CUT
CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE

ZR M_ _ABANE BUILDING

Central University of Technology, Free State

2024

ANNUAL REPORT

Dr Vincent Maphai, Chancellor

The year 2024 was an eventful year for CUT, marked by significant achievements and challenges, including the plight of our students and the escalating costs of higher education for our young people. Despite these challenging issues, we remained steadfast in our commitment to providing our students with an opportunity to gain access to the university and pursue their dreams.

My term of office as CUT Chancellor also began earlier this year. It was a period of considerable achievement for CUT to inaugurate me as the university's fourth Chancellor. I am following in the footsteps of my esteemed predecessors in this role, including Mosiuoa Patrick "Terror" Lekota (1997 to 2009), Dr Boet Troskie (2010 to 2015), and Madam Justice Mahube Molemela (2016 to 2023).

Most importantly, this year, we celebrated a significant milestone for the university, as we marked our 20th anniversary since its establishment as a university of technology in 2004. This is a testament to the enduring legacy of our past leaders.

Over these two decades, the university has established itself as a leading academic institution, and has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to using science, engineering and technology to drive the socio-economic development of the Central region. This is a source of immense pride and inspiration as we reflect on our remarkable journey and significant milestones.

As an incoming Chancellor, I am pleased that the university is creating new opportunities and consolidating its position as a true university of technology. It strives for excellence in various technological innovations, to set a new socio-economic development agenda for the region. We are not the institution we were 20 years ago. This university now has critical human capital, good infrastructure, and a large student intake to accelerate its growth, and multiply its graduate and research outputs. The foundation we have built over the past 20 years can help us achieve sevenfold what we have achieved thus far.

I served in various leadership roles in academia, research and development, as well as in commissions, before my tenure as Chancellor. I have become intimate with the challenges confronting the universities, as well as the growth opportunities. I see my coming here as an opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to the university.

As we present this 2024 Annual Report, I want to close with part of my inaugural speech earlier this year, in which I urged our current and future lecturers to embrace a vital commitment: to uplift our students and provide them with the exceptional foundation they need to achieve their aspirations. We must recognise that if we excel in everything but teaching and research, we undermine our very identity as a university. We must hold ourselves accountable to our core mission. Together, let us reaffirm our commitment to this mission, and make a meaningful impact in the communities we serve!

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to our partners for their unwavering belief in us, and for their continuous support of our collaborative programmes. Your contributions have been invaluable, and we look forward to continuing our work together to make CUT a beacon of innovation for the development of our region.

As we look towards the future, I am confident that the university will continue to build on its impressive legacy, endowing future generations with the high-quality scholarships that have guided us for the past 20 years. I look forward to continuing my association with CUT.

Regards,
Dr Vincent Maphai
Chancellor of the Central University of Technology, Free State

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Tables and Figures

SECTION 1

1.1   BACKGROUND

The Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT)'s Vision 2030 continues to serve as the cornerstone of our institutional performance, guiding strategic decisions, academic priorities, and operational excellence. This vision shapes the path forward as we cultivate a dynamic environment where knowledge thrives and possibilities are limitless. This section provides a comprehensive account of the university's performance against its strategic objectives and key performance indicators for the 2024 academic and financial year. It outlines progress made in core areas such as teaching and learning, research and innovation, community engagement, infrastructure, and institutional sustainability. The narrative highlights achievements, and provides justification for identified areas of non-performance and areas for improvement. It demonstrates how the university's activities align with its Vision 2030, and broader national and global imperatives in higher education.

Figure 1: Strategic approach

Vision 2030 Framework	Provides direction in the positioning of CUT over the period of 2021 – 2030.
2021-2025 Strategic Plan	Enables the strategic implementation for the first half of the decade intended in Vision 2030. Thereafter, the university develops an Annual Performance Plan (APP) on yearly basis.
Annual Performance Plan	To create awareness of the need for change, you need everybody who is affected by it to be aware of the issues that triggered the initiative.
Quarterly Reports	Provide the most recent accounts of progress and achievement made towards the set targets as per the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) outlined in the APP.
Accountability	To ensure accountability, there are quarterly, biannual and annual targets for the respective KPIs, with achievement towards the latter two target types being reported on in the mid-term and annual reporting cycles, respectively.

1.2   VISION STATEMENT 2030

The vision statement 2030 formed the foundation in developing the university's Strategic Plan and high-level objectives. This vision statement is underpinned by the university's mission statement and values and serves to articulate the university's roadmap for the next ten years.

Figure 2: CUT vision, mission and core values

By 2030, Central University of Technology, Free State will be a leading African university of technology, shaping the future through innovation.

VISION 2030

CORE VALUES

Ubuntu   Integrity   Diversity

Innovation   Excellence

In aspiring to fulfil our vision, CUT's mission is to:

- **deliver** high-quality, appropriate science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) academic programmes, as well as those in management sciences, education and humanities, supported by applied research;
- **engage** with the community for mutually beneficial development;
- **promote** access with success in attracting potentially successful students, and supporting them to become employable and job-creating graduates;
- **attract** and retains high-quality students and expert staff, and supports their development and well-being; and
- **forge** strategic partnerships that are mutually beneficial.

1.2.1 Institutional strategic goals and strategic objectives

The following strategic goals and associated strategic objectives were developed to guide the university's direction from 2021 to 2030.

Table 1: Institutional strategic goals and objectives

Strategic goals	Strategic objectives
To create a harmonious community conducive to teaching and learning.	S1.1 Provide a safe environment for employees, students and visitors. S1.2 Promote organisational well-being by providing a vibrant and healthy environment. S1.3 Create a harmonious community based on ubuntu. S1.4 Achieve the target for international students in the Student Enrolment Plan. S1.5 Develop online programmes. S1.6 Enhance the digital capabilities of the instruction/research staff. S1.7 Embrace the use of technology to streamline our business processes.
To produce work-ready, entrepreneurial and holistic graduates.	S2.1 Achieve the headcount enrolment targets in the Student Enrolment Plan. S2.2 Achieve the first-time entering (FTEN) undergraduate targets in the Student Enrolment Plan.

	S2.3 Achieve the science, engineering and technology (SET) enrolment targets in the Student Enrolment Plan.
	S2.4 Achieve the undergraduate pass rate targets in the Student Enrolment Plan.
	S2.5 Maintain the number of undergraduate students for work-integrated learning (WIL) placements in all undergraduate programmes that have a WIL component.
	S2.6 Achieve the graduate targets in the Student Enrolment Plan.
	S2.7 Increase the number of enrolments in postgraduate entrepreneurial learning programmes.
	S2.8 Promote entrepreneurship awareness and thinking amongst the student community.
	S2.9 Support the translation of students' ideas into products through the provision of prototyping services to the student community.
To develop a strong culture of research and innovation.	S3.1 Achieve the research publication unit targets in the Student Enrolment Plan.
	S3.2 Increase research in teaching and learning practices through the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL).
	S3.3 Achieve the total research output targets in the Student Enrolment Plan.
	S3.4 Increase the conversion of research and development (R&D) outputs into products, processes and services that are of benefit to society.
	S3.5 Increase the commercialisation of university-generated intellectual property (IP)
	S3.6 Support the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem by increasing the number of start-up companies incubated.
To attract, develop and retain staff as the university's most important asset.	S4.1 Achieve the doctoral qualification targets in the Student Enrolment Plan.
	S4.2 Facilitate industry exposure for instruction/research staff.
	S4.3 Develop instruction/research staff as university teachers.
To build strategic partnerships that contribute to the achievement of the university's goals.	S5.1 Create strategic platforms for alumni engagements.
To ensure institutional sustainability, expand streams of income, and enhance the CUT brand.	S6.1 Increase third-stream income, in an effort to ensure sustainability.
	S6.2 Expand renewable energy sources (solar).
	S6.3 Optimise the use of natural water sources.
To promote good governance, human rights, and social justice.	S7.1 Effective governance and management structures.
	S7.2 Partner with Council to enhance institutional governance through improved relations, effectiveness and efficiency.

1.3   2024 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

This section provides significant achievements in implementing the 2024 Annual Performance Plan (APP), towards the realisation of the university's Vision 2030 and the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan's seven strategic goals. The progress in this report focuses on student access with success; staff development; research and innovation; and governance issues. CUT

Management has implemented measures to ensure that commitments made in the 2024 APP are achieved against the allocated resources, to ensure that the academic project continues smoothly. The highlights related to the achievement of the strategic goals are delineated below.

STRATEGIC GOAL 1: To create a harmonious community conducive to teaching and learning.

- Significant progress was made in enhancing the university's integrated security system by equipping more buildings with cameras and access control.
- Various workshops, as well as wellness-focused radio content addressing the five wellness dimensions (psychological, emotional, intellectual, physical and financial), were offered to students, contributing to the well-being of students and supporting the academic projects.
- Training development sessions were conducted with the new Students' Representative Council (SRC) of both the Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses, to familiarise them with the operational and governance processes of the institution and their role therein, and providing leadership development in preparation for their term of office.
- Efforts were made in digital transformation by training more academic staff to advanced digital pedagogies. Additionally, more business processes were automated, which improves operational efficiency and make services more accessible.

STRATEGIC GOAL 2: To produce work-ready, entrepreneurial and holistic graduates.

- A total of 21 601 students were registered, of which 4 733 were first-time entering students (FTENs), whilst 9 876 were science, engineering and technology (SET) undergraduates.
- 99.9% of undergraduate students were successfully placed for work-integrated learning (WIL), allowing students to gain valuable, practical experience relevant to their industries.
- More students were enrolled in postgraduate entrepreneurial programmes.
- Nine CUT Studentpreneurs completed the six-month United States-South Africa Virtual Incubator Programme, gaining valuable entrepreneurship experience.
- Entrepreneurial development initiatives were presented, with students participating in numerous training sessions and gaining exposure to digital fabrication technologies.

STRATEGIC GOAL 3: To develop a strong culture of research and innovation.

- More Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) research outputs were produced by academic staff, to improve student learning and enhance the quality of teaching.
- The university proactively established strategic partnerships with other research institutions in order to foster collaboration, to streamline the commercialisation process.

STRATEGIC GOAL 4: To attract, develop and retain staff as the university's most important asset.

- The institution continued to increase the number of academic staff members with doctoral qualifications.
- An increased number of permanent academic staff participated in industry exposure, to link theoretical disciplinary knowledge with industry practice in order to enhance the quality of their teaching practice.
- The enrolment of academic staff in the Postgraduate Diploma (PGDip) in Higher Education commenced.

STRATEGIC GOAL 5: To build strategic partnerships that contribute to the achievement of the university's goals.

- The participation of the university's alumni in CUT's strategic activities has increased. By fostering robust relationships, alumni can provide invaluable technical, operational and financial support, which aligns with the university's strategic vision.
- The Product Development Technology Station (PDTS) has established a partnership with the Association for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Free State to collaboratively develop products aimed at improving the lives of individuals with disabilities. As part of this collaboration, the PDTS has already initiated the development of specific assistive devices tailored to the needs identified by the APD. The products focus on enhancing accessibility, functionality and overall usability, to address daily challenges faced by people with disabilities.

STRATEGIC GOAL 6: To ensure institutional sustainability, expand streams of income, and enhance the CUT brand.

- Third-stream income has been generated from sources other than government funding.
- The Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM) assisted Advanced Tumour and Trauma Reconstruction Implants (ATTRI) Orthopaedics with the manufacturing of a unique patient-specific sternal implant that will be implanted in 2025. This is the first dynamic sternal implant with articulating sternoclavicular joints that was manufactured by the CRPM.
- New rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) systems were designed and installed in a few buildings, and this contributed to a reduction in energy consumption from the Eskom grid as well as in the electricity bill from the municipality.

STRATEGIC GOAL 7: To promote good governance, human rights, and social justice.

An evaluation of individual councillors' performance and an external evaluation of Council's performance were conducted, and training was provided on identified shortcomings.

1.4   PERFORMANCE REPORT

The 2024 APP targets were set for each KPI and strategic objective linked to the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan's seven strategic goals. Each executive manager is assigned the responsibility for the achievement of specific strategic objectives and the planned 2024 APP targets. This assignment was formalised, and forms part of each relevant executive manager's performance contract, to ensure accountability. Furthermore, section 6.2 of the Performance Planning, Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation Framework of CUT states that monitoring ensures that executive managers account for their divisional performance, verified against the portfolio of evidence.

Progress towards the achievement of the strategic objectives and planned annual targets is monitored by the relevant executive managers within their divisions on a continuous basis, to assess whether operational managers are implementing what is in their 2024 APPs, within the allocated resources. In addition, the quarterly reports from the divisional managers are discussed and interrogated at the Extended Management Committee (EMC) meetings, with the aim of monitoring the implementation of, and progress with, the APP, including the Institutional Operational Plan (IOP)'s implementation.

Further monitoring of divisional quarterly performance reporting is done at Management Committee (Mancom) level, where all executive managers deliver presentations on their performance; achieved targets are celebrated; and unmet targets are discussed, including the reasons for the non-achievement of objectives, the impact thereof for the university, and action plans for the non-achievement, with a view to ensure that unmet targets are achieved.

1.4.1 Summary of overall performance in the implementation of the 2024 APP

The following section provides a comprehensive and detailed overview of the overall progress made towards achieving the targets set in the 2024 APP, and the challenges encountered in implementing some of the targets and action plans in achieving the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan's predetermined strategic objectives.

Figure 3 below shows that 20 of the 36 targets in the 2024 APP were achieved 100% and above, translating to a 56% performance. Furthermore, seven targets were achieved between 70% and 99%, indicating performance close to full achievement. One target fell within the 50%-69% range, reflecting fair progress, whilst eight targets were achieved less than 50%, highlighting areas of underperformance.

Figure 3: Summary of 2024 APP targets
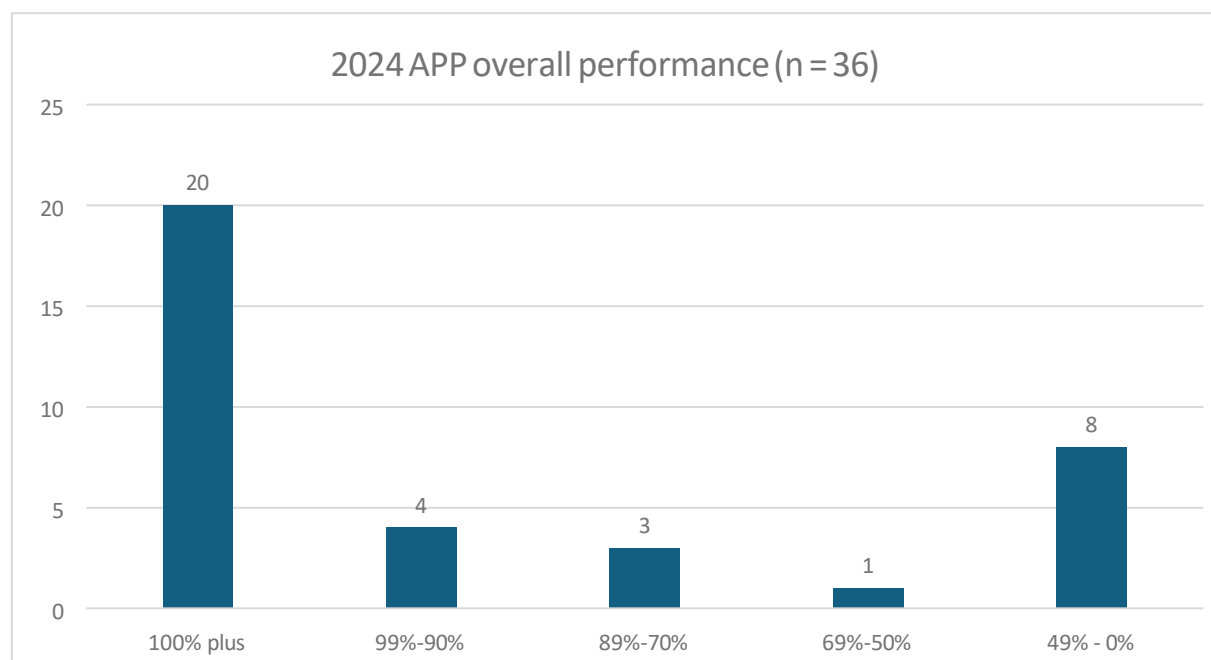
Table 2: Summary of the annual performance reported against the 2024 APP

STRATEGIC GOAL S1: TO CREATE A HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY CONDUCIVE TO TEACHING AND LEARNING.						
Strategic objectives	**Key Performance Indicator**	**Portfolio of evidence**	**2023 actual**	**2024 annual target**	**2024 achieved target**	**Reasons for non-achievement**
S1.1 Provide a safe environment for employees, students and visitors.	S1.1.1 Equip all required sites and venues with cameras, in response to proper security standards.	• Visual inspection reports confirming proof of installation. • Dated photos. • Service-level agreement (SLA) (end of project).	6 sites.	5 sites.	17 sites.	
			0 entrances.	4 entrances.	5 entrances.	
	S1.1.2 Provide access control in all identified areas where controlled access is required.	• Visual inspection reports confirming proof of installation. • Photos. • SLA.	3 sites.	5 sites.	3 sites.	Contractual dispute with the previous service provider.
			9 entrances.	3 entrances.	3 entrances.	
S1.2 Promote organisational well-being by providing a vibrant and healthy environment.	S1.2.1 Provide student-centred psycho-social support and services, focusing on the five wellness principles: psychological, emotional, intellectual, physical and financial.	• Presentations on workshops/training offered/events. • Workshop reports, including attendance registers/screenshots (if online), a list of workshops/projects, a list of topics covered, and the number of students covered.	40 workshops/events completed.	46 workshops/ events based on five wellness dimensions and GBV awareness.	46 workshops conducted based on five wellness dimensions and GBV awareness.	
		• Audio clips covering the exact slots. • Scripts showing allocated time.	21% of CUT FM content on wellness.	30% of CUT FM content on wellness.	38% of CUT FM content on wellness.	

STRATEGIC GOAL S1: TO CREATE A HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY CONDUCIVE TO TEACHING AND LEARNING.						
Strategic objectives	Key Performance Indicator	Portfolio of evidence	2023 Actual	2024 annual target	2024 achieved target	Reasons for non-achievement
S1.3 Create a harmonious community based on ubuntu.	S1.3.1 Effectively implement the Social Change Model (SCM) of Leadership to enhance student leadership and governance.	• Attendance register (screenshot if online). • Training reports. • Presentations.	0 training and development sessions on leadership efficacy.	2 training and development sessions on leadership efficacy.	2 training and development sessions.	
		Report on the effective implementation of the SCM of Leadership.	0% level of achievement on leadership assessment tool developed from Socially Responsible Leadership Scale.	70% level of achievement on leadership assessment tool developed from Socially Responsible Leadership Scale.	0% level of achievement on leadership assessment tool developed from Socially Responsible Leadership Scale.	
S1.4 Achieve the target for international students in the Enrolment Plan.	S1.4.1 Increase the number of international students to 1 283 by 2025.	• Higher Education Data Analyzer (HEDA) Dashboard Screen print. • List of international students (Southern African Development Community (SADC); Africa; Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS); and globally).	346 international students enrolled.	1 120 international students enrolled.	334 international students enrolled	The logistics surrounding study permits and visas present significant challenges, creating additional obstacles for international students attempting to enrol in academic programmes.
S1.5 Develop online programmes.	S1.5.1 Eight online programmes developed for advanced diplomas and postgraduate diplomas by 2025.	-	-	-	-	Achieved in 2022.

STRATEGIC GOAL S1: TO CREATE A HARMONIOUS COMMUNITY CONDUCIVE TO TEACHING AND LEARNING.						
Strategic objectives	Key Performance Indicator	Portfolio of evidence	2023 Actual	2024 annual target	2024 achieved target	Reasons for non-achievement
	S1.5.2 Eight online programmes for advanced diplomas and postgraduate diplomas are implemented by 2025.	• Accreditation letter from the Council on Higher Education (CHE), and registration letter from the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).	0 online programmes implemented.	7 (4 + 3) online programmes implemented.	0 online programmes implemented.	Accreditation of these programmes is no longer required, as CHE provided a concession to universities to offer programmes in any chosen mode of delivery (including distance/online) up until the end of 2026, with institutions to be subjected to a themed review by CHE.
S1.6 Enhance the digital capabilities of instruction/research staff.	S1.6.1 Ninety-five per cent (95%) (337 of 355) of headcount instruction/ research staff are trained to an advanced level of digital pedagogies by 2025	• Database of instruction/research staff trained to an advanced level of digital pedagogies (Zoom recording, with number of attendees). • Links to recording.	58% (206 of 355) of headcount instruction/ research staff are trained to an advanced level of digital pedagogies.	90%	17% (62 of 355) of instruction/research staff trained to an advanced level of digital pedagogies.	
S1.7 Embrace the use of technology to streamline our business processes.	S1.7.1 Reduce process inefficiencies by deploying digital technologies, automation, and self-service portals.	• User acceptance report. • URL (web link).	11 automated business processes.	10 processes that are either automated or self-service provisioned, or manual activity replaced by digital technology.	11 business processes.	

STRATEGIC GOAL S2: TO PRODUCE WORK-READY, ENTREPRENEURIAL AND HOLISTIC GRADUATES.						
Strategic objectives	Key Performance Indicator	Portfolio of evidence	2023 actual	2024 annual target	2024 achieved target	Reasons for non-achievement
S2.1 Achieve the headcount enrolment targets in the Enrolment Plan.	S2.1.1 Increase the total headcount enrolments to 23 339 by 2025.	• HEDA Dashboard Screen print. • List of headcount enrolments (students' names, contact numbers, student numbers, identity (ID) numbers, programmes enrolled for, and proof of registration). • Total as per qualification-type level description.	22 495 student headcount enrolment.	22 138 student headcount enrolment.	21 601 student headcount enrolment	Implementation of Academic Exclusion
S2.2 Achieve the first-time entering undergraduate targets in the Enrolment Plan.	S2.2.1 Enrol 4 515 FTEN undergraduates by 2025.	• HEDA Dashboard Screen print. • List of FTEN students (with names, contact numbers, student numbers, ID numbers, and programmes enrolled for).	4 465 FTEN undergraduate students enrolled.	4 515 first-time entering undergraduate students enrolled.	4 733 first-time entering undergraduate students enrolled.	
S2.3 Achieve the SET enrolment targets in the Enrolment Plan.	S2.3.1 Increase the number of SET enrolments to 10 881 by 2025.	• HEDA Dashboard Screen print per faculty. • List of SET enrolments.	10 194 SET enrolments.	10 550 SET headcount enrolment.	9 876 SET headcount enrolment	Fluctuating number of learners with Maths and Science to qualify for admission into SET programmes
S2.4 Achieve the undergraduate contact success rate targets in the Enrolment Plan.	S2.4.1 Maintain an undergraduate contact success rate of at least 79.4%.	• HEDA Dashboard Screen print. • List of undergraduate student pass rates.	68% undergraduate contact success rate achieved.	79% undergraduate contact success rate achieved.	76,4% undergraduate contact success rate achieved.	A variety of factors, such as financial, academic support, psychosocial support, quality of teaching, social and cultural factors, infrastructure, and resources.

STRATEGIC GOAL S2: TO PRODUCE WORK-READY, ENTREPRENEURIAL AND HOLISTIC GRADUATES.						
Strategic objectives	**Key Performance Indicator**	**Portfolio of evidence**	**2023 actual**	**2024 annual target**	**2024 achieved target**	**Reasons for non-achievement**
S2.5 Maintain the number of undergraduate students in WIL placements in all undergraduate programmes that have a WIL component.	S2.5.1 Ninety-eight per cent (98%) of undergraduate students successfully placed for WIL by 2025.	• Spreadsheet on Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS) system of number of students registered for WIL. • Database of WIL placements (placement lists; examples of WIL Coordinators).	99.9%	98%	99,9%	
S2.6 Achieve the graduate targets in the Enrolment Plan.	S2.6.1 Increase the number of graduates to 6 400 by 2025.	• Graduation lists. • Proof of graduated students (academic transcripts).	4 043	6 097	*4 399*	The impact of waiving academic exclusions (2020 - 2023).
S2.7 Increase the number of enrolments in postgraduate entrepreneurial learning programmes.	S2.7.1 One hundred and fifty (150) students enrolled in postgraduate entrepreneurial learning programmes by 2025.	• HEDA Dashboard Screen print. • List of postgraduate entrepreneurial enrolments (with names, contact numbers, student numbers, ID numbers, and programmes enrolled for).	154	150	226	
S2.8 Promote entrepreneurship awareness and thinking amongst the student community.	S2.8.1 Increase the number of training opportunities for students to develop entrepreneurship skills.	• Training reports (with attendance registers/photos, topics covered, etc.).	16	12	28 training opportunities for students.	
S2.9 Support the translation of students' ideas into products through the provision of prototyping services to the student community.	S2.9.1 Increase the number of students exposed to digital fabrication to 1 000 by 2025 (cumulative measure).	• Report on students exposed and assisted, including brief descriptions and images of developed prototypes, as well as attendance registers (photos).	224 students exposed to digital fabrication.	800 (600 + 200) students exposed to digital fabrication.	338 students exposed to digital fabrication.	

STRATEGIC GOAL S3: TO DEVELOP A STRONG CULTURE OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION.						
Strategic objectives	Key Performance Indicator	Portfolio of evidence	2023 actual	2024 annual target	2024 achieved target	Reasons for non-achievement
S3.1 Achieve the research publication unit targets in the Enrolment Plan.	S3.1.1 Increase the DHET-accredited research publication units to 227 by 2025.	DHET Institutional Research Output Report.	181.93 research publication output.	220	Actual outcome for 2024 will only be available in 2025.	
S3.2 Increase research in teaching and learning practices through SoTL.	S3.2.1 Enhance the teaching/research nexus by producing 247 research outputs by 2025 (cumulative target).	Copy or link of research outputs.	51 research outputs produced.	187 (132 + 55) research outputs produced.	56 research outputs.	
S3.3 Achieve the total research output targets in the Enrolment Plan.	S3.3.1 Increase the total research outputs to 665 by 2025.	DHET Institutional Research Output Report.	314.93 credit units.	639	Actual outcome for 2024 will only be available in 2025.	
S3.4 Increase the conversion of research and development (R&D) outputs into products, processes and services that are of benefit to society.	S3.4.1 Increase the number of actionable IP disclosures emanating from research and development activities per year.	List of IP disclosures received and assessed by the Technology Transfer Office (TTO).	11 actionable disclosures.	18 actionable IP disclosures.	12 actionable IP disclosures.	Lower-than-expected submission rate from researchers.
S3.5 Increase the commercialisation of university-generated IP.	S3.5.1 Increase the number of IP commercialisations per year.	Licence agreements (signed first page of the agreement).	0 IP commercialised.	8 IPs commercialised.	1 IP commercialised.	Many of the technologies are still at Technology Readiness Levels (TRL) 6-7, and it remains challenging to secure commercial partners willing to invest in further R&D to push these technologies to TRL 9.
S3.6 Support the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem by increasing the number of start-up companies incubated.	S3.6.1 Increase the number of start-up companies incubated per year.	Incubation agreements.	0 companies incubated.	15 incubated companies.	0 incubated companies.	The lack of a dedicated incubation facility at CUT remains the biggest obstacle in achieving our incubation targets.

STRATEGIC GOAL S4: TO ATTRACT, DEVELOP AND RETAIN STAFF AS THE UNIVERSITY'S MOST IMPORTANT ASSET.						
Strategic objectives	Key Performance Indicator	Portfolio of evidence	2023 actual	2024 annual target	2024 achieved target	Reasons for non-achievement
S.4.1 Achieve the doctoral qualification targets in the Enrolment Plan.	S4.1.1 Increase the number of permanent instruction/research staff with doctoral qualifications to 141 by 2025	• HR spreadsheet indicating total number of permanent instruction/research staff with Doctoral qualifications	131 permanent instruction/research staff with doctoral qualifications.	136 permanent instruction/research staff with doctoral qualifications.	144 permanent instruction/research staff with doctoral qualifications.	
S4.2 Facilitate industry exposure for instruction/research staff.	S4.2.1. Nine per cent (9%) (32 of 355) of permanent instruction/ research staff with industry exposure by 2025	• List of permanent instruction/research staff who visited the industry to gain exposure. • Standardised industry exposure reports.	3,4% (12 of 355) permanent instruction/research staff with industry exposure.	8,5% permanent instruction/research staff with industry exposure.	4% (13 of 355) permanent instruction/research staff with industry exposure.	
S4.3 Develop instruction/research staff as university teachers.	S4.3.1 136 instruction/research staff enrolled for the PGDip in Higher Education by 2025 .	• Total number of instruction/research staff registered/enrolled for the PGDip in Higher Education. • Signed proof of registration.	5 instruction/research staff enrolled for the PGDip in Higher Education.	103 (68 + 35) instruction/research staff enrolled for the PGDip in Higher Education.	5 instruction/research staff enrolled for the PGDip in Higher Education.	Academics cannot enrol for two programmes.
STRATEGIC GOAL S5: TO BUILD STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY'S GOALS.						
Strategic objectives	Key Performance Indicator	Portfolio of evidence	2023 actual	2024 annual target	2024 achieved target	Reasons for non-achievement
S5.1 Create strategic platforms for alumni engagements.	*S5.1.1 Increase alumni's interest in the affairs of CUT on CUT's strategic platforms to 35% by 2025*	• Events reports • Event Attendance register (where applicable)	3,35% participation of alumni on CUT's strategic platforms.	*25% participation of alumni on CUT's strategic platforms.*	39% participation of alumni on CUT's strategic platforms.	

STRATEGIC GOAL S6: TO ENSURE INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY, EXPAND STREAMS OF INCOME, AND ENHANCE THE CUT BRAND.						
Strategic objectives	Key Performance Indicator	Portfolio of evidence	2023 actual	2024 annual target	2024 achieved target	Reasons for non-achievement
S6.1 Increase third-stream income, in an effort to ensure sustainability.	S6.1.1 Faculties to generate R20 million per year in third-stream income by 2025.	Proof of payment (from payer).	R23,310 million generated by faculties.	R18 million generated by faculties.	R115.710 million	
	S6.1.2 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and WIL to contribute R25 million per year in third-stream income by 2025.	Proof of payment (from payer).	R28 561 060	R25 million generated through SETAs and WIL.	R28.485 million	
	S6.1.3 Research, Innovation and Engagement (RIE) to increase third-stream income from the Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM), Product Development Technology Station (PDTS), and Centre of Innovation and Commercialisation of Additive Manufacturing (CICAM) to R80 million by 2025	Invoices.	R19.111 million generated by the CRPM and PDTS.	R17,667 million generated by the CRPM and PDTS.	R15.193 million	Pressure from declining manufacturing industry affects value of projects
	S6.1.4 CUT Innovation Services (CUTIS) to generate R100 million per year from contracting projects to CUT, and payment of dividends from 2024.	• Proof of payment. • Invoices.		. R100,00 million generated by CUTIS.	N/A	
S6.2 Expand renewable energy sources (solar).	S6.2.1 Forty per cent (40%) of CUT's energy derived from renewable energy by 2025	• Report on CUT energy derived from renewable energy (15%). • SLA.	4.98% of CUT's energy derived from renewable energy.	30% of CUT's energy derived from renewable energy.	7,9% of 10% of CUT's energy derived from renewable energy.	No new rooftop PV system was installed in the fourth quarter; only the production of a solar PV system in the Science Park, to generate electricity for the essential loads, commenced in the fourth quarter.

S6.3 Optimise the use of natural water sources.	S6.3.1 **Thirty per cent (30%) of water usage derived from natural water sources by 2025**	• Report on water usage derived from natural water sources (10%), including calculations. • SLA.	3.12% of CUT's water usage derived from natural water sources.	*25% of CUT's water usage derived from natural water sources.*	1.15% of 5% of CUT's water usage derived from natural water sources.	• No optimisation was done on the existing borehole. • No additional or new boreholes were designed and built.

STRATEGIC GOAL S7: To promote good governance, human rights and social justice.						
Strategic objectives	Key Performance Indicator	Portfolio of evidence	2023 actual	2024 annual target	2024 achieved target	Reasons for non-achievement
S7.1 Effective governance and management structures.	S7.1.1 Review of Council committees' effectiveness.	Development and approval of evaluation tool.	95% score, based on DHET Good Governance Scorecard. The outcome of the self-evaluation of Council and its standing committees was presented. Results will be discussed, and an Improvement Plan will be crafted, if necessary.	95% score, based on DHET Good Governance Scorecard.	92% score, based on DHET Good Governance Scorecard.	The computation was determined based on Councils' statements. Ideally, Council should be scoring statements to be "True" with no exceptions, however During this cycle, three (3) exceptions were noted in three areas, hence the determination of statement "more true than false". 1. While progress on the updating of policies is noted, the University still has outdated policies, which needs to be updated. 2. Council acknowledged the importance of separating strategic oversight and operational mandate in some areas; hence this requires improvement. 3. Strategic engagement requires improvement. Council has put systems in place to ensure that the

						above is improved
S7.2 Partner with Council to enhance institutional governance through improved relations, effectiveness and efficiency.	S7.2.1 Evaluation of individual councillors' performance, and external evaluation of Council's performance.	• Evaluation report flowing from the assessment of individual councillors' performance. • Report on Improvement Plan.	Evaluation of individual councillors' and Council's performance was conducted.	Evaluation of individual councillors' performance.	An evaluation of individual councillors was conducted.	

1.5. ENROLMENT PERFORMANCE AND ANALYSIS

This section serves to highlight the university's 2024 achievements against the performance targets set in the Enrolment Plan.

In 2024, CUT enrolled 21 601 students (including occasional students), which is -2.43% less than the 22 138-target set in the 2024 APP, and 4 733 first-time entering students at undergraduate level, which is 4.8% more than the 2024 APP target of 4 515.

The following tables offer a comprehensive analysis of the performance, size and shape of CUT, providing a platform, based on reliable data, to manage and guide the institution in terms of implementing its 2021 to 2025 Strategic Plan priorities. Please note: The data in tables 3 to 18 is as extracted from *HEDA on 19 February 2025.*

Table 3: Student headcount enrolment by qualification level, 2023-2024

Qualification level	Headcount actuals 2023	Headcount target 2024	2024 preliminary performance*	Deviation
FTEN undergraduate students	4 464	4 515	4 733	4.82%
Total undergraduate Students	20 927	19 081	19 844	4.00%
Postgraduate to master's degree level	829	2 268	961	-57.63%
Master's degree level	486	529	570	7.75%
Doctorates	213	260	211	-18.85%
Total postgraduate students	1 528	3057	1 742	-43.02%
Total enrolment	22 501	22 138	21 601	-2.43%

Table 3 above indicates the headcount enrolment by qualification type. The institution did not meet the overall 2024 APP headcount target by -2.43%. In terms of the qualification-level breakdown, negative deviations of 57.63%, 18.85% and 43.02%, respectively, were experienced in the number of postgraduates to master's degree students, doctoral and the total postgraduate enrolments, from the set targets for 2024. However, for masters there is an excess of 7.75% enrolments.

Table 4: Student headcount enrolment in first-year programmes (foundation programmes), 2023-2024

Projected student headcount intake in first-year (foundation) programmes	Headcount actuals 2023	Headcount target 2024	2024 preliminary performance	Deviation
Projected student headcount intake in first-year (foundation) programmes	469	631	513	-18.70%

Source: HEDA, extracted on 19 February 2025.

Table 4 above indicates the headcount enrolment in first-year (foundation) programmes. The institution had a shortfall of 118 students – a shortfall of 18.70% in the Enrolment Plan headcount target for 2024.

Table 5: Student headcount enrolment by major field of study, 2023-2024

Major field of study	Academic year						
	2023			2024			
	Headcount target	Actual headcount	%	Headcount target	Preliminary headcount	%	Deviation
BUS./MAN.	4 740	5 260	23.38%	5 123	4 946	22.90%	-3.45%
EDUCATION	4 529	5 391	23.96%	4 656	5 123	23.72%	10.03%
OTHER HUMANITIES	1 736	1 675	7.45%	1 772	1 653	7.65%	-6.74%
SET	10 151	10 175	45.22%	10 587	9 876	45.72%	-6.71%
Total	21 155	22 501	100.00%	22 138	21 599	100.00%	-2.43%

Table 5 above indicates that, in 2024, most students (45.72%) chose Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET) fields, followed by Education (23.72%), Business/Management (22.90%), and Other Humanities (7.65%). Compared to 2023, there was a slight increase in the share of students in SET and Other Humanities, while the proportion of students in Business/Management and Education dropped slightly. There is a need to improve enrolments across all fields including the enhancement of career guidance to inform students about opportunities in all fields. In Summary: SET fields grew from 45.22% in 2023 to 45.72% in 2024, other Humanities increased from 7.45% to 7.65%, Business/Management decreased from 23.38% to 22.90% and Education dropped from 23.96% to 23.72%.

