clinical teaching, learning and assessments which is critical for the nursing students to achieve clinical competence as per the South African Nursing Council (SANC) requirements. Extra simulation lab groups whereby the students are divided into a smaller cohort due to Covid-19 protocols increased staff workload and no rest at all.

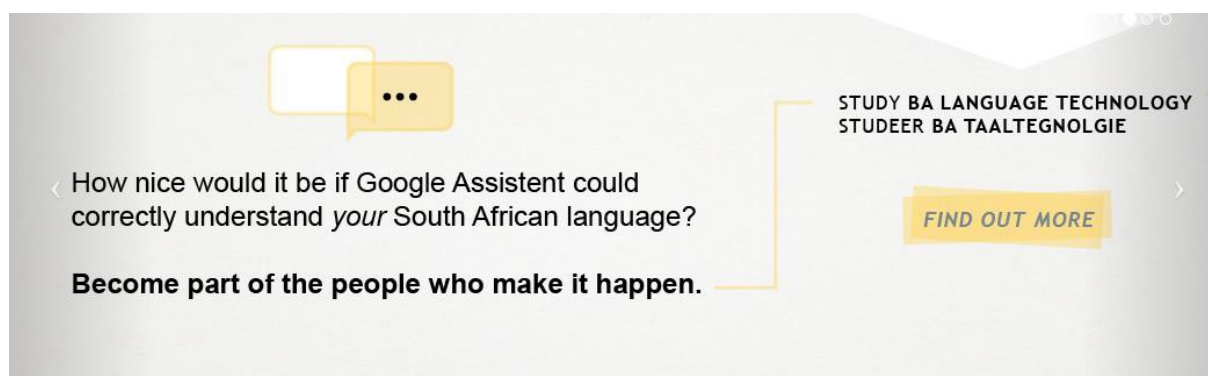
#### 11.10 CONCLUSION

It is evident from the report above that most of the academic and administrative staff members have succeeded in adapting well to the new teaching and learning and service environment. We have succeeded in delivering an excellent service to our customers. As a Faculty, we will have to do more in terms of listening to our student voices and engage in serious discussions about ongoing needs for the future. The ground-breaking work that the current cadre of staff has done these past 18 months, need to go down in history as evidence of our ability to adapt to life changing challenges. We need to educate our future leader of the country to learn from this opportunity to be able to adapt to any challenge and embrace the future with open arms.

In the words of Professor Susan Van Schalkwyk, acknowledged academic in Health Professions Education from Stellenbosch University: "The challenges facing health professions education in the 21st century (and especially since Covid-19), require a pedagogy of uncertainty that allows for "human flourishing", acknowledging the complexity of the world we live in and questioning what we believe we know about it.

We also want to give special thanks to CTL in the unwavering support to all staff members and students in the FHS, whatever the need may be. We doubt that this support platform at the NWU can be compared with any other in the country, if not the world.

## 12. FACULTY OF HUMANITIES



### 12.1 INTRODUCTION

In pursuit of transformation, social justice and an excellent student experience for all, the NWU and Faculty of Humanities annual performance plan for teaching and learning commits to promote excellent teaching and learning; to reposition the NWU to attain the size and shape required by the market direction; and to improve student access and success. This report details the work of the Faculty's six Schools towards furthering these transformation and alignment goals in their own environments. The section below offers introductory comments particular to activities within these six Schools. The report includes work done in the Schools to ensure that teaching, transformation and alignment have continued during the pandemic and lockdown conditions.

**The School of Communication (SoC)** consists of 3 subject groups: Communication, History of Art and Graphic Design. Communication is aligned across all campuses. This document captures Communication's aligned input as well as input from Graphic Design and History of Art as separate entities in the School. Despite the challenges faced by staff, the aim during this reporting period was to ensure that no student is left behind and that teaching and learning continue successfully.

The **School of Government Studies (SoGS)** provides a variety of programmes within the broad spectrum of Public Management and Governance as well as Political Science and International Relations disciplines. These qualifications are relevant and in demand in the public sphere including in tackling knowledge production in governmental functions, systems and processes. While some programmes are offered on one campus, others are aligned either in modules or as full programmes.

In keeping with their Strategic Planning document (September 2019), the **School of Languages (SoL)** is in the process of creating a curriculum framework encompassing transformation, alignment, decolonisation and Africanisation, inclusive education (enhanced student experience(s) by employing strategies to advance engaged teaching and learning) and multimodal learning.

**The School of Music (SoM)** has worked hard to ensure a return to contact classes for the practical modules and limited face to face sessions for the academic modules. This has been identified as crucial to the delivery of quality teaching and learning and to meet the student value proposition. The assessments of the practical modules have been in person. Studios and bigger venues have been equipped with safety screens. To limit the number of people in the venue, the final recitals are performed in front of the internal exam panel. The only other people in the room are the student and accompanist. The final recitals are recorded and shared with the external examiner.

**The School of Philosophy (SoP)** has a footprint on all three NWU campuses. Depending on areas of

specialisation, different undergraduate offerings are available on different campuses. There is also an aligned programme and aligned modules/courses offered across the three campuses. The SoP also offers a short course in Philosophy and all the Understanding the World modules.

**The School of Social Sciences (SoSS)** has three subject groups offering modules on two or more campuses. Social Anthropology is present on Potchefstroom Campus (PC) and Vanderbijlpark Campus (VC). Sociology and History are present on Mahikeng Campus (MC), PC and VC. Development Studies and Population Studies are currently only offered on MC. Modules offered on more than one campus have all used team teaching to expose students to colleagues from across the campuses. The readiness planning for each aligned module further requires that a module coordinator lead the process of preparing for the semester in a manner that ensures a shared approach to synchronous teaching, to engagement strategies, to learning activities and to asynchronous resources.

The SoSS has focussed on the alignment of student experience across the three campuses in 2021 while creating the space and practice required for meaningful curriculum renewal and transformation. This has primarily been pursued through the SoSS's module and assessment plan and the School's Semester Readiness Process. The SoSS has developed a curriculum renewal framework for the subject groups to closely engage the transformation of their undergraduate majors and honours programmes.

## **12.2 2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND SUCCESSES**

One of the major challenges lecturers in the Faculty experienced was the very late registration date for the first semester of 2021. On the one hand, lecturers had to continue with quality teaching and learning to students who started working in the middle of February. On the other hand they had to assist students who joined as late as the end of May to catch up, reach the module outcomes and enjoy a meaningful teaching and learning experience. This was especially problematic in the context of group work and group assignments particularly in a School such as Communication.

Most of the challenges experienced were the same as those experienced due to the pandemic during 2020. Some of the challenges experienced include:

- Since lecturers cannot see students face-to-face it has been difficult to identify non-participating students. In light of this the School developed steps to ensure that non-participating students are identified early.
- In the online environment making classes interactive has been challenging but the SoC is addressing this.
- Free Zoom licences are limited to approximately 40 minutes, which is not enough time for one lecture session. This makes it difficult to navigate time because when the 40 minutes expires, students don't return for other sessions.

Interventions to ensure student success:

- Staff with licensed Zoom accounts were willing to share these with colleagues for class sessions (to enhance student success).
- Cross-campus Q&A sessions were also set up in most modules to ensure students grasp module content.
- Colleagues developed intervention measures to ensure that student acquire enough knowledge and content required to succeed and pass their modules.

Successes:

- Exam statements revealed that the majority of modules in the School achieved the desired throughput, showing that students achieved the learning outcomes.
- Some of the modules with higher student numbers in the SoGS provided serious challenges in the teaching and learning processes. These included aligned modules highlighting that lecturers who were

working from home due to the Covid-19 pandemic needed extra-support to realise their full potential. Support included access to data, emotional support and working devices. The problems of frequent electricity cuts and load shedding meant lecturers had to provide students with multiple opportunities for submission of their assessments.

- There was also moment (which is still the case) which required colleagues in the SoGS to adapt to the new normal of working remotely. This needed optimising the use of various online platforms to allow students access to cutting-edge teaching and learning opportunities.
- Optimal assessment is context bound and discipline specific. The Faculty, thus, allowed teaching staff flexibility to determine their own T-L and assessment plans and intervention methods. This enabled subject groups to develop T-L and assessment plans and approaches suitable to needs and outcomes of the respective modules and disciplines, the Faculty did not prescribe methods of assessment, as all subject groups made provision for sufficient resubmission opportunities given the loss of a second opportunity exam at the end of each semester.
- These resubmission opportunities allow students the opportunity to substantially improve on module marks, and therefore improve their chances for successfully completing the modules. Subject leadership and the School's Directorate continue to monitor student engagement and participation in T-L activities throughout the semester. To facilitate this, a reporting mechanism (in the form of a student engagement tracker) has been embedded into all assessment plans. These are completed in subject group context and reported to the School Directorate on a monthly basis. In addition, all subject groups report on standing COVID-19 matters to the School's Directorate through quarterly reports. The SoL constantly monitors all aspects of undergraduate teaching and learning, including student engagement, at-risk students and our student success rate especially as they offer more service modules across the different faculties.
- In the SoM, Music students receive contact classes for the practical modules and limited face to face sessions for the academic modules. Practical lecturers make use of the bigger venues as far as possible. Studios and bigger venues are equipped with safety screens. The assessments of the practical modules take place in person. To limit the number of people in the venue, final recitals are performed in front of the internal exam panel. The only other people in the room are the student and accompanist. The final recitals are recorded and shared with the external examiner.
- Emergency remote teaching and continuous assessment were introduced in the SoP in 2020 and improved in 2021. This was challenging in various ways. The Understanding the World classes (nearly 2000 students in one module across all campuses) were extremely challenging to manage. A lot of extra and new work were required of staff in the process (like emails, other online communication with students, attending of workshops, assessment changes).
- The main challenges to teaching and learning in the SoSS continue to derive from the remote context. The primary challenges relate to establishing meaningful engagement among students, between students and lecturing staff and with learning resources. A secondary challenge has been getting students to submit work in keeping with the assessment schedule due to technical barriers like network and device access and due to personal challenges related to Covid and its economic and health impacts.
- The SoSS readiness process has enabled progress towards alignment in terms of expectations, T-L approach, and module structure between subject groups. The introduction of a semester readiness presentation process in subject groups has responded to this challenge by actualising the module and assessment plan in all modules to ensure students are well-positioned to succeed in a commonly shared framework for modules that is appropriate to the level of study and the inculcation of graduate attributes. The School has thus achieved a strong level of alignment that extends beyond the ordinary emphasis on internal module alignment on the three delivery sites.
- This process has been supported by an engagement guide and, in the second semester of 2022, a limited contact guide. The engagement guide articulates a set of principles that must be attended to

for effective engagement, and for each principle suggests a menu of practices that have been used by colleagues in and beyond the School that are suitable to the diversity of our module offering in terms of size and year-level. The same is the case with the limited contact guide, which is intended to provide face-to-face support for at risk students. This support takes the form of face-to-face assessment preparation sessions, assessment feedback sessions and Q&A sessions to round off module sections.

### **12.3 2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS**

As a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the continuation of remote or online teaching and learning project, it was important to plan and reconsider formal assessment activities, processes and the end of the year assessment for the academic year. As assessment is one of the ways we have to make students' learning visible. It continues to be important to reconsider the purpose of assessment, e.g., assessment FOR learning vs assessment OF learning. There are several alternative assessment options but a critical success factor for implementing this model was to adjust the weights of assessments.

The adoption of continuous assessment necessitated that there will be no formal examinations, therefore continuous assessment opportunities was used throughout the remainder of the semester and by amended summative examination opportunities, and the nature and scope of these continuous assessments varied in regard to the level and nature of the academic programme of the different Schools across the Faculty.

In the School of Communication, all lecturers responsible for aligned modules collaborated across campuses to draw up aligned assessment plans to ensure the same student experience for all levels of study in the School. The assessments were also decided upon prior to the semester beginning to ensure teaching and learning was on track from the beginning. Complete assessment plans of the SoC were submitted to the Dep Dean of T-L.

Assessment plans have formed a significant part of maintaining the standard of quality teaching and learning in the SoGS. The conceptualisation of teaching and learning transformation needs to include relevant assessment methodologies and approaches that are able to test the students' preparedness to deal with societal problems in creative and innovative ways. Testing analytical skills has become a critical element to ensure that students are able to think independently and in groups as a way of contributing to the welfare of the society in future.

The SoL experienced no major challenges in designing the assessment plans for 2021. The LMS continues to be used for assessments (staff have been instructed to manage T-L and assessments via eFundi), while Zoom, MS Teams and video facilities are used for oral assignments and practical work in relevant subject groups. Semester tests and formal sit-down exams have been avoided, as the School has adopted continuous assessment. As alternatives to formal sit-down tests and examinations, most subject groups have compiled alternative assessments e.g. written assignments combined with shorter eFundi tests, etc. In some subject groups the semester test and exams have been replaced by portfolios; while in others they remain separate assessments within the continuous assessment approach. Additional support mechanisms for students have also been installed, including additional support materials on eFundi, regular access to lecturers in a structured manner, workshop approaches to catch up where necessary, re-submission opportunities and Writing Centre support in an asynchronous fashion, etc.

As a general consideration, lecturers in the SoL have been advised to carefully consider the number of assessments and sensible ways to fit their T-L content into the allocated timeframe of the semester, as students (regardless of year level) might be inundated with assignments, eFundi tests, etc. from all faculties and subject groups during the semester. The SoL thus specifically looked into spreading assignments and tests carefully across the semester, but suggest this warrants a coordinated effort across faculties.

The SoL remains concerned by increases in academic dishonesty and incidents of plagiarism during remote teaching, as students are expected to function under a lot of time pressure and in their individual spaces without the option of visiting the library, or other facilities. 2020 and 2021 have revealed many issues in this regard and the SoL remains concerned that there will not be enough time in what remains of 2021 to treat such cases punitively and/or pedagogically. The SoL needs a Faculty-approved internal process for handling academic dishonesty cases to enable it to resolve matters internally and only escalate serious

cases to Student Judicial Services.

The SoM continues to implement continuous assessment. In academic modules, no assessment is weighted more than 25% towards the module mark. In performance modules the final assessment is weighted 30%. All academic modules thus include a minimum of four assessments. The performance modules, which re year-long modules include a minimum of six assessments during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester. SoM staff members and students are very positive about continuous assessment and some staff members have inquired about the possibility of continuing in this format beyond the pandemic.

Plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty and cheating with the online assessments by students became a problem in 2020 in the SoP and this has continued in 2021. Lecturers have responded by changing assessments to more insight questions, and various other options have been explored (more eFundi quizzes for example) to avoid cheating by students. There is a huge need for f2f (sit down) assessments to eliminate cheating and to keep the integrity of courses in place.