Table 6: Percentage distribution of student headcount enrolment by population group and major field of study, 2022-2024

Major field of study	African (%)			Coloured (%)			Indian (%)			White (%)			Unknown	
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024	2023	2024
BUS./MAN.	24.21%	23.56%	23.04%	19.82%	22.70%	24.04%	10.00%	12.50%	9.09%	8.47%	12.32%	11.62%	30.56%	36.84%
EDUCATION	23.02%	24.30%	24.00%	19.30%	19.26%	20.94%	7.50%	14.06%	18.18%	6.39%	6.94%	6.65%	44.44%	39.47%
OTHER HUMANITIES	7.10%	7.52%	7.76%	7.95%	7.57%	6.23%	7.50%	3.13%	0.00%	4.40%	2.79%	2.27%	5.56%	5.26%
SET	45.68%	44.62%	45.21%	52.93%	50.47%	48.79%	75.00%	70.31%	72.73%	80.73%	77.96%	79.46%	19.44%	18.42%
GRAND TOTAL	22 384	21 753	20 934	412	373	337	20	16	11	420	341	297	18	19

Table 6 above indicates that from 2022 to 2024, the majority of CUT students have consistently been from the African population group, followed by Coloured, White, and then Indian students, necessitating that the need to improve representation across all groups. Breakdown per specific fields of study is as follows:

- In Science, Engineering, and Technology (SET), African and Coloured student representation remains highest but both groups saw a slight decrease.
- In Education, African students' participation increased, showing steady interest, while Indian students' representation grew significantly, indicating better access or growing interest.
- In Other Humanities, African student numbers rose slightly, but Coloured student representation declined.
- In Business/Management, African student participation dropped a bit, while Coloured student representation increased.

Table 7: Undergraduate and postgraduate student enrolment and graduation rates by major field of study, 2023-2024

Major field of Study		Qualification type	Calendar year					
			2023			2024		
			Actual headcount*	Graduates	Graduation rate	Preliminary headcount*	Graduates	Graduation rate
BUS./MAN.		Postgraduate	654.7	225.2	34.40%	812.7	109.2	13.44%
		Undergraduate	4 600.7	904.5	19.66%	4 133.7	780.2	18.87%
		Occasional	4.5	0	0.00%	0	0	0.00%
	BUS./MAN. TOTAL			5 259.9	1 129.7	21.48%	4 946.4	889.4
EDUCATION		Postgraduate	385.8	108.5	28.12%	394.3	130.7	33.15%
		Undergraduate	4 988.6	908.2	18.21%	4 718.2	805.2	17.07%
		Occasional	16.5	0	0.00%	10.5	0	0.00%
	EDUCATION TOTAL			5 390.9	1 016.7	18.86%	5 123	935.9
OTHER HUMANITIES		Postgraduate	80	42	52.50%	108	63	58.33%
		Undergraduate	1 595.2	277.4	17.39%	1 544.5	351.5	22.76%
	OTHER HUMANITIES TOTAL			1 675.2	319.4	19.07%	1 652.5	414.5
SET		Postgraduate	407.5	114.3	28.05%	427	68	15.93%
		Undergraduate	9 742.6	1 461.8	15.00%	9 446.6	1 332.1	14.10%
		Occasional	25	0	0.00%	2.5	0	0.00%
	SET TOTAL		10 175.1	1 576.1	15.49%	9 876.1	1 400.1	14.18%
Deviation (%)			6.36%	-31.55%	-35.64%	-2.43%	-40.13%	-38.64%

- Total student enrolment dropped slightly by 2.43% from 2023 to 2024, indicating fewer students are enrolling or staying at the institution.

- Graduation rates are well below targets, with actual rates at 17.96% in 2023 and 16.90% in 2024, compared to targets of nearly 28%, showing a widening gap each year.

- The number of graduates declined by almost 10% (from 4,042 to 3,650), meaning fewer students are completing their studies despite steady enrolment.

- Enrolment exceeded targets in 2023 but fell just below target in 2024, while graduate output remained consistently and significantly below expectations.

- Breakdown by field: Business/Management, Education, and SET (Science, Engineering, Technology) all saw drops in both enrolment and graduation rates, except Other Humanities, which improved its graduation rate despite a small drop in enrolment.

- Persistent low graduation rates point to challenges in student retention and completion. Recommendation to improve includes strengthening of academic support, review curricula, expand financial and counselling services, and better tracking of student progress to improve student success.

Table 8: Student performance and full-time equivalents (FTEs) across the major fields of study by gender, 2023-2024

Major field of study		2023		2023 Total	2024		2024 total
		Female	Male		Female	Male	
BUS./MAN.	Pass rate	68.09%	59.66%	65.11%	76.56%	69.64%	74.11%
	FTE	1 880	1 029	2 909	1 943	1 068	3 011
EDUCATION	Pass rate	75.67%	64.53%	71.07%	81.83%	74.00%	78.72%
	FTE	2 672	1 878	4 550	2 803	1 850	4 653
OTHER HUMANITIES	Pass Rate	69.79%	60.67%	66.51%	80.77%	71.34%	77.48%
	FTE	1 023	575	1 598	1 012	543	1 555
STEM	Pass Rate	73.03%	62.63%	67.59%	77.45%	71.52%	74.47%
	FTE	3 143	3 453	6 596	3 313	3 336	6 649
OVERALL PASS RATE		72.39%	62.54%	68.03%	78.99%	71.89%	75.94%
PASS RATE DEVIATION (%)				-13.89%			-3.87%

DHET FTE ENROLMENT TARGET			14 885			15 220
TOTAL FTEs	8 719	6 935	15 654	9 071	6 797	15 868
FTE DEVIATION (%)			5.17%			4.26%

The table above provides the annual changes in student pass rates across the major fields of study by gender. The following observations are noteworthy:

- The overall student pass rate improved significantly from 68.03% in 2023 to 75.94% in 2024, moving closer to the target of 79%.

- The gap between actual pass rates and the target narrowed from -13.89% in 2023 to -3.87% in 2024, reflecting positive progress.

- Enrolment (measured by full-time equivalent, FTE) also grew slightly by 1.37% from 2023 to 2024, with improved alignment to enrolment targets.

- Female students consistently achieved higher pass rates than male students in both years; in 2024, females had a 78.99% pass rate compared to 71.89% for males.

- This persistent gender gap in academic achievement highlights that female students outperform males across all major fields of study.

- Recommendations to improve: To further improve results and close the gender gap, the institution should implement targeted academic support and mentorship programs for male students, enhance early intervention systems, and promote engagement initiatives that address the specific challenges faced by male learners

Table 9: Pass rates by major field of study and population group, 2023-2024

Major field of study	African		Coloured		Indian		White		Unknown	
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024
BUS./MAN.	64.63%	73.94%	73.99%	80.67%	93.63%	100.00%	95.57%	81.88%	75.60%	71.00%
EDUCATION	71.14%	78.72%	66.25%	78.06%	94.74%	92.61%	67.99%	66.74%	67.37%	110.83%
OTHER HUMANITIES	66.37%	77.47%	73.85%	74.47%	10.13%	100.00%	74.08%	87.75%	87.27%	84.03%
SET	67.01%	74.15%	73.78%	77.73%	78.04%	65.33%	83.80%	85.59%	64.01%	65.74%
Grand total	67.72%	75.79%	72.10%	78.22%	78.97%	74.72%	83.26%	83.81%	70.64%	88.34%

The table above provides the annual changes in student pass rates across the major fields of study by population group. A noteworthy observation is that an overall increase in pass rate is evident across all the population groups, except for the Indian population group, where the pass rate decreased by 4.24%.

Table 10: Summative view of student graduation and retention rates for three-year undergraduate qualifications (diplomas, 360-credit diplomas, national diplomas, professional first bachelor's degrees (three years), and undergraduate diplomas or certificates (three years)

Cohort Year	Entering	Retained after				Cumulative	Cumulative
	Cohort	1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	Graduates to date	Dropouts to date
2019	2 971	2 377 80.0%	1 753 59.0%	1 227 41.3%	690 23.2%	1 402 47.2%	1 243 41.8%
2020	2 702	2 259 83.6%	1 694 62.7%	979 36.2%	374 13.8%	1 100 40.7%	1 139 42.2%
2021	2 861	2 318 81.0%	1 676 58.6%	850 29.7%	607 21.2%	809 28.3%	1 235 43.2%
2022	2 816	2 079 73.8%	1 393 49.5%	1 152 40.9%		363 12.9%	1 140 40.5%
2023	2 553	2 024 79.3%	1 823 71.4%			4 0.2%	632 24.8%
2024	2 687	2 262 84.2%				0 0.0%	364 13.5%

Cohort base Year	Cohort	Min. time	Min. + 1	Min. + 2	Min. + 3	Min. > + 3	Total (N) graduates	Total (%) graduates
2019	2 971	514	416	324	117	77	1 468	49.4%
2020	2 702	442	514	197	2	4	1 159	42.9%
2021	2 861	442	393	0	0	0	835	29.2%
2022	2 816	380	0	0	0	0	380	13.5%
2023	2 553	4	0	0	0	0	4	0.2%
2024	2 687	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%

A summary of the data from the 2019 student cohort for three-year undergraduate qualifications:

Out of 2,971 students who started in 2019, 80% continued into their second year (2020), and 59% stayed enrolled into their third year (2021).

So far, 47.2% of this group have graduated, while 41.8% have dropped out or temporarily stopped their studies.

Regarding how quickly students' graduate: 17.3% finished their qualification in the minimum time of three years, 14% graduated within four years, and 10.9% within five years.

It's important to note that this data covers specific qualifications such as diplomas, national diplomas, professional first bachelor's degrees, and three-year undergraduate diplomas or certificates.

Measures to improve Retention and Graduation Rates:

Strengthen student support services, including academic tutoring and counselling, to help students stay on track.

Introduce early-warning systems to identify and assist students at risk of dropping out.

Provide flexible learning options or extended study plans to accommodate different student needs.

Enhance career guidance and engagement to motivate students and clarify the value of completing their qualifications on time.

These steps can help increase student retention and graduation rates, improving overall success for future cohorts.

Tables 11 to 18 below provide the gender distribution of students and permanent instruction/research staff members in the different faculties per campus for 2024.

Table 11: Student profile for the Faculty of Management Sciences per campus, 2024

Campus Grouping	African		Coloured		Indian		White		No Information		2024 total headcount
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Bloemfontein	2 644	1 494	56	27	1	0	14	19	4	2	4 261
Welkom	1 329	558	9	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1 898

Table 12: Permanent instruction/research staff profile for the Faculty of Management Sciences, 2024

Staff	African		Coloured		Indian		White		2024 total staff headcount
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Headcount	20	26	4	2	1	0	23	11	87
Percentage	22.99%	29.89%	4.60%	2.30%	1.15%	0.00%	26.44%	12.64%	100%

Table 13: Student profile for the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences per campus, 2024

Campus grouping	African		Coloured		Indian		White		No information	2024 total headcount
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Bloemfontein	1 446	629	26	11	3	1	79	36	1	2 232

Table 14: Permanent instruction/research staff profile for the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences, 2024

Staff	African		Coloured		Indian		White		2024 total staff headcount
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Headcount	10	16	1	1	0	0	14	7	49
Percentage	20.41%	32.65%	2.04%	2.04%	0.00%	0.00%	28.57%	14.29%	100%

Table 15: Student profile for the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (IT) per campus, 2024

Campus grouping	African		Coloured		Indian		White		2024 total headcount
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Bloemfontein	2 142	3 287	36	75	0	4	5	120	5 669
Welkom	296	389	0	1	0	0	0	0	686

Table 16: Permanent instruction/research staff profile for the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and _IT, 2024_

Staff	African		Coloured		Indian		White		2024 total staff headcount
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Headcount	18	34	1	2	0	2	15	26	98
Percentage	18.37%	34.69%	1.02%	2.04%	0.00%	2.04%	15.31%	26.53%	100%

Table 17: Student profile for the Faculty of Humanities per campus, 2024

Campus grouping	African		Coloured		Indian		No information		White		2024 total headcount
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Bloemfontein	2 052	1 601	46	32	1	0	0	0	7	13	3 752
Welkom	1 995	1 073	16	2	1	0	7	3	2	2	3 101

Table 18: Permanent instruction/research staff profile for the Faculty of Humanities, 2024

Staff	African		Coloured		Indian		White		2024 total staff headcount
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	
Headcount	21	39	3	3	2	1	17	6	92
Percentage	22.83%	42.39%	3.26%	3.26%	2.17%	1.09%	18.48%	6.52%	100%

1.6 CONCLUSION

The university has made significant strides in positioning itself through implementing its 2024 Annual Performance Plan which reflects the university's commitment to achieving its strategic goals outlined in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and Vision 2030 framework. As an institution, we want to reaffirm our dedication to our mission and vision, which guide everything we do. Significant progress has been made in assembling the right team at Executive and Leadership levels across the institution, which bodes very well for the strategic intent of transforming the institution into one that prides itself with meticulous planning, flawless execution and masterful telling of impact stories.

Despite many challenges, we are optimistic about the future and confident in our collective wisdom to succeed together. However, it should be mentioned that many of the challenges are systemic in nature and affect the broader higher education sector.

As we are commencing with the development of the 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan, we are taking this opportunity to recommit to the vision of CUT, working as a collective to ensure streamlined, high-performance work across the institution.

SIGNED BY:

RMahabeer

_____

Cllr R Mahabeer

Chairperson of Council

_____

Prof. PZ Dube

Vice-Chancellor and Principal

SECTION 2
REPORT OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL

Cllr Rajesh Mahabeer, Chairperson of Council

2.1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2024, Council exercised its fiduciary responsibilities with diligence, providing strategic oversight, and ensuring alignment between institutional performance and the long-term vision of becoming a leading African university of technology, shaping the future through innovation. Council was particularly excited to welcome the new Chancellor, Dr Vincent Maphai, who assumed his titular role in January 2024. This was another iconic moment for CUT, and an appropriate opportunity to strategically communicate the university's vision for the future. This appointment marked a significant milestone in the leadership trajectory of the institution, and is expected to elevate the university's visibility and influence nationally and beyond. In a further demonstration of governance continuity and renewal, Council also appointed a new Chairperson, Mr Rajesh Mahabeer, in November 2024. The Chairperson brings a wealth of experience and expertise in corporate governance, strategic leadership, and higher education oversight. His deep understanding of governance frameworks, coupled with his collaborative leadership style, positions the CUT Council to provide even more effective guidance in navigating institutional priorities and sectoral challenges.

Through robust governance frameworks, Council continued to monitor compliance, risk management, and financial sustainability, while supporting Executive Management in driving transformation and academic excellence. The CUT Council is proud of the progress made during the year under review, and reaffirms its dedication to transparent, responsive and future-focused governance, in the service of CUT's stakeholders and society at large.

The purpose of this section is, therefore, to account for Council's actions and achievements towards governance at CUT during the 2024 academic year.

2.2 EFFECTIVE ETHICAL LEADERSHIP AND CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP

CUT is committed to fostering a culture of ethical governance, management and operations. In line with this commitment, the revised CUT Statute includes the Chairperson of Council's responsibility of providing ethical leadership, and the existing ethics governance policy and procedure were reviewed and approved by Council, following endorsement by other governance structures. The policy underscores CUT's belief that all institutional practices, procedures and conduct should be rooted in ethical foundations. It aligns with the King IV Report, which emphasises the governing body's role in cultivating an ethical culture through the implementation of appropriate policies and practices. The policy ensures that CUT staff and stakeholders are committed to the highest standards of openness, probity and accountability. It also encourages employees and stakeholders to report malpractice or impropriety without fear of victimisation. To ensure widespread awareness, the regulations are made available to all employees, students, and Council members, and are freely accessible on CUT's intranet, with its principles integrated into staff induction and Council training programmes.

To operationalise ethics regulations, the university established an Ethics Unit and appointed an Ethics Officer, who plays a pivotal role in overseeing the implementation of the ethics governance policy, conducting ethics-related investigations, and ensuring compliance with ethical standards. Furthermore, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal was appointed as the Ethics Champion, providing leadership and driving the integration of ethical practices across the institution. Complementing these efforts, a network of Ethics Ambassadors was established, comprising members of staff and student representatives who promote ethical behaviour and awareness at departmental and student levels. These appointments are integral to the implementation of the Ethics Strategy and Management Plan, which were developed following

a comprehensive ethics survey and ethics risk assessment. These initiatives enabled the identification of key ethical risks, and informed the development of targeted strategies to address them, ensuring that ethical governance remains a priority at CUT.

In addition to these measures, CUT has a functional whistle-blower hotline facility to provide a secure and confidential channel for reporting unethical conduct. This facility, which is accessible to staff, students, and external stakeholders, is designed to protect whistle-blowers from victimisation and ensure that reported cases are thoroughly investigated. This mechanism underscores CUT's commitment to transparency, accountability, and the prevention of unethical behaviour.

The governing body should evaluate the possibility of assigning oversight and reporting responsibilities for organisational ethics, responsible corporate citizenship, sustainable development, and stakeholder relationships to a dedicated committee. Alternatively, these responsibilities could be integrated into the mandate of an existing committee, depending on what aligns best with the organisation's structure and needs. It is important to note that the Council committee responsible for social and ethics activities are currently suspended, and will have to be reconstituted as part of the revised Governance Framework, to ensure that the university adheres to sound governance practices and maintains alignment with established standards. Together, these initiatives demonstrate the university's proactive approach to ethical governance, ensuring that ethical principles are embedded in all aspects of institutional operations.

2.3   GOVERNANCE OF RISK

The university recognises that enterprise risk management (ERM) is an integral component of effective corporate governance, building upon transparent and accountable processes consistent with sound business practice. In alignment with the King IV Report on Corporate Governance, the CUT Council governs risks in a manner that ensures that relevant risks and opportunities are considered, to support the university in achieving its strategic goals and objectives.

CUT's governance structures play a pivotal role in risk governance. The CUT Council delegates the responsibility for risk governance to its subcommittee, the Audit, Risk and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Governance Committee (ARIC), ensuring efficient and effective oversight of the institution's risk management processes. The CUT

Council provides strategic oversight, ensuring that risk management is integrated into policy development, planning, and decision-making processes. Council adopts and approves various risk reports and guiding documents, including the Institutional Risk Register; risk appetite and tolerance levels; Fraud Risk Register; Opportunity Register; and Ethics Risk Register, which are critical tools for identifying, assessing and mitigating risks.

ARIC, as a subcommittee of Council, is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the ERM Framework, reviewing risk assessments, and ensuring that risk management practices align with institutional objectives. The Management Committee (Mancom) oversees the operationalisation of risk management strategies, ensuring that risks are managed at both strategic and operational levels. Additionally, the Risk and Compliance Advisory Committee (RCC) provides expert guidance on risk mitigation measures, compliance with regulatory requirements, and the implementation of best practices in risk governance.

To ensure a comprehensive approach to risk management, CUT conducts an annual Risk Assessment Workshop, the outcome of which are various risk registers. These registers highlight the most significant risks and opportunities the university is exposed to, based on an analysis of the global, local and higher education landscape; findings from assurance providers; and discussions with university stakeholders.

2.4   COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS, CODES, RULES AND STANDARDS

CUT is committed to maintaining the highest standards of compliance with all applicable international and national legislation, accountability frameworks, regulations, codes of practice, and standards. As outlined in the compliance management policy, the university ensures that its operations and governance align with regulatory requirements, fostering a culture of accountability and diligence. The ultimate responsibility for overseeing compliance resides with the CUT Council, which delegates the management and monitoring of compliance risks to the relevant executive, supported by the Chief Risk Officer (CRO).

The CRO operates independently of other operational areas, ensuring objectivity and adherence to the Generally Accepted Compliance Practice (GACP) Framework. The compliance function reports administratively to the Executive Director: Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, and functionally to ARIC. Regular updates on compliance obligations, risks and breaches are provided to Management and the CUT Council on a quarterly basis, ensuring transparency and accountability in compliance governance.

To maintain a robust Compliance Framework, CUT has developed and maintains a Regulatory Universe, which is a comprehensive document that identifies and categorises all applicable laws, regulations and standards relevant to the university's operations. This document serves as a critical reference tool for ensuring that compliance obligations are systematically monitored and addressed. The Regulatory Universe is regularly updated to reflect changes in the regulatory landscape, ensuring that CUT remains proactive in meeting its compliance requirements. In addition to this, the university conducts periodic compliance reviews, to assess adherence to regulatory obligations and identify areas for improvement.

During the 2024 reporting period, several key compliance initiatives were undertaken. A Protection of Personal Information Act (PoPIA) compliance review was conducted to assess the university's adherence to the PoPI Act. The findings of the review were presented to relevant governance structures, and, in order to address identified gaps, CUT appointed an external service provider to advise on the development and implementation of a PoPIA Compliance Plan. This plan will ensure that the university's data protection practices align with legislative requirements and best practices. Additionally, an audit on the excessive usage of part-time lecturers was conducted, to ensure compliance with section 198C of the Labour Relations Act (LRA). The final report and recommendations from this audit are expected to entail corrective actions to be implemented.

Regrettably, CUT received a compliance notice related to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), which requires employers to maintain accurate records of employee working hours, including names, occupations and remuneration. The university has taken immediate steps to address this notice. Despite these challenges, the institution remained free from any other regulatory sanctions, penalties or fines during the reporting period, reaffirming its commitment to compliance and adherence to regulatory standards.

2.5   REMUNERATION OF COUNCILLORS

In the CUT context, the remuneration of Council members is regulated by the policy on payment of external Councillors, which balances the principles of public accountability, good governance, and the recognition of civic duty. The policy on the payment of external councillors states that the payment of honoraria will be paid for attendance of quarterly meetings of Council and its committees that are stipulated in the Year Programme, plus no more than three special or emergency meetings, at 50% of the honoraria of an ordinary meeting, as special or

emergency meetings are intended to address specific/urgent matters. The call for a special or emergency meeting must be necessary and justified.

The policy also addresses and places a limit on special meetings. This was in line with the independent assessor's recommendation stipulated on page 103 of his report that Council must limit the number of meetings, which are costly for the university and indicate that meetings are inefficient:

> *1.3 Limit the number of special meetings per year, e.g. only in exceptional cases can they be more than the number of normal meetings permitted in a year.*

Council members who are invited to other university events will only be reimbursed for the travel expenses incurred.

No increase on honoraria was effected in the reporting year. Payment of external Council members, per category, from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024 are listed below.

Chairperson of Council:	R4 000
Deputy Chairperson of Council:	R3 500
Chairpersons of standing committees of Council:	R3 000
Members of Council and Council standing committees:	R2 500

2.6   FINANCIAL HEALTH/VIABILITY

In determining CUT's financial health, the following areas were assessed:

Income: During 2024, income increased by R297 million or 17.11%, from R1,739 billion in 2023, to R2,037 billion in 2024. This increase was mainly because of the following:

> An increase of R30.8 million, or 4.72%, in the tuition and other fee income. An increase of R14.9 million, or 27.4%, in income from contracts (2023: R9.6 million, or 21.51%).
>
> An increase of R194 million in income from the Pothole Project (2023: R9.4 million). An increase of R12.2 million, or 111.9%, in other income (2023: R7.2 million, or 191.31%).

An increase of R16.5 million, or 12%, in finance (investment) income (2023: R74.5 million, or 118.84%).

An increase of R23.9 million, or 43%, in state appropriations – specifically funded activities (2023: a decrease of R27.3 million, or 33%).

Expenditure: The total expenditure for 2024 increased with R967 million, or 80% (2023: a decrease of R287 million, or 19%). This increase was mainly due to the following:

Expected credit loss (ECL) year on year movement increased with R587 million (decreased with R295 million in 2023).

An increase of R200 million in expenses for the Pothole Project (2023: R3.4 million).

The higher ECL is due to the following factors:

52% of the NSFAS exposure is older than three years, vs 27% last year. Old debt carries a higher charge.

As a result, the coverage ratio for NSFAS increased due to the aging of the debt and the lower proportion of amounts outstanding in the more recent ageing buckets.

The proportion of debt allocated to the standard bucket has increased. The collection rate from this bucket is lower than that from NSFAS-funded students.

Property and equipment: The fixed assets increased with R224.7 million (22.9%). The additions were mostly due to construction expenses on new buildings.

Cash balance: The cash and cash equivalent balances increased by R4.5 million (4.4%).

Current investments: An amount of R1.087 billion (2023: R1.020 billion) was invested in the Ninety One High Income Fund account and Ninety One Money Market account. This investment consists of funds received from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for infrastructure and maintenance projects; other grants that have not yet been spent; and other operating surpluses.

The income-expenditure ratio was 93% in 2024, and 143% in 2023.

Subsidy, excluding specifically funded grants, was 41.41% of total income in 2024, and 48.30% in 2023.

Tuition and accommodation fees were 33.49% of total income in 2024, and 37.45% in 2023.

The profitability ratio for 2024 was -6.64% and 43.1% in 2023.

Solvency ratio: There was a decline in the asset-debt ratio, from 2.43 in 2023, to 2.35 in 2024. This movement is mostly due to the impact the increase in expected credit loss has on outstanding student debt. The debt ratio (total debt/total assets) was 0.41 in 2023, and 0.43 in 2024.

For the same reason, there was a decline in the current ratio (the number of times current assets can cover the current liabilities), from 3.51 in 2023, to 2.93 in 2024.

CUT considered the outstanding student debt when considering the going concern. CUT and NSFAS engaged in a Close-Out Report process for the years 2017 to 2022. The process has been ongoing since 2020. Based on the findings, NSFAS owes CUT a net amount of more than R1.056 billion for these periods.

If CUT receives these amounts, it will improve the outstanding debt significantly. The student debt will then reduce, and the cash balances will increase, which will also ensure improved ratios.

From the above, it can be established that, despite the challenges experienced by the higher education sector in terms of student debt, CUT remained financially healthy. It is envisaged that this position will strengthen, as more rigid strategies around student funding and debt recovery are being implemented. The university intends to reduce its dependence on government funding and student fee income.

Based on the above analysis, Council regards CUT as a going concern.

2.6.1 Borrowings and additional borrowings

The university did not borrow any money in 2024.

2.7   ADDITIONAL INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE

As part of its commitment to providing a conducive environment for teaching, learning, research and innovation, the university undertook several infrastructure initiatives in 2024. These developments reflect the institution's forward-looking strategy and the effective allocation of financial resources towards long-term sustainability and student success. This section provides a brief overview of the university's mega infrastructure projects.

The mega projects commenced in 2023, and the costs incurred during 2024 amounted to R220 million. Three buildings were completed towards the end of 2024, of which two are at the Welkom Campus, namely a residence (221 beds), at a cost, to date, of R111 million; and a Multipurpose Hall, at a cost, to date, of R49 million. A residence was also completed at the Bloemfontein Campus (126 beds), at a cost, to date, of R58 million.

Two more buildings are under construction, one at the Bloemfontein Campus (Jewellery School), and the other at the Welkom Campus (Teacher Education Building). It is anticipated that both will be completed in 2025.

2.8   RISK MANAGEMENT

The CUT Council affirms its commitment to effective risk management as a cornerstone of good governance and institutional sustainability. Council is responsible for overseeing the total process of risk management at CUT, and has established a robust system to ensure that risks are identified, assessed, mitigated and monitored in a structured and transparent manner. This system aligns with good governance principles and international best practices.

2.9   COMBINED ASSURANCE

CUT has adopted a robust Combined Assurance Model in alignment with the King IV Report, which emphasises the need for governing bodies to establish effective assurance processes to strengthen internal controls, enhance decision-making integrity, and ensure the accuracy of

external reporting. The Combined Assurance Model forms an integral part of the broader ERM Framework, reinforcing the university's commitment to proactive risk oversight and resilience.

CUT's Combined Assurance Framework and Combined Assurance Plan are anchored in the five-lines-of-assurance approach, ensuring a layered accountability structure to address risks effectively. The first line, Management, is responsible for strategy implementation, risk management and internal controls, including self-assessment and reporting. The second line, the risk oversight functions, ensures adherence to the ERM Framework, monitors compliance, and provides guidance on regulatory requirements. The third line, the internal audit, delivers independent assurance on governance, risk and control systems through risk-based audits. The fourth line, external assurance providers, validates statutory financial and performance reporting. The fifth line, regulatory and governance oversight bodies, provides independent oversight, ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory and governance standards, while offering external validation of the university's risk and control environment.

2.10   ETHICAL CONDUCT

The Ethics Unit is tasked with promoting an ethical culture across the university and investigating reported irregularities through designated platforms. As part of the Ethical Leadership and Culture Project, the unit launched a successful awareness campaign to promote ethical behaviour throughout the university. This included a video message from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, who, as the Ethics Champion, emphasised the importance of ethical conduct in maintaining integrity, trust and accountability within the university community.

2.11 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the university continues to uphold the highest standards of ethical leadership and governance, guided by a strong commitment to accountability, transparency, and institutional sustainability. The CUT Council has played a central role in providing strategic oversight, ensuring sound governance practices, and upholding ethical conduct across all levels of the institution. Through its stewardship, Council has overseen the management of governance risks, strengthened financial health, and supported the effective implementation of a Combined Assurance Model that enhances confidence in our internal control systems. These efforts collectively reinforce our resilience and responsiveness in an evolving higher education landscape.

SIGNED BY:

RMahabeer

_____

CLLR R MAHABEER
CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL

SECTION 3
COUNCIL'S STATEMENT ON CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

The CUT Council is duly constituted in accordance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended (also referred to as "the act"), and in terms of the CUT Statute. Council members are nominated and appointed cognisant of the skills set required for effective decision-making. Council reaffirmed its commitment to the principles outlined in the King IV Report on Corporate Governance, particularly in promoting good citizenship through responsible leadership, environmental stewardship, social responsiveness, and ethical conduct. These principles continue to inform the university's governance ethos and strategic decision-making processes. Council, via the Audit, Risk and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Governance Committee (ARIC), addresses risk management practices and compliance with relevant laws, regulations and institutional policies, in order to mitigate potential risks and ensure institutional sustainability. Council is intentional about identifying its shortcomings by evaluating its performance, reaffirming the institution's dedication to effective and transparent governance practices. CUT's Vision 2030, mission, and core values provide the foundation for governance practices and decision-

making.

3.1 INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The report of the independent assessor identifies signs of weakness and dysfunction. In the main, significant interventions will be required to strengthen governance. Council subjected itself and the university's governing structures to review its governance practices. The main reason was to address the shortcomings by the independent assessor and the need to ensure accountability, effectiveness, compliance, and strategic alignment. Two higher education and governance consultants were appointed to analyse/evaluate the main institutional governance structures as prescribed in the Higher Education Act; to reconfigure the CUT governance committee structure, towards establishing fit-for-purpose, efficient and effective governance structures, for purposes of promoting good governance and ethical conduct at CUT; and to produce a Governance Framework that sets out an enhanced governance structure, and they have completed their work.

The process of diagnosing the current statutory governance structures and operation, in which Prof. Thandi Lewin and Dr Len Konar were conducting the evaluation and assessment, was finalised in 2024.

Prof. Lewin and Dr Konar completed their evaluation of the CUT Council, Senate, and associated committees, as part of their work to reconfigure CUT's governance structures. The key output is a Governance Framework for the university. The framework outlines an enhanced governance structure that sets out the functions, responsibilities and membership of the university's governance bodies. The revised institutional governance structure includes updated terms of reference of all the proposed Council committees, which reflect current good practice in the governance space, taking into account the specific context of the university.

This will be followed by approval and implementation in the first term of 2025.

3.2 COUNCIL AND COUNCIL'S STANDING COMMITTEES

3.2.1 Council membership

In accordance with section 27(4) of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997), 60% of Council members are independent of the university, and possess the knowledge and experience relevant to the objectives and governance of CUT. 19 members of Council are external, whilst eleven are internal. It is worth noting, with concern, that Council has only one Ministerial Appointee, instead of the legally required five. This continues to be a challenge, as, despite our efforts to propose candidates to the Minister for consideration, four vacancies remain. The role of the Chairperson of Council is separate from the role of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of the university.

Council has skills sets in higher education, business, agriculture, finance, law, marketing, technology, and human resources (HR) management. The rotation principle was observed, and, as a result, some Council members serve a three-year term of office, whilst others serve a four-year term of office on Council. The Executive Committee (Exco) of Council serves as the Nominations Committee of Council, and as such assists with the process of identifying suitable members of Council. Each one of the Council committees has specific mandates to which its scope and operations are restricted.

The composition of Council; councillors' length of service; the standing committee(s) on which they served; the number of Council and standing committee meetings held; and councillors' respective attendance of these meetings in 2024, are reflected in the table below. Their qualifications are also presented, to indicate their competencies.

Table 19: Council and standing committees of Council: membership, attendance of meetings in 2024, and assessment of Council and standing committees of Council

Council and standing committees of Council	Number of members	Percentage (%) external/internal	Number of meetings	Average* attendance	Assessment of Council and standing committees of Council
Council	30	60/40	4 ordinary meetings. 3 special meetings. 1 workshop.	Above average.	Yes
Exco of Council	6	83/17	4 ordinary meetings. 3 special meetings.	Above average.	Yes
Planning, Finance and Resources Committee (PFRC) of Council	6	83/17	4 ordinary meetings. 1 special meeting.	Above average.	Yes
ARIC of Council	5 x Audit; 8 x Risk and ICT Governance	100 63/37	4 ordinary meetings. 1 joint ARIC and PFRC meeting.	Above average.	Yes
HR Committee (HRC) of Council	6	83/17	4 ordinary meetings. 1 special meetings.	Above average.	Yes
Remuneration Committee (RemCo) of Council	6	83/17	2 special meetings. 3 ordinary meetings.	Above average.	Yes

* Average = 50%

Table 20: Profile of Council members

#	Title, name(s) & surname	Gender	Race	Portfolio	Qualifications	Chairpersonships/memberships of standing committee of Council	Current term of office	Previous term(s) of office
EXTERNAL COUNCIL MEMBERS								
1	Mr R Mahabeer	Male	Indian	Finance	CA (SA), FCMA, CGMA, FCA (England & Wales), BFP FCCA, CIA, FIIASA, M. Inst. D SARIPA, INSOL MBA (Derby) Cert Leadership (UP), MCom (UKZN), PGDip (UKZN), NDip (DUT)	Council Chairperson (from 1 November 2024) Council member Chairperson of ARIC Member of Exco of Council Member of RemCo of Council	He holds office until the end of his predecessor's second term namely until 30 September 2025.	
2	Dr CN Mbileni-Morema	Female	African	Technology The technology portfolio became vacant with effect from 1 November 2024.	PhD (Wits), MTech (TUT MBA (HWU), Cert Leadership (HWU), Cert Project Management (HWU), Cert Strategy (HWU), Cert Finance (HWU), Cert Economic (HWU), Cert Organisation Behaviour (HWU), Cert Influence (HWU), Cert Marketing (HWU)	Council Chairperson (until 31 October 2024) Chairperson of Exco of Council Member of RemCo of Council	1 November 2021 - 31 October 2024 (2nd)	1 November 2018 - 31 October 2021
3	Dr MS Sefika	Male	African	Expert in local/regional development and governance	PhD (UFS), MA (UFS), BSc (UFS)	Council Deputy Chairperson Member of Exco of Council Member of RemCo of Council Member of the PFRC	1 April 2024 - 31 March 2027 (2nd)	1 April 2021 - 31 March 2024

4	Mr S Njikelana	Male	African	Ministerial Appointee	Dip Applied Social Studies (UO), Cert Leadership Communication (RU)	Council member Deputy Chairperson of the HRC	1 March 2024 - 28 February 2027 (2nd)	1 March 2021 - 28 February 2024
5	Vacant			Ministerial Appointee		Council member		
6	Vacant			Ministerial Appointee		Council member		
7	Vacant			Ministerial Appointee		Council member		
8	Vacant			Ministerial Appointee		Council member		
9	Mr A Dladla	Male	African	Marketing	MBL (Advanced Strateg Marketing) (Unisa), PGD Digital Marketing (Rege Business School), PGDip E (Milpark Business Schoc BPhil (Hons) Marketir Management (IMMGSM), D Marketing Managemen (RAU), Dip Animal Healt (NWU), PGDip Marketing (IMMGSM), CM(SA)	Council member Member of the PFRC Member of the HRC	He holds office unti the end of hi predecessor's second term namely until 3 September 2026.	
10	Mr GS Hlongwane	Male	African	HR Management	MBA (Milpark Busines School), BCom Hons (U. BTech (UJ), NDip (UJ), MAP (Wits), Cert ERP (UJ)	Council member Chairperson of the HRC Member of Exco of Council Member of RemCo of Council	1 June 2023 - 31 May 2026 (2nd)	June 2018 - May 2023
11	Dr TV Mda	Female	African	Education	PhD (OSU, USA), MEd (Wits), Hons (Wits), Hons (UFH), BA (UFH), UED (UFH), Programme in Human Resources Management (no degree) (Unisa)	Council member Member of Senate	She will hold office until the end of he predecessor's term namely until 31 May 2025.	

12	Ms P Moshanyana	Female	African	Business	BScEng (Civil Engineering) (UKZN), BBA (MANCOSA), PGDip in Project Management (MANCOSA), CIPM (BMT College), Dip Advanced Mobile App Development (Shaw Academy)	Council member Chairperson of the PFRC Member of Exco of Council Member of RemCo of Council	1 January 2022 - 31 December 202 (1st)	
13	Mr L Sebola	Male	African	Technology	BEng Comp Hons (UP), MEng (UP)	Council member Deputy Chairperson ARIC/Acting Chairperson afte the resignation of C Monyamane Member of Exco of Council Member of RemCo of Council	1 April 2021 - 31 March 2025 (2nd)	March 2017 - March 2021
14	Ms C Moshao	Female	African	Finance	Chartered Accountan Qualifying Exam Part (IRBA's Public Practis Exam), Chartered Accounta Qualifying Exam Part (SAICA), BAcc Hon (Commercii in Accounting) (UFS), BAcc Hons (UFS)	Council member Deputy Chairperson of the PFRC Member of the HRC	1 June 2022 - 31 May 2026 (1st)	
15	Ms N Mokose	Female	African	Agriculture	MA Agriculture (UP), BSc (Cornell)	Council member Member of Senate	1 April 2022 - 31 March 2025 (2nd)	March 2019 - March 2023
16	Ms J Bouverie	Female	African	Law	LLB Degree (UCT), BA (Law (UCT), Notary Public – Schoo for Practical Legal Trainin (Wits), Conveyancer – School	Council member Member of the HRC	1 January 2024	

				for Practical Legal Trainin (UCT), LSSA Practical Leg Training Programme (UCT Small Business Enrichme Programme, Certificate i Refugee and Migration La (Wits), Diploma in Nursin (Carinus Nursing College, Cape Town)			
17	Mr LTK Shabe	Male	African	Businessman from the Central region who will add business value to the university/Prominent person who would be able to add value to the Welkom Campus	BSc Ed (NWU), BTech (CUT), MBA (UFS), Diplom (Damelin), Cert Busines Leadership (Wits), Certifie Director (IoDSA)	Council member Member of the PFRC	He holds office until the end of his predecessor's second term namely until 31 October 2025.
18	Ms U Exner	Female	White	Audit and Risk/ICT Governance	Certified Director (IoDSA), CISA, CDPSE, CGEIT & CRISC (ISACA), BCom (Unisa), CISSP (ISC)2, MPhil (NMU)	Council member Member of ARIC	1 June 2024 - 31 May 2028	She held office until the end of the second term of her predecessor, namely until 31 May 2024.
19	Mr L Seleke	Male	African	Interim President of the Alumni Association He holds office until the end of his predecessor's term, namely 10 July 2025	BTech (CUT), NDip (CUT)	Council member	He holds office unt the end of hi predecessor's ter namely until 10 July 2025.

#	Name	Gender	Race	Role	Qualifications	Council role	Term	
20	Prof. P Dube	Female	African	Vice-Chancellor and Principal	PhD (Siegen), BA Hons (UKZN)	Council member Member of Exco of Council Member of RemCo of Council Member of the PFRC Member of the Risk and ICT Governance part of ARIC	1 January 2022 - 31 December 2027	
21	Prof. AB Ngowi	Male	African	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC Research, Innovatio and Engagement	PhD (Wits), MSc (Chalmers BSc (UDSM), Pr CPM (SA MBIE (BW), MCIOB, Pr Tech Eng, MIEEE	Council member	Ended 31 on December 2024.	
22	Prof. DP Ngidi	Male	African	DVC: Teaching and Learning	DEd (UZ), MEd (Unisa), Cert Project Management (Boston)	Council member	1 May 2021 - 30 April 2026	
23	Vacant			Executive Director: Resources d Operations		Council member		
24	Dr L Wiese	Female	White	Senate member representative	PhD (UFS), PGDip (SU), BA Hons (Unisa)	Council member	November 2024-November 2026 (2nd)	November 2022-November 2024
25	Prof M Coetzee Retired from CUT on 31 December 2024	Female	White	Senate member representative	PhD (UFS), MA (Creative Writing) (UFS), HOS718: Postgraduate supervision (MA level) (UFS), MA (Communication Sciences) (UFS), BA Hons (Unisa)	Council member	September 2023 - September 2025 (1st)	
26	Dr M Molete	Female	African	Institutional Forum (IF)	D_CLPM (CUT)	Council member	September 2023-September 2025 (1st)	

27	Dr I Phage	Male	African	Academic Staff Member/ Representative	PhD (CUT), MSc (NWU), BSc Ed (SMU), Cert Engineering Technology (UJ)	Council member	September 2023 - September 2025 (1st)	
28	Ms G Nkili	Female	African	Non-Academic staff Member/Representative	M Soc Sc (C Psy) (UKZN)	Council member	March 2024 March 2026 (1st)	
29	Mr M Matlhaku	Male	African	Students' Representative Council (SRC) President	In progress	Council member	January 2024 December 2024	
30	Mr TD Makintane	Male	African	SRC Welkom Campus	In progress	Council member	January 2024 December 2024	
31	Dr SM Dzingwa	Female	African	Institutional Registrar	PhD (UKZN)	Secretary to Council	1 July 2021 - 30 June 2026	

3.2.2 Council Induction Workshop

Council held an Induction Workshop on 5 February 2024 for all Council members. The overall objective was to ensure that the ongoing effort of turning the university around is carried out by suitably empowered members who have been prepared and equipped in an equitable manner. The following constituted the programme:

- Legislation: Higher Education Act, CUT Statute, and DHET Guidance.
- Council governance: Governance structure and governance artifacts.
- Governance codes: King IV™ and ISO 37000.
- Environmental, social and governance (ESG) and ethical leadership.

Transparent communication and shared objectives amongst councillors are constantly encouraged, to revitalise and fortify relations amongst them. The Council Code of Conduct was also workshopped with Council. Councillors who fail to uphold the Council Code of Conduct are held accountable by Council. This is paramount in reinforcing trust and adherence to Council's ethical standards.

3.2.3 Evaluation of Council's performance

An evaluation of Council and its standing committees was conducted through CUT's Institutional Research Unit. The outcome was discussed by Council on 2 November 2023, and presented to standing committees of Council during the first quarter of 2024. This evaluation survey of Council and its respective standing committees provided a reflection of members' opinions and perspectives regarding Council and its standing committees' operations and achievements during 2023, thus providing a sound basis for developing plans to improve the performance of Council and its standing committees. The outcomes of the evaluation will be used as a guide towards ongoing improvement, and will be integrated into future developments, plans and processes. An external review of the CUT Council and its standing committees would be conducted in 2025, based on their performance during 2024.

Peer and self-evaluations of councillors were conducted, aimed at evaluating the competencies and contributions of each individual Council member, as well as their commitment to the university, in line with the Council Charter and the DHET's *Guidelines for Good Governance Practice and Governance Indicators for Councils of South African Higher Education Institutions*. Individual Council members are evaluated based on their conduct and contributions as observed by other Council members during meetings of Council and its standing committees. All members of Council are members of the Institute of Directors South Africa (IoDSA).

A presentation was made at the Council meeting of 25 March 2024 that shed light on the opportunities, challenges, and strategic shifts related to sourcing third-stream income and

philanthropic support at South African universities, and the required support for the establishment of a comprehensive institutional advancement programme, including clarifying Council's role in the institutional advancement and fundraising strategy.

3.2.4 Significant matters considered by Council

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal presented quarterly reports to Council during 2024 that provided highlights of activities and institutional achievements in alignment with the *Regulations for Reporting by Public Higher Education Institutions,* and delivered high-level presentations at each Council meeting.

Executives were afforded the opportunity to deliver brief presentations at Council after the presentation of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, so that Council got to appreciate Executive Management's strategic operations and the implementation of plans for each portfolio.

A brief overview of significant matters that Council attended to in 2024 is provided below:

- Membership related to members of Council
- CUT Innovation Services (CUTIS)-related matters
- Progress report for the period 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 on the implementation of the 2023 Annual Performance Plan (APP)
- Progress reports for the periods 1 January 2024 to 31 March 2024, 1 April 2024 to 30 June 2024, and 1 July 2024 to 30 September 2024 on the implementation of the 2024 APP
- 2024 APP Mid-Term Report
- 2025 APP
- Management financial and investment reports for quarter 4 of 2023; and quarters 1, 2 and 3 of 2024
- Student financial support and student debt reports for quarter 4 of 2023; and quarters 1, 2 and 3 of 2024
- CUT policy on the handling of human or animal blood
- Appointment of Welkom Campus Principal
- Policy and procedure on open education resources
- Conferral of an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences (Business Management) upon Dr Michael Jordaan during the April 2024 graduations
- Quarterly reports from the IF (Section 5 of this Annual Report covers the IF's advice to Council and Council's responses to the advice.)
- Revised CUT Statute
- DHET: 2023 Council Self-Assessment Governance Indicators Scorecard for Councils of South African Public Higher Education Institutions

- CUT: Independent Auditors Report to Council, and Report to Management for the year ending 31 December 2023
- Management Report on the Consolidated Annual Financial Statements of CUT for the Year Ended 31 December 2023
- Going concern assessment
- CUTɪs: Independent Auditors Report to Council; Report to Management for the year ending 31 December 2023; and 2023 Annual Financial Statements
- 2023 Annual Report
- Institutional Risk Mitigation Progress Report – Quarter 1 of 2024
- Governance Risk Profile 2024
- Performance Risk Profile 2023
- Policy regulating smoking on university premises
- CUT Regulatory Universe 2024
- ICT asset management policy
- Asset management policy and related procedure
- Student debt policy
- Supply chain management policy and related procedure
- Infrastructure Procurement Delivery Management (IPDM) Policy Framework
- Policy on internal mobility, career progression and recognition, and related procedures
- Integrated Performance Management System (IPerMS) policy and procedure
- Policy and procedure on employee development and higher education studies for employees and their dependants
- Independent critical review of CUT Huma resources Management and Employee Relations
- Policy on the appointment of extraordinary professors
- Re-appointment of Prof. S Makola as Professor Designatus
- Letter from Minister of Higher Education and Training regarding Council's response to the notice of a directive to CUT
- ICT security policy
- Institutional Risk Mitigation Progress Report – Quarter 2 of 2024, and updated Institutional Risk Register 2024
- Compliance management regulations
- Lifestyle audit regulations
- Opportunity Register
- Policy and procedure on concluding of contracts
- RFP02/2023 - Panel of internal audit service providers
- Preliminary Headline Budget 2025, 2026 and 2027
- Project Management Policy Framework

- Policy on travel and accommodation costs and claims

- Policy on the inclusion of employees with disabilities in the workplace.

- Recruitment and selection for the position of Executive Director: Resources and Operations

- Recruitment and selection for the position of Executive Director: Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

- Final Report: Independent Critical Review of CUT HRM and ER Practices to Determine Fitness for Purpose

- Policy on research incentives

- Conferral of an Honorary Doctorate in Mechanical Engineering (Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology (IT)) upon Mr William Hlokoane at the March 2025 graduations

- Meeting attendance and cost-saving related to travel, accommodation and catering arrangements

- 2025 tuition and student accommodation fee increases

- Amended policy and procedure on the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Excellence Awards

- Proposed recommendation: recruitment and selection of executive managers

- Performance incentives of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, as well as the executive managers (P2 to P3)

- CUT language policy and Language Policy Implementation Plan

- Conferral of an Honorary Doctorate in Management Sciences (Business Administration) upon Ms Phuthi Mahanyele-Dabengwa at the September 2025 graduations; and an Honorary Doctorate in Management Sciences (Business Administration) upon Mr Sakumzi (Saki) Macozoma in 2026, with the event being hosted at the CUT Welkom Campus

- Assessment policy and procedure

- Policy on regulation and recruitment of, and awarding of grants to, postdoctoral research fellows

- Revised quality assurance and quality enhancement policy

- Certification policy and procedure

- Academic dress policy

- Examination policy and procedure

The following section summarises the activities of Council's standing committees during 2024.

3.3   STANDING COMMITTEES OF COUNCIL

Section 29(1) of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended, provides for the establishment of standing committees of Council to perform any of Council's functions. The undermentioned committees were approved by Council to execute the above authority. Standing committees of Council performed their functions according to their approved terms of reference.

3.3.1 The Planning, Finance and Resources Committee (PFRC) of Council

The PFRC attends to finance-, planning- and resource-related matters. The reporting responsibilities include all planning, finance and resources matters, and/or whether such matters have any impact on the governance, finances or resources of CUT. The committee made recommendations to Council on matters not within its authority to be approved or disapproved in the final instance.

3.3.2 The Audit, Risk and ICT Governance Committee (ARIC) of Council

Section 11 of the report covers the composition, roles and responsibilities, key engagements, and resolutions of ARIC.

3.3.3 The Human Resources Committee (HRC) of Council

The HRC of Council recommends appropriate strategic directions and priorities in HR governance to the CUT Council (e.g., performance management, conditions of service, and employee relations).

3.3.4 The Remuneration Committee (RemCo) of Council

RemCo of Council:
* deals with remuneration-related matters specifically mandated to them by Council;
* ensures that remuneration arrangements support the strategic objectives of CUT;
* enables the recruitment, motivation and retention of executive managers, while ensuring compliance with the requirements of regulatory and governance bodies, satisfying the expectations of stakeholders, and remaining consistent with the expectations of employees;
* advises Council on any matters related to the remuneration or rewarding of Executive or Senior Management; and
* reviews, and recommends to Council, broad policy relating to honoraria paid to councillors.

The committee will seek to collect comparable data on executive managers' salaries and conditions of service from other institutions, for purposes of executing its responsibilities.

Matters dealt with by RemCo during 2024:

- Differentiated salary increases for staff at Peromnes level 4 to 18, with an average increase for 2024 of 5.72%:
  - P4 = 3.50%
  - P5 = 4.50%
  - P6 & A5 = 5.00%
  - P7 & A4 = 5.50%
  - P8 – P9 & A2 – A3 = 5.75%
  - A1 = 6.00%
  - P10 – P12 = 6.25%
  - P13 – P16 = 7.00%
  - P18 = 7.50%

- A 2.5% salary increase for staff at Peromnes levels 1 to 3, and that, going forward, executives will no longer receive performance increases annually, but annual once-off performance bonuses, which will be based on affordability and performance.
- The remuneration offer to the Executive Director: Resources and Operations.
- The remuneration offer to the Executive Director: Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal.
- The review of the Institutional Registrar's remuneration.

3.3.5 The Social and Ethics Committee (SEC) of Council

The functioning of the SEC was placed in abeyance, pending the outcome of the Governance Framework strategic project.

3.3.6 The Executive Committee (Exco) of Council

Exco of Council addresses urgent matters between Council meetings, as well as matters referred to it by Council or its standing committees. Whilst Council is responsible for setting principles, policies and parameters, Exco of Council is responsible for overseeing the strategic implementation thereof. It is also the Nominations Committee of Council, and advises Council on governance affairs. Exco of Council is delegated to approve tenders in excess of R5 million for various services and products, and matters of interpretation of Council policies and disputes within the university that could be detrimental to the effective functioning of the institution. The committee dealt with the international travel of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal; Council ,membership; Council member conduct; and nomination of Council members, and made significant recommendations to Council.

3.4   CONCLUSION

The university remains firmly committed to the principles of sound governance, accountability, and ethical leadership, as enshrined in the Higher Education Act, the King IV Report, and other applicable regulatory frameworks. During the reporting period, the CUT Council and its subcommittees executed their oversight responsibilities effectively, ensuring that institutional decisions aligned with our strategic objectives, risk management priorities, and transformation agenda. Despite the challenges, we are confident that our reviewed governance structures and practices will provide a strong foundation for responsible stewardship, institutional resilience, and stakeholder trust. The university will continue to enhance governance capacity and accountability, in pursuit of excellence and equity in higher education.

SIGNED BY:

RMahabeer

_____

CLLR R MAHABEER
CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL

SECTION 4
SENATE REPORT

4.1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Senate of the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) serves as the highest academic authority of the institution, entrusted with governing all academic matters, including teaching, learning, research, and academic standards. In 2024, Senate fulfilled this critical mandate by providing strategic academic leadership, shaping institutional policies, and ensuring alignment with the university's Vision 2030 and national higher education priorities.

Through its central role in safeguarding academic integrity, Senate continued to advise Council on academic matters, uphold the quality and relevance of academic programmes, and oversee the performance of faculties and academic support units. This continued oversight reaffirms Senate's contribution to positioning CUT as a leading African university of technology.

Senate's leadership was evident through its strategic contributions to key areas such as teaching and learning, research, innovation, and community engagement. This was achieved through rigorous scrutiny of academic processes and the effective implementation of related strategies and policies.

During the reporting period, Senate recommended the following matters to Council for approval:

- Recruitment and selection process for the position of Welkom Campus Principal
- Policy on Open Educational Resources
- Policy on the Appointment of Extraordinary Professors
- Re-appointment of Prof. S. Makola as Professor Designatus in the Faculty of Humanities (five-year term, effective 01 July 2024)
- Policy on Research Incentives
- CUT Language Policy and Language Policy Implementation Plan
- Assessment Policy
- Policy on the Regulation, Recruitment, and Awarding of Grants to Postdoctoral Research Fellows
- Revised Quality Assurance and Quality Enhancement Policy
- Certification Policy
- Academic Dress Policy
- Examination Policy

In 2024 Senate was also honoured to confer an Honorary Doctorate, recognising individuals whose exceptional contributions to society embodies the values and aspirations of the university. The conferrals reflect CUT's enduring commitment to academic excellence, societal impact, and the celebration of distinguished leadership.

The following honorary degrees were awarded during 2024:

- Dr. Michael Jordaan – Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences (Business Management), conferred during the April 2024 graduation
- Mr. William Hlokoane – Honorary Doctorate in Mechanical Engineering, to be conferred at the March 2025 graduation
- Ms. Phuthi Mahanyele-Dabengwa – Honorary Doctorate in Management Sciences (Business Administration), to be conferred at the September 2025 graduation
- Mr. Sakumzi (Saki) Macozoma – Honorary Doctorate in Management Sciences (Business Administration), to be conferred in 2026 at the CUT Welkom Campus

4.2   COMPOSITION OF SENATE

In line with section 2 of the approved Terms of Reference of Senate, the members of Senate – as contemplated in sections 28(2) and 28(3) of the amended Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997) – are:

- the Vice-Chancellor and Principal;
- all the deputy vice-chancellors (DVCs);
- the Registrar;
- all the deputy registrars;
- all the faculty deans;
- all categories of professors, excluding honorary professors, visiting professors, emeritus professors and adjunct professors;
- all heads of department (HoDs);
- all academic department managers;
- two (2) representatives of the Students' Representative Council (SRC), elected by the SRC;
- two (2) members of Council, designated by Council;
- one (1) representative of support staff;
- one (1) representative of non-professorial academic staff;
- the senior managers responsible for academic support;
- the University Librarian;
- the Senior Director: Innovation and Technology Transfer;

- the Senior Manager in charge of Institutional Renewal and Transformation; and
- a maximum of ten (10) additional members, as approved by Senate.

The following members have observer status on Senate, but are not entitled to vote:
- Senior Manager responsible for Communications and Marketing;
- Chief Risk Officer (CRO);
- Chief Audit Executive; and
- faculty administrators.

4.3 SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING, AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

4.3.1 Achievements

Each faculty at the contributed meaningfully to the university's strategic goals in 2024, advancing academic excellence, applied research, and community engagement. This section of the report highlights noteworthy achievement in the respective Faculties.

Faculty of Management Sciences (FMS)

Community engagement projects:

The FMS successfully participated in eight community engagement projects, which includes:
- The provision of free tax services to pensioners.
- Offering of the Advanced and Postgraduate Diplomas in HR Management to senior managers in industry, in collaboration with the Maccauvlei Learning Academy.
- Training to Matjhabeng Municipality officials in report writing and minute taking skills.
- Empowering Welkom students on entrepreneurship through sustainable agriculture.
- Training of upcoming farmers in conjunction with Standard Bank.
- The offering of entrepreneurial development programmes in conjunction with CUT's *i*-Gym.
- The promotion of entrepreneurship awareness in Taung.
- The Entrepreneurial matriculant of the year competition.

Collaborations and partnerships:
- A staff member of FMS presented a course on *Business in the SA context* to a group of exchange students from Rhein-Waal University in Germany.
- The IIA SA CUT student chapter was relaunched in 2024 with assistance of the IIA (The Institute of Internal Auditors).

- Twelve students at the Ho Technical University in Ghana graduated with PhD's at CUT as part of an active MoU between the two institutions.
- FMS offered a Short Learning Programme to senior managers of CENTLEC.
- FMS signed a MoU with Mphona Civils for the development of the Matlosana Smart City project near Klerksdorp in the Northwest Province.
- FMS hosted a successful IASIA Conference gala dinner at CUT's Hotel School, in collaboration with UFS.
- Tourism Management and Hospitality Management students participated in Sandton's MEA Future Leaders Challenge. As part of the students' research, they had to interview industry leaders in the tourism and hospitality industry and scholars and students to prepare their presentations.
- A staff member of CUT visited Virginia Tech in the USA for an International interdisciplinary summit on Technology for Humanity
- A staff member of FMS acted as chairperson for the external review of the Department of Industrial Psychology at UFS.
- A staff member of FMS developed curricula for the Entrepreneurship Training for Educators of THENSA (Technological Higher Education of South Africa).
- CUT's Hotel School hosted various functions in collaboration with government and industry. One of the most significant ones was the Gr 12 well-done function in cooperation with the Free State Department of Education, which was attended by 900 people.

Innovative projects:
- The FMS generated third-stream income to the value of R6.3 million in 2024.
- Two successful Hospitality Management Entrepreneurship days were held.
- The Department of Business Management embarked on the development of a fully online Advanced Diploma in Human Resources Management, in collaboration with Higher Education Partners South Africa (HEPSA).
- FMS developed a Short Learning Programme in Entrepreneurship, namely Entrepreneurship 101, which will be offered to all CUT's students from 2026.

Awards and recognition:
- A staff member of FMS won the VC's Excellence Award in the category Entrepreneurship.
- A staff member was honoured in the Tourism and Hospitality category of the Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans.
- A staff member of FMS was appointed as Chairperson of the Council of the Performing Arts Centre of the Free State (PACOFS).

- The learning programme in HR Management received full accreditation for 5 years from the South African Board of People Practitioners (SABPP).

Faculty of Humanities (FHUM)

Research grants and publications:

- 52 articles were published in accredited journals, while 16 papers were published in conference proceedings.
- 19 chapters were published in books.
- 36 papers were presented at national and international conferences.
- Six staff members acted as reviewers for peer reviewed journals.

Community engagement projects:

- One staff member established an international collaboration with an NGO Initiative, Teachers Across Borders South Africa (TABSA) to forge links on the teaching methodologies in Mathematics and Science.
- 21 staff members attended the Teachers Across Borders South Africa (TABSA) Teacher Training and Development Workshops held in Bethlehem and Bloemfontein.
- One staff member delivered an engaging guest lecture at the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) on the captivating subject of Creative storytelling.
- The Department of Design and Studio Art collaborated with the Marketing Unit of CUT to exhibit various designs and artworks during the Golden Key Society event.
- One staff member is actively involved in the Maserona Primary School project to improve the reading and writing skills of learners.
- Three staff members are involved in a community project at Mothusi Primary School. It is a teaching and learning project. The school is visited on a fortnightly basis.

Collaborations and partnerships:

- One staff member was invited and attended the inaugural Cultural and Creative Industry Awards hosted by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture on March 30, 2024, at the Sandton Convention Centre, Gauteng.
- One staff member was appointed as a member of the executive committee of HSSAA (Humanities and Social Sciences Alumni Association), Free State Corridor Chapter.
- One staff member chaired two sessions at the 9th World Conference on Media and Mass Communication (MEDCOM 2024), held on 9-10 May 2024 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- One staff member chaired a session at the 33rd Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf at the California State University, Fresno, California, 5-9 June 2024.

- One staff member delivered a speech during the inauguration of the 4th CUT Chancellor, Dr Vincent Maphai, on 12 April 2024. She also acted as Master of Ceremonies during the formal function of the inauguration.
- One staff member is an affiliate partner to the SOAS GLOCAL (Global Council for Anthropological Linguistics), at SOAS, University of London.
- The Centre for Diversity in Higher Education Research (CDHER) held an inaugural Africa Day lecture in May 2024. One staff member presented a lecture on the theme "Understanding the Africa we seek to lead and unlocking research potential towards vision 2030".
- Four staff members participated in the 2024 South Africa Sweden University Forum (SASUF) Research and Innovation Week which was held in Sweden from April 13th to 17th, 2024.
- One staff member participated with seven students in a Mural Painting Community Engagement Project coordinated by the Art School at the University of the Free State.
- One staff member conducted leadership development training to the Bloemfontein Children's Choir on 21st March 2024.
- One staff member conducted extra classes in partnership with an NPO-Thuto extra classes.
- One staff member was a guest speaker at the 3rd Dr KPD Maphalla Annual memorial lecture at the Kroonstad civic theatre on 1st March 2024. His lecture was about the contribution of Dr Maphalla in advancing Sesotho literature.
- One staff member provided Economics revision lessons and examination revisions tactics to Grade 12 learners at Khulangolwazi Secondary School, in Escourt, Kwa-Zulu Natal.
- One staff member participated in a community engagement project at Nogas Post, Medicinal Plants.

Awards and recognition:

- One staff member received an award for best session presentation at the 9th World Conference on Media and Mass Communication (MEDCOM 2024), held on 9-10 May 2024 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- One staff member received a Mozilla Responsible Computing grant.
- One staff member successfully applied to the 9th Call CUT & UFS joint research programme for Phase 1 Seed Funding from the Multi, Inter - and Trans (MIT) Disciplinary Collaborative Research Grant - Fabrication of environmentally friendly functional materials for use in the development of smart computing in medical devices, an amount of R400 000 was awarded to the project for the period 2024/ 2025.

Research grants and publications:

- FEBIT received significant subsidies in 2023 (released in 2024), with research output growing to 75.8 DHET research Units, up from 71.34 for 2023. Notable new publications for 2024 include journal articles, books, and conference proceedings, with continued contributions from all departments.

- Notable grants included the R3,635,243 from SANEDI for Smart Grids research, R3,526,674 from the Collaborative Programme in Additive Manufacturing (CPAM), and funding for the Samsung Innovation Campus, which trained 46 students in 4IR skills. FEBIT also received R109,288,000 for the Pothole Eradication Programme, aimed at enhancing road safety and community development in the Free State.

Community engagement projects:

FEBIT has been actively involved in community development through various initiatives in 2024. Notable projects include the NQF level 4 training programme in collaboration with the Free State Department of Community Safety, Roads and Transport, focusing on practical road maintenance skills. The NEMISA Project has empowered youth and adults with essential digital literacy skills, while the Samsung Innovation Campus has provided coding and AI training to enhance digital skills among students. Additionally, the 3D Project in Amari Special School, Welkom has involved the design and printing of assistive devices, benefiting local communities with innovative solutions. FEBIT has also continued its environmental research on the Modder River contaminants, contributing to local health and sustainability efforts.

International collaborations and partnerships:

FEBIT has strengthened its global ties through staff exchanges and collaborative research. Staff members participated in the Tech for Humanity Summit at Virginia Tech (USA) and staff exchange at Haaga-Helia University (Finland). FEBIT has also partnered with Wrocław University of Science and Technology (Poland) and University of Cambridge (UK) for research initiatives, including Volting project (assistive mobility) project with UVSQ France, University of Laval Canada, Tohoku University Japan. Furthermore, partnerships with institutions like Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) and University of Bath (UK) are driving multi-disciplinary research with significant societal impact.

Innovative projects:

- FEBIT continues to drive innovation through key projects addressing societal and industry challenges. The Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM) has advanced 3D printing for custom medical implants, in partnership with Selective Surgical. FEBIT is also

working on sustainable energy with the FeedGrow project, which optimises energy use in farming.

- PDTS has supported over 107 projects valued at R3.1 million, focusing on product development and manufacturing of industry-driven solutions. This outstanding contribution earned PDTS recognition as a runner-up for Best Industrial Engineering Work in 2024. The station concluded 133 client contacts, including 39 new SMEs and individuals, further strengthening its impact in the innovation and industry sectors. As a culmination of these achievements, PDTS successfully achieved ISO 9001 recertification in FY2024, reinforcing its commitment to maintaining high-quality standards across its operations.

- Additionally, CUT is involved in the CoalCO2-X™ programme, which captures and repurposes carbon emissions from coal-fired power stations. Working with EPCM Global Engineering, CUT helped demonstrate carbon capture technology at Kelvin Power Station in 2024, converting harmful pollutants into useful products like fertilisers and sulphuric acid.

Awards and recognitions:

- In 2024, FEBIT staff received several prestigious awards, reinforcing the faculty's leadership in research, teaching, and community engagement. FEBIT won 7 out of 8 VC Excellence Awards, including the Early Career: Teaching Award for Ms. N. Maqache, the Mid-Career: Teaching Award for Dr. N. Qumbisa, and the Advanced Career: Teaching Award for Prof. J. Swart. Prof. S. Oke received the Community Engagement Award for his impactful research, while Prof. B. Kuriakose and Mr. L. Mokalusi earned the Innovation Award for their work in applied engineering technologies. These accolades highlight FEBIT's commitment to excellence in teaching and research.

- Prof. Deon De Beer and Prof. Elisha Markus each received a C2 NRF rating, while Dr. Philip Koko earned a C3 NRF rating, and Dr. Patience Horne received a Y2 NRF rating.

- For the second year in a row, Prof. Kusakana was recognised by Stanford University as one of the top 2% of globally cited scientists.

- PDTS was also recognised for its technical excellence, earning the runner-up award for Best Industrial Engineering Work and completing 107 projects. Ongoing collaborations with industry and SMEs further emphasise FEBIT's dedication to innovation and knowledge transfer. Additionally, Prof. OJ Gericke was awarded Fellowship status (FSAICE) by the South African Institution of Civil Engineering (SAICE). Further, the Pothole Eradication Project (PEP), won the SAICE National Award in the Community-Based Project category, demonstrating FEBIT's strong community focus.

Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences (FHES)

Research grants and publications:

FHES produced 54 accredited research articles, 8 book chapters and Prof Mochane authored a book.

Community engagement projects:

- Agri SA Toyota Young Farmer of the Year competition. A staff member participated in the adjudication of the Agri SA TOYOTA Young Farmer Competition sponsored by Toyota SA for young farmers in South Africa to reward excellent achievers. The staff member served as the technical advisor to Toyota and main adjudicator of the competition.
- We care about your well-being programme. The department of Clinical Science facilitated a community-based service learning course to educate the community regarding aspects of patient care to promote healthy living such as through preventative healthcare, infection prevention and control practices. The theme of the project is: "Public health education". This course is based on the modules Radiographic Procedures III (RDP7000) and Patient Care Management III (PCM7000) in the Bachelor of Radiography in Diagnostics (B.Rad) curriculum and offers students an opportunity to learn certain managerial skills that can be utilised in the Radiography department, but moreover, master the concept of infection control practices and identifying respiratory diseases on X-ray images due to smoking which is crucial in an imaging department. The CBSL programme is also linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), namely Good Health and Well-being (SDG- 3).
- Several outreach programmes which include among others the following were undertaken during this reporting report in the Department of Health Sciences:

Collaborations and partnerships:

- The Faculty of Health Sciences was involved in the following international collaborations:
- The faculty has research collaboration with UFS, NWU, ARC, SA Studbook and the Grootfontein Development Institute, University of Huelva in Spain, Basque Material Center, Spain and Universidad de Aveiro in Portugal.
- Lund University (Sweden). The Department of Clinical Science has a signed MoU with Lund University (Sweden). Through this collaboration a virtual class with first year radiography students from CUT on the 13th of September 2024 undertaken. The virtual class was based on ethics of care in a global perspective. Students learned that it is always important to be ethical when working with patients irrespective in which country you work. The contact person from Lund University is Bodil Andersson.
- Hanze University Applied Sciences & Fontys University Applied Sciences (Netherlands). The Department of Clinical Science has a signed MoU with Hanze University Applied Sciences &

Fontys University Applied Sciences (Netherlands) for internship purposes. The department welcomed five students from the Netherlands for their internship on the 5th of September 2024 till 31 January 2025. The internship assists the students with their workplace requirements from their country. They also have an exposure to variety of different types of clinical cases in the hospitals in Bloemfontein. The contact person from Lund University is Floris de Groot.

Traditional Councils Agricultural Development Programme

- The Department of Agriculture assisted the Traditional Councils (Chiefs) and some municipalities in South Africa with agricultural planning, mentorship and training in order to utilize unproductive land and being trained and guided towards commercial sustainability. This project had prospects for the creation of management positions for agricultural graduates and WIL positions for the 2nd year students.

- The staff members and the 4th year Environmental Health students had in collaboration with the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality-solid waste division engaged on a separation of waste project at Mandela View and Eden Park. The project was aimed at encouraging residents to separate their waste into recyclables and non-recyclables before municipal collection.

- The staff members together with the Free State Department of Veterinary Services and Nestlé held a training event at the Maluti a Phofung local municipality to the small-scale dairy farmers on the prevalence of mastitis pathogens and their antimicrobial resistance statuses.

Innovative projects:

The BSc Environmental Health program organized a Hybrid CPD training for Environmental Health Practitioners nationwide training which was centered around the theme 'Navigating Our Toxic Environment: The Environmental Health Practitioner in a Changing Landscape'.

Awards and recognition:

- Prof Makhafola was awarded an NRF C2 rating starting 01 January 2025 – 31 December 2030. He was also awarded the STIAS Iso Lomso Fellowship 2025 -2027.

- Dr Belinda van der Merwe who is currently a visiting research fellow in the Department of Clinical Sciences (DoCS) and former colleagues received and National Research Foundation (NRF) C2 rating.

Section for Work Integrated Learning (WIL) and Industry Liaison

Research grants and publications:

- A staff member contributed three (3) chapters to an academic book, published by Juta titled: "Work-Integrated Learning: Preparation of Students for Industry".

- Another staff member co-authored and submitted a journal article entitled: "Industry Insights: Exploring Expectations and Shortcomings in Work-Integrated Learning to Ensure Workplace Readiness for University Students" to an accredited journal.

Community engagement projects:

- One staff member is part of the project team for the development of a national policy for WIL, with another member forming part of the writing team for the policy.
- One staff member is the Acting Director of WIL South Africa (WILSA).
- A staff member is the co-leader of a project requested by the CHE to do a scan of WIL qualifications in the higher education sector in South Africa.
- Two staff members are part of the Free State Wholesale and Retail (W&R) SETA Research Leadership Chair while one staff member completed a Meta Analysis for W&RSETA regarding input statistics for different Learning Interventions.
- A staff member is a part-time Player Development Manager at MyPlayers consulting at the Toyota Cheetahs.
- One staff member was part of a roundtable discussion at a SASUF 2023 WIL satellite event, "Preparing graduates for the world of work through industry partnerships – WIL as an innovative approach to experiential learning and community engagement".
- Staff members presented or co-presented papers at the WACE International Research Symposium in Sweden and the WIL Africa conference in Cape Town.

Collaborations and partnerships:

- A staff member is an affiliated researcher of the WIL research group Learning in and for the New Working Life (LINA) at the University West in Sweden.
- Staff of the section formed part of the scientific and organising committee for the co-hosting of an international conference on WIL (WIL24) with University West at Kapama Private Game Reserve in South Africa. There were fifty (50) conference attendees in total from South Africa (24), Sweden (19), Norway (4) and Ireland (3).
- A staff member acted as external reviewer of a PhD proposal at Munster Technological University in Ireland.
- Two staff members of the Section for WIL & Industry Liaison completed a very successful WIL and careers services research and benchmarking visit to University West in Sweden, Mittweida University of Applied Sciences in Germany and the Warsaw University of Technology in Poland.
- One staff member served as a panel member for the review of PhD proposals at the Feed-Forward seminar at University West in Sweden.