The assessment plan in the SoSS has focused on enabling a continuous assessment approach that is suitable to the constraints faced by students. The School has adopted a very lenient approach regarding deadlines for submissions from students in response to the fluidity of student contexts. To combat the challenge of academic dishonesty, written assessments are submitted through Turnitin and quizzes are required to have large question banks to minimise the opportunities for students to collaborate over platforms such as telegram, WhatsApp, or discord. More important than measures such as Turnitin, the SoSS engagement guide encourages lecturers to set assessments that are rooted in the everyday lived experience of students. This is intended to transform the remote context into a learning resource to anchor learning in students' lived experience. It has the added effect of making it impossible for students to use essay banks on the internet.

#### **12.4 2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

Some SoC students have reported that they experienced problems with connectivity and access to computers, and had trouble coming back to campus to use campus resources due to financial difficulties. These students have often reported not being able to do assessments on time.

The main challenge experienced by students in Mahikeng was the issue of data, and network challenges that prevented them from attending online class sessions. Many SoC students on the Mahikeng Campus reside in areas with minimal connectivity and consequently battle to complete assessments, particularly online tests on the LMS.

The question of student learning experiences serves the purpose of a proper reflection on the Covid-19 impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the SoGS. The School has had to experiment with providing students access to devices, permit letters to access campuses and data among other measures to support teaching and learning processes. This has been an extremely difficult task as students (especially first year) are also trying to acclimatize to the university environment with these new online learning requirements.

Staff in the SoL continue to be mindful of the diverse challenges experienced by students, though COVID-19 may have exacerbated certain issues, lecturers have always acted with an ethic of care to ensure student needs are met. In 2021 staff have continued to provide assistance and support to ensure student success.

Risk modules and at-risk students in the SoL have been carefully monitored in 2021. Preliminary risk modules have been identified following the finalization of marks from the first semester, but these did not automatically result in limited contact sessions on campus:

- In some SoL modules, staff are teaching across campuses because each campus does not necessarily have appointed permanent or temporary staff due to budget cuts. In such cases, to the School cannot engage in limited contact teaching. In such cases the SoL continues to do everything in its power to support students through measures like online individual F-2-F support sessions with lecturers and tutors. This concern is also noted for some exit-level modules where final year students should ideally be on campus.

- In some SoL modules, staff have underlying health conditions (comorbidities) and/or are over the age of 60. Meeting students in limited contact F-2-F sessions on campus would place them at risk; given the seriousness of the third wave of COVID-19 infections. The SoL does not think it reasonable to place these lecturers in harm's way. The same applies to vulnerable students.
- Students who failed certain modules in the first semester have been allowed to continue with certain subsequent modules in the second semester due to formal prerequisites for continuation. This means that instead of focusing on module level, risk was considered on student level (i.e. programme level and context) during the commission statement process.

With students having to be in Potchefstroom for their practical modules, SoM students can make use of the university's infrastructure. SoM students, therefore, experienced fewer challenges related to remote teaching. Students are grateful to have shared experiences again with their peers. With the university hostel activities returning to normal, some students are finding it difficult to find the balance between their academic and their hostel responsibilities.

Students' learning and research experiences in the SoP have been radically affected by Covid-19. All tuition and assessment have taken place online, which has been limiting. Lecturers and students have, however, adjusted quickly and the general feedback from students has been positive. Initially students struggled with online access, but this has been resolved in 2021 with the help of the Faculty and NWU.

The SoSS module and assessment plan defines principles for contextually appropriate remote teaching and effective engagement and teaching within the constraints and opportunities and opportunities presented by this context. This plan is actualised via a readiness process that subjects all modules to subject group discussion to foster collective ownership and responsibility for curriculum transformation and producing graduates who will be successful in honours and master's programmes.

Apart from the expected challenges of the remote situation, the SoSS has experienced a smooth 2021. This is due to the three layers of teaching in modules as per the module and assessment plan. The first layer is the provision of asynchronous learning resources such as summary text, recorded lectures, or power point presentations with voice-over by the lecturer. The second layer is live teaching in with lectures offered over platforms like Zoom, Telegram, MS Teams or Google according to the scheduled lecture timetable. The third layer is the limited contact opportunities created for Q&A sessions and assessment clarification and feedback. Lecturers have also in most instances taken the step of creating WhatsApp or telegram groups for their modules to enable open spaces in which students can raise questions, discuss content, or raise concerns.

The SoSS readiness process requires teaching-teams in aligned modules to collectively make decisions about the form these interventions will take in their modules and apply these uniformly across the campuses. The readiness process also ensures that modules in subject groups and, increasingly, between subject groups are comparable regarding expectations and approach. The above has resulted in a positive consolidation of a shared and supportive student experience.

## **12.5 2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES (ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF)**

On the Potchefstroom campus, two administrative assistants working in the SoC contracted Covid-19 in the first semester. Both colleagues were ill for a relative long period of time and could not assist with admin functions as they would under normal circumstances. Numerous SoC academic staff members across campuses have been ill due to Covid-19 and other health issues and other colleagues have had to step in to carry their workload to ensure T-L continuity.

One of the main experiences and challenges faced by SoC staff on the Mahikeng campus has been poor student attendance in online classes. This contributed to the number of the at-risk modules in the SoC. Adding to this challenge, despite the warnings given to students, many did not submit assignments. This has resulted in some modules being classified as at-risk. Another challenge has been students not participating in the modules to the liking of their lecturers. The same students that need interventions do not reach out to the lecturer or to their peers. In order to address this the School has installed a risk management protocol to issue warning letters and in some cases to assign mentors to at risk students.

Also eFundi functionality is monitored on a weekly basis.

The effect of the Covid-19 pandemic on teaching and learning as well as on teaching and support staff in the SoGS seems to present a highly challenged environment. Numerous staff members tested positive for Covid. There was also visibly high levels of fatigue and exhaustion as colleagues were working from home and lacked sufficient emotional support systems in place to notice such on time.

Staff experiences in the SoL in 2021 has been greatly assisted by the publication of the formal lecture time table. While students do not necessarily “attend” classes in person (face-to-face) or in a synchronous manner online, having a formal timetable greatly facilitates lecturer and student planning by creating a structure where multiple modules visibly co-exist in a programme. It, however, remains problematic that the timetable is not fully aligned across campuses. This has been particularly problematic in instances where a single lecturer is assigned to teach across all three campuses. The result is that these lecturers have to duplicate classes, thereby increasing staff workload and undermining the practicality of teaching modules across campuses.

SoL staff have expressed serious concern about students’ lack of class attendance and/or engagement with online activities and other support mechanisms. This is demoralising to staff who have put in substantial effort to create activities/lessons and consultation opportunities.

Many staff members in the SoM feel overworked. The academic staff members who are presenting face to face contact sessions, often need to compile another digital version of the class to accommodate students who might experience flu like symptoms and are unable to receive the green tokens for campus access. The School of Music is currently re-curriculating the BA Music and Society programme. This is very time consuming, but is progressing well.

A challenge for staff in the SoP is the impossibility of face-to-face public lectures, colloquiums or other academic discussions. These have been replaced by online events and webinars. Research proposal colloquia have been replaced by the electronic circulation of proposals to all staff members. Most of these interventions have proved to be sufficient, but the personal contact has been missing. Lecturers have also stressed the fact that they miss face to face contact and interaction with students.

There has been some improvement of staff experience in the SoSS regarding the fluidity of the Covid-19 situation as 2021 has been a more stable year in the teaching and learning environment. Staff have expressed frustration at the increased workload of remote teaching that derives from the three layers of teaching. To produce asynchronous resources and to offer limited contact opportunities on top of synchronous teaching is more than the workload staff are used to under normal circumstances. This is exacerbated by the flexible assessment approach, which makes it difficult to close off sections of modules in a linear way as vulnerable students are occasionally at different stages of modules in ways that warrant repetition. Colleagues in the SoSS have also expressed frustration around the extent to which they are framed as responsible for the performance of at-risk students in an environment where students are not themselves required to take responsibility for their own performance. Finally, the fact of being permanently on duty via channels such as email also frustrates staff.

The SoSS has tried to deal with these matters by including comprehensive orientation study units in all modules. These are rooted in learning activities or assessments that foster and test familiarity with the module and are designed to ensure that students have a full picture of the module at the outset. This has reduced superfluous and repetitive student requests and does assist to shift responsibility back toward the students. However, the situation is such that these frustrations are not all addressable in the remote context.

## **12.6 HOW CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021**

In many of the SoC undergraduate modules, lecturers from different campuses worked on creating one eFundi site, which was then duplicated on all campuses. Lecturers in aligned teams also divided the task of making concept videos. These videos have been shared across campuses and as a result, students in aligned modules had a very similar student experience. In many undergraduate modules there have been weekly Q&A sessions where the lecturers and students from all three campuses join a discussion of the



week's work. Students in the SoC have also been exposed to teaching from different lecturers across the university which has been an important step in breaking down the campus "silos".

Cross-campus collaboration in the SoC has thus been well coordinated during the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of 2021. All staff have ensured that they are on the same page as far as teaching and learning is concerned. Staff have agreed that a good student experience be maintained in teaching and learning and the learning management system (eFundi). For example in COMS 214, regular meetings were held to ensure that everyone was on board and a common WhatsApp group for the COMS 214 team was set up for regular updates and scheduling of dates and task agreements.

There were clear attempts in the SoGS to ensure that online teaching and learning proceeded in an aligned fashion across the campuses through the LMS (eFundi). Communication among staff members remained a critical element that facilitates discussions on teaching and learning activities, assessments and progress among many other factors.

This year has seen an increase in SoL lecturers making use of shared eFundi sites and team-teaching across campuses. While this worked well for the most part, it continues to be complicated by the fact that NWU cannot implement a fully aligned class timetable. This has necessitated the duplication of teaching and content, and has placed restraints on the issuing of aligned assessments. An aligned class timetable is needed for the online mode of teaching and learning, as well as for (limited) contact classes if such are to continue on campuses.

The forced changes to emergency remote teaching and continuous assessment has significantly improved alignment between the three campuses in the SoP. Lecturers from the different campuses have cooperated to teach online classes, to design and mark assessments, and to communicate the same messages – often from only one eFundi site for all students. Students from the three campuses had the benefit of receiving exactly the same online presentation of classes and/or other learning activities and work with the same time frame and assessment plan on all campuses. Where study guides and assessments were aligned before, the alignment included these further aspects in 2021.

The SoSS readiness process has structured cross-campus collaboration in the T-L context. Colleagues responsible for aligned modules have been meeting in advance of the semester's start and collaborating to provide aligned learning resources, learning activities and assessment in terms of the module outcomes, study unit learning objectives and the MOD. They, along with all colleagues, have thereafter presented the result of this collaboration to the broad, cross-campus, subject group where further collaborative contributions have been made.

This has been broadly successful and has resulted in effective team teaching in most modules. The pressure to collaborate has resulted in some minor conflicts among colleagues across campuses but these have been quickly brought under control to ensure that teaching and learning continues as planned and scheduled.

Social Anthropology has been fully team-taught across PC and VC. History and Sociology are mostly team-taught across the three campuses, but some modules have elected to have separate eFundi sites for the three campuses. This separation is mostly the result of teaching timetables not being aligned on all campuses.

## **12.7 DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

In most SoC modules, lecturers have made concept videos that are available to students. The weekly Q&A sessions have been devoted to discussing student questions related to the work explained in the concept videos.

Despite the low number of students attending online classes in the SoC, alignment has allowed for equity in student experience across all three campuses. eFundi has been instrumental in getting the modules across to the students in a seamless manner in a unified structure reflecting the unitary NWU's unitary model. In some cases purposeful contact has taken place and seems to have been beneficial in addressing

numerous issues especially for at-risk and vulnerable students.

The limited contact interventions in the SoGS has served as an emergency intervention to teach at-risk students using mainly face to face sessions. However, the online teaching served to ensure that many of the colleagues are able to optimise their online use which provide students access and regular interaction with their lecturers.

In continuing with the online and/or remote teaching and learning mode, the SoL has had to rethink how to present modules, how students receive and engage with module content, how students complete assessments, and ultimately how students complete the learning experience. The SoL has had to challenge assumptions about available resources, connectivity, devices and even basic modes of communication to ensure that modules (content, assessments) have remained accessible to students. The challenges of the current context have necessitated a revised approach and attitude to teaching and learning on the part of staff and students. While this has been a challenging learning experience for all involved, it has given the SoL an opportunity for critical reflection on existing and accepted practices.

All modules have been presented via the online mode in 2021, with no (physical) F2F classes, though synchronous classes have been offered online. As noted above, this has necessitated rethinking existing practices, and the remote modality has therefore affected the use of blended/hybrid learning, though staff do still try to keep this in mind in their teaching practices.

When students in the SoM were unable to have contact sessions with their accompanists for the practical modules, accompanists recorded voice notes of the accompaniments and students were able to rehearse with the different tracks. Although not ideal in terms of the finer nuance music performance requires, students have been able to prepare well. Once allowed to meet with their accompanists, most of them knew the ensemble of their works very well and lecturers were immediately able to work on the finer nuance in the first rehearsals.

All T-L in all SoSS modules has been blended/hybrid, with the module and assessment plan requiring three layers of teaching as indicated above. Lecturers have all made asynchronous resources available in their modules, offer synchronous T-L opportunities in keeping with the timetable and offer limited contact interventions. Platforms used include Telegram, Google, MS Teams and Zoom.

## **12.8 TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM**

In the SoC, certain modules in the Communication subject group have been identified for revision to ensure that decolonisation, transformation and Africanisation are addressed. Lecturers of several modules have indicated they are exploring the inclusion of more African theories and African scholarship in the modules they teach. COMS311 (communication theory) specifically included communication theories from an African perspective and in the final module assignment, students had to reconceptualise an existing communication theory to make it relevant for the African context.

The SoC has enhanced the student experience by exposing their students to teaching and learning embedded in the Southern African experience. As such, many of the lecturers in Mahikeng have seen the need to apply the content taught in their modules to sources, content and examples relevant to the Southern and South African experience.

Theories in Communication have also been linked to the South African experience in content and assessments. For example, in COMS 214 and the flagship module COMS 123, current developments in the South African space were included in the assessments for students to engage.

The SoGS has revised its programmes in Mahikeng Campus as part of decolonising the curriculum. The other aspect requires assessments and student lecturer interactions to utilise lived experiences that offer substantive contexts that serve a purpose of decoloniality.