- Two more staff members completed a very successful WIL research and benchmarking visit to University West in Sweden, Mittweida University of Applied Sciences in Germany, Kristiania University College in Oslo, Norway and the South East Technological University in Ireland.
- The employability improvement project is a bilateral technical cooperation project between the DHET and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) to promote employability of students attached to Universities of Technology in South Africa and is coordinated at CUT by the Careers Office in the Section for WIL & Industry Liaison.

Awards and recognition:

- A staff member is a member of the Exco of the South African Board of People Practices (SABPP), as well as the Mangaung Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
- One staff member is an Exco member of the Free State Goldfields Chamber of Business.
- A staff member is enrolled for a PhD in WIL and another for a M-degree at University West in Sweden whilst a third staff member is completing a Master of Industrial Psychology at UFS.
- One staff member acts as reviewer for the Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research, Perspectives in Education, Africa Education Review, Innovations in Education and Teaching International and the International Journal for Educational and Vocational Guidance.
- A staff member acted as reviewer for the International Education and New Developments Conference in Portugal.

Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT)

Pedagogies in Higher Education:

- The Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) hosted the 2024 first year student orientation on 29 January in Welkom and 30 to 31 January 2024 at the Bloemfontein campus. A total of 1 352 students (409 Welkom and 943 Bloemfontein) participated in the orientation.
- The Curriculum and Academic staff development Unit held (CASD) an academic induction for newly appointed academic staff from 21 to 23 February 2024. Twenty-three (23) newly appointed academic staff attended the induction (18 from Bloemfontein Campus and 5 from Welkom Campus).
- The Curriculum and Academic Staff Development Unit hosted 8 Academic Staff development workshops.
- The Curriculum and Academic staff development (CASD) Unit published the 1st edition of the CASD newsletter which highlights 2023 successful academic staff development programmes.
- The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) office held a virtual meeting with SoTL mentors on 20 February 2024. Dr Xolani Khohliso was announced as the new Head of SoTL. 2024 SoTL applications was shared with the CUT community.

- The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning office hosted 4 virtual workshops on SoTL action research, Interprofessional Education and Communities of Practice and 3 writing retreats to increase research outputs.
- The furnishing and installation of desktops in the Academic Advising Hub was completed in May 2024.
- CILT received a list of 1215 readmitted academically excluded undergraduate students from the Deputy Registrar 's office to provide support to this cohort. A survey was conducted in April to establish factors that led to their academic exclusion and determine the support they need to succeed in their studies. The survey was sent to the students' email addresses. This was viewed by 152 students and completed by 72. The majority (61%) cited a lack of understanding of course content, followed by personal and family issues (57%) time management (43%), lack of support from the university (21%) health related issues (19,4%) and those who ticked other (19,4%) mentioned NSFAS funding and poor teaching strategies. Out of the 72 who completed the survey, only 18 sought support. The 18 have been captured on the Learner Case Management System. They are receiving support from the Wellness Centre, Academic Advising and Supplemental Instruction.
- The Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) awarded certificates to students who successfully participated in the 2023 Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) project, a European-funded initiative promoting intercultural understanding and internationalisation through online collaboration. COIL connects accredited courses, linking the classrooms of two or more higher education institutions, each located in a different country or cultural setting. It is coordinated by the University of the Free State and has the University of Antwerp (Belgium) as co-coordinator. Conceptualised to develop a contextualised South African concept of Internationalisation of the Curriculum (IoC), which integrates COIL virtual exchanges. The concept allows South African partner universities to become the country's leading HEIs in IoC, curriculum transformation, and COIL virtual exchanges.
- Contribution towards a paper of iKudu student experiences – Authors: Dr Nolwazi Qumbisa, Ms Nomfundo Khoza, Prof Malebo, Ms Claudia Bulnes, Ms Eveke de Louw and Ms Tsholofelo Tshabadira.
- The Curriculum and Academic Staff Development Unit hosted a hybrid workshop on Sustainable Development in a transformative Higher Education on 23 April 2024.
- The iKudu Closing conference was held from 06 to 09 May 2024 hosted at the University of the Free State.
- Dr X. Khohliso, Mr B. Mashaba, Mrs A. Edem attended a joint CHE and SAQA capacity development workshop at Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference centre on the 18 July 2024.

- Nine (9) staff members in CILT attended the Southern African Association for Institutional Research (SAAIR) Learner Analytics Institute 2024 workshops from 13 to 15 May 2024, hosted by University of Pretoria.

- The office of Special Projects organised a 5-day nGAP Writing Retreat for the first semester from 24 to 28 June 2024, and a total of 12 nGAP lecturers attended. The second semester nGAP writing retreat was held on 23-27 September 2024 where a total of 11 nGAP lecturers attended.

- The 10th Annual International Conference on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning was held from 3-5 October 2024, under the theme: "A Decade of Embracing Theory and Practice in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning" by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching led by Prof Ntsoaki Malebo, the Senior Director. Through the leadership of Prof Ntsoaki Malebo, the 10th International Conference on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Conference (SoTL), hosted by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT) culminated with the launch of a book titled: Perspectives on Curriculum as Praxis Implications for Higher Education Pedagogy.

- A member successfully completed the 6-years in the nGAP programme and attended the Send-Off Colloquium hosted on 16 to 17 October 2024 at Gqeberha for Phase 1-4 Lecturers.

- Eight (8) nGAP Lecturers and seven mentors attended the National nGAP Induction Workshop organised by DHET on 14 to 15 October 2024 at Gqeberha.

Community engagement

- The CUT Disability Unit was invited to The Association of and for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Free State to a workshop on Casual day along with other schools and NGO's in the Free State on 17 May 2024. The Disability Unit received a certificate for their support in the 2023 casual day fundraising to support persons with disabilities.

- The CUT Disability Unit in collaboration with FEBIT and The Association of and for Persons with Disabilities (APD) Free state participated in the Yes we can dance event on 01 and 02 July 2024.

- The CUT Disability Unit was invited by Goldfields TVET College on 10 and 11 July 2024 to offer training to 20 lecturers and 1 support staff member on how to teach students with disability, underpinned by Universal Access principles.

- The Writing Centre Coordinator, was invited as a panelist at the 2024 International Education Week held on 10-12 September 2024 on the theme " Navigating African Perspectives in internationalizing higher education towards achieving "The Africa we want" Agenda 2063

- The Teaching and Learning Coordinator, was invited to deliver a motivational talk to teachers as they celebrated Teachers' Day at the Polokehong Primary school in Bloemfontein on 11 October 2024.

- The CUT Disability Unit South African Sign Language (SASL) Interpreters provided an interpreting service for the Department of Employment and Labour Event which was held at Dr Petrus Molema Stadium on 24 to 25 October 2024.

Teaching and technological resources:

Lab 005 in the Ellen Kuzwayo Building has been newly upgraded to a simulation lab. This lab can now be used for practical simulations and assessments across all year groups in Clinical Technology. Simulated assessments can now offer a more real-world experience as assessors can observe from behind a one-way glass partition, reducing students' anxiety. The camera system allows zooming in on specific aspects of the action. Additionally, the upgrade accommodates large student groups by enabling them to view practical simulations from remote venues, accommodating a HyFlex approach.

Awareness initiatives:

- The CUT Disability Unit was requested to be part of the African Languages Week celebration by participating in a video shoot- incorporating South African sign language on 18 to 19 January 2024.
- The Disability unit was selected to participate in the "advanced" workshops designed for employees who deal with disabilities regularly as part of their roles facilitated by CUT Human resources on 09 February 2024.
- The CUT Disability Unit South African Sign Language SASL Interpreters provided interpreting services for CUT's Autumn Graduation Ceremonies that spanned over two days in Welkom and over four days in Bloemfontein. Interpreting these ceremonies into SASL is an important and impactful way to promote the visibility and inclusion of SASL within the CUT community.
- Two members attended and presented a research paper at the Disability conference hosted by the University of the Free State on 24 to 26 April 2024.
- The Library planned Exam Outreach to all students on 10 May 2024. An invitation was extended to Deputy Director in the Disability Unit to participate in the event, by briefly speaking about services rendered especially during the examination period.
- The CUT Disability Unit attended the Disability Summit and career Expo at Nasrec Expo centre on 16 to 17 May 2024.
- The CUT Disability Unit received a certificate for their support in the 2023 casual day fundraising to support persons with disabilities.
- One member was invited as a keynote speaker to the Supporting At-Risk & Struggling Students in Higher Education Institutions 2024 Conference on 24 to 25 July 2024.
- The Disability Unit Team attended the Language Services' Translanguaging Workshop hosted on 28 August 2024. This workshop aimed to explore the potential of translanguaging as a powerful tool to enhance students' access to academic content and ultimately, their academic

success. While the DU Team all attended the workshop, it was interpreted into Disability Unit South African Sign Language SASL interpreters. The equivalent workshop for academic staff took place on 16 September 2024.

- The CUT DU SASL Interpreters provided interpreting services for CUT's Spring Graduation Ceremony on 06 September 2024 that was a one-day combined ceremony.

- The Disability Unit at the Central University of Technology (CUT) is committed to creating an inclusive environment. Especially as it prepares to welcome its first cohort of deaf students. The Silent March on 20 September 2024, in Welkom, aimed to raise awareness about the challenges faced by Deaf and hard of hearing individuals, particularly regarding communication barriers. The event attracted support from key figures, including representatives from Disabled people South Africa and Deaf SA, Highlighting the importance of Advocacy for the deaf community. Feedback from participants indicated that the march was informative and demonstrated CUT's dedication to equity. As the university strengthens its inclusive practices, such initiatives are vital for fostering understanding and promoting a supportive culture for all students.

- The CUT DU SASL Interpreters provided interpreting services for the Language Unit's International Translation Day Celebration pm 30 September 2024. The theme for the celebration was: "Translation, an art worth protecting"

- On 04 October 2024, the CUT Disability Unit, in collaboration with the CUT Careers Office, hosted the inaugural Disability Awareness and Careers Expo. The event was attended by students, industry stakeholders, local schools, and representatives from other institutions of higher learning. The expo aimed to promote awareness and foster collaboration among various stakeholders regarding the challenges and opportunities within the disability community. It provided a valuable platform for networking and sharing resources.

- Over the course of these 4 days (between 23 to 3 October 2024), Mrs. Du Preez and Ms. Mvubu each presented 8 workshops on their respective campuses which concludes 16 workshops in total. These workshops were an introduction into basic South African Sign Language with a focus on awareness and sensitization with the aim of creating a more inclusive environment on CUTs campuses and integrating SASL into the CUT community and culture. These workshops were a great success, with strong interest and participation from students and staff.

- The Disability Unit (DU) Team of Central University of Technology ran a project of visiting Special Schools around South Africa with the aim to meet with the grade 11& 12 learners to recruit them for 2025 especially Deaf learners. Bartimea School for the Deaf and Blind, Retlameleng Special School and Martie Du Plessis Special School were visited on 26 April, 06 August and 17 October 2024 respectively.

Student support initiatives:

Peer support and student development: Academic Advising support continued at the established Hub in the Student Academic Support Centre. This is a dedicated space where Peer Advisors can conduct individual consultation sessions with students and record engagements on the Learner Case Management system powered by the Higher Education Data Analyzer (HEDA). Supplemental Instruction (SI) sessions in High Impact Modules are ongoing and the impact of these interventions is continuously monitored. 141 SI leaders were appointed to support undergraduate students in 149 at-risk modules across the four Faculties. Support is also offered to students (7) in programmes that are phasing out and students (only 18 students attending) who were readmitted following academic exclusions.

4.3.2 Accreditation of new programmes

The **Bachelor of Engineering Honours in Electrical Engineering** has been registered by SAQA, with the programme set to begin in 2025. This new offering is expected to increase the pool for M&D recruitment, further strengthening FEBIT's academic offerings.

4.4 REGIONAL, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Faculty of Humanities

- Ten staff members acted as external moderators for national universities
- Two staff members initiated a COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning platform) project with Florida International University between February and March 2024.
- Two staff members were part of the delegation that went on a joint collaborative initiative between South African and Russian educational institutions to Russia: 18 June – 02 July 2024.
- The 13th International conference on Mathematical Creativity and Giftedness (MCG) – was held at the Central University of Technology – Free State South Africa from 20 to 23 February 2024. The conference was hosted in the Faculty of Humanities by the Department of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education.
- International collaboration with the following universities: Aalen University (Germany), Aksaray University (Turkey), Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences, (Netherlands), Florida International University (USA), Mahasarakham University (Thailand), Mittweida University (Germany), Sam Houston State University, Houston (Texas), Siena University (Italy), Takoradi Technical University (Ghana), Thomas More College (Belgium), Trinity College, Dublin (Ireland) and University of San Pablo (Brazil).
- One staff member attended a community engagement project at Gulu University in Uganda.

4.5　CENTRE FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT (CGE)

4.5.1 Academic Staff and Student Mobility

The Centre for Global Engagement (CGE) at the Central University of Technology (CUT) remains steadfast in its commitment to advancing internationalisation through strategic academic staff and student mobility initiatives. In alignment with CUT's Vision 2030, CGE has worked to foster sustainable international partnerships, enhance global learning experiences, and strengthen the university's position as a globally engaged institution. The year 2024 saw significant progress in mobility programs despite challenges, with CGE refining its strategic approach to ensure long-term impact and institutional benefit.

4.5.2　Strategic Overview of Student Mobility

Inbound Student Mobility

Despite a decline in inbound student mobility, CGE focused on innovative strategies to revitalise participation, including the development of summer/winter schools, faculty-led programs, and virtual exchanges. These efforts aim to create more diverse and flexible opportunities for international engagement. The positive feedback from Radiography students from Hanze and Fontys Universities of Applied Science, Netherlands underscores the value of structured internships and work-integrated learning programs, which will be expanded in the coming years.

Faculty-led Summer Schools

Strategic partnerships with Aalen University of Applied Sciences and Rhine-Waal University of Applied Science resulted in successful faculty-led programs, reinforcing CUT's commitment to experiential international education. The participation of 51 international students in March 2024, alongside the expansion of faculty-led initiatives to include the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), illustrates CGE's proactive efforts in strengthening academic collaborations.

Outbound Student Mobility

A significant highlight of 2024 was the success of outbound student mobility, with 29 students benefiting from international study experiences across Germany, Turkey, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK, and the USA. The strategic use of scholarships such as the Baden-Württemberg and Erasmus+ ICM funds contributed to financial sustainability, saving CUT over R1.37 million. These programs not only enriched students' global perspectives but also reinforced CUT's positioning as an institution that prioritise graduate employability and international competitiveness.

4.5.3 Strategic Overview of Staff Mobility

Inbound Staff Mobility

Strategic engagements with international academic staff enriched CUT's academic and research landscape. Visits from partner institutions such as Aksaray University, Aalen University, and Ulm University reinforced collaborative research and capacity-building efforts, enhancing the university's global footprint.

Outbound Staff Mobility

CUT's representation at high-profile global forums, including AIEA, NAFSA, SASUF, FAUBAI, EAIE, ANIE, IEASA, SANORD, and The Forum on Education Abroad, ensured that the institution remained at the forefront of international education discourse. These engagements facilitated new partnerships and enhanced CUT's visibility within key International academic networks. The participation of CUT leadership, including the Vice-Chancellor, in strategic international missions further strengthened the university's global standing.

International Credit Mobility (ICM) and Strategic Partnerships

CUT secured key ICM agreements with institutions such as Uppsala University (Sweden), Karabuk University (Turkey), Bialystok University of Technology (Poland), Siegen University (Germany), Enise (France), VUM (Bulgaria) and Haaga-Helia (Finland) reflecting CGE's commitment to structured and reciprocal mobility programs. These partnerships align with CUT's broader internationalisation objectives, focusing on capacity building, collaborative research, and student development.

Virtual Mobility and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL)

Expanding CUT's internationalisation efforts beyond physical mobility, virtual exchange programs with The Hague University of Applied Sciences Netherlands, Lund University, Sweden, and Hanze University of Applied Sciences, Netherlands provided over 250 students with cross-cultural learning experiences. These digital initiatives remain integral to CGE's strategy, offering scalable and accessible global learning opportunities.

4.5.4 Community Engagement and Social Responsibility

Recognising the importance of social impact, CGE launched a community service initiative supporting the Ke-Ka-Mohau Children's Home in Mangaung Township. This initiative, driven by international faculty-led programs, underscores CUT's commitment to socially responsible

internationalisation. The engagement of Aalen University and other partners in philanthropic efforts reflects a growing culture of global citizenship within the university's internationalisation agenda.

4.5.5 Impact of Academic Staff and Student Mobility

The Academic Staff and Student Mobility (ASSM) Unit has significantly contributed to CUT's internationalisation strategy, aligning with Vision 2030 to position the university as a globally engaged institution. Through expanded international partnerships, the unit has facilitated increased mobility opportunities for students and staff, enhancing academic exchange, research collaboration, and global employability. These initiatives have strengthened CUT's reputation, attracting strategic funding such as Erasmus+. Additionally, the unit has improved operational efficiency by refining mobility processes, enhancing institutional coordination, and providing data-driven insights to support policy development. The impact extends beyond academic mobility, fostering a multicultural learning environment, promoting diversity, and contributing to curriculum internationalisation. Through these efforts, the ASSM Unit continues to drive global engagement, enriching the CUT community and positioning the institution as a leader in higher education internationalisation.

4.5.6 International Student Support Services (ISSS)

International Student Support Services (ISSS)

The International Student Support Services (ISSS) play a pivotal role in advancing CUT's internationalisation strategy by enhancing the student experience, academic success, and overall well-being of international students. Through targeted support structures, ISSS ensures that international students are seamlessly integrated into the university environment, enabling them to thrive both personally and professionally.

ISSS strengthens CUT's global engagement by streamlining immigration processes, facilitating compliance with national policies, and fostering connections between international students and key internal stakeholders, including AGU, E-Thuto, ICT, Student Governance, Faculties, and the Academic Structure. By acting as a central coordinating body, the office enhances institutional efficiency, ensuring a cohesive support ecosystem that aligns with CUT's commitment to student-centered internationalisation.

Externally, ISSS serves as a critical liaison between CUT and international regulatory bodies, including the National Manpower Development Secretariat (NMDS), Lesotho government sponsors, South African Missions abroad (Embassies, High Commissions), and the Department

of Home Affairs (DHA). The office also maintains accurate reporting on international student registrations, ensuring compliance with national and institutional requirements.

Through these strategic interventions, ISSS contributes to CUT's vision of being a globally connected university, fostering a diverse and inclusive academic environment that enhances the institution's reputation on the international stage.

4.5.7 International Academic Partnerships

This report highlights key initiatives undertaken in 2024, their strategic impact, and their role in positioning CUT as a globally engaged institution.

Strengthening International Academic Partnerships -Externally Funded Initiatives

Erasmus+ Project: IKUDU

The completion of the Erasmus+ IKUDU project has positioned CUT as a leader in implementing Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) methodologies. Through participation in the IKUDU consortium, CUT has demonstrated a strong commitment to curriculum internationalisation, inclusivity, and digital education. The project's success, evidenced by the certification of 242 students, highlights CUT's ability to integrate intercultural communication, critical digital literacies, and global engagement into its academic framework.

As the IKUDU consortium transitions into a global university network focused on inclusive internationalisation, CUT is well-positioned to continue leveraging COIL and other virtual collaboration methodologies. This aligns with the university's strategy to enhance student-centred internationalisation through mutual learning partnerships between Global South and Global North.

South Africa-Sweden University Forum (SASUF)

CUT's active participation in the SASUF Innovation and Sustainability Week in Sweden has reinforced its role in shaping international research collaborations. The involvement of senior leadership, including the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Innovation, and Engagement, underscores the university's strategic commitment to global partnerships. The re-envisioning of SASUF 2030 will further align CUT's international research agenda with the AU-EU innovation framework and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thereby solidifying its position as a leading African University of Technology.

4.5.8 Strategic Bilateral Collaborations

CUT-Virginia Tech Collaboration

CUT's engagement in the interdisciplinary conference and research institute, "Future Humans, Human Futures: Religion, Technology, and Ethics," has strengthened its collaboration with Virginia Tech. The partnership underscores CUT's commitment to addressing global challenges at the intersection of technology, ethics, and society. By engaging with global experts in artificial intelligence, environmental science, and technology policy, CUT is enhancing its research capabilities and fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration. This engagement supports CUT's broader vision of leveraging technology for social justice and sustainable development.

Tech-Humanity Centre launch

Preparations are advanced for the launch at CUT of the *Multidisciplinary Research Centre to promote human-centred approaches to the societal impact of technological innovations* or Tech for Humanity Research Centre as it is colloquially termed. The event is envisaged to include both national and international guests, the latter resulting from engagements reported on in the last quarter during the Vice-Chancellor's visit to Virginia Tech in the US. It will also be an opportunity to recognize Dr Daphne Mashile-Nkosi, the Executive Chairperson of Kalagadi Manganese (Pty) Ltd, whose generous contribution has made the establishment of the Centre at CUT possible. Amongst the key opportunity areas of engagement by the Centre will be**:**

- Human-Centred Design for Assistive Technologies
- Harnessing AI for Enhanced Learning
- Ethical AI Governance Frameworks
- Optimizing Human-Machine Collaboration in Industry 5.0
- Innovations in Pollution Mitigation Technologies

Global Student Leadership Exchange Programme (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

The Global Student Leadership Exchange Programme has laid the foundation for CUT's pan-African student engagement strategy. By fostering leadership development, historical awareness, and social justice discourse among student leaders from South Africa and Ethiopia, this initiative advances CUT's commitment to African partnerships and regional collaboration. The exchange program serves as a model for future student mobility initiatives that enhance CUT's role in shaping transformative higher education on the continent.

4.5.9 High-Profile International Recognition

International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) Placement

The nomination of Prof. Nicolas Luwes for the U.S. State Department's IVLP Multi-Regional Program on "Technology Innovators: Artificial Intelligence—Harnessing the Power of Technology" highlights CUT's growing international reputation in AI and smart city technologies. This recognition enhances CUT's global influence in emerging technological fields and creates avenues for future collaborations with U.S. institutions and research centres. Prof. Luwes' participation in the program will further strengthen CUT's leadership in sustainable technological innovation.

4.5.10 Hosting of International Delegations

CUT continues to serve as a hub for international engagement, hosting high-profile delegations that foster strategic partnerships. The visit of the Kenyan Attaché of Education, among other international engagements, has reinforced CUT's role in shaping international policy dialogues and cross-border educational collaborations.

4.5.11 Strategic Impact and Future Directions

CUT's international engagement efforts in 2024 have been instrumental in advancing the institution's global strategy. The university's involvement in high-impact projects, global research collaborations, and leadership forums has significantly strengthened its position as an internationally recognised University of Technology. Moving forward, CUT aims to:

- Expand its international funding portfolio by pursuing strategic grant opportunities.
- Deepen collaborations with key partners in Europe, North America, and Africa.
- Through these strategic initiatives, CUT will continue to shape a globally engaged academic environment that fosters innovation, inclusivity, and cross-border collaboration.

4.5.12 CUT's International Partners Footprint

The Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT), remains committed to advancing comprehensive and strategic internationalisation through effective partnership management. Currently, CUT maintains 92 active partnerships with a 61% activity rate, including agreements under renewal. Aligned with the CUT Annual Performance Plan (APP). To ensure alignment with institutional goals and optimise outcomes, CUT undertakes regular reviews and assessments of its partnerships. A pre-biannual monitoring and evaluation process, including a data review and collection survey, is planned to assess the effectiveness of these agreements and identify opportunities for improvement.

Figure 4: CUT's international footprint

CUT INTERNATIONAL FOOTPRINT

■ FMS ■ FEBIT ■ FHUM ■ FHES
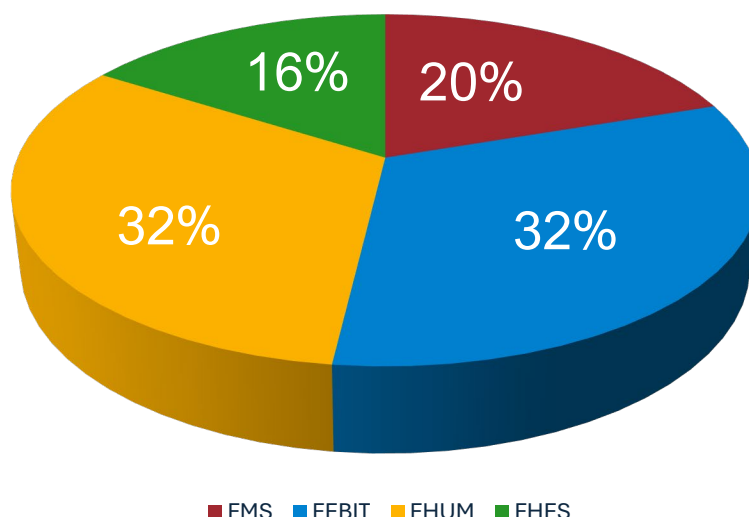
CUT demonstrates a balanced global presence across faculties, with FEBIT and FHUM leading its Global Engagement Strategy.

4.5.1 Partnership activities

Enhancing international academic partnerships in the 2024 academic year, the Central University of Technology, Free State (CUT) has significantly expanded its international partnerships, furthering its commitment to global academic collaboration and excellence.

4.5.2 Internationalisation at Home (I@H) Projects Office and International Student Association (ISA)

Internationalisation at Home: International Mother Tongue Day celebration

On 21 February 2024, CUT marked International Mother Tongue Day with a memorable celebration that underscored the institution's commitment to linguistic and cultural diversity. This event, a collaborative effort between the International Student Association (ISA) and the Unit for Language Services at CUT, brought together international and local students to showcase their mother tongues and cultural heritage. The highlight of the celebration was the "Voices of the World at CUT" video project, which featured students speaking about what their mother language means to them. This initiative not only provided a platform for students to share a piece of their heritage, but also served as a powerful reminder of the importance of preserving linguistic diversity. The event played a significant role in promoting I@H, enabling students to engage with, and learn from, one another's linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It was a step forward in preparing global

citizens who value diversity and the role of language in cultural identity and mutual respect, thereby enriching the educational experience at CUT and strengthening the community's global connections.

SADC International Student Recruitment Tour

The CGE's International Student Recruitment Unit embarked on an SADC International Student Recruitment Tour across six countries: Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, to increase CUT's visibility alongside notable universities from Canada, the USA and Italy, as well as the University of Johannesburg (UJ), who were part of the tour. This direct engagement strategy generated over 2 000 prospective student leads, which is now being actively pursued through personalised follow-ups.

Taste of Africa event for Africa Month

On 8 May 2024, the Taste of Africa event, part of the Africa Month celebration, showcased rich African cultures at CUT. Organised by the International Student Association (ISA), alongside the Governance and Student Life Unit, the event highlighted diverse African cultures from countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Lesotho, Ghana, Zimbabwe and Botswana. This not only entertained, but served as an educational platform, bringing the local and global together, and fostering a more interconnected student community, in line with CUT's I@H agenda.

Africa Day 2024 Soccer Tournament

Further enriching the Africa Month activities, the Africa Day Soccer Tournament was held on 10 May 2024 at the Welkom Campus. The tournament saw ISA FC, an international student soccer team, compete against three other teams. The event concluded with trophies and medals being awarded, underscoring the role of sports in enhancing I@H and the CUT graduate attributes by promoting teamwork, communication, citizenship, global leadership, and cultural exchange. This not only supported the educational goals of the university, but also highlighted the importance of sports in building a globally competent and culturally aware student body.

From 22 to 27 July 2024, the CGE Recruitment Unit conducted a successful international student recruitment visit to Eswatini. The visit aimed to strengthen our recruitment efforts, enhance CUT's brand visibility, and foster relationships that would facilitate smooth visa processes for prospective students. The visit commenced with a strategic meeting at the South African High Commission in Eswatini, where discussions focused on fortifying our partnership, to ensure an efficient visa

application process for Eswatini students seeking to study at CUT. This collaboration is expected to minimise delays and improve the overall experience for our prospective students.

During the visit, we engaged with nine international schools, which resulted in 750 direct leads, indicating a strong interest in CUT's academic programmes. Additionally, on 24 July 2024, CUT participated in the 17th Annual Eswatini Careers Fair held at Waterford Kamhlaba. The fair, which brought together local and South African universities, provided an excellent platform to showcase CUT's offerings to a broader audience. This event generated an additional 150 leads from students eager to explore their academic futures at CUT. A highlight of the visit was the Counsillors' Dinner, where we hosted representatives from all the schools we visited. This event served as an invaluable networking opportunity, allowing us to build strong relationships with key influencers in these schools.

The visit has already begun to yield tangible results, with 1 368 international student applications received by 12 August 2024. 72 of these applications are from Eswatini, reflecting the success of our targeted approach. Continuous follow-ups are being conducted on the leads generated during the visit, to ensure conversion into actual applications.

Study in Africa Pavilion – Kigali, Rwanda

From 2 to 5 July 2024, CUT participated in the Study in Africa Pavilion at ICEF AFRICA in Kigali, Rwanda. This pavilion served as a unique platform for African universities to showcase their academic offerings and foster partnerships with educational service providers across the continent. The event provided CUT with an invaluable opportunity to connect with a diverse range of agents and service providers, significantly enhancing our international recruitment efforts. CUT was joined by other South African universities, including the University of Johannesburg (UJ), the University of the Free State (UFS), the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), the University of Venda (Univen), and Walter Sisulu University (WSU). Together, these institutions represented the strength and diversity of South African higher education.

During the event, CUT arranged 15 strategic meetings with recruitment agents from various regions. These discussions focused on exploring potential working relationships that could bolster our recruitment initiatives in key growth markets identified by CUT. The connections established during these meetings are expected to pave the way for increased student enrolment from these regions, as well as strengthen CUT's network of international recruitment partners. These partnerships are crucial for expanding our reach into new markets and ensuring that CUT remains competitive in attracting top-tier students from across Africa.

The event culminated in CUT's participation in the Kigali Education Fair, which attracted over 1 000 prospective students. This fair provided an excellent platform to directly engage with potential students and present CUT's academic offerings. As a result of this engagement, CUT generated over 100 direct leads, demonstrating strong interest in our programmes. These leads will be actively pursued, to convert interest into actual applications and enrolments.

Uganda International Student Recruitment Drive: 23-27 September 2024

The Manager: International Student Recruitment, Communications and Internationalisation, as well as the Academic Staff and Student Mobility Coordinator, visited Uganda as part of our ongoing international student recruitment efforts. The visit aimed to promote CUT's academic offerings and increase the number of international students, in alignment with our strategic objective S.1.4. This visit supported our goal of enrolling 1 413 international students by 2025, as outlined in the Student Enrolment Plan.

Uganda was identified as a key growth market in the International Student Recruitment and Marketing Plan 2023-2025. During the visit, we engaged with seven (7) international schools, and participated in two (2) university fairs at the International School of Uganda and Galaxy International School of Uganda. These events provided an opportunity to showcase CUT's academic programmes, facilities, and support services.

Internationalisation at Home (I@H): International Youth Day

On 12 August 2024, CUT commemorated International Youth Day with a collaborative event organised by the Centre for Global Engagement (CGE), the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT), and the *i*-Gym. The event, themed "The Role of Youth in Advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)", highlighted the significant contributions of youth in driving progress towards the SDGs, aligning with CUT's commitment to global citizenship and sustainability. The event featured impactful presentations, including one by the International Student Association (ISA) at CUT in which they showcased their recycling project that supports SDGs 11, 12, 13 and 17.

This project demonstrated the active role of international students in advancing sustainability at CUT, emphasising the importance of I@H. Mr Niklas Nannskog, International Manager from Malmö University, also presented on "Sustainability at Malmö University", offering insights that reinforced the exchange of international perspectives, an essential element of I@H. A panel discussion included M Ramajoe, Manager of International Student Recruitment, Communications,

and Internationalisation at Home, who discussed the role of international student recruitment in enhancing global perspectives in higher education. The event reinforced CUT's dedication to sustainability, global engagement, and integrating international perspectives into its curriculum, further solidifying its reputation as a leader in promoting global citizenship and sustainable development.

International Student Recruitment Tour – Uganda

As part of CUT's efforts to expand its international student body and meet enrolment targets, a recruitment visit was undertaken to Uganda, a key growth market identified in the International Student Recruitment and Marketing Plan 2023-2025. The visit aimed to promote CUT's academic offerings, facilities, and support services, positioning the university as an attractive option for Ugandan students seeking quality higher education in South Africa. Although Uganda had not been previously visited, it was identified as a potential growth area due to its capacity to contribute to CUT's international student population.

During the visit, CUT representatives engaged with six international schools, including U-Can International School, Aga Khan School, and Rainbow International School, and participated in university fairs at the International School of Uganda and Galaxy International School. These events provided a valuable opportunity to introduce CUT to prospective students, parents, and school counsellors, raising awareness of the university's unique STEM programmes and comprehensive support services.

The visit generated over 400 leads, and follow-up communication has been initiated to sustain interest and encourage applications. Additionally, the visit laid the groundwork for future recruitment partnerships with Ugandan schools, contributing to CUT's long-term recruitment goals and its vision of being a leading African university of technology.

4.5.3 Conferences, webinars, online training, and other activities

Staff members in the Centre for Global Engagement participated in the following conferences, webinars, online training, and other activities:

4.5.3.1   Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA) Annual Conference in Washington, DC, from 18 to 21 February 2024.

4.5.3.2   Forum on Education Abroad Conference in Boston from 20 to 22 March 2024.

4.5.3.3   Erasmus+ Week for Sub-Saharan Africa from 25 to 27 June 2024.

4.5.3.4   International Education Association of South Africa (IEASA) 26th Annual Conference from 20 to 23 August 2024, Johannesburg.

4.5.3.5   European Association for International Education (EAIE) Annual Conference, 17 to 20 September 2024, Toulouse, France.

4.5.3.6   Africa Network for International Education (ANIE) Conference, Accra, Ghana, 9 to 11 October 2024.

4.5.4 SANORD Conference 2024, University of the Western Cape (UWC), 3 to 6 December 2024

Southern African Nordic Centre (SANORD) Conference: The 16th SANORD International Conference was held at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), South Africa, from 4 to 6 December 2024, under the theme: "Social and Epistemic Justice: Imagining Sustainable Futures through Agency".

CUT was proudly represented at the 2024 SANORD Conference by a diverse and distinguished delegation of sixteen participants, led by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof. Pamela Dube, and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Engagement, Prof. Alfred Ngowi.

4.6   STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITH BUSINESS, INDUSTRY AND GOVERNMENT

In 2024, the Section for WIL and Industry Liaison, through agreements entered into with seven SETAs, such as AgriSETA; BANKSETA; Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport SETA (CATHSSETA); Health and Welfare SETA (HWSETA); FoodBev SETA; Transport Education Training Authority (TETA); and Services SETA, raised approximately R29,54 million from these SETAs, assisting 623 students with placement stipends and internships (see figure 5; table 21 and figure 6 below).