Given the changing educational landscape and the needs of students and industry in the 21st century, the SoL has had to renew/update curricula and carefully reconsider what they teach, how they teach and assess, and who they teach. As outlined in the SoL Strategic Planning document (September 2019), they have embarked on a process to thoroughly and responsibly engage with colleagues (subject experts, and

teaching and learning experts), published scholarship, and institutional guidelines (when they become available) on curriculum transformation. The SoL has started to rethink themes, perspectives and approaches, and will continuously incorporate the resulting insights and experiences into modules and programmes. There are many interpretations of curriculum transformation, and not all subject groups in the SoL approach it in the same way, there is no “one size fits all” solution; it is something that requires careful thought and deliberation within each discipline. The SoL believes that the process of transformation cannot be rushed and needs to be approached in an accountable and responsible manner in terms of clear institutional guidelines. While the SoL has progressed in transforming content and pedagogy, they remain cognisant of the fact that transformation is continuous and ongoing.

It remains a strategic goal of the SoM to develop **African Music** into a flagship programme.

Whilst it is crucial African music students are well-grounded in southern African vocal traditions, any theoretical engagement with the study of African music requires rigorous knowledge of music from beyond the South African region as well. Dr Stacey has shifted the modules for 2021 so that students engage with music southern Africa, East and central Africa, West Africa, and North Africa. At the same time, the SoL encourages the more senior students to engage with more advanced concepts within African music and musicology (archives, research ethics, decolonisation, sound repatriation, gender and artistic research) as well as preliminary research projects.

A crucial part of the epistemological core of these SoM modules, and African music as a mode of expression, is knowing by doing. It is crucial therefore to have an active performing and composing component to any African music study. The African Music instruments currently at the School of Music, represent a very small (and not entirely southern African) portion of musicking on the continent. In purchasing the suggested instruments, the SoM will be centering the African music offering on southern African musical traditions, giving students a chance to put into practice the theoretical, technical, and artistic concepts they are learning. The students in African Music must be given an equal footing alongside their classical music peers. Whether they go on to specialise in African music or not, it will ensure that our students have a working knowledge of the music they study so that they will graduate as accomplished and professional African musical performers, as opposed to classical instrumentalists/vocalists who know something of African musical expression. The School of Music is therefore in the process of procuring these African music instruments.

**Social musicology modules** have been part of a decolonised curriculum for the past two decades. These modules approach music-making as an innate human capacity. No musical hierarchies are constructed and no distinction is drawn between music of the world. Music from Africa and the West are treated as varying expressions of universal human experience.

In the early 2000s, lecturers of music history / historical musicology at universities (mostly in the USA) started questioning the validity and relevance of the traditional (usually chronological) undergraduate “Western classical/art music survey”, which was/is also almost exclusively followed in South African secondary and tertiary music curricula. As the demand for greater diversity, inclusivity, and decolonisation of the curriculum increased in recent years, calls were made for a fundamental revision of the music history curriculum and associated teaching pedagogies.

In addition to the revision of curricula, this movement has also produced several new and innovative pedagogical approaches embracing the possibilities of new media and technology. Apart from putting aside set content/repertoire/canon that should be covered, these new curricula pay significant attention to the skills that students should develop to function in a new world where information is at their fingertips. It also attempts to finally demolish the high art–low art dichotomy by including all kinds of music and musicians equally.

Most of the changes proposed for the Musicology / Music in Society modules in all three undergraduate music programs at the SoM are informed and driven by this renewal and improvement of curricula for greater representation and relevance.

With the recent appointment of an African Music expert, the opportunity has been used to adjust and align

certain African Music modules for better outcomes. The transformation of the Musicology and African Music modules successfully served at SCAS on 29 April 2021.

Curriculum transformation in the SoM has not been limited to the content of the curriculum, but also the means of assessing students. The remote emergency teaching and learning environment (RETLE) the pandemic necessitated, has been positive in this regard. Apart from the creative ways that the teaching and learning experiences continued, it has sparked innovative new assessment formats that will continue even when face to face teaching resumes.

The SoP has continued to focus on decolonising our own curricula in 2021. This has entailed a complete re-curriculation of the UTW modules, and the introduction of various other modules (focused on African Philosophy and/or Ethics) in our graduate and postgraduate programmes. The SoP continues to develop a glossary of philosophical terms in an ongoing process to enhance access and multilingualism.

Regarding the ongoing project of decolonising and transforming the curriculum, the SoSS readiness process has revealed that subject groups are not generally practiced in critical conversation around basic curriculum elements, like the types of textual resources, the modes of assessment or pedagogical approach as these relate to graduate attributes or to social justice. To this end we have enrolled an external service provider to teach a short course on curriculum development and developed a curriculum transformation and renewal framework rooted in that short course. From next academic year this will be a major School project that will feed into the readiness planning as an extra resource to serve the subject group conversations and hold academics to account to a transformation and decolonial vision. This will unfold along four axes. First, the epistemic politics of disciplinary development generally and in the South African context. Second, the identification of African literatures to use as learning resources in modules. Third, the identification of appropriate pedagogical approaches such as student-centred learning. Fifth, the development of strategies through assessment for building on student literacies to shape effective knowledge producers rooted in their own history rather than subject to colonial textual conventions. We have capacitated this fifth element with a short course from a service provider to focus on identifying student literacies building with rather than against these.

This is an arena of activity in the SoSS that has largely depended on work in individual modules by individual lecturers. The SoSS will now focus on using the curriculum transformation and renewal framework, to foster subject group visions to ensure coherent, curriculum-wide consideration. The biggest step in the direction of decolonising T-L in the School has been in the form of student-centred learning that aims to ground learning in students' everyday lived experience. SANL112 has been particularly strong in this regard.

## **12.9 FACULTY-SPECIFIC HIGHLIGHTS/ SUCCESSES/ INITIATIVES**

- As of August 01, 2021 the School on the Mahikeng Campus welcomed a new colleague, Dr Quatro Mgogo to add to the Senior lectureship.
- Also on the Mahikeng Campus, two (2) colleagues recently obtained their Doctoral degrees: Dr Bright Molale and Dr Chilombo Banda. Dr Molale was also promoted to the level of senior lecturer.
- At the Potchefstroom campus Dr Anette Degenaar obtained her PhD. Me Rethabile Isaacs was promoted to the level of Lecturer.

The SoGS will be hosting a curriculum transformation workshop in October 2021 as a reflection and advancement of the discourses regarding this matter.

As part of the School of Languages' internal drives toward curriculum transformation, a number of curriculum conversations are planned for the second semester of 2021. Though this will start with internal conversations, it is envisaged that these important curriculum conversations will also take place on Faculty level.

The School of Philosophy organised the NWU Forum on 27 May 2021, entitled: "*Cheating, dishonesty and plagiarism with online TL. What are the students saying? Can we fundamentally change it?*"

The four speakers at the NWU Gender Awareness Week's Webinar on 10 August 2021 were all from the

School of Philosophy.

Prof Chantelle Gray was a respondent at the CTL Colloquium on “Instantiations of Decolonised Curriculum” on 7 September 2021.

Prof Anné Verhoef was a respondent at the CTL Colloquium on “Decolonising Christianity” on 8 September 2021.

The SoSS has initiated and hosted a weekly seminar series in which academic researchers present their work for commentary and feedback. To date there have been in the order to 20 presentations so far in 2021. The SoSS is also in the process of initiating taught masters programmes in memory and reconciliation and in environmental justice in partnership with the Justus-Liebig University in Giessen Germany and the Universidad de Los Andes in Colombia. The SoSS is also in the process of a multi-institution DAAD application for the development of a masters programme in the SDGs.

## **12.10 CONCLUSION**

2021 has been a good year in terms of alignment. The Faculty has seen productive use of team-teaching across campuses in aligned modules in a manner that has shared practices and approach between campuses and subject groups to build a broadly shared student experience. We have made good progress into student centred learning and a blended approach, both of which are in keeping with our strategic plan and relate to curriculum transformation. The introduction of School level processes in most Schools to attend to alignment, renewal and transformation has opened the discursive space in which to make accelerated progress in curriculum renewal and transformation in 2021.

## **13. FACULTY OF LAW**



### **13.1 INTRODUCTION**

The Faculty of Law learned important lessons on teaching and learning during 2020 and the aim for 2021 was to improve the quality of online and blended offering, whilst ensuring academic standards. A new management structure was implemented in the School for Undergraduate Studies and the management approach was adapted. The following experiences, successes and challenges can be reported.

### **13.2 2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS AND SUCCESSES**

As in 2020, the Faculty of Law proceeded to follow the English timetable for contact sessions, which are aligned across campuses. Team teaching is encouraged and as such the contact sessions are offered to all students, regardless of campus, at the same time by the same lecturer. This means that contact sessions and lectures in whatever format, have been 100% aligned across the three campuses since April 2020, as students receive exactly the same content and experience at the same time.

One of the lessons learnt during the emergency online teaching in 2020, was that students desire live interaction with lecturers and fellow students. As such, the Faculty has decided that in each module, at least one lecture session should be synchronous on either Microsoft Teams or Zoom. Most lecturers make use of MS Teams as all staff and students already have access to the platform. All contact sessions are

recorded and recordings are uploaded to eFundi where students may download it at zero data costs. Due to financial constraints during the Covid pandemic, a number of students have taken up employment and feedback from these students regarding asynchronous availability of material, is positive.

Attendance of the synchronous sessions varies – in some instances high levels of participation are experienced, while in most instances the attendance figures are low. Download rates of contact sessions and supporting slides are significantly higher than other primary sources, which is a cause for concern. The challenge will be to find an optimal balance between students' apparent preference for asynchronous learning and lecturer's preference for synchronous interaction and participation.

### **13.3 2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS**

Due to Covid-related restrictions and limited availability of compliant lecturing venues, the Faculty of Law decided to continue with online delivery of its undergraduate programmes for the first semester of 2021. As a result, there were no sit-down assessments or examinations. Continuous assessments were conducted online, in various formats (including eFundi tests, typed assignments, video assignments, live streamed or recorded arguments).

In the first semester, teaching-learning and continuous assessment for senior students took place from 15 February 30 June 2021, with module and half year marks published by 14 July 2021. For first year students, teaching-learning and continuous assessment took place from 17 March 2021 to 16 July 2021, with module and half year marks finalised by 6 August 2021.

Due to congestion of assessment due dates, the Faculty drafted a central assessment timetable for the second semester, so that students in any particular year group in a programme, will not experience any clash or bottle neck during the second semester. To do this, all lecturers were required to submit their planning during July, as the timetable was collated during the winter break and published before commencement of the second semester. This approach has assisted students and staff.

Faculty management has decided that all teaching-learning in the undergraduate programmes should be concluded by 30 November 2021 and all marks must be submitted to marks coordinators by 8 December 2021, to allow staff and students the opportunity to take a proper summer holiday.

To ensure that academic standards are not compromised, it was decided that at least one of the assessments in each module must be a substantive assignment or paper (higher order assessment, not just short answers). Multiple choice assessments may not count more than 60% of any module mark, bearing in mind the NQF level of each module. For multiple choice assessments, lecturers must report how many question pools will be used and how the question pools will be structured as there must be a distinction between lower and higher-level questions and that the question pool size should rather be larger than smaller, to avoid academic dishonesty and maintain academic standards).

### **13.4 2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

The number of students who have difficulty accessing online learning platforms, has been significantly reduced. Currently access problems are limited to loadshedding or hardware issues. Students and staff repeatedly express the wish to return to contact teaching, but with retention of all the positive experiences that the blended online delivery has brought.

During 2021, academic integrity took centre stage as challenge during the remote distance and blended learning experience. The Faculty's Academic Integrity Committee has played a central role in streamlining processes and stepping up monitoring of student submissions.

Several academic integrity educational resources have been developed to enable students to familiarise themselves with aspects pertaining to academic integrity and academic misconduct. The resources are available to all students, via the "Academic Integrity" tab, in the "Law Communication 2021" eFundi site (direct link: <https://efundi.nwu.ac.za/x/7cwsAo>). This includes:

- A video on Academic Integrity;
- A guide explaining Academic Misconduct;

- Faculty of Law House Referencing Style Guide and
- NWU Policy on Academic Integrity.

Additional material, aimed at the application of the NWU Policy on Academic Integrity, as well as the Faculty of Law Internal Rules and Procedures regarding academic integrity, is available to all our Faculty staff members in the “FLAW UG Support” eFundi project site (direct link: <https://efundi.nwu.ac.za/x/OjZAGK>). This includes:

- Video on Academic Integrity;
- Relevant Policies and Guidelines;
- Staff Procedures and Guidelines;
- Faculty of Law – Academic Integrity Process – 2021 (Process flowchart);
- Guidelines for the setting-up of Turnitin in eFundi Assessments (Recommended settings in eFundi Assignments);
- Video: Setting up Turnitin in eFundi Assessments and
- Video: Interpreting Turnitin Reports.

### **13.5 2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

The untimely passing of the Dean of the Faculty as well as an academic colleague, due to Covid 19, had a dramatic impact on the Faculty and its members. Faculty management was in a transitional phase for most of the year and with two directorships to be filled before the end of October 2021, it is hoped that stability will ensue for the remainder of 2021.

During the first semester of 2021, Faculty Management requested People and Culture to assist with a survey to assess staff wellness. The general impression was that staff are fatigued, that boundaries between work and personal life have blurred when working from home and that working hours extended to more than ever before. A number of faculty-specific challenges were identified, and the Faculty Management Committee is considering options to address these.

During August 2021, the School for Undergraduate Programmes on the Mahikeng Campus had eight academic vacancies that occurred over time, due to resignations, transfers, and death of a colleague. One candidate has been recommended for appointment and shortlisting for the other seven vacancies is scheduled for the end of September. It is hoped that appointments can be made in time for the 2022 academic year.

### **13.6 CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021**

The deputy directors and director of the School for Undergraduate Programmes have a standing weekly meeting during which all upcoming matters for the week are discussed. Although the deputy directors are appointed per campus, the functioning of the team is now based on functional division of tasks in addition to campus-based duties. For example, the deputy director based on the Mahikeng Campus oversees assessment processes, including the appointment of moderators and managing of marks submissions; the deputy director based in Potchefstroom takes the lead with staff development and the deputy director in Vanderbijlpark is the student development and support champion. In this way, all staff and students are ensured of identical treatment and experiences.

### **13.7 STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT**

Mentors assisted approximately 470 students during the first semester, mainly first and second year students. The majority (90%) of the students either joined a WhatsApp group, contacted the mentors directly, or were referred by the Faculty. A small number made contact via the sign-up sheet or Navigator page.

Tutorials were conducted majority via WhatsApp, Zoom, and Teams. The majority of the tutorials were used to discuss and explain the theory and then assist with application questions – by using draft questions, old

papers, etc. Students reported that they are struggling with mental health; time management; workload; style requirements; plagiarism; academic writing; assignments; analysing case law; application questions; understanding content; online learning; communication; not knowing where to find relevant and correct sources.

Compliments: included that the webinars are informative; mentors explained the work and helped the students to understand. Their continuous effort and availability is appreciated, as is their ability to explain difficult concepts.