Figure 5: SETA funding 2024

SETA FUNDING 2024

- AGRISETA — R912 800,00
- BANKSETA — R8 177 400,00
- CATHSSETA — R7 478 400,00
- FOODBEV SETA — R2 400 000,00
- HWSETA — R1 694 000,00
- SERVICES SETA — R1 950 000,00
- TETA — R6 932 400,00
- TOTAL — R29 545 000,00
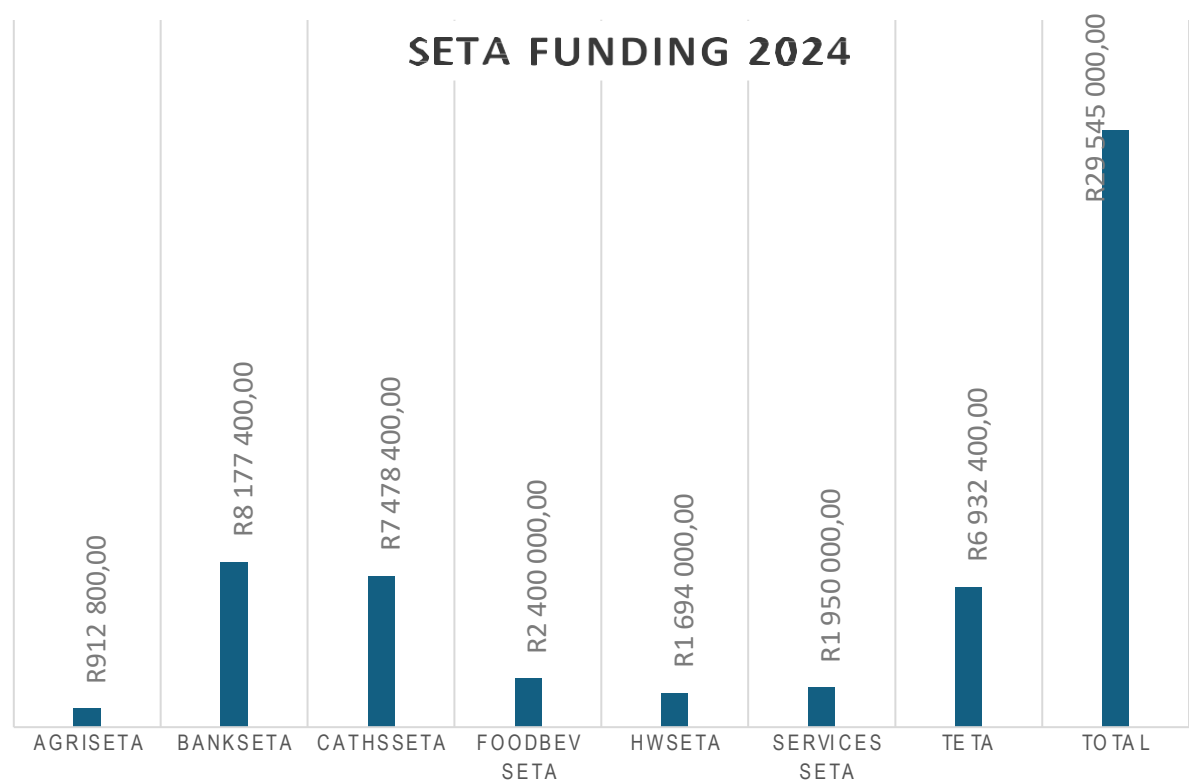
Table 21: Number of students benefiting from SETA funding in 2024

SETA	Funding	Number of students
AgriSETA	R912 800	28
BankSETA	R8 177 400	118
CathsSETA	R7 478 400	177
FoodBev SETA	R2 400 000	40
HWSETA	R1 694 000	43
Services SETA	R1 950 000	100
TETA	R6 932 400	117
TOTAL	**29 545 000**	**623**

Figure 6: Number of students assisted with SETA funding 2024 (WIL)

SETA STUDENTS 2024

Category	Value
TOTAL	623
TETA	117
Services SETA	100
HWSETA	43
FoodBev SETA	40
CathsSETA	177
BankSETA	118
AgriSETA	28
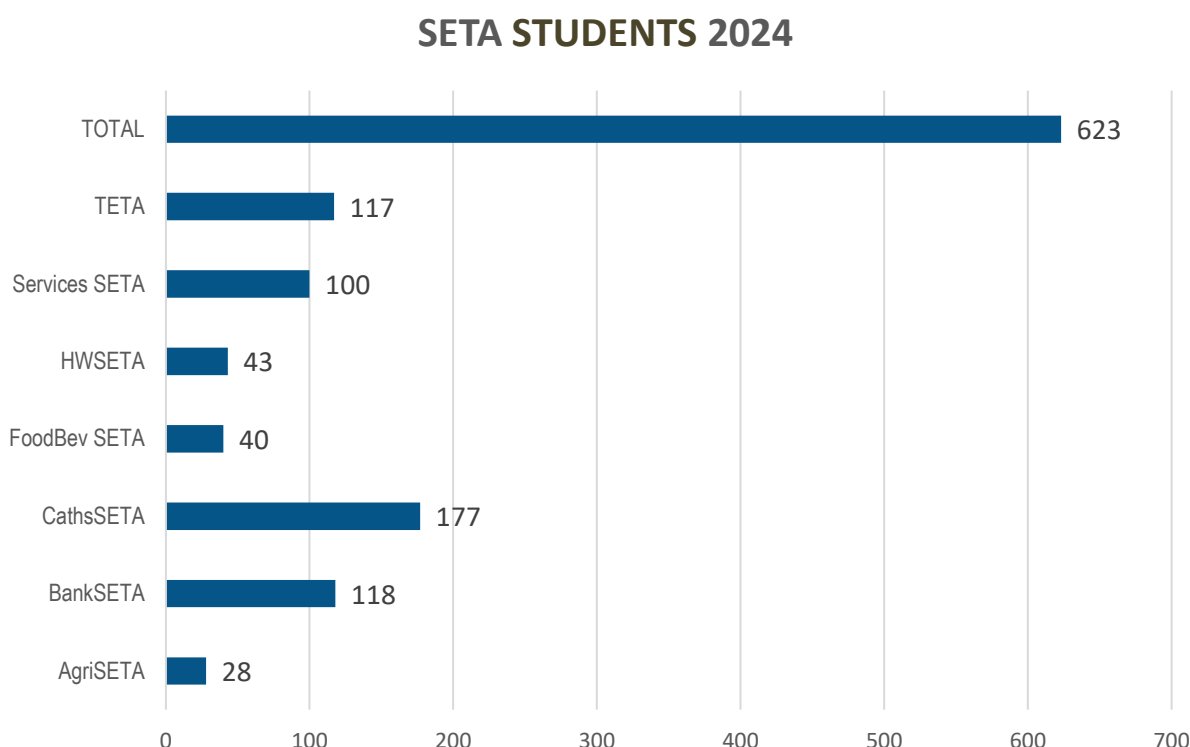
4.7   STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

4.7.1 Supplemental Instruction (SI)

Supplemental Instruction (SI) is a peer-led academic assistance programme that seeks to improve student performance and retention. It targets traditionally challenging academic courses, and provides regularly scheduled, out-of-class, peer-facilitated sessions known as "SI sessions". These sessions are conducted by trained senior students appointed to model ideal student behaviour and assist other students in understanding the course content. In the first semester of 2024, 141 SI leaders were appointed to support undergraduate students in 149 at-risk modules across the four faculties.

At the Welkom Campus, the overall pass rate across the three faculties is recorded at 82%. The Supplemental Instruction (SI) programme significantly improved student performance across multiple faculties, particularly in at-risk modules. SI participants consistently achieved higher pass rates and distinctions compared to non-SI students, with notable success in modules like Construction Technology, Software Development II, Radiation Physics, Economics III, and Business Management I. In some cases, such as Mathematics for Engineering Technology 5 and Information Systems IA, SI participation drastically improved outcomes, highlighting its effectiveness. However, certain technical and mathematics-related subjects, including Machine Mechanics I, Mathematics I, and Accounting I, showed persistent challenges, suggesting the need

for additional academic support strategies. Expanding SI availability and tailoring interventions for difficult modules could further enhance student success.

4.7.2 Academic Advising

Academic Advising at CUT refers to the additional academic and social support offered to students to ensure success in their studies. It is a comprehensive, student-centred intervention to promote student success and foster academic and personal growth. Peer Advisors are appointed to conduct individual consultations and group sessions on essential topics such as time management, stress management, and examination preparation, equipping students with valuable skills to navigate their academic challenges. Individual consultations offered personalised guidance on various issues, including course content clarification, accommodation enquiries, subject cancellation or recognition, and NSFAS-related queries. Additionally, students are referred for further assistance when necessary, ensuring they receive comprehensive support tailored to their unique needs.

FEBIT undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising, and academic performance: first semester 2024

In the first semester of 2024, 19 Peer Advisors were appointed, and provided academic and social support to 357 undergraduate students. However, this section focuses on 271 students for whom first-semester results were available.

First-semester academic performance of FEBIT students

The first-semester academic performance of students who participated in Academic Advising activities reveals encouraging outcomes. Out of the 271 academic advising students who wrote first-semester examinations, **172** (63%) successfully passed all their modules, **76** (28%) passed 50% or more of the modules, and **23** (8.4%) students failed all their modules. These results indicate that over 80% of the students achieved passing grades in more than half of their modules, meeting the minimum NSFAS requirements for continued funding. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the Academic Advising programme in supporting student success and helping them retain their financial aid.

Second-semester FEBIT undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising, and academic performance

In the second semester, a total of **255** undergraduate students engaged in Academic Advising through both group sessions and individual consultations. Group sessions provided targeted support on key academic and personal development topics, including time management, stress management, and examination preparation. These sessions equipped students with essential skills to navigate academic challenges effectively. In addition, individual consultations offered personalised guidance on a range of issues, such as course content clarification, accommodation concerns, subject cancellations, recognition of prior learning, and NSFAS-related queries. Where necessary, students were referred for additional support, ensuring that they receive comprehensive assistance tailored to their unique needs.

Academic performance of FEBIT students

The academic performance of students who participated in Academic Advising activities during the second semester reflects promising outcomes. Amongst the 255 students who sought assistance, more than half (52%) successfully passed all their modules. Furthermore, 95% of these students passed most of their modules, indicating a high level of academic success amongst those who engaged in the Academic Advising programme. These results hold particular significance for students relying on NSFAS funding, as meeting the minimum academic requirements is crucial for continued financial support. The data suggests that the Academic Advising programme has played a vital role in enhancing student performance and retention, helping students retain financial aid eligibility, while fostering academic resilience.

FHES undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising, and academic performance

The Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences has **524** first-time entering students. In February 2024, the total attendance was relatively low, at **41**, as students were still likely familiarising themselves with the academic environment. However, in March 2024, attendance increased to **229**, indicating that students began to recognise the importance of academic support and were actively seeking assistance. As the semester continued, attendance declined, with **140** students attending in April 2024 and **145** in May 2024. This suggests that initial interest in academic support decreases over time, possibly due to students familiarising themselves with university life.

Academic performance of FHES students

Of the 229 students who participated in Academic Advising in the first semester, 189 (83%) passed all their modules. Additionally, 32 students (14%) passed 50% or more of their modules, whilst four students (2%) failed all their modules, and eight students (3%) failed more than 50% of their modules. These results indicate that 221 (97%) students met the requirements for continued NSFAS funding support in 2024.

Second-semester FHES undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising and academic performance

The Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences has **534** first-time entering students. The data shows a worrying trend in student attendance of Academic Advising sessions during the second semester. Attendance started at **92** students in July 2024, and peaked at **111** in August 2024. However, it dropped significantly, to **71** in September 2024, and fell further to **63** in October 2024. This is mainly due to students spending most of their time preparing for the examinations.

Academic Performance of FHES students

Amongst the students who actively participated, 95 out of 112 (84%) passed all their modules. Additionally, 12 students (10%) passed more than half, whilst 2 (1.7%) failed more than half, and only 2 (3%) failed all their modules. This highlights the importance of consistent engagement with Academic Advising in helping students overcome challenges. These results indicate that 84% of the students met the criteria for passing their modules, and will continue to receive NSFAS funding, having met the requirements for continued support in 2025.

FHUM undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising, and academic performance

A total of 224 undergraduate students participated in Academic Advising during the first semester, and are recorded on the learner management system. The students participated in group sessions on time management, stress management, and examination preparation. Individual consultations addressed topics such as accommodation enquiries, subject cancellations/recognition, NSFAS-related questions, and referrals for additional support.

First-semester academic performance of FHUM students

Out of the 224 undergraduate students who consulted with Peer Advisors on social and studying strategies, 130 (39%) passed all first-semester modules, followed by 46 (14%) who passed 50% or more of their modules, with only 9 students (2.7%) failing all or most of their registered modules. This suggests that 79% of these students will retain their NSFAS funding, as they have met the requirements for continued funding.

Second-semester FHUM undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising, and academic performance

A total of 210 undergraduate students participated in Academic Advising during the second semester, engaging in both group sessions and individual consultations. Amongst them, 198 students are recorded in the LCM records, whilst 108 students were not found on the IPQE spreadsheet, and 26 students were registered in year modules. The sessions focused on topics such as how to stay motivated and focused throughout the semester, dealing with failure, mental health, conscious living, and dealing with family pressure and turmoil back home. Individual consultations addressed topics such as tips and tricks for successfully navigating your first year, NSFAS-related questions, and referrals for additional support.

Second-semester academic performance of FHUM students

Out of the 210 undergraduate students who consulted with Peer Advisors on social and studying strategies, 50 passed all second-semester modules, followed by 10 who passed 50% and more of their modules, with only 2.3% (5 students) failing some registered modules. No students failed all modules. This suggests that 98% of these students will retain their NSFAS funding, as they have met the requirements for continued funding in 2025.

FMS undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising, and academic performance

During the first semester, 212 undergraduate students in the Faculty of Management Sciences participated in Academic Advising. These consultations include one-on-one as well as group consultations.

First-semester academic performance of FMS students

Out of the 212 undergraduate students who consulted with Peer Advisors during the first semester, 98 (46%) passed all their modules, followed by 80 (38%) who passed 50% or more of their modules. Twenty students failed all their modules. These results indicate that 178 (84%) students have met the requirements for continued NSFAS funding support.

Second-semester FMS undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising. and academic performance

In the second semester, a total of 137 undergraduate students from the Faculty of Management Sciences took part in Academic Advising. It is important to note that there was a significant increase in participation between July and August 2024, coinciding with the mid-July start of the second semester. Following this initial surge, attendance levels remained steady and consistent throughout the remainder of the academic year. Although engagements in Academic Advising remained steady, they were considerably low, as the participation rate was low.

Second-semester academic performance of FMS students

Out of the 137 undergraduate students who participated in group sessions hosted by Peer Advisors during the second semester, 68 passed **all** their modules. The high number in this category reflects a relatively large proportion of students who are excelling academically. This is followed by 50 who passed 50% or more of their modules. Whilst it is positive that these students passed most of their modules, the fact that they did not pass all of them suggests some challenges. Four students failed all their modules, whilst 16 failed 50% or more modules. It is concerning that some students failed all or more than half of their modules, as this puts their bursaries in jeopardy.

Welkom undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising, and academic performance

A total of 379 undergraduate students participated in Academic Advising in semester 1 through group sessions and individual consultations. In the **Faculty of Humanities, 177** undergraduate students participated in the programme. Of these, 82 were tracked on the LCM for group and individual consultations.

First-semester FHUM academic performance

Regarding the academic performance of participating students, out of 82 tracked students who participated in group sessions and individual consultations, 48 (58%) passed all modules, 31 (37%) passed 60% or more of their modules, no students failed all modules, and 3 (3,6%) failed more than 60% of their modules. This suggests that 96% of participating students passed their modules and will, therefore, continue to be funded by NSFAS, as they have met the requirements for continued funding for the year 2024.

Second-semester FHUM undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising, and academic performance

92 first-year students participated in Academic Advising through group sessions. Regarding the academic performance of students participating in Academic Advising activities, out of 92 tracked students who participated in group sessions and consulted peer advisors for assistance, 45 students (49%) passed all their modules, 37 students (40%) passed 60% or more of their modules, 1 student (1%) failed all modules, and 6 (6,5%) failed more than 60% of their modules. This suggests that 89% of participating students passed their modules and will, therefore, continue to be funded by NSFAS, as they have met the requirements for continued funding for the year 2025.

In the Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and IT (FEBIT), 106 undergraduate students participated in Academic Advising. Of these, 92 were tracked on the LCM for participation in group and individual consultations.

FEBIT participation in Academic Advising

Regarding the academic performance of students participating in Academic Advising activities, out of 92 tracked students, 28 (30%) passed all their modules, 46 (50%) passed 60% or more of their modules, one (1%) failed all modules, and 17 (18%) failed more than 60% of their modules. This suggests that 82% of participating students passed their modules and will, therefore, continue to be funded by NSFAS, as they have met the requirements for continued funding for the year 2024.

FEBIT academic performance of participants in Academic Advising

Second-semester FEBIT undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising, and academic performance - 53 first-year students participated in Academic Advising in semester 2 through group sessions.

Regarding the academic performance of students participating in Academic Advising activities, out of 53 tracked students who participated in group sessions, 38 students (72%) passed all their modules, 13 students (25%) passed 60% or more of their modules, no student failed all modules, and 2 (4%) failed more than 60% of their modules. This suggests that 96% of participating students passed their modules and will, therefore, continue to be funded by NSFAS, as they have met the requirements for continued funding for the year 2025.

FMS participation in Academic Advising

Regarding the academic performance of students participating in Academic Advising activities, out of 148 tracked students, 34 (23%) passed all their modules, 72 (49%) passed 60% or more of their modules, one student (0,7%) failed all modules, and 34 (23%) failed more than 60% of their modules. This suggests that 65% of participating students passed their modules and will, therefore, continue to be funded by NSFAS, as they have met the requirements for continued funding for the year 2024. There was one student whose marks were missing from data supplied by IPQE.

FMS academic performance of participants in Academic Advising

Second-semester FMS undergraduate student participation in Academic Advising and academic performance - 97 students participated in Academic Advising group sessions in semester 2, as per Peer Advisor submissions.

Regarding the academic performance of students participating in Academic Advising activities, out of 97 tracked students who participated in group sessions, 26 students (27%) passed all their modules, 41 students (43%) passed 60% or more of their modules, 1 student (1%) failed all modules, and 20 (21%) failed more than 60% of their modules. This suggests that 69% of participating students passed their modules and will, therefore, continue to be funded by NSFAS, as they have met the requirements for continued funding for the year 2025.

4.7.3 First-year student orientation survey

In January/February 2024, a CUT readiness survey was conducted with first-time entering students during registration and orientation. This was completed by 1 108 students. The survey was used to profile CUT first-time entering students in terms of their home language, home environment, high school environment, funding for studies, whether they are first-generation students, digital devices, level of computer literacy, and academic and social support they would

need. For the purpose of this report, we highlight findings related to the students' home language, level of computer literacy, and funding for studies and living expenses.

4.7.4 Home language of students

83% of the 2024 CUT first-year students have indigenous African languages as their home languages. Only 13% of the students indicated English as their home language. Given that English is the medium of teaching and learning at CUT, some first-year students may need additional support in adapting to this environment.

4.7.5 Funding for studies and living expenses

Almost 90% of CUT first-year students rely on NSFAS to pay for their tuition, accommodation and living expenses. This is yet another indication that a significant number of first-time entering students come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Without NSFAS, many of these students would not have had the financial means to pursue higher education. As such, they need to maintain good academic performance to retain their NSFAS funding. It is thus imperative that CUT provides comprehensive academic and social support to first-year students.

4.7.6 Computer literacy

Regarding computer literacy, the students exhibited basic (35.49%) or average (31.93%) computer skills, with 24% indicating that they had never used a computer before. This is particularly concerning, as the first-year students are expected to use desktops or laptops for their studies, as well as navigate e-Thuto with relative ease.

Basic computer literacy intervention

In response to the 2024 CUT first-time entering student readiness survey findings related to computer literacy, CILT offered basic computer skills sessions to students who have never used a computer before. The sessions started on 22 February 2024, and continued until 3 May 2024. They were attended by 40 students. The students who participated in these sessions are also registered for the **Basic Digital Literacy module** (**DLC5011**), a compulsory module for all first-time entering students. A survey was conducted at the beginning of the second semester to determine the impact of the basic computer skills sessions and whether they helped the students to pass the **DLC 5011** module.

Academic performance in the DLC5011 module

Out of the 40 students who participated in the basic computer skills sessions, 30 (75%) passed the **DLC5011** module, and four (10%) failed. This data suggests that the basic computer skills

sessions positively impacted academic performance, as evidenced by the higher pass rates. The marks of six students were missing from the data provided by IPQE.

A student feedback survey conducted at the beginning of the second semester confirmed the value of the sessions. The results revealed that students with no prior computer experience felt more confident using computers after the intervention. Furthermore, all participants found the practical exercises useful, and most were satisfied with the content and the facilitator. Although some students found the pace too fast, the overall response was very positive, indicating strong support for more advanced sessions in the second semester.

4.7.7 Writing Centre

The primary objective of the Writing Centre is to provide support to undergraduate and postgraduate students in all aspects of academic writing. This includes offering face-to-face consultations and conducting workshops in the faculties. The Writing Centre uses the learner case management tool to record interactions with students.

During the 2024 academic year, the Writing Centre continued its efforts to support students in improving their academic writing skills. Whilst there was a decline in workshop requests due to students focusing on examination preparation and having fewer writing-intensive assignments, individual consultations remained a key aspect of our support services.

Student consultations addressed various writing challenges, including assignment structure, coherence and referencing, ensuring that students received tailored guidance. Our collaboration with lecturers and different academic departments further strengthened the centre's impact. Additionally, our participation in initiatives such as the Business Management Lexicon Project, which was successfully handed over to the faculty on 31 October 2024, highlights our commitment to language development and academic literacy. As we move forward, the Writing Centre remains committed to enhancing student support, refining our strategies, and exploring innovative ways to address academic writing challenges.

Academic Writing workshops and student consultations

The Writing Centre aims to address students' academic writing challenges by providing targeted support through workshops. These workshops are typically conducted based on lecturer requests, or as recommended by the centre following an assessment of students' needs during consultations.

In the first semester, the Writing Centre conducted a total of 17 Academic Writing workshops in the **FHES**, **FHUM** and **FMS** from February to July 2024. A total of **796 students** participated in these workshops. In the second semester, no Academic Writing workshops were conducted. This was due to the reduced demand for writing support, as students had fewer assignments during this period, and were primarily focused on preparing for their examinations. During the first semester, Writing Centre Advisors held 520 consultations across the four faculties, followed by 577 consultations in the second semester.

4.7.8 Lexicon Development Project

The Writing Centre commenced the 2024 academic year by finalising the Management Sciences Lexicon Project, which began in 2023. A total of **383** terminologies for **Office Management and Technology**, **Accounting and Auditing**, and **Human Resources Management** were translated into Sesotho, and authenticated by the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) at an online working session held from 4 to 6 March 2024. In April 2024, CILT received a letter from the Sesotho National Language Body (SNLB) – an advisory structure of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) – certifying the verified and authenticated Sesotho Business Management terminologies. The terminologies were then compiled into a booklet and handed over to the faculty on 31 October 2024, marking the completion of this important initiative.

4.7.9 Disability Unit

The Disability Unit is tasked with providing support to students with disabilities. As part of the support, we have a responsibility to assist students with all necessary arrangements for reasonable accommodation. The number of students supported in different categories of disability types are: 97 x Sensory Disability category; 56 x Neurodevelopmental Disability category; 22 x Psychosocial Disability category; 37 x Physical Disability category; 1 x Temporary Disability category; 7 x Multiple category; and 13 x Unknown category.

Registration statistics 2024

There has been an influx of new students who actively and regularly make use of the DU's services. The number of students registered for DU was 145 (2021), 208 (2022), 133 (2023), and 239 (2024). It is important to note that students with disabilities may declare the disabilities upon application to CUT and wish not to register with the Disability Unit, which makes numbers on ITS more than the number of students registered with the DU. This has been the case with disabilities that do not require reasonable accommodation.

4.8 WORK-INTEGRATED LEARNING (WIL) AND INDUSTRY LIAISON

The following achievements were recorded in 2024:

- 8 912 students registered for WIL at CUT during 2024.

- 99.9% of CUT students who qualified for WIL were placed in the various WIL modalities used at CUT.

- 149 students benefitted from internships from BankSETA and FoodBev SETA, arranged by staff of the Section for WIL and Industry Liaison.

- Funding was secured from 7 SETAs, to the value of R29 945 000, and benefitting 623 students.

- 71 new partnerships were established for WIL, which contributed towards having 2 072 employers on the WIL central database.

4.8.1 Careers Office

The Careers Office participated in five industry events as a means to connect students with industry. These events were complemented by 605 employer contacts made during the year. In addition, 69 training events were hosted by the Careers Office, in which 1 311 CUT students participated.

4.9 SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS IN RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

4.9.1 Research and Development Plan 2021 to 2025

The Research Development and Postgraduate Studies Strategic Plan 2021 to 2025 is based on the strategic objectives, which are translated into seven foundational themes that support research development and postgraduate studies during 2021 to 2025. The strategic objectives are further supported through institutional support systems and infrastructure, including financial resources. The Key Performance Areas (KPAs) from Research Development and Postgraduate Studies' plans for 2021 to 2025 are grouped into three distinct functions:

4.9.1.1   Research administration, on behalf of Research, Innovation and Engagement; faculties; and the university (external partners, such as industry, government, and government research agencies).

4.9.1.2   Research development, to improve: (i) the quality, and (ii) the quantity of research performance and outputs, resulting in (iii) policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation of capacity development, and summative reporting on behalf of the Research, Innovation and Engagement Division, faculties and the university (including external partners).

4.9.1.3   Postgraduate studies development: (i) Capacity development support to supervisors and students; (ii) support structure and entity development; (iii) policy formulation; (iv) monitoring and evaluation of capacity development; (v) quality assurance of postgraduate studies; and

(vi) summative reporting on behalf of Research, Innovation and Engagement, faculties and the university (external).

4.9.2 Financial support

University budget

The Research Development and Postgraduate Studies Section manages a cumulative Research and Development Budget of R43 023 000.

Table 22: Total Research and Development Budget

Item	Amount (R)
Research Development and Postgraduate Studies Institutional Grant	16 500 000
University Capacity-Building Grant (Research and Development)	5 835 000
University Staff Doctoral Programme	1 000 000
NRF	13 189 000
New M & D scholarship grants	6 500 000
Total	**R48,875,500**

2024 DHET UCDP: Research and Development Grant

UCDG 2024 Research Grant: The new 2024-2026 DHET UCDP Plan was approved by the DHET. The implementation of the 2024 DHET UCDP cycle commenced on 1 April 2024. The DHET approved a budget of R16.946 million for CUT for 2024. R5.835 million was allocated to Research Development and Postgraduate Studies projects (35% allocation of the total UCDG budget) The following progress can be reported:

4.9.2.1   2024 budget (April – December): R5 835 000

4.9.2.2   Expenditure: R4 543 357 (77.86%)

4.9.2.3   Balance: R1 291 642.99

University Staff Doctoral Programme (USDP) Research Grant (2023/2024)

The University Staff Doctoral Programme focuses on supporting early career academics (ECAs) over three years to complete their doctoral degrees. Two staff members were awarded the grant, to the value of R1 000 000. In 2024, the university applied for four early career academics: doctorates, and three early career academics: junior research fellows. The outcome is still pending.

NRF awards

The NRF is the university's largest research funding agency. The Director: Research Development acts as designated authority to the NRF.

The following financial expenditure as at 31 December 2024 can be reported:

Awarded:	R13 838 755
Released:	R13 188 755
Total claimed:	R11 809 735
Settled:	R0
Available:	R1 379 020

Percentage expensed from released funds: 90%

CUT Postgraduate Scholarship

As a drive for the university to grow its research outputs via the completion of master's and doctoral degrees, the university annually opens two calls in support of master's and doctoral degree students. Value of the scholarships:

4.9.2.4   First-time application: full-time master's degrees: tuition fees, R60 000 for living expenses, and R15 000 for project expenses.

4.9.2.5   First-time application: full-time doctoral degrees: tuition fees, R60 000 for living expenses, and R25 000 for project expenses.

4.9.2.6   First-time application: part-time master's degrees: tuition fees, and R10 000 for project expenses.

4.9.2.7   First-time application: part-time doctoral degrees: tuition fees, and R20 000 for project expenses.

Current grant holders can apply for renewal, subject to progress and the conditions of the grant. The maximum period for residency should not be exceeded.

4.9.2.8   Full-time master's degree students can apply for R60 000 for living expenses, and R20 000 for project expenses.

4.9.2.9   Part-time master's degree students can only apply for R15 000 for project expenses.

4.9.2.10   Full-time doctoral degree students can apply for R60 000 for living expenses, and R30 000 for project expenses.

4.9.2.11   Part-time doctoral degree students can only apply for R25 000 for project expenses.

The call cycles are: (a) January to December, and (b) July to June. These calls are aimed at supporting students in the successful completion of their studies. The following progress can be reported:

Table 23: Total research development and postgraduate studies new and renewed M and D grants, cycle 1: 2024 (January to December 2024)

Programme	Amount	Number of awards	Total awards
Master's – full time	R1 719 290	18	R2 298 970
Master's – part time	R 579 680	20	
Doctoral – full time	R683 520	7	R1 105 560
Doctoral – part time	R422 040	12	
Total	**R3 404 530**	**57**	**R3 404 530**

Table 24: Total postgraduate scholarships for July 2024 to June 2025

Programme	Amount	Number of awards	Total awards
MTech/MEd - full time	R2 906 630	31	R3 573 310
MTech/MEd - part time	R666 680	24	
DTech/PhD - full time	R1 058 800	10	R1 492 600
DTech/PhD - part time	R433 800	11	
Subtotal	**R5 065 910**	**76**	**R5 065 910**

Table 25: Research development and postgraduate studies extended M & D grants, cycles 1 & 2: 2024 (January to December 2024 and July 2024 to June 2025)

Category: special closed call	Amount
Extended M & D grants	R1 290 000 (Jan. 2024 – Dec. 2024)
	R1 490 000 (Jul. 2024 – Jun. 2025)
Subtotal	**R 2 780 000**

This represents 66.2% of the expenditure of the budget of R4 200 000.

Table 26: RD & PGS new M & D grants, cycle 1: 2024 (January – December 2024) & cycle 2 (July 2024 – June 2025)

Category	Amount
New M & D **grants**	R2 114 530 (Jan. 2024 – Dec. 2024), **inclusive of tuition**
	R1 710 040 (Jul. 2024 – Jun. 2025), **inclusive of tuition**
	R1 863 870 (Jul. 2024 – Jun. 2025), **inclusive of tuition**
	R5 688 440

This represents 87.51% of the expenditure of the budget of R6 500 000.

The budget is determined using the enrolment target as per the CUT Enrolment Plan. The under-expenditure was due to the lower enrolment number of postgraduate students relative to the target, resulting in a low uptake of the scholarship.

4.9.3 Human capacity development

Department of Science and Technology (DST)/NRF interns

The university, under the DST-Human Sciences Research Council (DSI-HSRC) Internship Programme, is hosting 17 interns for the years 2024/2026 in: category 1: doctorate; category 2: master's; category 3: honours; and category 6: bachelor's.

NRF-rated researchers

Twenty-eight (28) academic and academic support staff have NRF ratings. One (1) rating fall within the B category (internationally recognised), twenty-two (22) in the C category (C1- C3 ranges of the established researchers), and five (5) in the Y category (promising new researchers). For 2024, two (2) new rating applications are still pending. For 2024/2025, the application process commenced in 2023, and twelve (12) applications were submitted to the institution. Two (2) were institutionally rejected, and ten (10) were submitted to the NRF for review. Feedback is expected in 2025. Twelve (12) NRF-rated researchers are actively participating in research centres.

Financial support towards research development

Next-generation researchers: 60 staff members are being supported with a grant for project expenses towards the completion of their postgraduate degrees. 19 staff members (12 females and 7 males) are supported towards their master's degrees, and 40 staff members (21 females and 19 males) are supported towards the completion of their doctoral degrees. One staff member (1 male) was also supported with a staff replacement grant towards completion of his doctoral degree.

Emerging researchers: 3 emerging researchers (1 female and 2 males) in the Thuthuka Post-PhD Track were supported to advance their research, which was already successfully funded by the NRF. Three emerging researchers were awarded funding for research project expenses (3 males).

Mid-career researchers: 5 mid-career researchers (2 females and 3 males) in the Thuthuka NRF Rating Track were supported to advance their research, which was already successfully funded by the NRF.

Established researchers: 28 established researchers (three females and 25 males) were supported to advance their research, which was already successfully funded by the NRF.

Support for women towards development in research: In 2024, the university supported 365 academic staff and postgraduate students, to the value of R28 586 215, through various programmes, namely next-generation, early, mid- and established career programmes; and initiatives supported by the NRF, postdoctoral fellowships and postgraduate studies. A total of **172 females (47% of the total beneficiaries)** were supported, to the value of R17 289 721, which is 60% of the total funding available. This signifies a gap for the university in supporting more female academics to participate in research.

Postdoctoral fellows

There were 15 postdoctoral fellows in, respectively:

- track 1 = 11; and
- track 2 = 5.

The postdoctoral stipends are R250 000 and R50 000 for operational expenses annually.

Research education training programmes

The Research Development and Postgraduate Studies Section offers research education training programmes in support of the university's researchers, academic supervisors, and postgraduate students. Scientific knowledge production and thematic workshops and training events were presented during 2024.

Table 27: Research Development and Postgraduate Studies workshops and training events

Scientific knowledge production and academic writing	Attendance
Introduction to the basic principles of thesis writing and argumentation	42
Artificial intelligence and scholarly writing	42
Artificial intelligence and topic discovery	26
Crafting research questions and articulating research contributions	31
Theory and theorising, particularising, drawing conclusions from data	30
Welcoming webinar: Empowering Postgraduate Research: Navigating the Research Landscape	105
Qualitative research using Hermeneutics	39
Research design for quantitative studies	95
Writing tips and tactics for emerging scientists	44
Viva Pilot Information Session	25
Supervising Cohort Group Studies	19
Publication Writing Workshop	44
Research Proposal Writing Workshop	29
Publication Writing Workshop	64
SANORD 3MT Competition (online). Winner participated in National 3MT at UFS, and attended the 2024 SANORD Conference in the Western Cape on 6 December 2024.	Judges only
Pilot Viva Workshop	32
Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Training – Welkom	50
Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Training – Bloemfontein	55
Three Minute Thesis (3MT®)	Replaced by SANORD 3MT Competition
Converis Graduate Management Module Training	93

Activity	Date
DSI/NRF Research Development Grant for New Academics Programme (nGAP) Information Session	20 Feb. 2024
Freestanding, Innovation and Scarce Skills Postdoctoral Fellowships	18 Apr. 2024
Thuthuka and Black Academic Advancement Programme (BAAP) NRF Information Session	17 Apr. 2024
CSRR, CSUR and Y-rated Researchers Institutional Information Session	18 Apr. 2024 – attendance – 22
NRF Rating Application	12 Oct. 2023 – attendance – 19
Thuthuka and BAAP Institutional Information Session	19 Apr. 2024 – attendance – 26
NRF Institutional Visitation	18 Jun. 2024 - attendance – 97
DSI/NRF - CUT Strategic Institutional Engagement - SARChI	19 Jun. 2024 - attendance – 20
2024 – 2025 NRF Postgraduate Master's and Doctoral Training	18 Jun. 2024 – attendance – 16
2024 – 2025 NRF Postgraduate Master's and Doctoral Training	19 Jun. 2024 – attendance – 12
2024 – 2025 NRF Postgraduate Master's and Doctoral Training	21 Jun. 2024 – attendance – 13
2023 – 2024 NRF Postgraduate Master's and Doctoral Training (Welkom)	04 Jul. 2024 – attendance – 27
2024 – 2025 HSRC Internship Programme Institutional Visit	11 Sept. 2024 – attendance – 25

Postgraduate students

The following enrolment for 2024 can be reported:

- Master's target = 529
- Master's enrolments = 529/568 students (107% of target)
- Master's full-time enrolments = 37% of target
- Master's part-time enrolments = 63% of target
- Doctoral target = 260
- Doctoral enrolments = 212/260 students (82% of target)
- Doctoral full-time enrolments = 26% of target
- Doctoral part-time enrolments = 74% of target

4.9.4 Research publications

For DHET purposes, the following can be reported:

4.9.4.1 **Research publication outputs 2023:** In May 2024, the university submitted a claim of 196,35 credit units for the 2023 publications for subsidy. On 11 December 2024, the DHET approved chapters in books, conference proceedings and journal articles for 2023, and following the assessment, the university attained a total of **181.93** credit units (against a target of 220 credit units), which resulted in a **92.70%** success rate.

4.9.4.2 **Research outputs 2023:** For 2023, the university provisionally achieved 314 (against a target of 610) credit units. The credit units are 181.93 publications credit units, 61 master's credit units, and 72 doctoral credit units (24 doctorates).

4.9.4.3 **Intervention to mitigate against publication research wastage:** A workshop was held on 19 March 2024 on identifying predatory journals; challenges and consequences; choosing the appropriate journal, including quantile journals and transformative agreements – open access publication. 79 people participated in the workshop. A report and presentation on CUT's research output performance, including research wastage, was made and discussed at Senate on 5 June 2024. Ethics/integrity issues related to publication were completed before submission to the DHET on 15 May 2024. For 2023, none of the submissions were deemed as predatory publications.