Webinars were conducted by academic peer mentors and postgraduate mentors on different topics. Recordings and support material were made available after the sessions.

- 22 April: Studying law (general tips and guidelines) – 140 students attended 284 accessed the recording.
- 11 May: Case Law (Reading, summarizing, using FIRAC/IPAC) – 134 students attended and 519 accessed the recording.
- 13 May: Application Questions (FIRAC/IPAC) – 74 students attended and 411 accessed the recording.
- 20 May: Introducing Student Support Services – 60 students attended.
- 14 June: Assignment tips & guidelines (how to approach by APM) – 81 students attended and 168 accessed the recording.
- 6 July: Drafting CVs, applying for vacation jobs, interview tips – 40 students attended and 23 accessed the recording.
- 3 June: Structure of mini-dissertation – 26 students attended and 148 accessed the recording.
- 8 June: Importance of research question – 17 students attended and 103 accessed the recording.
- 10 June: Sources – 5 students attended and 103 accessed the recording.
- 15 June: Technicalities (plagiarism, paraphrasing, referencing; legal arguments) – 4 students attended and 72 accessed the recording.
- 17 June: Marking rubric – 3 students attended and 50 accessed the recording.



### **13.8 DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The delivery of most law modules has been adapted over the past year. In multiple modules, students were given video assignments in which they have to argue a certain matter or present a point of view. In legal education, these oral and presentation skills are crucial and might have been under-assessed in the past. In the Moot Court modules, students were required to record their arguments and present arguments during live streaming sessions, exactly like the remote sessions in our High Courts. Development and assessment of these skills will definitely remain part of the teaching-learning and assessment strategy of the faculty in future.



Due to Covid restrictions, final year LLB students could not experience live client consultations at one of our Law Clinics in their compulsory year module Legal Practice. The Law Clinics and lecturing team took the initiative to develop multimedia material (including video material) to be used in simulations for teaching and assessment purposes.

### **13.9 TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM**

The Teaching Learning Committee decided that the list of LLB final year electives must be re-evaluated to ascertain which modules were still relevant, how they are structured and whether the Faculty would not add value by either redesigning existing modules or developing new electives.

It was proposed and accepted that the subject groups would meet and discuss the continued relevance of electives within the subject group. They needed to focus on, development of possible new electives, possible merger of some electives and provide recommendations to the undergraduate management team.

The Subject group heads are expected to provide feedback at the first TLC meeting of 2022.

### **13.10 FACULTY-SPECIFIC PROJECTS**

During 2021, a micro-curriculum project was conducted in respect of the Language Skills Modules that are offered on three NQF levels. Its purpose was to ensure that all requisite skills and graduate attributes were developed. The articulation and scaffolding of skills and content in the modules were analysed. Lecturers in IURI 174, 274 and 377 agreed on amendments to their module content to optimise skills development. This included the incorporation of the “writing school” project in IURI 377 to ensure that all students benefit from the experience. All amendments will be incorporated in 2022. The project would be rolled out and expanded to all subject groups within the next year to ensure that all graduate attributes are attained.

### **13.11 CONCLUSION**

The Faculty of Law has adapted to continuous assessment and has developed guidelines to ensure that academic integrity and standards are not compromised in the online environment. Academic integrity remains problematic, and training of students and staff will be an ongoing project. Staff fatigue and vacancies are attended to and the aim is to have a full team of motivated academics ready for the 2022 academic year. The Faculty is functioning as a unit and lecturing teams across campuses ensure identical student experiences. Staff and students will welcome a return to contact teaching but the Faculty will retain the benefits experienced during the period of blended learning. The Faculty is continuously reconsidering its curriculum and module content. The micro-curriculum project will require an in-depth analysis of module content and skills development to ensure that all graduate attributes are indeed attained.

## 14. FACULTY OF NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES



### 14.1 2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS AND SUCCESSES

Staff have been forced to explore all aspects of e-learning to the fullest - from free easy-to-use online recording programs to the full capability of eFundi and other platforms.

Effective and fair assessments have proven to be a huge challenge, with elevated throughput rates and higher than usual average marks. In some cases there is evidence that the students benefited from continuous assessment, understood the work well and achieved high marks. Some assessments gave the students access to open book resources legitimately and by design, and higher order thinking skills were assessed, which made dishonesty difficult. In other cases it was found that the online assessments were either too easy, or that such assessments afford students the opportunity to be dishonest.

In the case of WVNS-modules, all assessments are open-book and thus focussed on higher-order cognitive abilities, which largely mitigated the problem. However, throughput reports from most modules in FNAS indicate that online assessments still need to be optimised.

School of Biological sciences found that cross-campus alignment is difficult to achieve in terms of practical sessions and sit-down assessments – even more so under Covid regulations. MC does not have the necessary infrastructure to follow the same timetable as PC. This makes the writing of tests and teaching of practical sessions difficult, with differences between the final curriculum and standard of the same degree.

Successes were experienced in MKBS313 and 314, where we introduced a system to ensure the quality of our online assessments is not compromised by carrying out zoom invigilated online assessments and making use of the breakaway rooms to create smaller groups of students for invigilation. The appointed student assistants assisted with invigilation and all sessions were recorded. Additionally, we ensured control by requesting to be able to see the student and their desk at all times. This method worked well for us and we will be implementing it in the other Microbiology modules during the second semester.

In Biochemistry the biggest challenge observed in PC remains plagiarism and dishonesty during assessments by students. It was very clear that students do not engage with the work but merely copy and paste to pass an assessment. They failed miserably when they had to write a final sit-down assessment. We do make use of multiple questions drawn from question pools, but there are only so many questions one can think of. Another challenge in MC was lack of face to face practicals with BCHN 213 (number of students ~ 200) due to COVID. Online stimulation practicals were conducted as part of an intervention. Students were instructed to be creative and conduct experiments at home and send video (DNA extraction

using their saliva). Art and creativity were introduced for 3 D structure, and students used tooth pics and jelly tots to draw structures of amino acids. One wet practical was conducted, and students were grouped and came and took turns to attend once a week. Students were successfully equipped with practical information, stimulation practicals allowed them to be creative, and understand the module. A sit down assessment as the practical exam was held, and students did well in this module.

In the case of BCHS 316 MC, sit-down final assessment and contact practical sessions were the main challenge. The contact practicals were cancelled; instead, the students were provided with simulated data which they used to compile a report in publication format. The students were assessed online throughout the year and were expected to write a sit-down assessment. Most of the students opposed the sit-down exam and insisted on an online final assessment. As a result, only a few students actively participated in all the activities that were designed to prepare them for the sit-down assessment. i.e. tutorials, revision lectures, consultation etc.

One of the major challenges in teaching and learning is the general one of students complaining about connectivity, especially when it comes to online assessments. As staff in MC, teaching an extended module, I think we find ourselves in a tight corner because you cannot dispute the issue. One reason being that we sometimes experience the problem ourselves. I have personally experienced disconnections in-between zoom meetings. One way of trying to avoid excuses in this regard is to advise students to go to campus.

Averages for Chemistry NCHE modules at PC were higher than usual after the first semester of 2020, mainly due to the fact that lecturing staff had to adapt to the new assessment model. Results were much improved after the second semester. In most cases, averages for modules were on par with those of previous years. We are incorporating the valuable lessons learned in 2020 into our teaching efforts in 2021. After the first semester of 2021, averages for modules were again on par with those of previous years.

All the practical work for NCHE modules was converted to online activities. Although it is certainly not ideal when students are unable to attend physical, practical work, online practical activities offer their advantages. We have found that online practical activities allow for deeper learning of the theoretical aspects of practical work, which can be assessed at a deeper level. One of our modules (NCHE 121) employs a dual practical work system. Our chemistry majors need to do laboratory work while other students do online practical work. In the event of students being ill, they are moved from laboratory work to online practical work for that period. This system works very well to ensure the continuity of the practical work.

Some of the main challenges for NCHE 171 is **addressing diverse learning needs in the classroom:** every student is different with unique learning needs. The challenge faced for online teaching and learning is the inability to address and attend to each student's specific needs, although as lecturers we are supposed to come with different teaching strategies, it is still difficult. Students learn differently and the way we evaluate them somehow restricts them. Online evaluation is quite rigid and confines students, for example, some are not well acquainted with computers and this makes it difficult for them to complete tasks on time, others have a phobia to see questions online as compared to what they come from where they used pen and paper for assessment.

Practical activities: About 95% of the modules in the Faculty require practical activities, however, based on the numbers and resources available, these activities were restricted to video recordings. This has resulted in students not taking practical classes seriously, for example, there is a scheduled timetable indicating the time slots for these activities. The majority of students, do not attend these online practical classes and rather choose to listen to video recordings. The experience from my class, indicates that they assist each other in writing a structured report, however, when assessed they fail. This is one component where I feel that the students' ability to connect both the theory and practice is compromised.

Zoom burn-out & network connections: even though the majority of classes are online, this somehow affected the issue of students' attendance and inability to complete the tasks, with reasons such as network connectivity problems. Another reason mentioned by students when asking about missed online classes and assessment mentioned burn-out and not coping with online zoom meetings, even though the classes are shortened to one hour, some consider this as tiresome exercise. This has resulted in lecturers setting extra online assessments. Students expect lecturers to post video recordings, and do not interaction

through zoom meetings. Furthermore, as lecturers, the challenges faced with zoom meetings and e-fundi online is to give those students lagging behind extra classes and marking of activities, meetings, and other work-related issues, which have caused and resulted in burn-out and fatigue. Lecturers complained that so much has happened during this pandemic and the teaching and learning never stopped owing to the new strategies employed. However, this made it easy for lecturers to reach the students and vice versa. This means students are never left behind if they make an effort. Online engagements tend to tempt a person to work without stopping and thus becoming burned out. It is thus necessary to consider having a working schedule and sticking to it. Lecturers are within reach 24/7 for our students. One does not have to feel offended when students contact them or send a message beyond working hours. It does not mean that you would be forced to respond immediately. The most important thing is that the student does not have to wait until the next class to get the message through. Online classes are good, however it becomes a challenge if the majority of the students do not see a need to attend a synchronous or live class because they know that it will be recorded. In most cases, if they failed to attend the class they would probably not find the time to listen to or view the class recording. They might do that only when under pressure of the assessments.

Physics lecturers on PC generally all encountered one, or both, of two major challenges: student dishonesty, and a lack of student engagement. The first challenge has been with us since the commencement of online teaching in 2020, and successful interventions to address this were few. Two, however, worked well. The first was made possible by the limited F2F opportunities that were possible in 2021. Using these, some lecturers were able to incorporate in-person assessments into their assessment planning. These in-person tests allowed for plagiarism-free assessment. These opportunities, however, were few and not available to modules with large student numbers, thereby limiting their overall efficacy and highlighting the urgent need for a return to normal classes, which will no doubt become possible as the COVID vaccination drive moves forward. The second successful intervention occurred concerning 3rd-year physics practicals. A new experiment was set incorporating the analysis of spacecraft data. This allowed students to acquire data analysis skills, while doing a unique experiment that could not be copied from another source on the internet. This approach, while being efficacious at 3rd-year level, is not extendable to 2nd and 1st-year practicals due to the limitations imposed by their respective NQF levels.

The lack of student engagement was much more difficult to address and was especially serious for the 1st year modules, as can be attested by the lecturer of FSKS113. Reasons for this could be that online teaching simply does not appeal to the majority of students, especially 1st years who struggled through almost a year of emergency online teaching at a matric level. This lack of engagement led to enormous difficulties, and very low marks. One intervention was that of lifeline assessments, the last opportunity for students to acquire enough marks to pass. This, however, is not an ideal option to take, as it could compromise on quality. This issue, however, we expect to vanish upon a return to normal in-person teaching and look forward to the resumption of normal classes.

Some hands-on practicals were possible with social distancing. Physics and Chemistry students were able to work in the labs, which were certified fully Covid compliant.



Figure 1 a: Chemistry lab on MC and Figure 1b: Physics electronics lab on MC

Animal Health clinical work integrated learning was also able to continue. The Animal Hospital remained open to the public, with the exception of a couple of weeks when positive Covid cases were reported.



Figure 2: Small animal clinic

## 14.2 2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS

The Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences Assessment Plan for each semester has been put together in the following way:

Each School/Centre Director was asked to put together their plan. It was stressed that the guidelines were not prescriptive, and each School could use any format that suited their purposes. The Subject Group Leaders and individual academic staff members formulated the assessment plan for each module, which were then collated by the School Directors. Different formats were used for the individual module assessment plans, with some submitting Word or pdf documents and others preferring Excel. The Deputy Dean Teaching Learning collated all the plans, and summarised the main points in terms of continuous assessment, summative assessment, constraints and possible solutions, grading and moderation of the final assessments. Guidance and assistance from the CTL Faculty Team was provided. Assessment plans were discussed at a meeting of the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee. The FNAS Faculty Assessment Plan as approved by the Faculty Management Committee was sent to the DVC Teaching and Learning to be submitted for recommendation to SCTL and Senate.

In putting together the assessment plan, the following principles were applied:

- It was accepted in 2020 that this is a time of crisis, and that we cannot always control assessment environments like we usually do, thus the plan proposes emergency measures which are not necessarily ideal or the best pedagogical means of assessing students' performance in the modules. Many modules have found that there is no acceptable alternative to sit-down assessments. However, contingency plans have been made should sit-down assessments not be possible.
- Lecturers initially had to plan Teaching and Learning in such a way that students with only cell phones and minimum data are accommodated, although from 2021 all first year students are required to have access to a device. The eFundi platform is used, as it is zero rated. The university has also undertaken to continue providing data to students who need it and who are not returning to campus. Those who have permission to return to campus will be able to use the university facilities. Most students in the Faculty have returned to campus for the second semester, to use the university facilities, and for limited contact teaching such as practicals.
- It is recommended that lecturers, as far as possible, still provide teaching and learning in Afrikaans and English when uploading material to eFundi, for those modules which are normally offered in both languages of instruction. However, it was found in 2020 that it was often difficult to do videos, podcasts etc. in both languages, and other resources only available in English will also be used. Assessments are uploaded in English and Afrikaans, where appropriate.
- For all programmes, the workload of students needs to be co-ordinated carefully between different modules and lecturers. It must be borne in mind that some tasks may take longer to complete in the online mode than in the contact mode. The principle applied is that lecturers should try to assign tasks requiring the same amount of time per week as that allocated to a module in the class timetable. They will also make use of the timeslots provided in the published time table.
- It is difficult to assign group assignments on the one hand, as students may not be able to communicate effectively with each other, while on the other hand we acknowledge that students may work together, may share work, and may submit work which is not their own. This was found to be a very big problem in 2020, and is one of the reasons why many modules request sit-down assessments.
- The number of assessments to be submitted differ across the Schools and subject groups. Aligned modules have submitted one assessment plan across campuses.
- Marking of assessments also has to be borne in mind. It is more difficult for technicians and student assistants to help with marking. Assignments submitted on cell phones, for example, may be in a format which is difficult to read and mark. Due to the numbers of students, it will not be an option to print out all the assignments that are submitted in order to mark them. A move to question formats which are easier to mark, such as multiple choice questions, is sometimes necessary to overcome this problem. This does have consequences on the reliability of the assessments however. The Cirrus assessment platform is being piloted for some modules.