4.9.5 Research centres

Research centres serve as strategic engines for advancing a university's academic mission, innovation agenda, and societal impact. Their primary purpose is to drive focused, high-quality research that aligns with institutional priorities and national or global development goals. The university has the following research centres:

Table 28: Approved research centres and research directors

Research centre	Research director
Centre for Applied Food Security and Biotechnology	Prof. JFR Lues
Centre for Diversity in Higher Education Research	Prof. A Makura
Centre for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Studies	Prof. D Dzansi
Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing	Prof. K van der Walt
Centre for Sustainable Smart Cities	Prof. N Luwes
Centre for Quality of Health and Living	Dr T Makhafola
Centred Approaches to the Societal Impacts of Technological Innovations	Prof. Y Woyessa

The university has six (6) research centres aligned with thirteen (13) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the DSI Decal Plan. The research centres have both internal and external (local and international) collaborations, totalling 35 collaborations. The centres participate in both internal and external interdisciplinary research collaborations, totalling 28 interdisciplinary research projects. Research centres contribute towards the university's Transformation Plan, Emerging Researcher Programme, and Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR)-related initiatives. In addition, on 2 September 2024, Senate approved a new Research Centre on Human-Centred Approaches to the Societal Impacts of Technological Innovations (HTI) at CUT, which aims to establish a hub of excellence in addressing the societal impacts of technological advancements. With a focus on human-centric approaches, interdisciplinary collaboration, and ethical frameworks, the centre will contribute to responsible and sustainable technological development.

4.9.6 Digitalisation of the Research Development and Postgraduate Studies processes: RIMS

In 2019, the university, in consortia with two other UoTs (TUT and CPUT), and under the auspices of THENSA, procured a Clarivate Converis Research Information Management System. The system can assemble professional profiles for a complete and up-to-date collection of all research-related activities, providing an overview of all accomplishments, with advanced analytic reports of outputs and impact. Converis also supports the complete research lifecycle, from an initial idea for project applications and projects, to their results and innovation. This provides important benefits to key stakeholders along the research lifecycle, including researchers, graduate students, administrators and managers (Research Office, Library, and Graduate School), and to different organisational units.

The Converis product offers the following module features: publication management, pre- and post-award management, research analytics, graduate student management, configuration, and a research portal. The modules (research publication management, intellectual property

management, ethics, grant management, and graduate student management) have been successfully implemented and customised according to the consortium's needs and specifications.

Significantly, in support of research administration digitalisation and capacity building, the university has achieved the following milestones with the implementation of the system:

4.9.6.1   Five modules have been successfully customised and implemented.

4.9.6.2   A permanent position to administer the system was created and filled.

4.9.6.3   For the past five years, research publications from researchers up to DHET ROSS have been successfully submitted online and paperless using the Converis system.

4.9.6.4   Ethics applications approvals by the HSREC are submitted online.

Onsite training in Dubai, 25 – 30 November 2024

As part of the THENSA Converis Consortia, the following three (3) Converis experts participated in hands-on onsite training hosted in Dubai by Clarivate Analytics. The training was facilitated by Clarivate's team of Converis experts in Dubai, in their workspace, workstations and facilities for a week. The training included the following:

4.9.6.5   Converis configuration training, covering system configuration, including, but not limited to, administration, configuration, and rights management.

4.9.6.6   Strategic planning session for THENSA Converis Project for 2025 and beyond.

4.9.6.7   Bibliometric Workshop on Research Assessment and Research Impact.

4.9.6.8   Content management, background, and dashboard visualisation coding.

4.9.6.9   Complementary Bibliometric on Research Assessment and Research Impact.

During the visit, we also explored other systems that are available to support research administration and researchers. After the visit, the following initiatives will be undertaken to enhance the utilisation of the system:

4.9.6.10   Building of all researchers' profiles to enhance visibility, to be undertaken by the Research Office and ITC.

4.9.6.11   Submission of research publications on a quarterly basis, to allow performance monitoring of research productivity at departmental and faculty level.

4.9.6.12   Alignment of actual research publications on the Converis Workload Model.

4.9.7 Technology and innovation in the CRPM and PDTS

The Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM) had a challenging 2024, amidst the economic challenges that the South African manufacturing industry have to circumnavigate due to factors such as loadshedding and slow industry growth. The total value of academic, research and industry-supported projects completed at the CRPM during 2024 was R8 279 435. Approximately 15 016 parts were manufactured as part of the 844 industrial and research- supported projects completed. Figure 7 below illustrates the value of revenue generated from industry-supported projects against the set monthly targets.

Figure 7: Monthly values of industry-supported projects: actual vs target
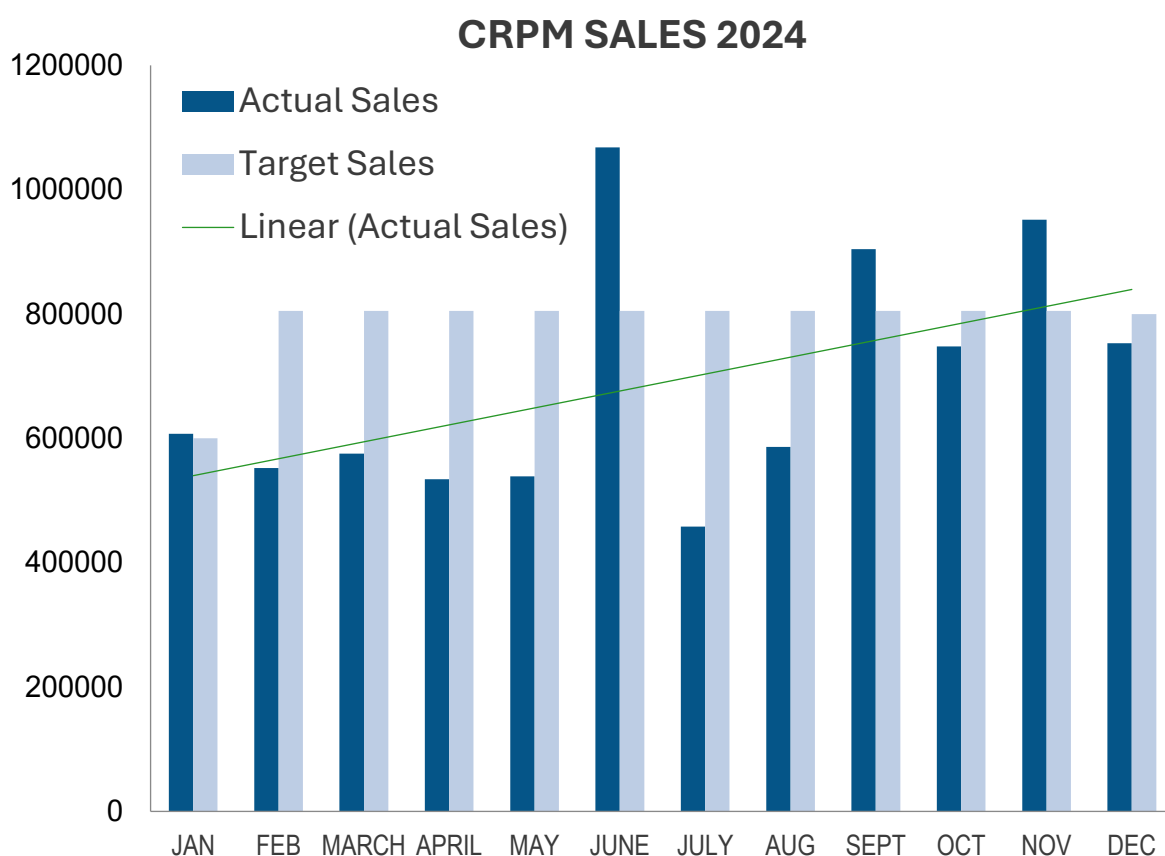
The collaboration with Selective Surgical (a medical product distributor focused on maxillofacial products) resulted in a significant increase in enquiries for custom medical implants. The total medical-related revenue amounted to approximately **R4 755 476.68 for 2024**. The partnership between CUT and Selective Surgical proved to be very successful, as **19 (2021), 160 (2022), 170 (2023) and another 260 (2024)** cases were successfully completed, as shown in figure 8 below. All these cases were custom designed to conform to the patients' geometries.

Figure 8: Number of cases completed during 2021, 2022, 2023 and 2024 in collaboration with Selective Surgical

DEVICE QUANTITY BY YEAR, TYPE & CLIENT

Category	Value
2024 MANDIBULAR RAMUS + FOSSA	6
2024 MANDIBULAR FRAME	1
2024 SUB-PERIOSTEAL FRAMES	1
2024 MANDIBULAR FRAME + FOSSA	1
2024 ORT TI PLATES	17
2024 ORBITAL FLOOR	6
2024 CUSTOM RECON PLATE	120
2024 MODEL	16
2024 FIBULA FLAP + PROSTHESIS	1
2024 CRANIAL PROSTHESIS	9
2024 CRANIAL MOULD	82

260

Category	Value
2023 SUB-PERIOSTEAL FRAMES	1
2023 MANDIBULAR FRAME + FOSSA	4
2023 ORT TI PLATES	15
2023 ORBITAL FLOOR	3
2023 THORACIC PROSTHESIS	2
2023 CUSTOM RECON PLATE	59
2023 ORTHOGNATHIC PLATES	7
2023 MODEL	9
2023 ORBITAL RIM + FLOOR	1
2023 MANDIBULAR FRAME	3
2023 CRANIAL MOULD	66

170

Category	Value
2022 SUB-PERIOSTEAL FRAME	1
2022 ORBITAL PLATE	1
2022 CUSTOM RECON PLATE	49
2022 ORTHOGNATHIC PLATES	13
2022 MODEL	8
2022 MAXILLARY FRAME	2
2022 MANDIBULAR PROSTHESIS	1
2022 MANDIBULAR FRAME	5
2022 FIBULA FLAP + PROSTHESIS	5
2022 CRANIAL MOULD	75

160

Category	Value
2021 MAXILLARY PROSTHESIS	1
2021 MANDIBULAR PROSTHESIS	6
2021 CRANIAL MOULD	12

19

Total

Another good example of industry adoption is shown in the manufacturing of titanium 3D-printed spinal cages. Since 2019, a total of **18 010** units were manufactured amongst the four companies as part of a 320-product range. This significant product range included a significant amount of research and development to optimise the design for AM (DfAM). The CRPM celebrated another milestone by surpassing the 1 000 patients assisted during 2024, as shown in figure 9.

Figure 9: Number of spinal products produced for four companies from 2019 to 2024
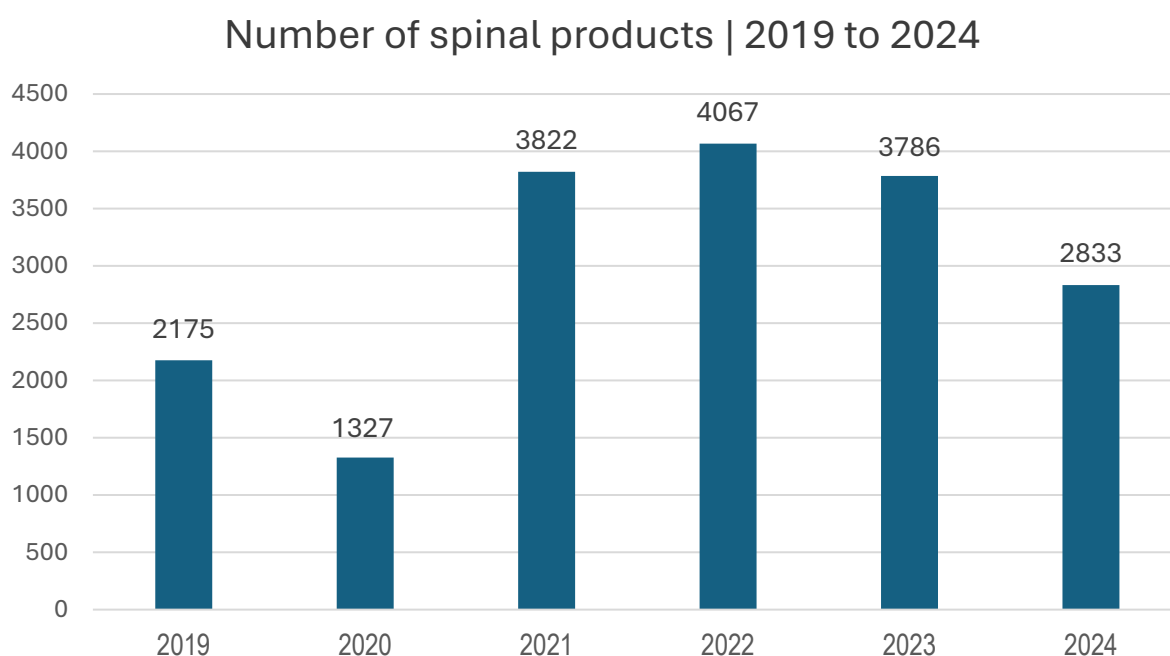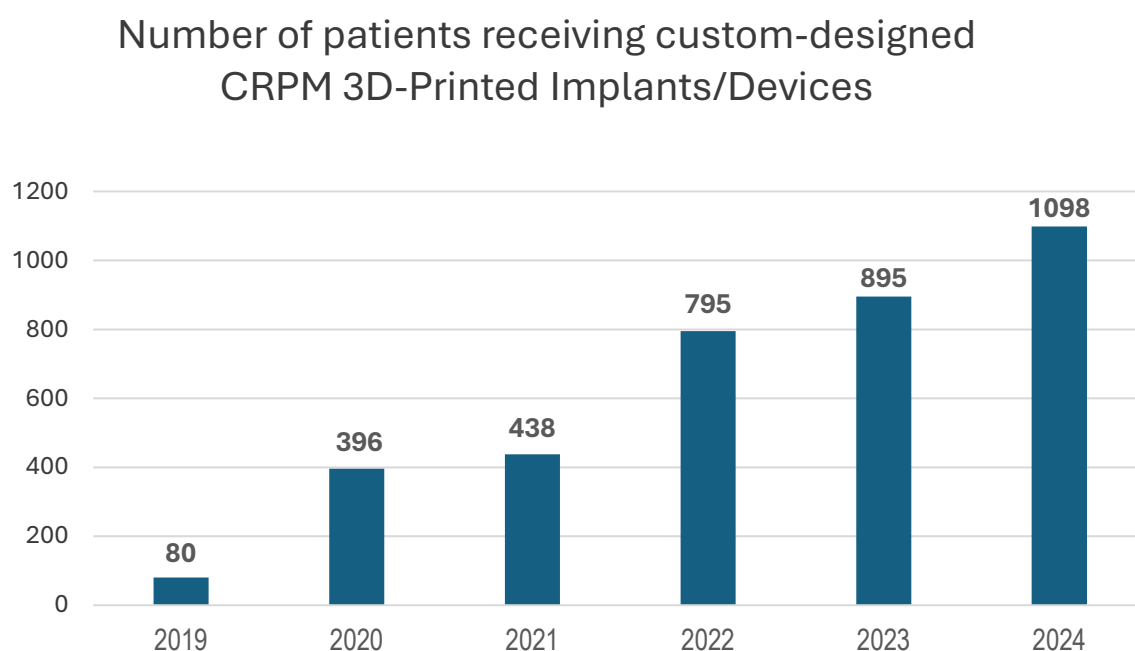
Number of spinal products | 2019 to 2024

Figure 10: Number of patients receiving custom-designed 3D-printed implants/devices, 2019 to 2024

Number of patients receiving custom-designed
CRPM 3D-Printed Implants/Devices

Furthermore, a total of R823 993 was spent on 15 research projects, compared to R1 242 789 which was spent on research projects during 2024. The EUREKA CMMMed project was the largest contributor to these research activities.

Algoa Dental, a dental laboratory located in Gqeberha (Port Elizabeth), has collaborated closely with the CRPM in the mass roll-out of the 3D-printed cobalt-chrome removable partial dentures. Since 2019, a total of 904 patients benefitted from the 3D-printed Removable Partial Dentures (RPD's) produced through the Department of Science, Technology and Innovation (DSTI)/CUT-funded MedAdd project. The CRPM also produced 236 3D-printed sleep apnoea devices for patients in 2024.

Results from communication and marketing events

The CRPM promoted its services by attending strategic meetings, opening its doors for visitors, delivering presentations, and participating in various exhibitions. *188* national and international people from universities, industry and governments visited the CRPM during 2024, as detailed in table 29. The CRPM staff furthermore presented *36* presentations to various stakeholders, as shown in table 30 below.

Table 29: Visitors welcomed

                    CRPM MARKETING EVENTS

FACILITY TOURS		
DATE	**DETAILS**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**
08 January 2024	SSEM Mthembu	Project Engineer: Design
07 February 2024	Selective Surgical	Operations Manager: CRPM
04 March 2024	CRPM Workshop Assistants & Jnr Project Assistant: Graphic Design	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer
07 March 2024	Summer School Students	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer

Date	Visitor	Host
15 March 2024	Mr Chen Yong	Operations Manager: CRPM
15 March 2024	Dr Dewald Venter, Senior Lecturer: Faculty of Management Sciences (CUT)	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer
22 April 2024	TUV SUD South Asia – Nagaraju	Project Engineer: Operations
24 April 2024	US Ambassador to South Africa	Operations Manager: CRPM
24 April 2024	Elogium Sasolburg	Project Engineer: Operations
29 April 2024	Tanzania Innovation Hub	Operations Manager: CRPM
30 April 2024	CUT students (Motsime, Barnard & Winnaar)	Jnr Project Assistant: Technical
30 April 2024	Art students, Faculty of Humanities (CUT) - metal	Jnr Project Assistant: Technical
30 April 2024	Art students, Faculty of Humanities (CUT) – polymer	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer
03 May 2024	The Tuition Centre	Operations Manager: CRPM
08 May 2024	GIZ Botswana Office	Operations Manager: CRPM
08 May 2024	iKudu Conference visitors	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer
07 May 2024	South African Dental Technicians Council	Operations Manager: CRPM
07 May 2024	Leandra Jordaan & industry rep.	Project Engineer: Design

Date	Visitor	Role
08 May 2024	CUT students	Project Engineer: Design
10 May 2024	Prof. Wilfrid Pilloy	Operations Manager: CRPM
13 May 2024	Marinus Potgieter & guest	Project Engineer: Design
15 May 2024	UFS Bio-reactor team	Operations Manager: CRPM
30 May 2024	UK higher education experts	Project Engineer: Operations
18 June 2024	Kgalagadi Mine	Project Engineer: Operations
20 June 24	NRF delegation	Operations Manager: CRPM
27 June 2024	Glen College representatives	Project Engineer: Design
09 July 2024	Dr Piet Johnson	Operations Manager: CRPM
26 July 2024	Brazil delegation	Operations Manager: CRPM
29 July 2024	Mr Gerhard Beukes – HoD: Teacher Education (CUT)	Director: CRPM
12 August 2024	Trinidad and Tobago delegation	Project Engineer: Operations
23 August 2024	UWC delegation	Operations Manager: CRPM
10 September 2024	Vertice - Marla Scheepers	Operations Manager: CRPM
26 September 2024	Divine Ifeanyi	Jnr Project Assistant: Technical
29 October 2024	CUT HSE Office (Mareko & Leeuw)	Project Engineer:

		Technical Polymer
06 November 2024	Malahlela Labotek	Project Engineer: Design
18 November 2024	CUT Agriculture student	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer
20 November 2024	Zhejiang Boao Energy Saving	Project Engineer: Operations
TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITORS TO CRPM		**188**

Table 30: Presentations

PRESENTATIONS		
DATE	**DETAILS**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**
07 February 2024	Dr Clifford Nxomane	Director: CRPM
17 February 2024	Innovation in Anaesthesiology	Director: CRPM
04 March 2024	Summer School: Introduction to Product Development through AM	Director: CRPM
05 March 2024	Summer School: Design rules for polymer AM products	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer
06 March 2024	Prof. Steffen Schwarzer (Aalen University, Germany)	Director: CRPM
15 March 2024	Mr Chen Yong	Director: CRPM
24 April 2024	Elogium Sasolburg	Operations Manager
29 April 2024	Tanzania Innovation Hub	Director: CRPM
30 April 2024	Guest lecture for the subject Design for AM (MDMA418)	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer
03 May 2024	The Tuition Centre	Operations Manager
07 May 2024	South African Dental Technicians Council	Operations Manager
07 May 2024	CUT Career Fair	Project Engineer: Operations
08 May 2024	GIZ Botswana Office	Operations Manager
10 May 2024	Prof. Wilfrid Pilloy	Director: CRPM
28 May 2024	Odin Checkpoint/Graduate Entrepreneurial proposal organised by CRPM Director	Director: CRPM
04 June 2024	UFS Faculty of Education	Director: CRPM
20 June 2024	NRF visit to CUT	Operations Manager

12 July 2024	Changing Faces, Changing Lives discussion with Dr Terry Wohlers, USA	Operations Manager
16 July 2024	Dr Konar and Dr Lewis	Director: CRPM
22 July 2024	Matlosana Smart Cities presentation	Project Engineer: Operations
25 July 2024	HR Induction	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer
29 July 2024	Mr Gerhard Beukes, HoD: Teacher Education, CUT	Director: CRPM
31 July 2024	Milkor in Pretoria	Operations Manager
01 August 2024	Ifakara Health Institute (Tanzania)	Director: CRPM
06 August 2024	Ifakara partner engagement (Tanzania)	Operations Manager
22 August 2024	CUT Finance Division (financial sustainability brainstorming session)	Director: CRPM
22 August 2024	Ms Amina Nyuri (Ifakara Innovation Hub start-up)	Operations Manager
05 September 2024	Dr Shathani Nkhwa, University of Botswana	Director: CRPM
09 September 2024	Vice-Chancellor of Hochschule Mittweida University of Applied Sciences	Director: CRPM
10 September 2024	Vertice: Marla Scheepers	Operations Manager
10 October 2024	Hensoldt: ceramic discussion	Operations Manager
11 October 2024	CUT Clinical Technology; CUT Mechanical Engineering; Dr PT Jansen, UFS	Director: CRPM
17 October 2024	Ifakara Innovation Hub - online session	Director: CRPM
18 October 2024	3D Centre Skane University Hospital, Sweden	Operations Manager
07 November 2024	Mr Wayne Joao, Mr Jacques du Plessis, Prime Surgical	Operations Manager
12 November 2024	Prof. Per Assmo, University West	Director: CRPM
TOTAL NUMBER OF PRESENTATIONS DELIVERED		**36**

CRPM Engagement

During 2024, the CRPM made a concerted effort to engage with customers, students, learners and various industrial stakeholders at *nine* (table 31) engagements and exhibitions, to create awareness and showcase the different technological offerings that the CRPM is able to provide. A summary of the various engagements is provided below.

Table 31: CRPM exhibitions

EXHIBITIONS		
DATE	**DETAILS**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**
27 February 2024	UFS DESTEA Investment Forum (UFS Bfn)	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer
07 May 2024	CUT Career Fair (CUT)	Project Engineer: Technical Polymer
10-11 July 2024	Community Engagement Indaba (UFS, Bfn)	Operations Manager
9-10 August 2024	iClix Elite Gaming Fest (Bfn)	Project Engineer: Operations
26-30 August 2024	SAOA (Cape Town)	Operations Manager; Project Engineer: Design
18-22 September 2024	Africa Aerospace and Defence (Pretoria)	Project Engineer: Operations
28 September 2024	Launch of National Science Week (CUT)	Operations Manager; Project Engineer: Design
01 October 2024	International Partner Week Exhibition (CUT)	Project Engineer: Operations
28-31 October 2024	RAPDASA (Gqeberha)	Operations Manager
TOTAL NUMBER OF EXHIBITIONS: ATTENDED OR EXHIBITED		**9**

CRPM participation in South African Orthopaedic Association Congress 2024

The Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM) participated in the 2024 South African Orthopaedic Association (SAOA) Congress, marking its debut at this prestigious event. The opportunity was used to showcase our latest innovations in 3D printing and medical applications. The team engaged with industry professionals, sharing insights and demonstrating how our technology is transforming healthcare. SAOA reported a record attendance of 515 participants at its 2024 congress over four days, surpassing the previous year's attendance by 10 delegates.

Figure 3: CRPM stall at SAOA Congress

Key interactions

- Surgeons and specialists: CRPM engaged with leading orthopaedic surgeons to discuss the practical applications of 3D printing in complex reconstructive cases.
- Academic institutions: Discussions were held with surgeons involved at higher education training hospitals, to explore research and development opportunities in medical 3D printing.
- Industry stakeholders: The CRPM established two valuable connections with medical device manufacturers and distributors interested in collaboration. Following the congress, the CRPM had follow-up engagements with two local distributors, showing that there is a trend in South Africa to offer more locally manufactured solutions to compete with international offerings, where the CRPM can offer a competitive advantage with regard to lead time and cost.
- Vertice – Principal distributor of Stryker Orthopaedics in SA (meeting with Marla Scheepers, Inland Sales Manager: 10 September 2024).
- SA Biomedical – Principal distributor of KLS Martin in SA (meeting with Wayne Joao and Jacques du Plessis, Managing Director: 7 November 2024).

Both these distributors expressed their interest to offer locally manufactured patient-specific solutions, but neither of them currently has the design knowledge or capacity to offer this. This

presents a unique opportunity for the CRPM to explore software training, as well as reselling and support as potential new ventures.

Strategic outcomes

- **Enhanced visibility:** The CRPM's debut at the SAOA Congress significantly increased awareness of its capabilities within the orthopaedic community.
- **Networking opportunities:** The congress facilitated valuable connections with potential clients, collaborators, and thought leaders.
- **Market insights:** Insights into the latest challenges and needs in orthopaedic care will guide the CRPM's future product development and service offerings.

CRPM participation in biannual Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) Expo 2024

The CRPM team exhibited at the biannual Africa Aerospace and Defense (AAD) Expo 2024 from 18 to 22 September 2024 at the Waterkloof Airforce Base, showcasing the capabilities of the CRPM in 3D printing cutting-edge components. The team engaged with leading industry stakeholders, discussing exciting opportunities for 3D-printing solutions in aerospace and defence, while exploring potential partnerships for localised manufacturing and product development.

Figure 12: Participants at the Africa Aerospace and Defense (AAD) Expo

RAPDASA (29 to 31 October 2024)

The CRPM exhibited at the Annual RAPDASA-RobMech-PRASA-AMI 2024 Conference. This conference brought together experts from industry, R&D institutions, academia and students in additive manufacturing, materials engineering, rapid product development, pattern recognition,

robotics and mechatronics to present research, network, and expand the fraternity that has been built by the previous conferences, with the theme of "Unlocking Advanced Manufacturing".

CRPM participation in Community Engagement Indaba:

The Community Engagement Indaba at the University of the Free State was a resounding success. The event, which brought together staff from the UFS and CUT, NGOs, CBOs, and community members, provided a fantastic platform for CUT to showcase our groundbreaking work in 3D-printing technology. The overwhelming interest and positive feedback we received at the Community Engagement Indaba underscore the vital role of 3D printing in various fields, from healthcare to housing, agriculture and education. The event was not only an opportunity to share our innovations, but also to inspire and collaborate with the broader community.

Figure 13: Participants at the Community Engagement Indaba

iClix Elite Gaming Fest: The CRPM team was fortunate to exhibit at the iClix Elite Gaming Fest on 9 and 10 August 2024. This event was packed with excitement from epic LAN competitions featuring EA FC 24, Rocket League, Street Fighter, and more, to stunning supercars and cosplay

showcases. It was a true celebration of gaming, community and creativity. CUT was thrilled to be a part of it, and to share the passion with everyone who attended.

**Figure 144: Participation at iClix Elite Gaming Fest**

ATTRI dynamic sternal case

The CRPM assisted ATTRI Orthopaedics with the manufacturing of a unique patient-specific sternal implant. This is the first dynamic sternal implant with articulating sterno-clavicular joints that was manufactured by the CRPM.

Figure 155: CAD design and titanium 3D-printed sternal implant manufactured for ATTRI
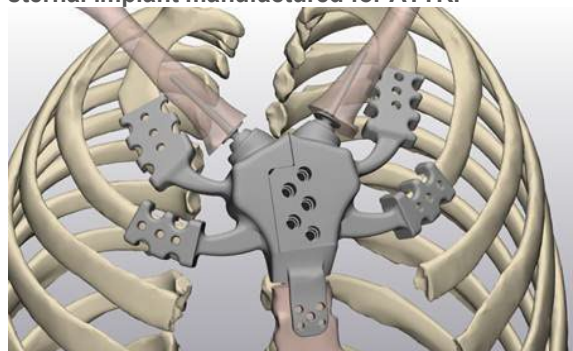
Changing Faces, Changing Lives Corporate Social Responsibility project:

CUT Honorary Doctor Terry Wohlers donated $10 000 towards the CRPM Corporate Social Responsibility project, called "Changing Faces, Changing Lives". The purpose of this project is to improve peoples' lives with cutting-edge technology. By making use of additive manufacturing (AM), better known as "3D-printing technology", the CRPM can design and manufacture patient-specific implants, surgical guides, and external prostheses.

Centred around AM, this initiative focuses on providing advanced, patient-specific medical solutions to underserved communities. The project's key deliverables are medical device product development that will guide AM-applied research projects and themes at CUT.

Furthermore, students participate in the design and manufacturing of personalised medical devices utilising advanced manufacturing techniques, bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world applications. This not only enhances the university's research capabilities, but also directly benefits communities by offering life-changing medical solutions.

CUT's approach demonstrates how academia, technology, and social responsibility can intersect to create lasting impacts. By linking AM technology with community development, the project is a model for using innovation to drive societal change, while addressing critical healthcare challenges.

ISO 13485 Certification

The CRPM's quality management system (EN ISO 13485: 2016) has been successfully maintained, and enabled us to deliver quality products and services. The system is set to be audited twice per year, and the results were as follows for the period under review:

- An external audit was conducted on 22 April 2024. The audit was completed with zero (0) non-conformances.
- An internal audit was conducted on 12 and 13 September 2024, with a degree attainment of 79%.

Teaching and Research

Update on externally funded projects: EUREKA Grant

The TIA-funded EUREKA project made significant progress in producing a demonstration model of the proposed clinical application where the ceramics and metal multi-material solution could be clinically applied. The next phase of the project included the ethical clearance application for a proposed animal trial, to verify the intended macro-porosity to be used on the bio-ceramic implants.

Figure 166: Image of 3D-printed model fitted with multi-material prosthesis, to illustrate proposed clinical application of the project

Figure 177: 3D-printed bio-ceramic resorbable lattice structures printed at Lithoz on ceramic 3D printer
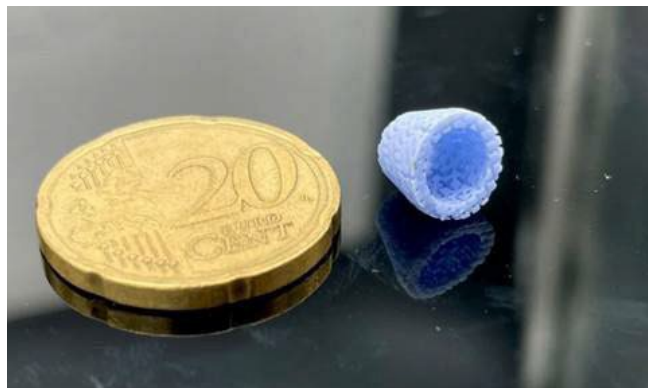
Training

CRPM supporting the Aalen Summer School programme

The Summer School programme is a partnership between CUT and Hochschule Aalen University. It allows for an exchange of technical sketching skills and digital product development knowledge to 18 master's students from Aalen University. All students achieved the required objective and grades in all assessments, and provided positive feedback. The Summer School was a four-day course in March 2024, where the CRPM presented an introduction to additive manufacturing (AM), the various AM processes, the design rules for direct metal laser sintering (DMLS) and selective laser sintering (SLS), a 3-Matic design course, and a facility tour of the CRPM AM technology.

Figure 188: CRPM supporting CUT-Aalen Summer School programme

CAD and 3D Printing short course

The CRPM, in collaboration with the Department of Mechanical Engineering (FEBIT), hosted an Introduction to CAD and 3D Printing short course from 25 to 26 September 2024. Attendees learnt the fundamentals of CAD, to explore the possibilities of 3D printing. Each participant left equipped with new knowledge and skills to bring their creative ideas to life. This was a first attempt in exposing scholars, technology teachers, and members of the Department of Basic Education to a structured 3D-printing introductory short course that will excite them to come and study engineering at CUT. Attendees wrapped up day 2 with insightful hands-on experience.

Figure 19: Participants of CAD and 3D Printing short course

Product Development Technology Station (PDTS)

Table 32: PDTS presentations and exhibitions

EXHIBITIONS		
DATE	**DETAILS**	**PERSON RESPONSIBLE**
18 April 2024	The PDTS presented at the SEDA training event. This session gathered SMMEs, business leaders, and individuals to explore the latest advancements in technology and innovation.	Junior Project Assistant: Marketing & Junior Project Engineer: Product Development
3 May 2024	The PDTS hosted grade 11 and 12 students from Ikanyegeng High School in Jacobsdal, Free State. The students had the opportunity to explore our advanced technologies and gain insights into industry practices.	Junior Project Engineer: Advanced Manufacturing
7 May 2024	Digital dentistry training event, hosted at the CUT PDTS and exhibited at the CUT Careers Roadshow. The exhibition aimed to connect industry with CUT students, support graduate recruitment, and provide a platform for the industry to share their needs and skills expectations.	Project Assistant: Marketing
10-11 July 2024	The PDTS exhibited at the University of the Free State's Community Engagement Indaba. This event focused on self-sufficiency and sustainable living concepts, providing a valuable platform for networking and showcasing community initiatives.	Project Assistant: Marketing
12 July 2024	The PDTS visited, and presented at, the Motheo Artisan Academy, to explore potential collaborations aimed at enhancing skills development for innovators.	Project Assistant: Marketing & Quality Engineer: PDTS
19 July 2024	The PDTS presented its innovative product at the Expo Sense event organised by the South African Innovation and Support Institute (SAISI), where occupational therapists from across South Africa convened in Pretoria to share experiences.	Senior Project Assistant: Medical & Project Assistant: Marketing
16 September 2024	The PDTS hosted the Fichardt Park Primary School for an industry tour, which included technology demonstrations and a comprehensive facility tour. During the visit, students were engaged in various projects, which were subsequently evaluated, to enhance their learning experience.	Project Engineer: Graphic Design and Branding & Junior Project Engineer: Advanced Manufacturing
10 October 2024	The PDTS exhibited at the Free State Department of Education's Natural Sciences Quiz Competition at Naval Hill's Environmental Hall. This annual event brought together Natural Sciences learners from across the province, to inspire their academic and career journeys.	Project Assistant: Marketing & Quality Engineer: PDTS
28-31 October 2024	The PDTS presented and exhibited at the RAPDASA Conference, engaging with industry leaders, to explore advancements in manufacturing technologies.	Deputy Director: PDTS & Project Assistant: Marketing
8 November 2024	The PDTS presented at the Business Window Magazine Launch and Networking Event, forging valuable connections with small business owners and professionals.	Quality Engineer: PDTS & Project Assistant: Marketing

3-6 December 2024	The PDTS exhibited at the Science Forum South Africa 2024 in Pretoria, contributing to critical discussions on the societal impact of science, and promoting cross-sector collaboration between government, industry, and the scientific community.	Quality Engineer: PDTS & Project Assistant: Marketing

The PDTS has been actively engaged in delivering training courses, focusing on transferring valuable skills to students and SMEs. The following training courses were presented in 2024:

Table 33: Training courses

Training	Date	Presenter	Attended
Introduction to Sketching and Drawing	04 March 2024	M Kotze	9
Introduction to Sketching and Drawing	25-26 March 2024	M Kotze	6
SolidWorks Essentials	2-28 June 2024	I Hlanganiso	51
SolidWorks Essentials	23-27 September 2024	I Hlanganiso	30
Introduction to Sketching and Drawing (open to the public)	28-29 November 2024	M Kotze	14
SolidWorks Essentials	02-06 December 2024	I Hlanganiso	24

4.10 INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

The Innovation and Technology Transfer Unit (ITTU) at CUT continues to play a crucial role in research commercialisation, entrepreneurship development, and technology transfer. In 2024, the unit made significant progress in patent filings, start-up incubation, and industry engagement, strengthening its position as a driver of regional socio-economic transformation.

Key achievements

- Achievement of the prestigious ACEEU Engaged University accreditation, becoming the first African university to receive this recognition.
- 14 new invention disclosures received, covering emerging technologies in biomedical, ICT and advanced manufacturing.
- Multiple patent filings, including two international PCT applications and a European National Phase entry.
- Three licencing agreements in advanced negotiation, with commercialisation prospects for key innovations.
- Expansion of the start-up incubation ecosystem, in collaboration with the Venture Bridge Incubator in Welkom.

- Over R3.6 million funding applications submitted to support technology commercialisation and spinouts creation.
- Participation in the South African Innovation Summit (SAIS) 2024.

These efforts align with CUT's Strategic Goals 2 and 3 to promote innovation, research commercialisation, and entrepreneurial development.

Intellectual property and technology transfer

The Technology Transfer Office (TTO) at CUT continues to advance intellectual property (IP) protection, commercialisation, and industry partnerships.

Pre-Seed Fund Call 2025 – supporting early-stage innovation

In March 2024, the Intellectual Property Steering Committee (IPSC) convened to evaluate submissions for the 2024 Pre-Seed Fund Call. This initiative supports early-stage technologies emerging from CUT, advancing them toward commercialisation.

A total of six projects were reviewed, with five projects approved for funding.

Table 34: Pre-Seed Fund Call projects

Project title	Principal investigator	TRL	Funding approved
Reusable Estrus Synchronisation Device for Cattle	Mr Els	2	R100,000
People's Telehealth	Mr Moqhaisa	2	R100,000
Relay Attack Blocker	Mr Grobbelaar	2	R100,000
Functional Beverage Development: Hop Water	Prof. De Smith	2	R100,000
Custom-Made Chair for Outdoor Purposes	Dr Ojo	2	R20,000

Intellectual property portfolio and commercialisation

14 new invention disclosures were received, covering the biomedical, ICT and advanced manufacturing sectors.

Patent filings:

- PCT applications:
    - FASTSeg3D – 3D point cloud processing for obstacle detection.
    - Shadow-Shield Collimator System – precision neonatal radiography.
- European National Phase Entry: PCT/IB2022/057076 for commercialisation prospects.
- Provisional patents: baseplate for 3D printing. Filed for local IP protection.

Commercialisation and licencing

- Sanitary pad dispenser (Dear Bella)
- 3-in-1 sustainable wheelchair (Chairman Industries)
- Emergency Medical Preparatory Programme (EMPP)

Participation in South African Innovation Summit (SAIS) 2024, showcasing technologies such as:

- lockable drain cover & rodding eye; and
- 3-in-1 sustainable wheelchair.

Industry engagement

- Strengthened partnerships with Chairman Industries and Dear Bella for commercialisation pathways.
- Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) Seed Fund application for R5 million to accelerate TRL advancements.

Challenges and solutions

- **Low TRL commercialisation bottlenecks:** Many technologies require additional development. The R5 million TIA Seed Fund request will support further maturation.
- **Lack of dedicated incubation facilities:** The TTO collaborated to establish the Venture Bridge Incubator as an interim solution, with plans for a dedicated CUT start-up incubator.
    - o **Industry hesitancy in licencing:** The TTO is enhancing industry engagement strategies to promote market-driven technology development.

Entrepreneurship and start-up incubation

The Idea Generator (*i*-Gym) and The Venture Bridge Incubator played a key role in fostering entrepreneurial development and student start-up incubation.

Key achievements:

- United States-South Africa Virtual Incubator (USSAVI):
    - o 64 students enrolled, and 9 student ventures were incubated, gaining access to global mentorship.
- CUT's excellence at EDHE Intervarsity Competition:

- o   Winning start-ups: Bellatra Tech and OWA Jewellers (both national finalists).
- The Venture Bridge Incubator launch:
  - o   10 unemployed CUT graduates enrolled in a 12-month start-up accelerator programme in Welkom.

Innovation and technology development (FabLab)

The FabLab serves as a digital fabrication and prototyping hub, equipping students with hands-on technical skills. 2024 performance highlights:

- 400+ students trained in CAD, 3D printing, and electronics.

- 50+ workshops conducted, covering Fusion 360, PCB Design, and Smart Electronics.

- 127 prototypes developed, including:
  - o   smart farming sensor for agricultural monitoring;
  - o   solar-powered charging dock for sustainable energy use; and
  - o   medical assistive device to improve accessibility.
- Industry and community engagement:
  - o   Collaboration with THENSA in corporate gift manufacturing.
  - o   Eskom Science Expo engagement, introducing high school learners to digital fabrication.

The FabLab is expanding into IoT and robotics. In 2025, the aim is to scale training and enhance industry partnerships, in order to support student-led innovation projects and foster real-world innovation applications.

4.11 CHANGES IN TUITION FEES AND FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDENTS

In 2024, the university received funding to the value R1,197 billion from NSFAS. The funds received were allocated as per table 35 below:

Table 35: NSFAS financial aid

Category	Total amount due per registration data template (NSFAS claim)	Funds received	Amount due to CUT
DE - General	1,290,411,921.00	1,185,142,228.80	105,269,692.20
DE - Disability	4,043,973.20	873,532.00	3,170,441.20
National Skills Fund	-	-	-
NSF - General	-	-	-
Fundza Lushaka Bursary	29,185,893.12	8,553,650.36	20,632,242.76
DMV	30,500.00	30,500.00	-
TRC/REPA	585,070.00	585,070.00	-
DALRRD	432,000.00	432,000.00	-
COIDA	1,481,281.00	1,481,281.00	-
TOTAL	**1,326,170,638.32**	**1,197,098,262.1**	**129,072,376.1**

The 2024 outstanding NSFAS payments are R105,3 million, whilst R20,6 million is outstanding for Funza Lushaka, and R3,2 million is outstanding for the Disability allocation.

4.12 SENATE RISK REPORT

The Senate Risk Report is part of overall enterprise risk management endeavours, and serves as a proactive approach to monitor academic risks and mitigating measurers, specifically those related to teaching, learning, and research portfolios. The report offers an in-depth analysis of risks across faculties and academic support sections for the year, and draws on information from respective units, consultations with stakeholders, and reviews of relevant reports.

For the 2024 reporting period, significant progress was noted in several key areas. Under teaching and learning, the development and offering of short-learning programmes saw positive progress, with some faculties receiving approval for their programmes, whilst others are in the process of development. In the area of research, efforts to increase research publication credit units were successful, as evidenced by the CUT Research Output Report received in December 2024, which confirmed that none of the articles submitted to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in May 2024 were flagged as predatory. Additionally, ethics and integrity issues related to publications were addressed prior to submission, ensuring compliance with academic standards.
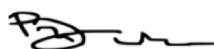
Whilst a procedure related to gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual harassment is still in development, in the domain of Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) and Industry Liaison, measures were implemented to create a conducive work environment for WIL students, and significant progress was made in placing students in selected programmes, ensuring that they gain valuable industry experience. These achievements reflect the university's commitment to addressing academic and operational risks, while fostering a supportive and compliant environment for teaching, learning and research.

Through the Senate Risk Report, CUT demonstrates its dedication to proactive risk management, ensuring that academic risks are identified, assessed, and mitigated effectively. This approach not only supports the university's strategic goals, but also reinforces its commitment to maintaining high standards of academic excellence and institutional integrity.

4.13 CONCLUSION

Senate, as the highest statutory body to which the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997) gives authority over the design, delivery, assessment, and quality assurance of academic, research and engagement programmes at a university, takes pride in the aforementioned contributions and achievements of our academic and support services staff. Senate remained committed to fostering student success by approving student-centred interventions focused on retention, throughput, and academic support.

SIGNED BY:

_____

PROF. PZ DUBE
CHAIRPERSON: SENATE

SECTION 5
INSTITUTIONAL FORUM REPORT

5.1 INTRODUCTION

As we reflect on the 2024 academic year, the Institutional Forum (IF) takes pride in presenting this report, for inclusion in the Annual Report. This report is an essential record of progress, challenges and aspirations. It reflects the shared commitment of our governance structure, with comprehensive representation from leadership teams, academic and support staff, students, and labour as critical stakeholders to the ongoing development and transformation of our institution. The IF continues to play a pivotal role in advising Council on matters that are fundamental to institutional transformation, including issues of equity, redress, inclusivity, and good governance. In alignment with the Higher Education Act and CUT's own Strategic Framework, the IF served as a critical voice and platform for engagement on matters that shape the identity and values of the university.

The IF intensified its advisory role in areas such as the appointment of senior and executive managers, employment equity, institutional culture, and the promotion of social cohesion across campuses. Through robust and constructive dialogue, it has helped ensure that our policies and practices remain aligned with the principles of fairness, transparency, and academic excellence. The forum's engagement has also extended to strengthening stakeholder participation, facilitating communication between constituencies, and fostering a university community that values collaboration and shared responsibility.

The work of the IF remains central to CUT's mission of advancing innovation, transformation and impact through higher education.

As we look ahead, we remain resolute in our collective pursuit of academic excellence, ethical governance, and social responsiveness. It is only through unity of purpose and inclusive dialogue that we will continue to grow as a leading university of technology, responsive to the evolving needs of our society.

5.2 COMPOSITION

The IF derives its statutory function, namely to advise Council on transformational matters, from section 31 of the Higher Education Act (Act No. 101 of 1997), and chapter 7 of the CUT Statute 2017. The composition of the IF is consistent with its terms of reference and the CUT Statute. In keeping with CUT's ongoing transformation agenda and commitment to inclusive representation, the composition of the IF has evolved to reflect the full diversity of our university. The IF now proudly includes a representative for employees from the Welkom Campus, as well as a

representative for persons with disabilities. These representations are not only aligned with best practices in governance, but also affirm CUT's dedication to giving a voice to all constituencies across its campuses, consistent with the core values of CUT.

5.3 ADVISORY INVOLVEMENT

In compliance with the statutory requirement to advise Council, the IF advised Council on transformation and other related matters that affect the institution, including the following:

5.3.1 Recruitment and appointment of executive and senior managers

The recruitment and selection process for filling the Welkom Campus Principal position was in alignment with the procedure for recruitment and appointment of executive and senior managers. The IF participated in the recruitment and selection process for the Welkom Campus Principal position, and provided guidance to Council on the preferred candidates, based on their performance and individual scores.

Recruitment and selection processes for the positions of Executive Director: Resources and Operations, and Executive Director: Office of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Following the review of the policy on the recruitment and selection of executives, the IF was to review each potential candidate's merits; assess the extent to which they meet the requirements for the job; and recommend the best possible candidates for shortlisting, in order for the two executive positions to be filled, using anonymised recruitment reports, in alignment with the new relevant policy and procedure.

However, due to the new procedure requiring candidate information to be anonymised, the IF did not pronounce itself. Instead, the forum proposed to Council that detailed information should be provided, going forward, as a one-page overview makes it difficult for members to determine the degree to which candidates are recommendable for shortlisting.

5.3.2 Advice on approval of policies

CUT language policy and Language Policy Implementation Plan

The CUT language policy had been reviewed. The IF discussed it, together with the associated implementation plan. The forum accepted the reviewed policy, and advised Council to approve it based on the fact it supported all its elements.

5.3.3 Advice on other governance and transformation-related matters

Lack of written response on matters on which the IF advised Council

Concerns were raised about the quarterly reports to Council submitted to the IF meeting of 30 August 2024 not entailing Council's written response on the forum's dissenting view about the summarised overview of, and anonymised reports on, executive appointments. Council was advised to note the IF's concern about this matter.

Based on the Council report that was submitted to the IF meeting of 01 November 2024, the IF advised Council to note that it accepted Council's written response, and that it was awaiting the revision and approval of the procedure for the recruitment and selection of executive managers, after which it might reconsider the matter for further deliberation.

Consolidated Institutional Audit Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

The findings of the institutional audit that was conducted by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) in 2022 gave rise to the development of the Consolidated Institutional Audit QIP, in order to address various institutional matters based on CHE's recommendations.

The IF advised Council to note the following:
- The need to clarify/outline the roles and responsibilities of responsible persons/structures referred to in the Consolidated Institutional Audit QIP, in order to monitor progress.
- The broader institutional renewal and organisational culture unification process is slow, to the extent that it is no longer being perceived as a matter of major concern at CUT.
- Wellness sessions are vital for the well-being of employees. Hence, line managers should be encouraged to release staff to attend scheduled sessions.

Progress report for the period: 01 January 2023 to 31 December 2023 on the implementation of the 2023 Annual Performance Plan (APP)

Council was advised to note that the IF will monitor the development of the Strategic Plan 2026-2030, to ensure that the process provides an enabling framework for all stakeholders to understand the value of an APP, how it is set out, and the contribution of each individual towards achieving Vision 2030.

The IF advised Council to pay attention to the need for CUT to align the Institutional Operational Plan (IOP) and institutional performance metrics with the current Strategic Plan. Council was also advised to note the importance for Council to work harder in ensuring that the Strategic Plan is effectively and efficiently implemented to achieve CUT's strategic objectives.

In the reporting year, the IF met as per the scheduled meetings in the Year Programme.

5.4   CONCLUSION

The IF's advisory function to Council is vital to ensure that CUT effectively and efficiently deals with various transformational and related matters at the two campuses. Overall, Council somewhat pays attention to the IF's advice on various matters, and ensures the implementation thereof. In instances where particular advice is not considered and implemented, reasons are provided, in compliance with the written response requirement in section 31(1A) of the Higher Education Act.

As we close this Annual Report for 2024, we wish to reaffirm the centrality of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the life and progress of CUT. Our achievements are the result of ongoing dialogue, collaboration and partnerships with all those who have a vested interest in the success and transformation of our institution.

The voices of staff, students, organised labour, Management, alumni, and broader community partners are not only valued, but essential. Through platforms such as the IF, we are able to bring together diverse perspectives that strengthen governance, deepen institutional accountability, and foster an inclusive environment in which all members of the university community can thrive.

Looking forward, we commit to enhancing these partnerships, promoting open communication, and ensuring that CUT remains a responsive, responsible and forward-thinking institution. Together, through continuous engagement and shared vision, we will continue to advance the university's mission and contribute meaningfully to the broader societal good.

SIGNED BY:

DR MC MOLETE
CHAIRPERSON: IF

SECTION 6
VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL'S REPORT ON MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

Professor Pamela Z. Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal

6.1   EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2024 academic and operational year was marked by resilience, strategic progress, and a firm commitment to academic excellence and institutional transformation under the leadership of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal. In pursuit of operational excellence, significant investments were made in infrastructure projects and governance reforms, to ensure that CUT remains agile, efficient and sustainable. We continued to place a strong emphasis on good governance, ethical leadership, and social justice as core pillars of our institutional culture. As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our resolve to deliver on the promises of Vision 2030, namely to be a university of technology shaping the future through innovation, excellence, and social impact.

We also strengthened our digital transformation agenda, expanded our research footprint through newly established and accredited research centres, and secured significant national and international partnerships that will drive innovation and impact for years to come. Central to all our achievements has been a steadfast commitment to academic integrity, institutional transformation, inclusivity, and operational excellence. We celebrate the collective resilience

and spirit of our CUT community, whose contributions continue to propel our university forward in an increasingly complex and dynamic higher education environment.

As we reflect on the milestones of 2024, we also recommit ourselves to the journey ahead, to attracting, nurturing and retaining talent; producing knowledge that matters; and advancing the public good. CUT remains focused, agile and ambitious as we shape futures through innovation, creativity and purpose.

2024 was a moment for CUT to celebrate the milestones achieved as part of our 20th anniversary as a university of technology. As we celebrated, we used every opportunity to showcase our remarkable achievements in teaching and learning, research and innovation, and community engagement. The planned events and engagements focusing on the 20th anniversary included a colloquium with other universities of technology to collectively reflect on our competitive advantage, value-add and impact as universities of technology over the past 20 years. The 30 years of democracy celebrated as a country also provided us as the higher education sector with the opportunity to reflect collectively on key achievements over the years, as well as on plans for the future.

As we reflect on 2024, we recognise the tremendous contributions of our Council, Senate, Management teams, academic and support staff, students, and external partners. Together, we continue to shape a university that is relevant, resilient and transformative, preparing graduates who will not only participate in, but lead and redefine the future. Together, we are building a university that is not only relevant for today, but transformative for tomorrow.

This section of the 2024 Annual Report provides a high-level strategic overview, as well as important insights into the key strategic operations of the university, in alignment with the *Regulations for Reporting by Public Higher Education Institutions*. The Annual Report provides an update on the programmes and key activities of CUT in pursuit of its Strategic Plan 2021-2025. In this section, we build on other reports providing updates on the programmes and key activities of CUT in pursuit of its Strategic Plan 2021-2025.

6.2. STUDENT-RELATED MATTERS

Student housing policy development

In October 2021, the Minister published a call for public comments on the *Draft Review Policy on Minimum Norms and Standards for Student Housing* in the *Government Gazette*. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has completed the process of analysing

all comments, incorporating them into the draft review policy. Through 2024 the Division Student Affairs held meetings/workshops from 23 August 2024 to 25 October 2024, to empower colleagues on the new arrangements in place. CUT used these opportunities to engage both the DHET and other stakeholders in gaining insight as to how best to provide student accommodation that provides a "home-away-from-home" environment for our students, both now and in the future.

National Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

The appointment of the Administrator for NSFAS has ushered in an era of much greater engagement with and by the scheme – a welcome development in the relationship between institutions and NSFAS. NSFAS has had several engagements with higher education institutions to discuss, amongst others, the policy framework for student housing, particularly in respect of its links to funding by the agency, as well as a review meeting to discuss issues related to the accreditation and grading of student accommodation; funding caps for accommodation costs; and the regulation of private accommodation facilities

In 2023, NSFAS initiated a pilot project on private student accommodation, as a learning curve towards improving the management of private student housing. Whilst valuable lessons were drawn from this exercise, significant capacity deficiencies have undermined the project's objectives, and have eroded confidence in the organisation. NSFAS embarked on roadshows across the country during August 2024. The aim was to solicit ideas from stakeholders, and to learn from their experiences in preparation for the 2025 academic year. CUT ensured its participation in these engagements, as NSFAS activities have a direct and impactful bearing on the stability of campus operations, particularly in relation to accommodation and related allowance payments.

Students' Representative Council (SRC) elections

The elections for the 2024/2025 SRC were successful at both the Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses of CUT and the new student leaders prepared for their role of representing the broader student body, getting to understand what the role required. The university extended its heartfelt thanks to the SRC of the previous term of office for their important contributions to not only effective representation of student matters at the various platforms in the university, but also for their proactive approach to engagement and desire to be an important source of ideas for making things better for students and the entire university.

6.3   STRATEGIC INITIATIVES AND ENGAGEMENTS

Launch of the Student Women Economic Empowerment Programme (SWEEP) initiative

On 8 October 2024, CUT proudly launched SWEEP, an Entrepreneurship Development in Higher Education (EDHE) initiative designed to empower our female students with the necessary skills and tools to excel in entrepreneurship. This marks an important milestone for CUT in our continuous efforts to support gender equity and drive economic transformation within our community.

SWEEP is founded on the recognition of the significant challenges that female students face, including the pervasive impact of gender-based violence (GBV) and the ongoing under-representation of women in business and entrepreneurship. Through this programme, we aim to address these challenges by providing a supportive environment that equips our female students with practical resources, mentorship opportunities, and access to networks that will help them build successful enterprises and become leaders in their fields.

The launch was well attended, featuring powerful opening remarks from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof. Pamela Dube, whose passion for women's empowerment set an inspiring tone for the day. The programme also included insightful keynote speeches, panel discussions, and testimonials from successful female entrepreneurs, creating a powerful platform for discussion, knowledge sharing, and inspiration. Since its launch, SWEEP has already garnered significant interest, with 101 members from both our Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses joining the chapter. This strong start underscores the eagerness of our female students to be part of an initiative that supports their journey in entrepreneurship and leadership development. Moving forward, the SWEEP Chapter will focus on a variety of activities, including training workshops; mentorship sessions; and community engagement, aimed at building the competencies of our students and fostering a culture of entrepreneurship that drives economic change. Our goal is to create a thriving network of empowered women that will not only contribute to their personal growth, but also serve as catalysts for economic development within their communities. We are proud of this important step towards achieving greater gender equity at CUT, and look forward to the transformative impact that SWEEP will have on our students and beyond.

Institutional Lekgotla

An Institutional Lekgotla was held on 23 October 2024 to discuss the pursuit of quality across the institution, starting with the academe, but also reflecting on the other supporting areas of

the institution. Of particular focus was the intersecting effect of both the size and shape of the institution and its financial sustainability. One of the key messages emanating from the gathering was the importance of integrated and articulated planning at an institutional level if strategic intents are to be successfully pursued.

10th Annual International Conference on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)

The 10th Annual International Conference on SoTL was held from 3 to 5 October 2024 by the Centre for Innovation in Learning and Teaching (CILT), led by the Senior Director, Prof. Ntsoaki Malebo, the Senior Director, under the theme: "A Decade of Embracing Theory and Practice in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning". Through the leadership of Prof. Malebo, the conference culminated in the launch of a book titled: *Perspectives on Curriculum as Praxis Implications for Higher Education Pedagogy*. The conference produced two special issues from two different journals, the *International Journal of Inquiry Based Activities* and the local *Journal of New Generation Sciences*.

Edited by **Dr Xolani Khohliso**, the Director: Curriculum and Academic Staff Development Unit and the Head of SoTL at CUT, and **Prof. Emmanuel Mgqwashu**, Director: Centre for Higher Education Professional Development at North-West University (NWU), the book is not merely an academic book that relates to higher education, but also a valuable and insightful contribution to the sector, envisioned to lead to further doctoral studies, master's qualifications, and even larger projects.

Programme events

The university aspires to be a strategic partner and innovative contributor to the skills revolution on the one hand, and to addressing the unemployment challenge on the other. This is pursued through partnerships with government, business and community stakeholders, to address specific needs in the area of training and skills development. Some highlights of development in this respect were the following:

- CUT, in partnership with Centlec, **unveiled an Executive Leadership and Management Development Programme**, which has been customised for 20 Centlec executive and senior management officials. The six-month Executive Management Development Programme is a certified learning opportunity. Accredited by CUT, this programme adheres to the new approach to education and training, ensuring the development, upskilling and multi-skilling of human capital in the community. The launch of the programme was attended by high-level representatives, namely Cllr Gregory Nthatisi, Mangaung

Metropolitan Municipality Executive Mayor; Cllr Vusi Soqaga, Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC): Engineering and Infrastructure; Mr Casca Mokitlane, Centlec Board Chairperson; and Mr Malefane Sekoboto, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Centlec.

- **The *Samsung Innovation Campus Graduation*** held on 10 September 2024 at the Sanlam Auditorium was a resounding success, bringing together a diverse group of esteemed guests, including the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Prof. PZ Dube, as host; the South Korean Ambassador to South Africa, Ambassador Dong-han Yang; the CEO of Samsung Africa, Mr S Lee; and other high-level provincial delegates. The event was an inspiring celebration of achievement, marking the culmination of months of hard work by students, staff and partners. The graduation ceremony showcased a strong commitment to innovation and education, empowering the next generation of technological leaders and, most importantly, signifying the partnership between CUT and Samsung.

- **CUT hosted a two-day workshop and site visit by Higher Ed Partners South Africa (HEPSA),** the university's strategic partner for the development and implementation of online programmes, on 10 and 11 September 2024. The purpose of the workshop was to achieve mutual orientation towards effective implementation of the project for the establishment and roll-out of the planned online programmes of CUT.

- **Council on Higher Education (CHE) institutional audit:** CHE had conducted the second round of institutional audits of all public universities as well as private higher education institutions. The institutional audit site visit at CUT took place from 1 to 5 August 2022. The final Institutional Audit Report from CHE was received on 5 May 2024. CHE requested that the institutional **Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)** should be submitted to them by 30 August 2024. It is against this background that Institutional Planning and Quality Enhancement (IPQE) proposed a project plan for the development of the QIP and consultation with all relevant stakeholders, up to the submission of the QIP to Council for approval.

- **The launch of the CUT Artificial Intelligence (AI) Hub*:*** Key strategic National Systems of Innovation partnerships that have yielded some positive results include the launch of the **CUT AI Hub** at the end of March 2024. The hub is part of the national AI Institute of South Africa, an initiative of the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies, which has seen two other hubs launched, at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), respectively. The CUT AI Hub aspires to be a leading centre for AI research, development and application in the areas of smart agriculture value chain; smart manufacturing; natural language processing; and smart,

sustainable tourism. High-level representatives at both national and provincial level attended the function.

- **Visit to Virginia Tech (VT), Arlington Campus, Washington***:* The Vice-Chancellor and Principal led a CUT delegation to VT's 2024 summit on *Tech for Humanity,* which was preceded by engagements with the Arlington Campus Research Centre on Human Futures, Future Humans. The partnership with VT is a new relationship for CUT, facilitated by the CUT Vice-Chancellor and Principal, and the lead professor and convener of the Tech for Humanity Hub, Prof. Sylvester Johnson. This new collaboration, which extends from a past and expanded relationship with the University of the Western Cape (UWC), provided for a fully paid trip to CUT's ten delegates, supported by the Henry Luce Foundation sponsorship at VT. Whilst more information on this trip is provided under the global engagements section, it is important to note the value of the contribution that this experience will add to the newly established research centre at CUT to promote responsive and responsible human-centred technology designs and innovation. We were most grateful to be accompanied by our local sponsor for starting up the centre, Dr Daphne Mashile-Nkosi, who has contributed R10.96 million for a five-year period, and by our key community leader, Kgosi Gabo Moroka of the Royal House of Barolong in Thaba 'Nchu. More importantly, the presence of the then Chairperson of Council, Dr Charity Mbileni- Morema, served as testimony of the support at the level of the highest government body, Council, for this new point of departure adopted by the university. We are most grateful to Council for this support.

6.4   FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS AND OPERATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

A total of R12 757 401 was made available to support the following research development programmes:

6.4.1 Next-Generation Researchers

52 staff members are being supported with a grant for project expenses towards completion of their postgraduate degrees. 13 staff members (seven females and six males) are supported towards their master's degrees, whilst 38 staff members (22 females and 16 males) are supported towards completion of their doctoral degrees. Six staff members (two females and four males) were supported with a staff replacement grant towards completion of their doctoral degrees (five of these staff members applied for both project expenses and staff replacement). Four staff members (three females and one male) in the PhD Track was supported to advance

their research, which was already successfully funded by the National Research Foundation (NRF). A series of seven workshops have been funded, at a total cost of R352 714,18.

- **Emerging researchers:** Three emerging researchers (two females and one male) in the Thuthuka Post-PhD Track was supported to advance their research, which was already successfully funded by the NRF. Nine emerging researchers (three males and six females) who recently completed their doctoral degrees were supported with research project expenses towards advancement of their research careers.
- **Mid-career researchers:** Five mid-career researchers (three females and two males) in the Thuthuka NRF Rating Track were supported to advance their research, which was already successfully funded by the NRF.
- **Established researchers:** 23 established researchers (three females and 20 males) were supported to advance their research, which was already successfully funded by the NRF.
- **Women in Research:** 30 females out of 52 grant recipients were supported under the University Capacity Development Plan (UCDP) Grant.

The university supported 278 academic staff and postgraduate students, to the value of R 22 917 571, through various programmes, namely next-generation, early, mid- and established career programmes; and initiatives supported by the NRF, postdoctoral fellowships and postgraduate studies. A total of 128 female researchers and students (46% of the total beneficiaries) were supported, to the value of R11 641 588, which is 51% of the total funding available.

6.4.2 CUT partnership with the Free State Provincial Government (FSPG)

CUT has an active partnership and relationship with the FSPG and related local role players in high esteem. The university is actively involved in enhancing the innovation ecosystem in the Free State province and establishing innovation hubs, for example in the development of the Free State Science and Innovation Park, as well as in a baseline study of the Free State innovation system. CUT's involvement in the recent Free State Investment Summit, as well as the State of the Province Address (SOPA) and the budget speech, demonstrates our awareness of our location, and our commitment to adding value to its growth and development. In his speech, the Premier mentioned the importance of our relationship; the project involving training and skills development for communities in the province through the 36-month labour-based pothole repair programme in which we are cooperating; and their support to students through the Premier bursaries, as well as through funding for historical debt, in partnership with the Manufacturing, Engineering, and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA). A meeting was scheduled with the Premier and

his team to meet our leadership team, to track progress on our commitments and explore potential new areas for collaboration.

6.4.3 NRF Consultation and Research Chair Tier 1

The NRF visited the university on 20 June 2024 to discuss the alignment of the university with the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI)'s Decadal Plan priorities and participation in the South African Research Chairs Initiative (SARCHi) programme. Discussions were centred around the interaction of the Research Chair and DSI Product Development Technology Station (PDTS). The NRF indicated the uniqueness of the research-innovation ecosystem, which include research chairs, as a good model to replicate at other universities. In anticipation of the NRF Research Chair in Medical Product Development through Additive Manufacturing ending in December 2024, the SARChI Five-Year Review Report and application for Tier 1 were submitted to the NRF for consideration as was successful.

6.4.4 Collaboration and partnerships

In a bold move to advance health innovation across Africa, the Ifakara Innovation Hub (IIH), part of the Ifakara Health Institute (IHI); the Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM); and the NRF SARChI Chair for Medical Product Development through Additive Manufacturing at CUT, have forged a cross-border partnership between Tanzania and South Africa. This collaboration represents not just a milestone for the IIH, CRPM and NRF SARChI Chair, but also a significant leap forward in our shared mission to transform the health innovation landscape in Africa.

Scholarships: Scholarships to the value of R14 625 859 were awarded to 41 honours, 84 master's and 35 doctoral students. Two staff members received a R500 000 grant each from the DHET UCDP University Staff Doctoral and Junior Research Fellows programme.

6.4.5 Centres Impact and Performance Report 2024

In fulfilling its mandate, the university initiates a policy to enable the organisation of research centres as vehicles to ensure relevant and focused research and innovation. CUT has the following research centres , approved by Senate:

- Centre for Applied Food Security and Biotechnology (CAFSaB);
- Centre for Diversity in Higher Education Research (CDHER);
- Centre for Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Studies (CEES);
- Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM);
- Centre for Sustainable Smart Cities (CSSC); and

- Centre on Quality of Health and Living (CQHL).
- CUT Artificial Intelligence (AI) Hub

6.5   COMMUNICATION, MARKETING AND BRANDING

6.5.1 Media coverage and communication

The Communications and Marketing Section continued to provide news coverage and photographic services for faculty and institutional events to enhance the university's brand. Unmediated communication channels effectively communicated university messages comprehensively to internal and external stakeholders through official digital communication platforms. *Thutong Today* (the electronic internal weekly newsletter), the university's website newsroom, and social media platforms were fully used. Campus screens were also used to enhance internal communication.

The unit covered many initiatives, including achievements, partnerships and celebrations, highlighting the institution's commitment to academic excellence, student success, and community engagement. The university celebrated the autumn graduations, conferring degrees and diplomas to more than 4 000 students. Notably, 18 graduates received doctoral degrees, and 38 were awarded master's degrees. Dr Michael Jordaan was honoured with an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy in Management Sciences for his exceptional contributions to business leadership. The content was shared internally and externally across all communication platforms, including media outlets.

6.5.2 Partnerships and collaborations

The United States (US) Ambassador visited the institution to explore potential areas of collaboration. CUT and the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality co-hosted a dialogue, themed "Empowering Voices: Celebrating three decades of Human Rights Advocacy", in commemoration of Human Rights and Freedom Day.

6.5.3 Research and innovation

CUT's Communications and Marketing Section is leading a strategic project of profiling academics for their contribution to the university's academic project beyond the confines of the university. Several academics were identified, and profiled in *Thutong Today* and on other media platforms. These include Profs Greg Alexander, Danri Delport, Pamela Dube, Mercia Coetzee, Deon de Beer, Ryk Lues, and Olga Smidt.

6.5.4 Internationalisation

The Centre for Global Engagement collaborated with the University West, Sweden, to host the WIL24 Conference. The conference focused on "Work Integrated Learning for Global Engagement and Societal Development" as its theme.

6.6 TEACHING AND LEARNING

6.6.1 Accreditation of programmes

The following programmes were submitted to the DHET for Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM) clearance:

- Diploma in Engineering in Civil Engineering (360 credits);
- Diploma in Engineering in Electrical Engineering (360 credits);
- Diploma in Engineering in Mechanical Engineering (360 credits); and
- Doctor of Radiography.

PQM clearance was received from the DHET for the Doctor of Philosophy in Built Environment, and the programme was submitted to CHE for accreditation purposes.

A written representation was made to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for the registration of the Bachelor of Engineering Technology Honours in Electrical Engineering. The programme was registered by SAQA during the period under review, to be offered at CUT from 2025.

6.6.2 Reviews

IPQE coordinated the following internal reviews in 2024:

- CILT;
- Higher Certificate in Dental Assisting;
- Finance Division;
- Community Engagement Unit;
- Postgraduate Diploma in Project Management;
- Department of Agriculture review: Diploma in Agricultural Management, Advanced Diploma in Agricultural Management, Postgraduate Diploma in Agricultural Management, and Master of Agriculture;
- Bachelor of Health Sciences in Clinical Technology; and
- Master of Health Sciences in Clinical Technology.

IPQE provided support to the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences for the external review of the Bachelor of Health Science in Medical Laboratory Science by the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).

6.7 ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES AND RESOURCES REGARDING BOTH STAFF AND SYSTEMS

The Human Resources (HR) Section aligns its strategic priority areas with CUT's strategy, in order to contribute to the strategic intent of the university.

Table 36: HR strategic priority areas aligned with CUT strategic intent

CUT strategic goals	Strategic objectives	HR strategic priority areas
S1: To create a harmonious community conducive to teaching and learning.	S1.2. Promote organisational well-being by providing a vibrant and healthy environment.	Employee engagement and well-being.
S3. To develop a strong culture of research and innovation.	S3.1. Achieve the research publication unit targets in the Enrolment Plan.	Performance management, reward, and employee development.
S4. To attract, develop and retain staff as the university's most important asset.	S.4.1. Achieve the doctoral qualification targets in the Enrolment Plan. S4.3 Develop instruction/research staff as university teachers.	Recruitment/talent acquisition and talent management. Performance management, reward, and employee development.
S5. To build strategic partnerships that contribute to the achievement of the university's goals.	Non-App related strategic platforms	Strategic business partnering with Key stakeholders, namely the Management Committee (Mancom), Labour Relations Forum (LRF), Joint Bargaining Forum (JBF), Extended Management Committee (EMC), University Transformation Advisory Committee (UTAC), Protection of Personal Information Act (PoPIA) Committee, HR Committee (HRC), organised labour, and the university at large.
S6. To ensure institutional sustainability, expand streams of income, and enhance the CUT brand.	S6.1. Increase third-stream income in an effort to ensure sustainability.	Workplace Skills Plan and third-Stream income via the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs); Workforce Plan.
S7. To promote good governance, human rights, and social justice.	S7.1. Effective governance and management structures.	Operational excellence, employment equity and employee relations; internal and external audits.

Quarterly reporting on HR activities was done to illustrate achievements in each of these strategic priority areas.

6.7.1 Employee engagement and well-being

Based on research that has demonstrated over the years that an engaged workforce remains one of the key strategic imperatives for success, and studies showing how engagement significantly affects essential outcomes such as productivity, customer satisfaction, discretionary effort, commitment and well-being (Shuck, 2011; Shuck & Reio, 2011; Shuck & Reio, 2014), CUT conducts an institutional employee engagement survey every two years, to identify and better understand the state of engagement and well-being of employees. With this knowledge, the intent is to address organisational support initiatives, in an effort to improve engagement as a strategic imperative. During 2024, various recommendations were implemented based on the findings from the survey.

Consistent with the findings of the CUT employee engagement study conducted, CUT leaders and policymakers were encouraged to maintain and improve the general well-being and engagement of employees. Accordingly, various preventative wellness sessions were conducted during 2024. The table below provides an outline of sessions/events for the entire year:

Table 37: Employee wellness sessions 2024

Date	Focused preventative sessions and wellness events
Thu, 11 April	Work/Life Balance and Adjusting to Change (tips and tools)
Wed, 24 April	Burnout and Resilience
Wed, 22 May	Specialised Training (1 hour): Managing Personal and Work Stress
Wed, 17 July	Interpersonal Conflict
Wed, 21 August	Managing Relationships (Work and Personal)
Tue, 27 August	Employee Wellness Day Event - Bloemfontein Campus
Thu, 29 August	Employee Wellness Day Event - Welkom Campus
Wed, 16 October	Bereavement
Wed, 13 November	Mental Well-Being

6.7.2 Employee Wellness (Assistance) Programme

Psychological wellness services were made available to employees and their dependents (those who are financially dependent on them) via Life Health Solutions on a needs basis. Wellness services include the following:

Psychosocial support

Experienced and qualified psychosocial practitioners provide support, which is effective in helping people to resolve their difficulties, including, but not limited to:

- family, relationship or marital problems; parent-child difficulties; child behavioural or emotional problems; risk aspects; conflict; and work-related difficulties;
- any individual needing assistance with gambling, alcohol or substance dependency will be assessed, and if highly motivated to change, he/she will be assisted with counselling;
- mental health illnesses, such as anxiety, depression or stress, and issues relating to bereavement and loss;
- emotional and adjustment disorders;
- sexuality problems; and
- HIV/AIDS-related concerns.