- The weighting of the continuous (formative) and final (summative) assessments sometimes has to be changed in light of the type of assessments which are possible. Thus the module mark is generally not made up of 50% participation mark and 50% final assessment mark. In most modules, in 2020 continuous assessment formed the basis of the module mark and there was less emphasis on summative assessment. Some professional bodies stipulate that there must be a final summative examination, and also the weighting that this examination must take. Within the framework of continuous assessment, many lecturers expressed the need for a final summative assessment. One of the reasons for this is that students often study only what is to be assessed. This has the implication that everything must be assessed. This can either be done by many frequent small assessments (at least weekly) or by a summative assessment at the end of the semester.
- In some cases, assessments have to be completed online within a certain timeframe. The time allowed has to be longer than the normal timeframe due to challenges of access and connectivity. However, the time allowed cannot be too long, as this leads to too much collaboration and cheating on the part of students. Extra opportunities are also given by lecturers in cases where students experienced genuine connection or electricity problems. When students are allowed to access campus, then the time allowed and the number of resubmissions can be limited, because students will be able to use university facilities.
- Practical work poses a particular challenge as students who are not able to return to campus will have no access to laboratories, the farm or on-campus computers with specialised software. Where possible alternatives to practicals are used, such as video demonstrations etc. Many modules, particularly for senior students, require hands-on practical activities.
- For some modules practical work and WIL will be possible. For example, Biochemistry Honours students do hands-on practicals using the instruments. Only small numbers of students are involved. In Animal Health the students must fulfil the requirements of the professional body SAVC. They will complete all their practical work on a rotation basis in small groups. All protocols will be complied with. In addition, when vaccinations became freely available to all students over 18, some service providers require students to be vaccinated.
- The issue of academic integrity needs to be borne in mind. The CTL have specifically stated that the NWU does not have the capacity to deploy institution-wide proctor software and that exams should be set in such a way (open-book, limited time, scenario questions, etc.) that cheating is near impossible; and also that we have to rely on students' integrity and also warn them of the consequences of plagiarism. This has proved to be difficult to implement in practice. In 2020, throughput rates were higher than normal. Some of the reasons for this may be that students were better able to engage with the work. On the other hand, there is evidence that students sometimes worked together, shared answers with each other, or downloaded answers from the Internet.
- In 2020, students often claimed that they had network difficulties if they did not do well in their assessments. There were definitely genuine cases where students experienced difficulty. There were also cases where students wanted extra opportunities to improve their marks. In most cases staff were very sympathetic to students and granted extra opportunities. In 2021, fewer extra opportunities have been granted.
- Physical sit-down tests and examinations will be used for some coursework Honours and Masters modules, and some undergraduate modules have also requested sit-down exams.
- Students who write sit-down exams should have the possibility of a second assessment opportunity, in accordance with the A-rules.
- There will be a Dean's Concession (Third assessment opportunity) for students who are left with one outstanding module to complete their degrees. This may take the same form as the first opportunity, and may be an online assignment, a sit-down examination or a practical examination.
- WIL is needed, particularly for some Animal Health modules that are accredited by the South African Veterinary Council (SAVC), a professional body. Minimum guidelines must be adhered to. There are also other programmes which are governed by professional bodies, such as Urban and Regional

Planning and Actuarial Science. Liaison with them is of utmost importance to ensure the continued accreditation of our programmes. Some professional bodies stipulate that there must be a final summative examination, and also the weighting that this examination must take.

- Faculty Board proposes the following measures in terms of moderation:
  - Module owners consult with internal subject specialists as moderators on final assessments and results.
  - External moderation of exit level modules continues electronically as prescribed in A-rules and Faculty Yearbook. Only selected assessments (normally the final assessment) will be sent for external moderation.
  - We need to display the ethic of care and compassion even in the way that we assess during this time, without compromising on quality.

#### **14.2.1 Constraints**

All Schools voiced concern over dishonesty as evidenced by the high throughput rates in most of the modules when compared with the previous years. There is need for academics to be more creative and innovative especially when setting assessment instruments (online quizzes, tests and assignments). For this reason, sit down semester tests and exams at the end of the semester are envisioned for some modules.

It was observed that for online assessments:

- Students send around and share their completed work in WhatsApp groups during online assessments.
- In some cases, students fill in and complete an online assessment (eFundi fill-in test), scheduled for 4 hours, in less than 5 minutes, using values from previous students.
- Students have reported rumours that some students share eFundi log-in information and then complete assessments on behalf of each other. We have some evidence of the same IP address submitting multiple eFundi assessments.
- Students have stated that they google (extensively) for the answer to problems, and then copy the answer from e.g. the textbook's instruction manual.
- Students tried to fool Turnitin by using white text. However, Turnitin is able to flag this.
- Students used thesaurus functions to look for synonyms for words in text that they had copied and pasted. In many instances this led to sentences that were complete nonsense.
- Where they had more than one assignment or test pending, they would work online on one of these, which they would submit, and then click submit on the second assessment although they had not even attempted it, and try to blame eFundi as yielding errors.
- Where two opportunities for an assessment were given, students accessed the first opportunity to copy the questions and search for the answers while offline. They then simply copied and pasted the answers during the second opportunity. There were problems with plagiarism as these answers were sent to fellow students.
- Some students always missed assessment, and then requested extensions.
- Lack of computer skills were observed during submission, about 70% of the students struggled to write a concise report, especially for practical activities, where calculations posed difficulties for some students.
- Marking assignments and practical activities was another challenge, based on the number of students, it takes long to finish online marking with more than 200 students.
- It takes up a lot more time for planning and preparation to ensure that it is a good representation of the students' learning and knowledge on the subject, and not just their "Googling" or information gathering skills. The experience is that CASS serves formative assessment goals - assessment for learning - but not summative assessment goals.



- In an emergency situation, continuous assessment is a workable temporary solution, but given the practical nature of most of our modules it cannot replace a practical examination under strict invigilation.

### 14.2.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

The teaching leadership (Module Leaders; Subject Group Leaders; Programme Leaders, School Directors, Centre Directors and Deputy Dean Teaching and Learning) will monitor the implementation of the assessments plans. A survey questionnaire for reflection and evaluation of the implementation of the Faculty teaching, learning and assessment plan will be conducted at the end of the academic cycle. The purpose of the reflection and evaluation is to determine best practices and lessons learnt and to refine future plans, as well as to try to overcome constraints encountered. This process was carried out on the 1<sup>st</sup> semester 2020 teaching, learning and assessment in a very thorough manner, as that was the first time that continuous assessment had been used. Lessons learned have already been incorporated, so the process can be streamlined in 2021. A similar survey was also administered at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> semester 2021, and the results are incorporated in this report.

### 14.3 2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES

Some lecturers have found that students reported during anonymous feedback that they find online teaching and learning to be effective and on par with contact sessions. In fact, in classes where discussion between students are necessary (such as in WVNS modules), the outcomes are achieved more effectively than in contact classes since students work in small groups. In pre-Covid times during contact sessions with more than 100 students in class, conversations were usually dominated by a few outspoken students while the rest were not involved (or interested?) at all. With online group assessments (such as group papers to be submitted as well as peer-review), all students have to fully participate if they want to be successful. However, other lecturers complain that it is very difficult to get students to participate in the online setting.

In order to gather information on student learning experiences, questionnaires were made available to all students. Responses were obtained from 723 students. In terms of campuses, 35% of the respondents were from Mahikeng Campus, 53% from Potchefstroom Campus and 12% from Vanderbijlpark Campus. Although this is about 12% of all students in the Faculty (just over 6000, excluding Masters and PhD students), it is a representative sample, with 25% of the students being in first year, 35% in second year, 32% in third year and 8% in fourth year or Honours.

Students were generally not quite as positive as staff, with only about half of them agreeing that communication was adequate. The majority had access to computers and were able to access online resources on eFundi. Many of them (about 45%) indicated that they struggled to plan their own learning schedules and that the schedules and material provided by lecturers were not clear enough (about 40%). Their responses are summarised in Figure 3.

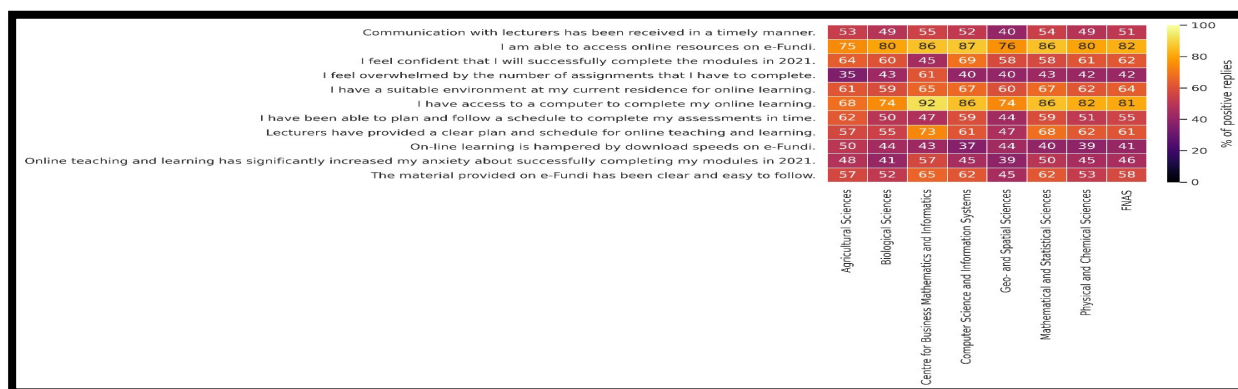


Figure 3: Student perceptions of online learning.

The word cloud of the students' responses about things they feel confident about is shown in Figure 4.



- Try to consider issues of network and electricity when setting a deadline for an assignment.
- Give free laptops to deserving performing students
- More than one online class a week per module. More zoom meetings that can be equivalent to class time.
- Ensure that lecturers provide a reasonable amount of practice quizzes and assignments, and their memos so that students may be confident about writing an exam.
- Contact classes could be recorded and posted on eFundi
- More zoom classes with stable networks
- Weekly or biweekly interactive Q&A sessions with the lecturers.
- Increase time for the test and exams which requires students to type all the answers.
- More reminders of test and assignments
- Can they at least try to organize some extra contact classes where they elaborate further about future assessment (e.g. final exams and semester tests)
- Appoint Student assistants
- If possible, professors could be more creative and create interactive assignments, by which we could practice laboratory skills.
- Develop a strong vaccine for NWU students
- I think they are doing a good job already

Biochemistry observed that it is clear from the student feedback, especially for PC, that students struggle in the BSc courses with online teaching. They want to come back to campus, and it is also difficult to clearly explain difficult concepts online as we sometimes use in-class exercises to make these clear. Students in MC seem to be happy to have at least 1 online class per week where they can interact and feel the lecturer's presence.

Chemistry students reported far less technical difficulties to lecturers in 2021. It is evident that the new first year cohort is much more technologically capable than the first-year cohort of 2020.

The students indicated that they would like various types of support from the NWU's support divisions regarding their learning. The main areas in which they require support are listed in Table 1. Some of this can be provided by the Faculty. For example, preparing students for life and work in the 21st century should be an integral part of the modules taught. This is the most important area in which students indicated that they required support. In the words of one student "We need more support in making the shift between online class tests and the semester test and final assessments. Although both are on the same standard, writing a sit-down test makes me more anxious and then I do worse than the progress I have made with the online assessments."

Other areas need to be handled together with the CTL, Counselling Unit, etc. Assessment preparation and writing is a major area of concern for students. They also indicated they need assistance with learning styles, note taking and use of technology.

**Table 1: Areas in which students require support**

Area	Percentage of students
Preparing students for life and work in the 21st century	58
Assessment preparation and writing	48
Learning styles	39
Note taking	27
Technology – computer skills	23

**14.5 2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES (ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF)**

The success of online learning depends on every individual student experiencing a personal, one-on-one interaction with the lecturer, and this is very demanding. Some students will email staff at any time 24/7 and they expect an immediate response. This means that I check my emails when I open my eyes in the morning even before I get out of bed, throughout every day (including week-ends) as well as in the evenings just before I switch off the light. My availability for students is therefore much better than it ever was in an office situation.

Questionnaires were sent to all academic staff members to get information about specific programmes and modules, and their teaching and learning experiences, particularly with regards to online learning. Responses were obtained from about 40% of academic staff. Of these, 28% were on MC, 55% on PC and 17% on VC.

The majority of staff were positive about their ability to communicate with their students, and their ability to create enough online material and successfully teach their modules. They have created a schedule for themselves and also for their students. Most thought that their online teaching and learning experience improved in 2021 compared with 2020, although eFundi download speeds were still problematic, and many stated that their home environments were not suitable for work. Their responses are summarised in Figure 5.

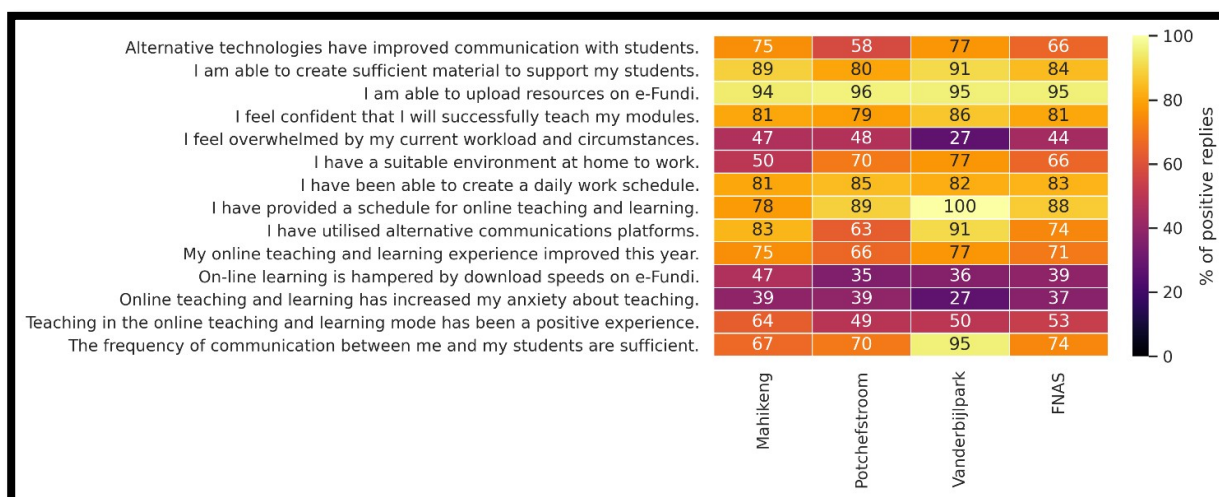


Figure 5: Staff perceptions of online teaching

Staff embraced the “21 Futures” model, where most teaching and learning remained online, but with limited purposeful contact sessions. A few modules used mainly contact sessions. This is shown in Figure 6 below.

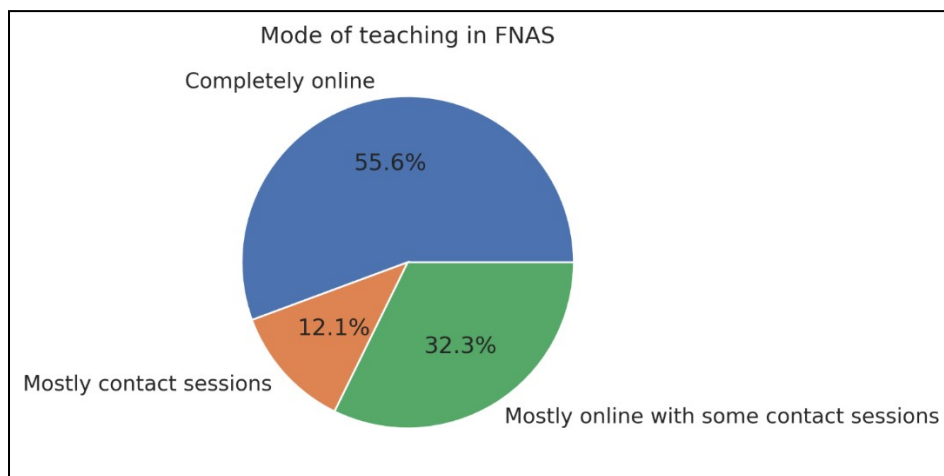


Figure 6: Mode of teaching in FNAS

#### 14.6 HOW CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021

In WVNS, lecturers assigned students to groups of 8 with the express aim to achieve maximum diversity - every group must contain students of all campuses and all cultural and language groups. This was done to achieve discussions where many students for the first time in their lives were compelled to listen to views other than what they were used to. The results were astonishing, with the vast majority of students reacting very positively in anonymous feedback.

In the School of Biological Sciences, lecturers in Botany collaborate very well and currently, each lecturer involved will teach the study material in his/her field of expertise across campuses as well as set his/her own assessments in the module. This ensures that students across campuses receive exactly the same study material from the same lecturer and are tested equally. PLKS111 and PLKS223 have contact practicals but due to a shortage of COVID complying spaces on the MC, practical sessions are not aligned.

In the School of Geo and Spatial Science the alignment process has led to extremely good collaboration across all three campuses from the first year to honours. Lectures have made a concerted effort to ensure that modules offered on the three campuses have the same outcomes and objectives. Students would easily be able to switch between campuses and feel that the same courses are being taught on all the delivery sites. In 2021 the collaboration has expanded to include cross campus teaching of modules by all lecturers. This has been facilitated by the online environment. Future cross campus teaching will need to be considered for in-person lectures, but it is definitely achievable. Additionally, the assessments of modules have been normalised across campuses in many modules. This has meant that the expectations of students on the three campuses is fully aligned.

SCSIS reported that in some modules one eFundi site was used for all campuses, as well as the Distance programme.

Lecturers took turns addressing content. Lecturers had weekly check-in session to collaborate and agree on what needs to happen during the next week. Lecturers proposed different methods to deliver content and students from campuses could utilize the unique approaches and deliverance of the content of the module. Lecturers performed the preparation of tasks for all campuses such as quizzes, test etc. and this has benefited and provided test of knowledge and understanding for students across the campuses. The approaches were troublesome to some students but eventually they managed to adopt and utilize the opportunities. A challenge was that, when the list of students is not finalized this can create problems as some students will find it hard to have access to the site and that can delay the introduction of the module during the first week weeks.

With regards to Biochemistry, MC and PC are aligned across the semester test, practicals as well as final assessments for all modules except BCHS322 (which is a campus research specific project). We usually

divide the study units with each lecturer then being responsible for setting the tests and assignments for the particular study unit. Cross campus collaboration was good as lectures used the same slides for practicals, and took turns with recording of practicals. This has been a success, as if they are struggling with one lecturer listening to the other improves their chances on passing the module.

In general, the teaching strategy was aligned and assessments were given in the same week. All sit-down assessments were aligned. The alignment between the modules was assisted greatly by the open communication between lecturers on different campuses.

#### **14.7 DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

In WVNS, students are urged to study background information on their own. To get them to comply, they write weekly eFundi tests on the contents. Simultaneously, they are guided in the semester schedule to work on their group assignment regularly during the semester and not to procrastinate. The group assignment requires students to apply knowledge and skills obtained in the weekly theoretical work. If they follow the suggested schedule, their theoretical knowledge and their progress on their group assignment will be perfectly aligned. They are thus supposed to, on a weekly basis, apply every topic to their group assignment before they move on to the next theoretical topic. It was found that this way of guiding the students provide good results (but there are still those who leave everything to the last minute...).

SBS reported that in Zoology second year modules: Theory classes were presented virtually and simultaneously interpreted to English. This was made possible by the type of Zoom licence made available by the interpreting services. These lectures were recorded, separately for the 2 languages, and up-loaded on the eFundi site together with the PowerPoint presentations. The practicums for both semesters were done face-to-face.

PLKS223 and PLKS314 could manage to complete contact practicals. During these times students had the opportunity to apply their theory work in experiments, learn new skills, and physically observed the outcomes of learned concepts. During times of complete lockdown lecturers traced experiments back to their basic steps and students could perform certain experiments at home or observe certain examples in their gardens. In PLKS223 students isolated plant DNA in their kitchens at home, studied cloning using a paper model, and developed a shopping-list from local supermarkets and alike to do plant tissue culture at home.

MKBS314 used a free online platform (LabXchange) where students can do simulation experiments relevant to the module. Students record themselves while doing the simulation experiments (to eliminate cheating) before they come for actual laboratory experience. The simulation is interactive and has increased the level of understanding that the students have for this particular module compared to previous (normal contact) years. In addition, the approach has also enhanced the quality of their preparation for all the practical classes. The lecturer adds, "Interestingly, I can also see the effect on how the students are able to link what we do in the practical classes to the theory aspect of the module. I am definitely happy that this has also helped me to motivate the students in different ways. However, it is pertinent to mention that this cannot replace the actual practical experience that the students are having in the laboratory but it has helped to reduce the amount of time we spend explaining the steps and processes to the students in the practical classes."

*The School of Computer Science and Information Systems gave a few examples:*

Example 1: As part of the CMPG323 Discovery project, students receive training videos on project concepts from Discovery, and thereafter have weekly Q&A sessions with a System Analyst from Discovery (flipped-blended approach).

Example 2: Developed an artificial intelligence system to assist in designing multiple-choice quiz distractors. Used the multiple-choice quizzes for F2F as well as online prep assessments (Bloom taxonomy level 1). The quizzes are very effective in differentiating between the level of preparedness of the students. Received very positive feedback from the students on these assessments.

Example 3: Videos were made of all contact sections and made available to students.

### *School of Physical and Chemical Sciences*

For Biochemistry, we introduced one contact practical as part of the hybrid teaching strategy. The students were very engaged and seemed to enjoy the practical. All teaching was done online with a variety of strategies such as flipped classroom during presentations.

In Physics, one particularly successful blended learning innovation was in NPHY111. The lecturer incorporated the subject textbook into eFundi, allowing students to use a wealth of online resources available to purchasers of that book. He did not struggle so much with a lack of student engagement, which may be related to this particular innovation.

#### **14.8 TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM**

The challenge for educators is to engage with students at a level and within a context familiar to them and design learning experiences that make educationally sound use of the opportunities provided by the technologies and digital resources that they prefer while broadening their informational horizons.

In the achievement of this goal, the Faculty tries to involve its students in more inclusive learning experiences that address their diverse learning styles. These learning experiences will include student engagement with practice by means of work-integrated learning and community engaged service learning opportunities.

Within the Faculty it is an accepted assumption that programme curricula content must provide students with an orientation to various paradigms of thought and knowledge systems, e.g. undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes with a focus on indigenous knowledge systems.

The Faculty deems it of importance to introduce students to different educational approaches – whereas the traditional train of thought and nature of teaching was that of the behaviouristic tradition, many of the subject groups have since realised that a more constructivist-related approach, where students are allowed to make meaning of their own learning and knowledge systems, are of essence to be able to substantiate their worldviews and the principles that inform their decisions and conduct.

One of the major themes of transformation is to make the content of the curriculum relevant to students, and to fulfil the needs of industry and equip students for job opportunities.

Another theme is transformation of teaching strategies and methods to be inclusive of students from diverse cultures, and to structure the learning experience in ways that are not alien to the cultures of the students.

Another major theme in transformation involves language. Lecturers try to ensure that language is not a barrier to anyone, and use multiple languages where possible. According to one lecturer “I am sensitive to the group of students I am teaching. In a heterogeneous class, I use English as a medium of instruction when I teach. Although I encourage students to respond in English, I sometimes allow students to express their answers in their home language (if I am conversant with it) and interpret it in English for the benefit of the rest of the class.”

Examples given are in the African context and within the experience of the students. Lecturers make sure that examples are local and that the module responds to the need of the country and reflects the problems faced by local communities.

Specific examples used by some of the disciplines in the Faculty are given in the section below.

### *School of Computer Science and Information Systems*

In all our modules we strive to continuously change to keep up to the fast changing field of Computer Science and Information Systems, and to ensure that our students graduate with the skills needed to succeed in the workplace. Our lecturers work hard to stay up to date, and we get feedback from industry on our curriculum and the readiness and progress of our graduates.

All content is built on industry expectation and is therefore focused on what is required from the student to "get the job". Content only focuses on what is relevant in the industry and is informed by practice. All assessments are based on what is currently required in the South African IT industry.

In several modules requirements are given and then students select their own problem to solve from their own frame of reference.

#### *School of Mathematical and Statistical Sciences*

Some history of mathematical thought may bring in indigenous knowledge. The course that involves the philosophy of mathematics includes the context of the South African research community in the curriculum: what kind of problems can be expected in terms of predatory journals, etc. Apart from this, most Mathematics lecturers are unsure how one should go about decolonising a subject in a mathematical discipline. Apart from using South African applications (which they do), they do not know how to change the foundations of mathematics.

Mathematics is a global field of study and students would like to measure up to international standards. However, I try to instil a sense of how they can transform society and close the gap between rich and poor through their expertise.

We regularly check content to make sure we are up-to-date with recent developments in the field – we try to figure out where the needs of the students in their jobs will be, then look at how to adjust the curriculum to see how we can help them in their careers.

Statistics modules make use of a great deal of practical computer training, thereby providing computer software exposure to students that previously might not have had access to these things in the past.

#### *School of Agricultural Sciences*

There is a need of a module on Ethno-veterinary Medicine in Animal Health to incorporate indigenous knowledge and practices in domains such as Pharmacology, Diseases, food safety.

A number of Crop Science modules have been identified as possible candidates for curriculum transformation to promote decolonisation, Africanisation and social justice. They include Botany of Agriculture (CSDM111), vegetable production (CSDM 215), Crop Improvement (CSDM221), Soil conservation (CSDM223 & CSPM223), Cropping systems (CSPM411) and CSPM412 (Plant Breeding). The review of study guides to incorporate contents on the names, biology and agronomy of indigenous vegetables including agronomic practices for crop production and soil conservation based on indigenous knowledge systems is on the cards. Students will also be encouraged to undertake their practical activities by growing indigenous vegetables; generate and document the biological and agronomic data through working with local farmers.

Agricultural Economics and Extension emphasises the history of farming in South Africa and highlights the factors leading to dualistic farming in the country.

#### *School of Biological Sciences*

The courses are already transformed in that we relate the content of the work to African issues and difference in perceptions and interpretation. This is especially applicable in our case in terms of health and disease. I also, where applicable, use examples in scientific discoveries and applications to disprove the perception that western science and culture are in any way superior.

Fauna and flora are under continuous pressure, not only from colonisation, but also other factors such as global warming. Taxonomy of indigenous plants as well as the indigenous knowledge (food plants, medicinal plants etc.) especially in certain cultures are addressed.

One lecturer has started taking steps to involve local indigenous experts to assist with the vernacular names of most crop plants and semi domesticated plants in North West in Botany and Plant breeding modules. I have noticed that most students do not know the names of most of the crop plants they consume.

Botany: Textbooks in plant ecology are mostly authored by scientists from the northern hemisphere. Since ecological theory is applicable across global ecosystems, we teach undergraduate students the basics of these theories. However, in our explanations of ecological theory, we use only examples from South Africa. Such examples come from research within the NWU, but also extend to authoritative literature sources



which we share with the students as case studies. In cases where ecological principles are not aligned to the African context, we discuss with students and encourage them to identify the controversies. One such an example in terrestrial ecology is the use of fire as a management tool in African savannas and grasslands. In most textbooks, fire is considered an anthropogenic disturbance agent that should be prevented at all costs. As lecturers, we explain to our students how African terrestrial ecosystems evolved with the presence of fire, and that these systems are dependent upon such disturbances, unlike the systems from the northern hemisphere where fire pushes the natural vegetation into alternate states. In PLKS211 we use a textbook that was specifically written for Africa. This textbook uses real-life examples from Africa to explain major global trends in environmental botany. The book also introduces topics of specific consequence to Africa, e.g. indigenous knowledge and human-wildlife conflicts. South Africa has several unique challenges in terms of managing eutrophication. Therefore, the teaching of this topic (PLKS122 and PLKS324) is based entirely on the South African experience and we particularly focus on case studies such as the Hartbeespoort Dam. Teaching is aided by presenting locally generated research material and literature resources.

Zoology: DRKS121 uses a second text book on vertebrates of Southern Africa is prescribed so that students learn to identify the vertebrates on our continent. And in the third year, the first semester prescribed textbook was authored by South Africans for South African students (a co-author is teaching this module) and the zoonotic parasites that are the objects of investigation in the second semester of the third year, are also those found in South Africa. The concepts dealt with on second year are more of a general nature but where possible African examples are used.

Modules in microbiology include discussion of relevant illnesses in the South African context such HIV and AIDS, TB. The role of microbiologists in addressing water scarcity and lack of clean water; addressing agricultural issues such as how soil health plays an important role in crop yields and how this compares between commercial and subsistence farming. How different diets and history of health care affect gut microbiota.

#### *School of Physical and Chemical Sciences*

A Chemistry lecturer pointed out that Africanisation is not new. "I have not changed my style at all, all practical examples I use in the theory lectures are all South African (e.g. industries applying processes in SA). It has always been and will always be."

Many organic chemistry examples are taken from Africa. African plants, animals, etc. At honours level one of the modules to be introduced is Natural Products Chemistry which also covers some South African medicinal plants. The achievements of South African researchers are highlighted when applicable, for example in antimalarial drug research and anthropology.

Certainly, the curriculum offers the opportunity to give real-life examples of the lived experienced the diverse student populace. We make allowance for such in the assessment. For example, the same question would on the PC paper talk to sunburn from a beach holiday versus sunburn from playing soccer outside for the MC students.

It has been suggested that using in-house textbooks could be one way of achieving decolonisation. This has been done for NCHE 121. The textbook champions the achievement of an African in South Africa in the field of malaria research. It is used to give context to the organic chemistry work and hopefully serves as motivation to all our students.

Astrophysical sciences are aimed at supporting South African research efforts that often make use of Southern African observatories. Examples of indigenous knowledge and development of Astronomy in Africa are used.

#### *School of Geo and Spatial Sciences*

Where students develop and learn due to the implementation of SDL strategies, their experiences are recorded and used to further develop curricula. An example of this is the module Introduction to Earth Observation. This module introduces students to the field of earth observation in the context of

environmental sciences. Instead of prescribing the content, the module takes the approach of outlining a set number of topics and requiring of each student to determine the area of application as well as the type of technology to use to master the outcomes of the module. The student can therefore build knowledge and skills closely related to his own particular field of interest. Assessment focuses on the process and the application of the field principles in the field chosen by the student. The local context is used as a backdrop in most of our modules. African examples are frequently used. This point was discussed at the alignment process with all three campuses. It was agreed in those meetings that southern Africa should be the focus of all modules.

In Geology the students learn about the South African soil classification system. Examples, case studies and articles which are more relevant to South Africa are used. Second year Geomorphology focuses exclusively on South African landforms; the third year research project deals with local research issues. Soil Classification. We have a South African Soil classification system, which is the main focus of this module. As such the South African soil form names were used, which are linked to the place where they were first described. As such, about a third of the names are indigenous language names, such as Didema and Namib.

In Disaster Risk Management, modules focus on basic conceptualization of disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) and a study unit focuses on development. We discuss the different approaches to development in past and present and then we discuss what approaches are used in disaster studies. This is usually where a discussion starts about the implication of external funding for DRR and CCA activities and the role of external funders and organizations in effective risk reduction or development in Africa.

#### *Centre for Water Science and Management*

Kader Asmal (the first Minister of the Department of Water and Forestry in 1994) always stated '*some for all forever*'. This is reflected in the National Water Act (1998). Water is a scarce and unevenly distributed national resource that occurs in many different forms and which are all part of a unitary, interdependent cycle. While water is a natural resource that belongs to all, the discriminatory laws and practices of the past have prevented equal access to water and use of water resources. The National Water Act is based on the following principals:

- Sustainability – water use must promote social and economic development, but not at the expense of the environment
- Equity – every citizen of the country must have access to water and the benefit of using water
- Efficiency – water must not be wasted and must be used to the best possible social and economic advantage

The National Water Act is the foundation of the majority of our training. We provide the students with skills to address the water related challenges facing South Africa.

#### *Centre for Indigenous Knowledge Systems*

Indigenous knowledge is all about decolonisation. This is the core business of IKS. But it involves more than just the content of the modules, it concerns the approach and philosophy as well. Most of our modules have included theoretical frameworks of decolonization. Our research approach as a centre has adopted an indigenous approach and philosophy and all our postgraduate students have to show this in their dissertations/thesis. Our teaching has adopted community engagement to harness the African wisdom. Our ethical approvals follow an Ubuntu philosophy.

#### *Understanding the World modules*

The contribution of African worldview to natural science is one of the topics that is studied. One of the main aims of the "Understanding the World" modules is to broaden student's perspectives to promote social justice and transformation towards achieving a harmonious society in South Africa. The approach to learning design allows students to critically examine module content from their own perspective(s) and

compare views with peers. Viewpoint diversity trumps diversity of immutable characteristics, every time. African history/authors has been included in worldview module (WVNS211) when covering a variety of topics (Middle Ages, Enlightenment, etc.). Decolonisation should be viewed as additive, not pernicious in terms of academic pursuit. WVNS requested Indigenous Knowledge Systems to provide us with some notes on traditional African world-views, especially with regard to epistemology and ontology. This work has been fully integrated into the body of work.

Some specific examples from staff members concerning the experience of students are listed below:

- Students are exposed to viewpoint diversity, enriching their own worldviews in the process. Using context and examples that are familiar or local makes learning more effective because students can relate to content more easily.
- Students in my Hons classes have a clear understanding of how decolonisation has affected teaching and learning and they strive towards centralising Africa's own in terms of what they learn and how they interact with other peers in this regard.
- I think it affected them positively, because decolonizing education provided them the type of educational access that addresses their emerging African-centred humanness.
- Because they can relate more, they experience module content to be closer to home, allowing them to learn easier, feel more comfortable and confident. As a result they design and develop better projects and their marks are improved.
- Students in our programme have a greater appreciation of African science and systems. They are more aware of their communities and how to respectfully engage with them. Several are engaged in projects to effect positive changes in their communities.
- Not much - IT and especially databases is a global phenomenon and principles need to be understood. Only the context of the case studies can be changed to bring it closer to home and it is done.
- I believe more of the students can probably relate to the module, as we are talking about issues that some of them might be experiencing at home. For other students it might challenge their preconceived notions on why people live where they live and the drivers of poverty.
- Decolonisation and Africanisation are very complex topics. There are many layers to this argument and a single answer will not serve. The biggest impact I believe is in the different socio-economic situations that students find themselves in. All the other issues pale in comparison with this challenge. The only way I think I can take this into account, is to be gracious and lenient when it comes to dealing with students. I've tried to be patient and to give students second chances.
- This acts as an eye opener for many students and they have asked why African indigenous knowledge has been neglected as they view it as the catalyst that can improve the livelihood of many if it is correctly integrated.
- If the curriculum were to focus only on Colonisation and Africanisation, the experience of students will definitely be limited, as a wide range of the work we do, are influenced by the International spectrums.
- I think it has added knowledge about understanding the individual social's behaviour irrespective to their culture and how to treat one another more especially working as a team.

Some of the students expressed their viewpoints:

- *The need for further transformation*

In the words of one student, "For any country or region it is important to include the aspects which pertain to their roots, their identity and in this case Africanisation so that they understand their immediate environment and surroundings first before they can learn of other people. Thus the curriculum has to be relevant even to the needs of society so that they can harness what they have for the betterment of society and sustainability."

Those who want transformation suggested that Microbiology and Botany could focus on the use of African herbs in counteracting microbes, on indigenous plants with medical uses and on African ecosystems. They want to learn about their own land. IKS should be incorporated, especially in agriculture studies. They should study more of the chemistry of African herbs and problems that affect the African continent. Decolonisation has been added to WVNS, which includes information about important researchers from Africa that contributed to science on a global scale.

The majority of students surveyed in 2021 did not see the need for transformation and decolonisation of the curriculum. Only 4% of students indicated that there was a need for transformation. The majority of these students called for more local content in subjects such as Botany and Geography. Some responses are shown below.

- Yes, Africans should have African solutions to African problems every single module should incorporate an African theme to it whereby African problems are presented.
- I believe that more effort can be put towards developing African languages whilst still remembering that Afrikaans is an African language.
- Science at its core is universal. Therefore, decolonisation or Africanisation would be irrelevant for the majority of FNAS modules, but some modules like Geography, Biology and Zoology would benefit from merging some aspects with Indigenous Knowledge Systems to improve scientific research in a mostly un-researched country.
- *The nature of science*

In their comments, many students referred to the universal nature of science.

- The general science subjects such as physics, mathematics, chemistry, computer science, etc. are universal and fundamental subjects of nature, independent of the persons that developed the subject matter.
- This is a science Faculty. Unless the theory is proved and acknowledged by trustworthy external journal or society it can't be taught.
- Science is what can be proven, it does not care about background or culture.
- Academics should have their own discourses on these issues by sponsoring proper research with more scientific rigor.
- While it may surprise many calling for “decolonised education”, South Africa’s universities are not ivory towers: they are hotbeds of research solutions for the nation, drawing on local and global theories, thinkers and science. Much of this work could be undone if students push their thinking about “decolonised education” into practice. Therefore no... Do not decolonize because we ARE independent... but our facts cannot afford to be... science stays science and cannot be conformed into a viewpoint from a country’s personal perspective.
- *Internationalisation*

Another theme mentioned by students was internationalisation. Many students expressed a wish to keep modules in line with international standards to ensure the best possible opportunities for all students in Africa and abroad.

- Science is a collaboration on international scales. Approaching science and how it is taught, differently than institutions abroad, could prove to produce sub-par scientists who struggle to compete and make a living in academic pursuits. This is detrimental to the student who thinks he is getting the same level of education as students in other countries, but may not be, and is potentially harmful to the scientific community by unintentional bias brought about when focussing on "Africanised" science above science as a general topic.
- Science needs to be advanced as much as possible, to keep up with international standards.

- What's really important is that South African teachers, lecturers and professors must develop curricula that build on the best knowledge skills, values, beliefs and habits from around the world.
- We must be prepared to fit into and compete in the international world. Our degrees must be recognised internationally otherwise we are wasting our time and money.
- Africanisation would affect my learning negatively, I would like for my studies to follow an international standard, as I wish to seek employment from large international businesses. I do not wish to limit my employment opportunities to South Africa.
- *Enhancing understanding*

The aim of transformation in the Faculty is to enable students to learn more effectively and be able to understand content better. The students should understand and enjoy the curriculum, not just cram and forget because they see no value from knowing "boring stuff about some person from Europe". Students would be learning about material they have first-hand knowledge of, research will be for developmental purposes rather than graduation purposes.

Africanisation must not limit the level of knowledge by concentrating only on Africa. The Faculty aims to produce graduates who may be employed anywhere in the world.

#### **14.9 FACULTY-SPECIFIC ADDITIONS/ HIGHLIGHTS/ SUCCESSES/ INITIATIVES**

WVNS modules are 100% aligned with no exceptions. Students do the same work according to the same schedule and all assessments are identical in terms of substance and due dates.

Zoology: The week long practical excursion (DRKS311) that we were able to conduct in the Vredefort Dome. Students are exposed to both terrestrial and aquatic ecology. The students are taught how to collate the results of their mini-research projects and present them at a mini-conference at the end of the week.

In DRKS322 students also report on their mini-research project, but in the format of a poster-presentation. These are evaluated by post-graduate students and staff members. The top five poster authors compete further and do oral presentations on behaviour concepts related to their poster project.

Botany: All study guides (mostly e-guides) and online eFundi sites were developed with the help of CTL on both campuses, to satisfactorily achieve the learning outcomes and to provide students with a cohesive learning environment for the whole programme. The e-guides for Botany modules have been developed to support active learning and teaching and to meet the new expectations that came about with lockdown. This is a much better approach as it allows lecturers to frequently update the theory and practicals to include typical, relevant, and interesting activities that enable students to 'learn while doing'. Lecturers from both PC and MC also took part in a workshop on developing exam papers hosted by CTL according to SAQA in alignment with the HEQSF framework.

For CMPG323 - IT students are completing industry projects as part of their work-readiness preparation. For their 1st project, students are receiving weekly training on industry concepts directly from a Discovery Vitality representative.

Planning for the annual IT seminar is in progress. It is a live event to be hosted 21/28 October.

1 team from NWU has made it through to the next round of the Discovery Gradhack.

Four FNAS students participated in the Famelab competition, together with the Faculties of Engineering and Health Sciences. The winner was an FNAS student.

#### *Teaching Excellence Awards*

In 2021 there are six new categories of awards. Sixteen members of staff are participating in the Faculty Teaching Excellence Award.

## 15. FACULTY OF THEOLOGY



### 15.1 INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Theology is committed to dream of the North-West University, namely “to be an internationally recognised university in Africa, distinguished for engaged scholarship, social responsiveness and an ethic of care.” The transformation of the Faculty’s curricula is a vital part of achieving this dream in our context as a South African and African university. The Faculty fully aligns itself with the NWU 2015-2025 Strategy, the Teaching and Learning Strategy 2021-2025, as well as the NWU Declaration on the Decolonisation of University Education: The imperative to transform Teaching and Learning, the Research Agenda and Community Engagement. We desire to boldly address the issues and questions about the role, value, and future of theological education in the setting of the university. In line with the purpose to be more relevant and to reorient our curriculum focus on Africa in terms of the construction, development and communication of knowledge, a snapshot of the Faculty’s future will picture a culture of inclusion, enhancing and infusing diversity throughout the staff and student body and student experience. In terms of academic offering, we envisage differentiated programmes in order to increase the network of participating and collaborating churches, ecclesiastical bodies, and community partners. In this manner we wish to acknowledge the diversity of the communities we serve.

### 15.2 2021 TEACHING AND LEARNING CHALLENGES, INTERVENTIONS, AND SUCCESSES

Teaching and Learning during the first semester of 2021 was still affected by the Covid-19 pandemic with the associated uncertainty and challenges. These challenges especially affected our first-year students who experienced very little contact teaching and learning. Yet, it also presented an opportunity to implement the lessons learnt during 2020. These lessons proved valuable for staff and students as the pandemic presented as a “new normal” rather than a crisis that required new contingency plans (as was the case in 2020), although the continuing impact of the pandemic on the lives of staff and students can never be underestimated.

Our teaching and learning continued mainly online in 2021 with limited face-to-face opportunities for postgraduate students in our professional programmes as well as students at risk of not completing the academic year. Face-to-face interaction occurred on campuses but also virtually with Zoom and MS Teams. With the institutional support of the NWU and support divisions such as CTL and LIS, we could assist students with connectivity issues (mainly through data provision). Lectures also moved to e-learning material to facilitate online learning. Quality was assured in our implementation of continuous assessment through rigorous moderation processes.

Even though the Faculty had a very sound base of online teaching prior to Covid-19, our academic staff have embraced the challenges posed during the pandemic. The online teaching base has been expanded to all academic staff, and staff members have adopted alternative means of communication with students. In this regard our e-Technologist and CTL have been instrumental in the success, guiding lecturers to make use of low impact technologies. Communication with students has improved and staff have been sensitised to continuous monitoring of student progress on undergraduate and postgraduate level.

### **15.3 2021 FACULTY ASSESSMENT PLANS**

As was the case in 2021, the Faculty compiled a Faculty Assessment Plan (FAP) for semester 1 of 2021. The final plan was the result of extensive consultations at subject group and School level as well as at Faculty Management Committee. The FAP was approved by Faculty Board and by Senate. The plan was based on online teaching and learning with limited face-to-face teaching and learning and all modules were assessed by way of continuous assessment (A-rule 1.13.1; Faculty Yearbook 2020 THE.1.3.8). Module owners considered the number and relative weighting of assessments in each module, and Directors moderated dates to ensure a fair workload for students.

Module owners were encouraged to follow the guiding principles: eFundi-based (augmented by other platforms if necessary), mobile-friendly, low tech, low data, low immediacy (see Guidelines provided by CTL). As we look to the future and hybrid modalities for teaching and learning, these principles will remain relevant. The plans also had to consider how students will access study materials in lieu of access to libraries while adhering to DALRO compliance.

During 2020 it became clear that we needed to provide clarity on what it means to complete a module by way of continuous assessment since some students worked for a pass mark but did not necessarily reach all the module outcomes. The Faculty approved the following Faculty rule:

#### THE.1.3.8.1.1 Module Mark

The continuous assessment module mark is calculated according to the criteria applicable to the continuous assessment portfolio as set out in the study guide/module overview document (MOD). A student must COMPLETE the portfolio in order for the portfolio to be assessed. Thereupon, an average mark of 50% for the completed portfolio is needed to pass the module. A portfolio is regarded COMPLETE only if ALL the required formative and summative assignments are submitted for assessment.”

Constraints in terms of assessment related mainly to Work-integrated Learning (WIL) and Service Learning (SL) of students studying to become ministers of religion. Formal WIL/SL is integrated into modules in the professional BDiv qualification as well as the MDiv qualification as part of module work or as part of a research portfolio. The WIL/SL relates to preaching and practical work in congregations. Practical work was completed where and when possible considering Covid-19 restrictions. Sermon preparation continued virtually, and the delivery of sermons occurred where and when possible in person, observing Covid-19 protocols, and otherwise virtually. Assessment of the same occurred mainly electronically based on recordings, although some in-person assessment was possible.

All procedures and processes aimed at quality assurance and enhancement in the Faculty were followed (both in the contact and distance modalities). In addition, measures were put into place for the moderation of continuous assessment modules. Module owners consulted with internal subject specialists as moderators on final assessments and results. External moderation of exit level modules continued electronically as prescribed in A-rules and Faculty Yearbook. A moderation form designed for continuous assessment by CTL was utilised as a reporting mechanism. We are satisfied that all necessary and possible quality assurance processes were followed to ensure a successful academic 1st semester of 2021.

	Pass rate (%)			Registered pass rate (%)			Success rate (%)		
	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021	2019	2020	2021
<b>Mahikeng Campus</b>	80.3	76.4	82.6	77.2	75.0	81.0	81.1	76.8	81.5
<b>Potchefstroom Campus</b>	89.0	95.1	85.0	81.9	84.8	83.1	88.2	94.7	84.4
<b>Vanderbijlpark Campus</b>	80.2	92.5	70.5	78.6	83.7	69.8	80.0	92.2	72.0
<b>UODL</b>	102.0	90.8	88.9	77.7	85.4	87.0	109.8	101.2	88.3
<b>Overall</b>	92.5	85.7	83.5	83.7	78.0	81.8	92.5	86.4	82.1

The above figures show that the pass rate and success rate showed a decline from 1<sup>st</sup> semester 2020 although the registered pass rate improved. This may indicate a return to pre-Covid statistics as students and staff were more accustomed to online teaching and learning. The improvement on Mahikeng Campus is encouraging while the decline on Vanderbijlpark Campus is concerning, although the phasing out of qualifications may have an impact on the statistics. Due to the smaller number of students registered within a specific module the standard deviation on the average will be bigger than when calculated in bigger modules i.e., one or two students failing to perform in a module with a small number of students will have a big effect on the class average.

The attrition rate was 2% in comparison to 1.32% in 1<sup>st</sup> semester 2020. In the contact modality, the attrition rate was 0.9% as Mahikeng Campus, 2.2% on Potchefstroom Campus, and 1.0 on Vanderbijlpark Campus. In the distance modality the rate was also 2.2%. These figures are well below the benchmark of 2019 which was close to 10%.

Unfortunately, higher incidences of academic dishonesty occurred which had to be managed by staff and Faculty management.

#### **15.4 2021 STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

Student feedback came to the Faculty by way of student leadership on the three campuses as well as individual reports from students to Faculty leadership, and queries directed at institutional communication channels. The feedback can be summarised as follows:

- Students still expressed concerns on issues such as devices and data, download speeds, connectivity, power interruptions, and home environments.
- Communication with lecturers were highlighted as problematic in a few modules. These were addressed by School Directors.
- Several students had issues in terms of finances and struggled to continue their studies. Students who could not continue will affect the statistics moving forward.
- Some students fell by the wayside in terms of participation in modules during the semester. The Faculty put into place measures for early identification of at-risk students with lecturers and School Directors engaging with these students to determine what support could be offered.

All module owners are required to set up eFundi sites prior to the start of every semester, including communication tools such as forums, chat rooms, polls, messages. eFundi sites are reviewed by the Subject Chairs as well as the E-learning Technologist with reporting to the School Directors as well as the Teaching and Learning Committee. Remedial action is taken in collaboration with CTL where necessary. Lecturers also make use of e-mail, SMS and WhatsApp groups, the latter being especially useful in smaller groups to facilitate online discussion because of lower data usage. Increasingly staff also made use of Zoom or MS Teams to facilitate virtual contact sessions, being cognisant of the data limitations that students experience.



The Student Teaching and Learning Experience Surveys for Semester 1 2021 indicated an average rating of 86% (83% in 2020) for contact students and 87% for distance students, which is an excellent improvement from 2020's 68%. Participation increased from 2020.

### **15.5 2021 STAFF EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES (ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF)**

Feedback from academic and support staff came to the Faculty by way reports from Directors and Faculty coordinators, as well as personal conversations with staff members. Generally academic staff remained positive about the online teaching and learning environment and based on the experiences of 2020, paid attention to communication and follow-up with students to ensure that they participate in a meaningful manner. Some staff expressed frustration with limited contact with colleagues and students. More contact was possible for smaller contact group and especially for the supervision of postgraduate students. Concerns were raised by staff members about academic integrity and dishonesty amid online teaching and learning.

The feedback among support staff followed the same pattern of positive attitudes despite the challenges of the pandemic. Staff with connectivity issues could access their offices and where necessary data was provided institutionally. Staff integration ensured that there was Faculty presence on the three campuses, with numbers depending on the level of lockdown.

### **15.6 HOW CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION WAS FOSTERED DURING 2021**

Academic qualifications offered in the Faculty are aligned across campuses unless specific to a local campus context or to a church denomination. Qualifications are aligned in respect of module content and assessment, as well as student communication via eFundi, ensuring that every student receives similar support, guidance, and communication. The module owner carries overall responsibility for all students in a module across the campuses as well as online, with on-site facilitators in each module to assist contact students. The alignment positively impacted on staff co-operation across campuses, with staff members working together as teams to present modules across campuses.

To effectively manage staff workload and foster cross-campus collaboration, the Faculty approved the following definition of the contact modality (accepted by NWU Senate February 2020):

“Up to 50% of the modules of any contact programme may be presented by the module owner (thus discipline expert) irrespective of the campus where the module owner works. The basic principle that does apply, is that the student who is registered on a campus, will receive all his/her classes on the campus, but that up to 50% of those classes may be presented via technology-mediated processes with a facilitator in the classroom where the student is to ensure lively discussion and interactive learning.”

This approach engages team-teaching where the module owner, irrespective of his/her campus locality, presents the specific module on all the respective campuses via virtual means and eFundi. In this way we endeavour to align the student learning experience within the core modules of the different programmes across our campus footprints.

Although equity in terms of resources across campuses is still a challenge in some areas, progress has been made in increasing availability of academic books and other resources in the libraries of all campuses. This applies especially to the libraries on Mahikeng and Vanderbijlpark Campuses. We are increasingly making use of e-books in both modalities. Staffing on Mahikeng Campus has also been increased during 2021 to accommodate increasing student numbers on that campus.

### **15.7 DRIVING BLENDED/ HYBRID LEARNING AND INNOVATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The 2021 academic year created some opportunities for lecturers to experiment with blended/hybrid learning and innovation. While academic time during 2020 was largely spent in the online environment, 2021 provided opportunities for lecturers to venture into blended/hybrid modes of teaching based on experiences gained during the previous academic year. The challenge before lecturers largely pertained to nurturing a sense of community amongst students amidst the prolonged social distancing practices and how learning can best be facilitated in this climate. Conversations within subject groups indicated that lecturers experimented by combining existing pre-recorded lectures with virtual contact sessions and limited face to face contact sessions with students. In this way, learning during 2021 was characterised by

blended/hybrid teaching practices. Lecturers also embraced institutional efforts by the NWU to reflect on best- and effective learning practices in a changed environment. Hence staff welcomed ongoing opportunities offered by CTL as well as the NWU Virtual Colloquium that took place on 23-24 August 2021 with the theme: Imagining the transitions: The future of TL@NWU in which staff participated

### **15.8 TRANSFORMING BY DECOLONISING THE CURRICULUM**

Although the nature of the subject matter plays a role in determining the extent of decolonisation that is possible, especially within the School for Ancient Languages and Text Studies, the Faculty is steadfast in its commitment to bring a diversity of academic orientation, theological conviction, and spirituality to the lecture room. This entails that lecturers and students consider issues and solve problems from a wide variety of social, economic, political, religious, ethical, and cultural perspectives. They also share their different cultural backgrounds and contribute to the discourse through relevant examples from their own contexts.

Students are involved in practical projects with an international or intercultural focus, for example students engaging in cross-cultural congregational practical work. These initiatives all depend on creating a safe, non-threatening learning environment in which students can express their own views while respecting those of other students and staff. The Faculty views the transformation of the curriculum as more than superficial and cosmetic changes to modules, but as epistemological interrogation of all disciplines within the broader field of Theology. Compelled by the ideal to become a leading university on the African continent and in the global arena, the Faculty is intent on nurturing curriculum renewal within the different subject groups represented in the Faculty. The Faculty understands its obligation to accelerate transformation and create an inclusive and rigorous academic culture.

During 2021 the Faculty participated in a colloquium in conjunction with CTL on the topic “Decolonising Christianity” with staff members serving on the academic panel. The Faculty also had a footprint on the panel of the colloquium regarding transparency in learning which relates directly to some of the key issues of transformation, namely the deconstruction of historic barriers to student success, especially of underserved student cohorts. In many modules the content is contextualised from an African perspective allowing students sharing that context to participate in a more meaningful manner. In the process all students are exposed to different perspectives and they are encouraged in terms of critical thinking and academic engagement in a safe environment. Students and staff members are challenged by a diversity of worldviews and contexts. The ongoing work done on revising the Understand Your World modules has been instructive and helpful in preparing students for this challenge. The skills developed in this regard are reinforced in terms of Work-integrated Learning (WIL) and Service Learning (SL), especially in the qualifications aimed at the training of ministers, pastors, and pastoral councillors where the skills are applied in real-life situations.

### **15.9 FACULTY-SPECIFIC ADDITIONS/ HIGHLIGHTS/ SUCCESSES/ INITIATIVES**

In addition to the above practices within the Faculty, 2021 also allowed for a renewed focus on community engagement related to teaching and learning as well as taking the Faculty’s Language Plan forward as part of the transformation of curricula.

In this regard the Faculty conducted a Community Engagement Consultation on 30 July with, amongst others, specific focus on community engaged teaching and learning. The NWU’s Declaration on the Decolonisation of University Education: The imperative to transform Teaching and Learning, the Research Agenda and Community Engagement (Senate, 30 October 2018) was reflected upon in the context of Theological higher education. At this event, so-called ‘Community engagement pedagogies’ received attention and put on the agenda of subject-groups for further exploration and organic integration into teaching and learning outcomes.

The Faculty also continued with the implementation of its Language Plan as approved during 2019. According to the Language Plan, the implementation would take place in four phases (adjusted timeline inserted):

- Phase 1: Facilitation of translingualism providing students with the opportunity to engage in contact

sessions in their language of choice (this phase may be rolled out to other modules where there is capacity). [2020]

- Phase 2: Compilation of glossaries of terms as an ongoing project (this phase may be rolled out to other modules where there is capacity). This development will have to take place in conjunction with Setswana subject specialists, language experts, and Setswana-speaking communities. [2020 onwards]
- Phase 3: Reworking of study material into Setswana. [2021 (2022)]
- Phase 4: All forms of assessment available in Setswana and marked in the student's language of choice, where there is teaching and moderation capacity to ensure quality. [2022 (2023)]

As part of phase 2, a language competition was launched in the Faculty that invited students to take part in the compilation of glossaries. The Faculty's approach and efforts were also showcased during the NWU's Language Awareness Week (13-17 September).

### **15.10 CONCLUSION**

As narrated in this report, curriculum transformation and alignment of the student experience remained a priority at the Faculty of Theology during 2021. The Faculty as a collective accepted the enduring character of the Covid-19 pandemic and organically committed us to realise the NWU's institutional ideals within a new set of rapidly changing realities. As a highly dynamic and innovative Faculty, we hope to contribute positively to these issues in 2022 and beyond. ONCLUSION TO THIS REPORT

Our students and out graduates are and always will be the mirrors of our success in making our University and TL vision a reality. The Office of the DVC Teaching and Learning will therefore continue to establish platforms and to create initiatives for staff and students to engage with the opportunities and indeed the challenges of our modern-day society.

We plan to take such initiatives further. Exploration of and engagement with the very human concepts of identity, language, ethnicity, religion, race, culture and social class are but a few of the foci that we plan to keep learning more about.

We invite you to engage with us so that we can continuously transform and move forward as a unitary institution of academic excellence with a visible commitment to social justice and an ethic of care.

### **16. CONCLUSION TO THE REPORT**

Our students and out graduates are and always will be the mirrors of our success in making our University and T-L Strategy and vision a reality. The Office of the DVC Teaching and Learning with the eight Faculties will therefore continue to establish platforms and to create initiatives for staff and students to engage with the transformational opportunities and indeed the challenges of our modern-day society.

We plan to take such initiatives further. Exploration of and engagement with the very human concepts of identity, language, ethnicity, religion, race, culture and social class are but a few of the foci that we plan to keep learning more about.

We invite you to engage with us so that we can continuously transform and move forward as a unitary institution of academic excellence with a visible commitment to social justice and an ethic of care.