Where needed, employees (and their dependents) are encouraged to contact the professional Care Centre support line on the following details:

- Toll-free from a landline: 0800 004 770
- E-mail: ewp@lifehealthcare.co.za
- SMS your name to 31581
- WhatsApp: 0664882273 (text enquiries only)

Management consulting

For Management, the following care centre services are provided:

- Services to address managers' needs regarding employees they find challenging or difficult to manage, wherein consultation with the manager will occur, to obtain background information regarding the employee's problem and his/her management of the situation. He/she will be further supported, and his/her skills will be developed further in respect of his/her own people skills.
- Services to address managers' personal needs.
- Consultation to managers on a problem or troubled employee will be done by means of a five-stage process, consisting of engagement, assessment, intervention, action planning, and follow-up. The consultation may be conducted telephonically or in person, depending on the needs and location of the manager.
- Aspects related, but not limited to, employee performance, safety and conduct; incapacity management; absenteeism; resilience enhancements; etc.

Where managers need to refer an employee to the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), they need to complete the managerial referral form, obtain consent from the employee, and e-mail the completed form to the care centre at managers@lifehealthcare.co.za. In these cases, managerial feedback reports will be provided two weeks after completing the assessments.

Virgin Active agreement

CUT has partnered with Virgin Active, as a well-established gymnasium nationally (with facilities in both Bloemfontein and Welkom). The agreement includes customised physical team-building sessions for departments/units as part of team building (no cost to CUT).

The offer further entails the following benefits for staff, staff's spouses, and students who join the gym:

- 20% off the retail rate for 12-month memberships.
- 20% discount on any monthly campaigns (e.g., if a campaign in July is a 25% discount on the premier package, there will be a total discount of 25% + 20%).
- Reduced joining fees.
- R199 card fees for the main estate, and R199 for collection.
- 10% off the retail price for CUT students, as well as the R199 joining fee.

6.7.3 Employee Relations (ER) initiatives

ER continued with awareness sessions, training on employment statutes, and attendance of faculty board and sectional meetings. These proved to be very instrumental in creating a conducive environment for teaching and learning within the institution, covering all departments/faculties.

6.8 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT, REWARD, AND EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

6.8.1 Performance management

CUT aims to develop and retain staff as the university's most important asset, and to further develop a strong culture of research and innovation (S3 and S4). The performance management process as a governance structure now enables the university on an institutional level to:

- enable employees and line managers to align individual performance efforts for the year to the strategic intent of the university;
- encourage the collaborative monitoring of staff performance and continuous

feedback/dialogue between the employer (line manager) and employee regarding performance, support and developmental needs; and

- promote targeted and strategically aligned employee development.

This process thus supported the achievement of the strategic goals and objectives by offering a formal way for employees and line managers to plan for, and monitor, the achievement of accredited research publications as part of their formal 2024 performance contracts.

HR compiled a report on the 2024 mid-year review results for the executive managers. This feedback report allowed executive members to share an overview of results with the relevant divisional management team, and further served to:

- offer an overview of overall mid-year performance reviews per division (section);
- allow each executive the opportunity to provide feedback on whether review scores align with the progress made by the division towards the achievement of CUT's strategic goals/objectives; and
- provide oversight, and ensure the integrity of the performance management process in offering input on whether consistent/fair evaluation has taken place across the various divisions.

Although this report is provided to executive managers as part of governance oversight, it remains the responsibility of each line manager and employee to fulfil their commitments to the institutional process by planning for, and assessing, performance expectations aligned with the strategic goals and objectives of CUT.

6.8.2 Remuneration and reward

To address external parity, Mancom has approved funding for a strategic project to appoint an expert service provider to assist the university over a period of 12 to 24 months to:

- review CUT's current remuneration structure, and compare it with national best practices in employee remuneration; and
- design an innovative, fit-for-purpose and fair remuneration structure, for consultation with relevant stakeholders and approval by Council.

The project is well underway. The service provider has completed their data gathering and analysis, and presented their findings to the relevant bodies in the first quarter of 2025.

6.9   TALENT MANAGEMENT

The objective of integrated talent management is to engage, nurture and retain talent across

the institution once talent has been recruited through the Talent Acquisitions Office. As part of the HR strategic priority areas, key initiatives/processes have been developed to best support the strategic goals and accompanying APP objectives. These include the following:

6.9.1 Onboarding (develop and nurture talent)

The onboarding programme was developed to integrate the employee into the institution and the job, to help new hires understand their role and how it links to achieving the institutional vision and goals. An Induction Day event forms part of the onboarding process, and focuses on providing new employees with an overview of the university, including information from key units, such as the Research Development Office and CILT. This session provides information related to research support and funding, especially for early career researchers or those planning to complete a doctorate. These Induction Day events were scheduled as part of the CUT Year Programme.

Table 38: List of induction dates 2024

Appointed	Induction dates	Executive team representative	Facilitating HR Consultant
Dec. 2023 – Feb. 2024	Thursday, 15 February 2024	Registrar: Dr Sally Dzingwa	Ms Lerato Tseki
Mar. – May 2024	Wednesday, 15 May 2024	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Research, Innovation and Engagement: Prof. Alfred Ngowi	Ms Refiloe Khabo
Jun. – Aug. 2024	Friday, 2 August 2024	DVC: Teaching and Learning: Prof. David Ngidi	Mr Tumi Moshotloa
Sept. – Nov. 2024	Tuesday, 5 November 2024	Acting Executive Director: Resources and Operations: Dr Joe Molete	Mr Paleli Hlabahlaba

In addition to the HR Specialist Services (HRSS) Unit fulfilling a pivotal role in facilitating the staff study support bursary and learning/development funding, in order to best support the strategic goal, the Learning and Development Office sourced specified funding to focus and support lecturer/researcher development and innovation (see the section on the Workplace Skills Plan for an outline of the training conducted in the 2024 period).

6.9.2 Divisional talent forums (develop, nurture and retain talent)

Talent forums are governance structures consisting of managerial teams at different levels. Talent forums are conducted to inform Management of the processes, strategies and initiatives surrounding talent management within the institution, and to encourage a shared responsibility in terms of the management of CUT talent, especially the nurturing and retention thereof.

Talent forums further serve as a tool to review and identify talent management needs per division, propose action plans, and ensure buy-in from managerial stakeholders across divisions. These forums comprise the following representatives:

* Relevant DVC/Registrar/Chief Financial Officer (CFO)/Executive Director: Resources and Operations, as the Chairperson;
* faculty deans/directors or managers of sections;
* heads of department (HoDs)/heads of units;
* HR Consultant for specified division/faculty;
* union representative (in observer status); and
* Senior Talent Management Specialist.

Talent forums for 2024 were scheduled as per the dates below:

* Thursday, 15 August 2024 (Research, Innovation and Engagement Division)
* Wednesday, 21 August 2024 (Registrar's Division)
* Thursday, 19 September 2024 (Resources and Operations Division)
* Friday, 4 October 2024 (Teaching and Learning Division)
* Thursday, 17 October 2024 (Finance Division)

6.9.3 Succession and career path planning (develop, nurture and retain talent)

To further support the strategic goal of *developing and retaining staff as the university's most important asset,* talent initiatives such as career path and succession planning were established.

Career path planning

Career path planning provides an opportunity for employees to achieve a match between realistically available roles at CUT and their personal career aspirations, irrespective of the division. Career path planning enables employees to take ownership of their own professional development. It is most often initiated by the employee, but it can be initiated by a manager of units/sections in ensuring that more than one person is skilled or developed to perform the

duties of key roles in smaller sections/units/departments, and in preparation for future vacancies in the smaller sections/units/departments.

Table 39: Short description of career path planning

Procedure	Short Description
Career path planning	1. Career path planning is individual focused, as it establishes a sequence of job opportunities available that individual employees can pursue in alignment with their personal career aspirations. It is usually initiated by the employee, but can be initiated/requested by the manager.
	2. No vacancy needs to exist. All full-time employees are eligible; a person need only meet or exceed performance standards in the current role to start career path development discussions and set up a development plan/milestone towards meeting the requirements of the desired role.
	3. There is no selection process to complete career path planning development. Calls facilitated by a manager will accordingly include support for development interventions for all those interested. (*The training budget is to cover training costs, whilst the requesting manager's operational budget is to cover all other fees*).
	4. Upon completion of the career path development process, the employee needs to apply for, and compete in, a recruitment process, should a position become available.

Succession planning key updates for consideration

Succession planning is a deliberate, systematic and institution-focused strategic approach on the part of the Executive Management team to groom a pool of selected talent to compete for key leadership/critical roles per division as they become vacant. This procedure aims to retain and develop intellectual and knowledge capital for the future, and to invest in strengthening the leadership pipeline of the university. Eligible employees are to undergo a selection process to form part of the succession development pool. Selected succession candidates are to apply for, and compete in, a recruitment process once a position becomes available.

As per section 3.3.2 of the procedure on succession planning, inclusion within a talent pool does not guarantee a future leadership position, nor does it constitute the classification of categories for promotion. Rather, it serves to develop and strengthen the university's leadership pipeline. (Note: External recruitment is used for all executive and senior leadership roles (P1-P5)). The following key updates are outlined:

- Succession planning will be phased in by the Executive Management team, going forward. It is highlighted that efforts such as career path planning will be implemented for positions becoming vacant in 2025 and 2026. As the position of DVC: Research, Innovation and Engagement became vacant on 1 January 2025, the recruitment process has started. The

table below offers an overview of key leadership positions that become vacant within the period 2025 and 2026, and for which division executives have started career path planning efforts, in collaboration with the Talent Office.

- As per the succession planning procedure, for future institutional succession planning efforts for potential vacant Executive Management positions, going forward, the executive and senior leaders per division will be responsible to:
  - establish/set up succession plans per division (a step-by-step implementation guideline has been developed); and
  - executives are to report to the HRC of Council on the status and progress of succession plans per division.

Table 40: Career path planning interventions started in place of succession for 2025 and 2026

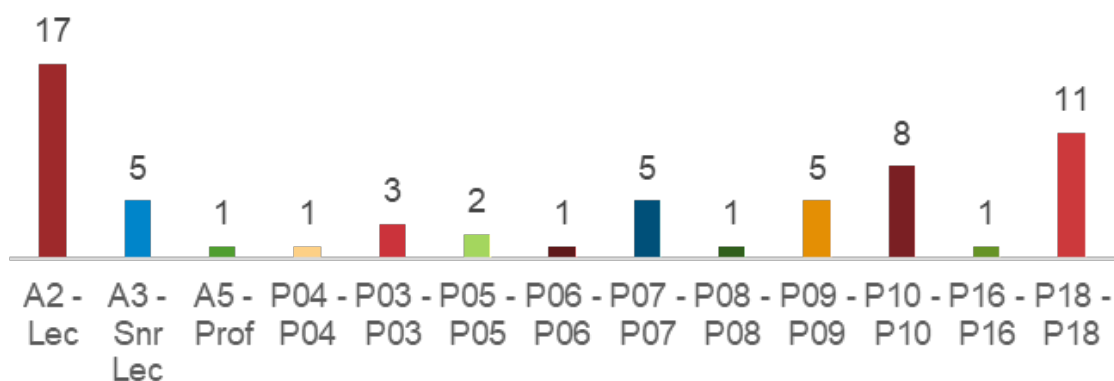| Division	Position	Vacancy date	Career path planning (2025 and 2026)
Research, Innovation and Engagement	DVC: Research, Innovation and Engagement	1 Jan. 2025	n/a. Recruitment process has commenced, as the position became vacant.
Teaching and Learning	DVC: Teaching and Learning	1 May 2026	In process: A career path call was issued in *Thutong Today* from 16 August 2024 – 30 August 2024, via the Office of the DVC: Teaching and Learning. Two employees showed interest in career paths towards these posts. Meetings were held between the Senior Talent Management Specialist, the DVC: Teaching and Learning, and the Vice-Chancellor and Principal to advise on development initiatives. Meetings were subsequently held with each of the employees, to provide them with feedback and assist them in setting up career path development plans that would best position them to apply for the position.
	Dean: Faculty of Management Sciences	1 January 2026	In process: A career path call was issued in *Thutong Today* from 16 August 2024 – 30 August 2024, via the Office of the DVC: Teaching and Learning. One employee showed interest. Meetings were held between the Senior Talent Management Specialist, the DVC: Teaching and Learning, and the Vice-Chancellor and Principal to advise on development initiatives. Meetings were subsequently held with each of the employees, to provide them with feedback and assist them in setting up career path development plans that would best position them to apply for the position.

6.10 RECRUITMENT/TALENT ACQUISITION

As at December 2024, 12% of the Council-approved positions on CUT's permanent organisational structure were vacant. Vacancies in the Teaching and Learning Division, specifically the four faculties, comprise the largest portion of this, with 80 out of 493 (16%) of positions in the division being vacant. The average length of vacancies in this division is three years, which can be attributed to faculties using savings from vacant positions to fund part-time lecturing appointments.

Figure 20: Cost per hire for 2024

Year-to-date cost per hire

The average **direct** costs associated with recruiting a new employee into a Council-approved permanent position. It includes advertising costs, fees paid to executive search firms, travel costs, etc. This amount excludes indirect costs, such as labour, onboarding and

Figure 21: New appointments per post level

23 out of 38 new appointments made in 2024 were academic vacancies. The greatest number of appointments in support services were made at P18, and can be attributed to the continued insourcing of previously outsourced cleaning and gardening services.

Figure 22: Demographic information on new hires
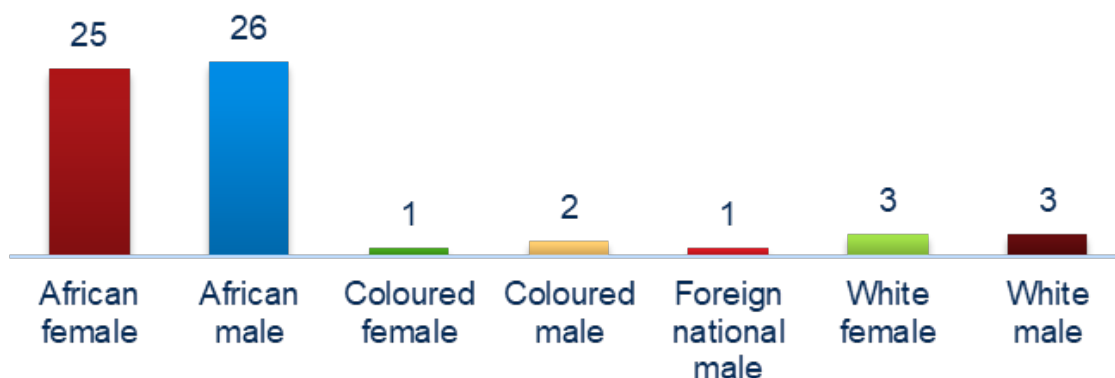
As can be seen from the graph above, the majority of new permanent employees were African or from other designated groups. CUT continues to make strides towards meeting its numerical targets in line with the Employment Equity Act.

Figure 23: Year-to-date retention rates

CUT's retention rate of employees in Council-approved permanent posts who remained at CUT from the beginning of a specific time period to the end of that same time period, remains high, with a turnover rate of less than 1%.

6.11 STRATEGIC BUSINESS PARTNERING WITH KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Building and enhancing strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, both internally and externally, is the foundation for building a successful relationship in line with the institution's strategic objectives.

6.11.1 Workplace Skills Plan and SETA Workforce Plan

To best support this strategic goal, efforts were made by HR to ensure compliance with the SETA and governance structures by submitting a strategically aligned Workplace Skills Plan and Annual Training Plan that enabled the university to generate additional third-stream income via the Mandatory Grant and Discretionary Grant allocations.

- For the 2023/2024 period, an award of R1 million was received from the Education, Training and Development Practices (ETDP) SETA.
- An additional amount of R692 307 was awarded by the ETDP SETA towards digital transformation skills training.

The table below provides an overview of the various training initiatives conducted via the office of the Skills Development Facilitator.

Table 41: Skills development interventions in 2024

| Training focus	Training details	Month conducted in 2024
Lecturer development training *(Education, training and development sector skills gaps for 2020/2025 – major group 2 – professionals)*	Assessor, Facilitation and Moderation Writing Retreat (training rolled out in collaboration with CILT)	January – September December
Digital transformation	Human-Centric Digital Transformation	February – March
	Basic Computer Literacy (Occupational level 6 staff)	June – July
Compliance training	Fire Emergency Preparedness	June
	First Aid (CUT)	September – October
Management training *(Education, training and development sector skills gaps for 2020/2025 – major group 1 – managers)*	Conflict Management	June
	Managers/HoD training (outward performance)	November
Education, training and development sector skills gaps for 2020/2025 – customised programmes under public higher education institutions: financial skills	Financial Literacy (*wage wise)	July – August

6.12 OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

To ensure effective governance and compliance, HR is an active member of the PoPIA Committee. Collaboration with the internal and external auditors to ensure good governance and compliance is maintained. The Employment Equity and Skills Development committees are effectively functioning. New legislation is adhered to and complied with, to ensure that the institution's interests are not at risk.
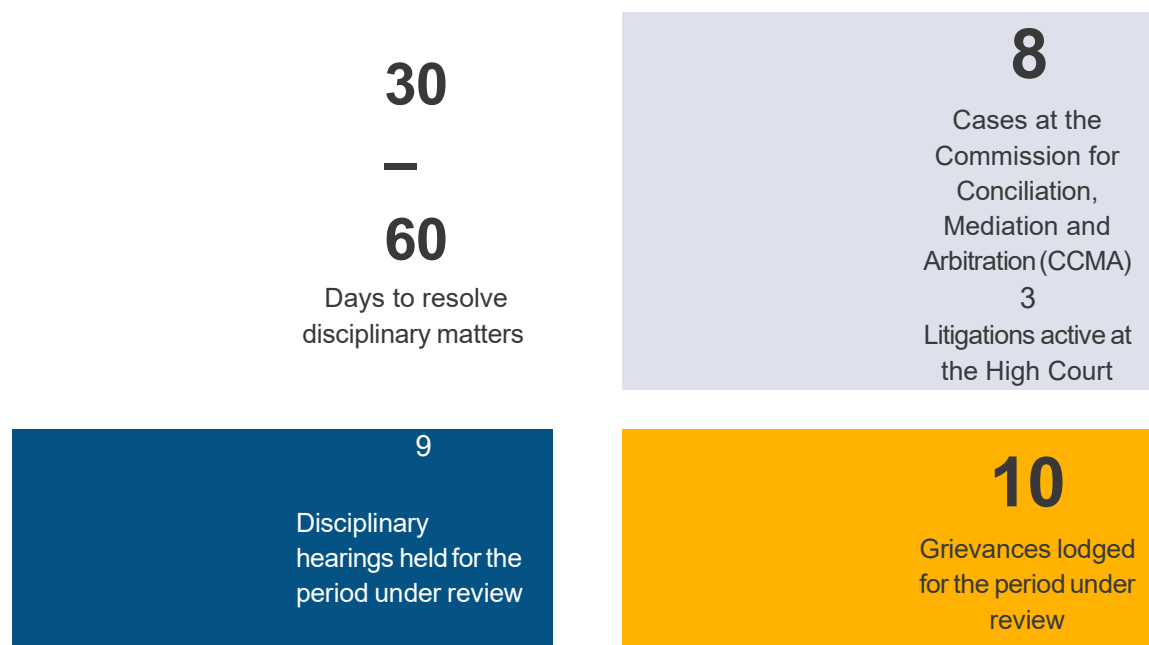
6.13 EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

ER is pleased to report that the LRF and JBF, as the institutional forums created for Management and the unions to consult and engage on issues of mutual interest, are fully operational, and are serving their purpose of strengthening healthy relationships. These forums underscore the importance of healthy and vibrant engagement in the workplace, which seeks to promote a harmonious and conducive environment for teaching and learning.

Figure 24: Union representation
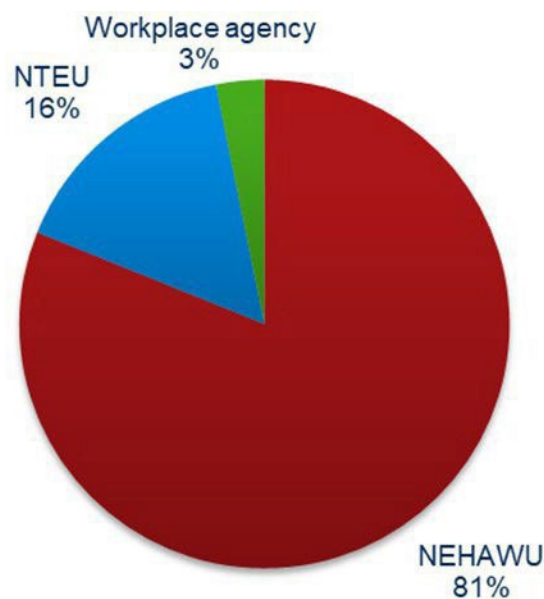
NB: NTEU will no longer be a recognised union, as they have not met the required threshold, and has been given formal notice of such.

Figure 25: Litigations and claims 2024

30 – 60
Days to resolve disciplinary matters

8
Cases at the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA)
3
Litigations active at the High Court

9
Disciplinary hearings held for the period under review

10
Grievances lodged for the period under review

For the period under review, ER had nine internal disciplinary hearings, which were finalised, and nine investigations. Three employees were placed on precautionary suspension, whilst five employees were placed on suspension as a sanction.

There were eight CCMA disputes, which were related to unfair dismissal and were all arbitrated by the CCMA; two active litigation cases pending before the Labour Court; and one settled case at the High Court.

There were ten dismissals from 2022 to 2024, for reasons related to victimisation, harassment, and acting without authority (one); gross dishonesty (one); contravention of the supply chain policy (one); theft (three); fraud (one); sexual harassment (one); and abscondment (two).

6.14 THE EXTENT TO WHICH EQUITY TARGETS IN THE WORKPLACE HAVE BEEN REALISED, INCLUDING GENDER TRANSFORMATION

6.14.1 Employment equity

The university's current Employment Equity (EE) Plan was approved in 2020, following a compliance review by the Department of Employment and Labour. The following figure provide a summarised comparison against the EE Plan, in terms of percentages, of the representation of each of the demographic groups of employees, as compared to the EE target for that group.

Figure 26: CUT performance against annual EE targets
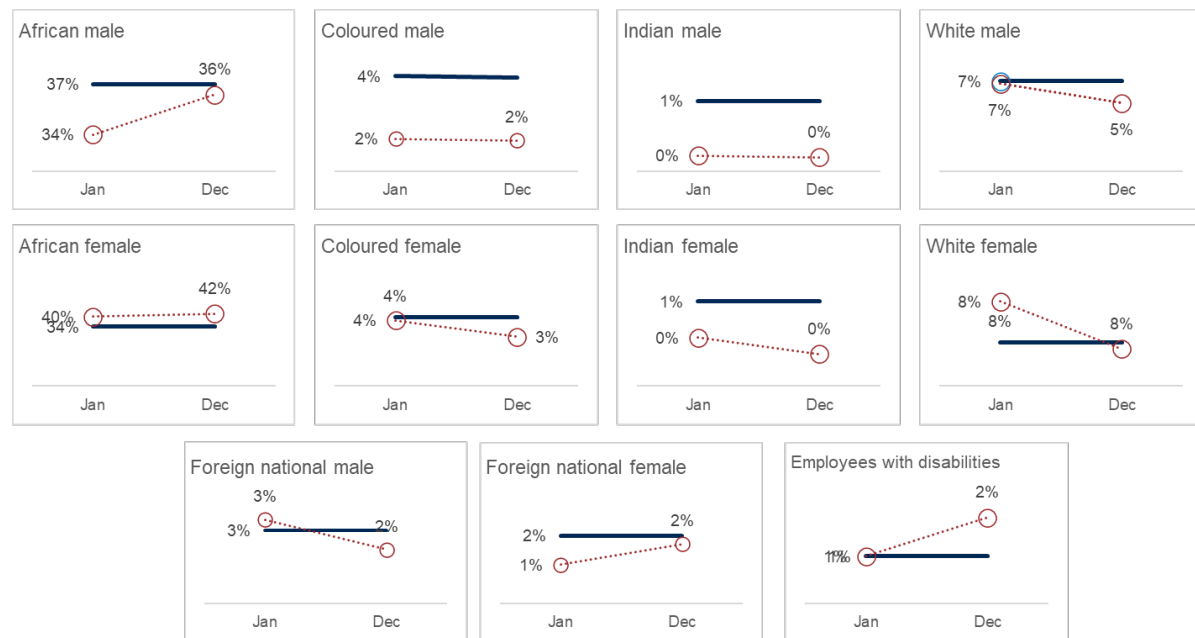
As can be seen from the above figure, CUT met or exceeded its EE targets for the year 2024 in the majority of designated and non-designated groups, with the exception of Coloured males and females, and Indian males and females. Decreases in representation by members of non-designated groups (i.e., White males and foreign nationals) is to be expected, as CUT works towards a workforce that is representative of the country's economically active population.

Figure 27: Representation of demographic groups at CUT

Black employees (A, C, I): 83,4%
Female employees: 52,6%
Employees with disabilities: 1,63%
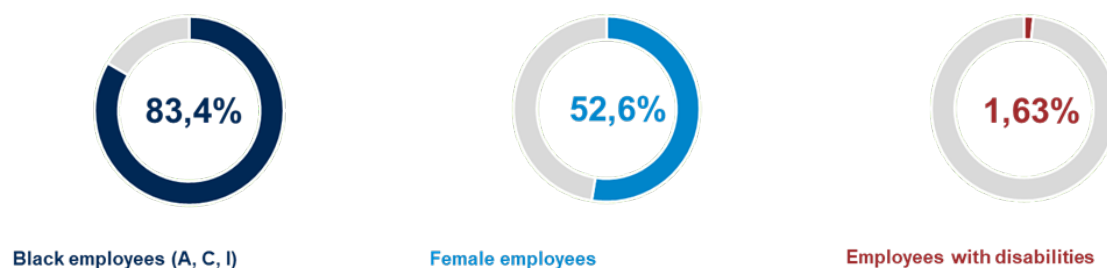
Of importance is the marked increase, from 0,9% to 1,63%, in representation of employees with disabilities over the course of 2024. This can be directly attributed to the strategic project launched by HR to raise awareness and create a disability-confident workplace.

6.15 FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Progress on the facilities and infrastructure plans of the institution for the period under reporting is as follows:

- The Free State Sport Science Institute (FSSSI) and Cecelia Park land exchange agreement between the FSPG and CUT was signed and concluded in November 2022. The agreement will be implemented over a three-year period from the date of the agreement, which entails the relocation of the FSSSI to Cecelia Park.

- CUT has paid the FSPG R90 million out of the R104 million in terms of this agreement, with the final instalment of approximately R15 million payable on/before 31 March 2025.

- The land exchange agreement allows for beneficial occupation, where CUT may occupy certain properties that are currently not in use by the FSSSI, as well as the vacant land parcels that form part of the agreement. The process to accommodate the CUT Sport Excellence Facility at the FSSSI, in keeping with the beneficial occupation arrangements, is underway.

- The process to rezone, subdivide and consolidate the land in terms of the Spatial Planning and Land Use Management Act (SPLUMA) is currently in progress.

- During the year under review, Estates and Infrastructure has successfully completed three new building projects (the so-called "mega projects"), namely:
  - o a 221-bed student residence in Welkom;
  - o a 126-bed student residence in Bloemfontein; and
  - o the Welkom Campus Multipurpose Hall.

- Construction of two new building projects is currently underway, namely:
  - o the Jewellery Building at the Bloemfontein Campus (anticipated completion in April 2025); and

  - o the Teacher Education Building at the Welkom Campus (anticipated completion in November 2025).

- A number of key buildings have been identified for, and fitted with, backup power supply through the use of inverters, in addition to the installed diesel generator capacity, namely:
  - o Gymnos Residence;
  - o Manheim Men and Manheim Ladies residences;
  - o Graduandi House;
  - o Huis Technikon;
  - o Old Loggies; and
  - o Science Park.

- This is to minimise the effects of loadshedding and any other power outages. In addition, this contributes to the university's sustainability initiatives through renewable energy solutions.
- The installation of backup generators is ongoing. For the period under review, the following generators were procured and installed:
    - 500 KVA at the BHP Phase 1 and 2;
    - 100 KVA at Ya Rona Building;
    - 200 KVA at O Block, A Block, and the library at the Welkom Campus;
    - 400 KVA at the Multipurpose Hall; and
    - 200 KVA at New Loggies.

6.16 INTEGRATED SECURITY SYSTEM (ISS)

Progress on the ISS for the period under reporting is as follows:

- The ISS comprises an access control system; closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance system; and intruder detection alarm system, which serve as an additional layer of security to assist our staff to enhance safety and security on both campuses.
- The university has started seeing a return on investment on the ISS project. The security systems have assisted in significantly reducing the number of security-related and criminal incidents on both campuses.
- This system will also assist in data retention, to resolve some of the cases that end up being investigated.
- The reaction time of Protection Services to a security breach incident has improved because of the surveillance capabilities of this system.

6.17 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY (OHS)

Committed to fostering a safe and compliant environment, the university develops and improves sound practices to protect university stakeholders. It upholds relevant health, safety and environmental legal requirements. The following are reported for the period under review:

Incident recording and investigation

Injury on duty: For the period under review, and as reflected in the graphical summary below, 16 work-related injuries that necessitated medical attention were reported. These injuries involved trips, slips, falls, altercation with students, and mechanical injuries. Safety measures were strengthened, to reduce risk and improve workplace safety.

Figure 28: Type of incidents

Types of accidents: 2024
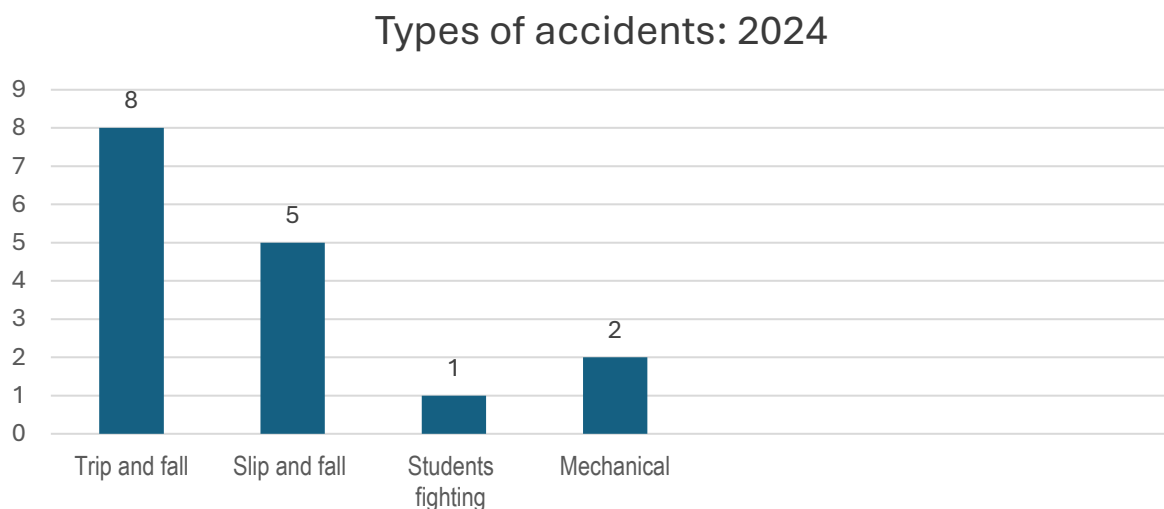
Two fire smoke incidents were reported:

- A smoke alarm in the library, accompanied by a smoke smell, triggered heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) shutdowns. An investigation by internal units and an external service provider found no electrical faults. The issue was traced to a faulty smoke detector on the second floor, possibly linked to recent air conditioner installations on the third floor.

- At the Ya Rona Building, an unattended hotplate caused significant smoke, triggering the building's fire alarm and prompting an evacuation. The fire department responded, confirming no flames, but identifying the smoke as a safety hazard. Findings highlighted the risks of unattended heating devices near flammable materials, although no major damage occurred.

Communicable disease:

Two active tuberculosis (TB) cases were reported and confirmed at the Bloemfontein Campus, with both individuals receiving appropriate treatment and responding well. In collaboration with the Department of Health; the Campus Clinic; and the Health, Safety and Environmental Sustainability (SHE) Unit, measures were implemented to manage the situation and prevent further spreading. Health education on TB prevention were provided, and a two-day screening campaign was conducted for students and staff, to ensure thorough monitoring.

Hazard identification and risk assessment

The following key risk assessments were conducted. The findings still need to be addressed:
- Comprehensive occupational hygiene surveys were conducted at the chemical laboratories and the PDTS Workshop. The surveys focused on four key areas: noise levels, lighting conditions, hazardous chemical agents, and ventilation systems. The purpose was to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and to identify any potential health risks to workers.

- A structural assessment of buildings at the Bloemfontein Campus was conducted, to evaluate their integrity, including both interior and exterior components, as well as the roofs. The goal was to ensure safety, stability and longevity, while identifying areas requiring maintenance or repair. Some buildings are in a poor condition due to cracks, water infiltration, tree damage, and surface bed issues. Urgent maintenance and repairs are required.
- In partnership with Marsh, a fire management assessment was conducted, to identify hazards, evaluate risks, and recommend safety measures. The assessment ensured compliance with fire safety standards, and focused on protecting occupants, property and assets. Key areas reviewed included fire protection systems such as alarms, extinguishers, exits, and evacuation procedures, with recommendations for improvements.

Competency, awareness and training

In collaboration with the HR Skills Development Unit, the following training was facilitated and conducted:

- Emergency preparedness training for Protection Services and Assistant Residence Managers, to ensure legal compliance and that Protection Services Officers, as the first line of defence, are competent and motivated to deal with emergency situations.
- Compliance training was conducted for First Aiders, Health and Safety Representatives, and Fire Marshals, in line with legal requirements under the OHS Act. The sessions were well attended, with 31 First Aiders, 35 Health and Safety Representatives, and 32 Fire Marshals completing the training. These programmes are crucial for equipping staff with skills to manage emergencies and uphold safety standards, enhancing campus safety. Ongoing follow-ups and refresher courses are recommended, to ensure continued compliance and readiness.

HSE internal audit

The internal audit was completed, and the close-out report indicates that the evaluated controls are sufficient, appropriate and effective, providing reasonable assurance that risks are managed and that objectives can be achieved.

Figure 29: Operational Health and Safety cases closed/implemented
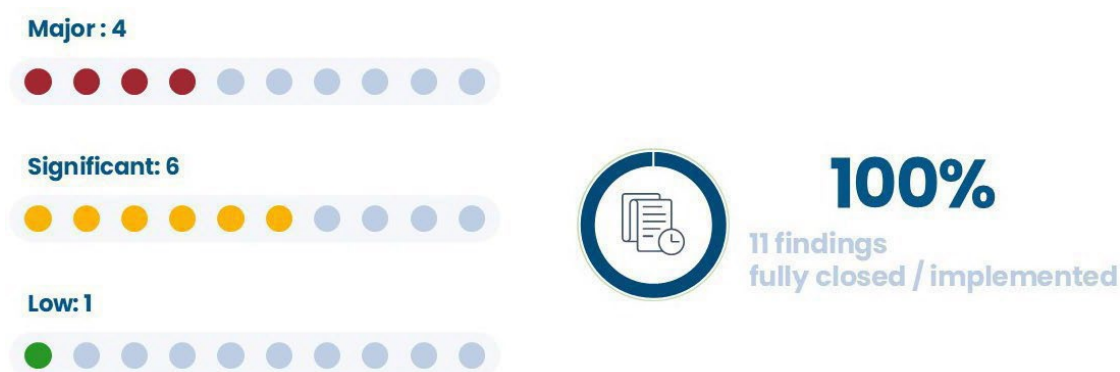
Fire safety management and other emergencies

- All firefighting equipment was serviced, reinforcing the university's commitment to fire safety and improving its preparedness for emergencies. Ongoing monitoring and improvements will further strengthen safety measures.
- Emergency evacuation drills have been rolled out across the university, to ensure that occupants are prepared for emergencies. Emergency evacuation drills conducted at buildings were successful, with recommended improvements set to enhance future evacuations.

Event management compliance

The university hosted major events, including the Internal Edutainment Event for students and the external National Science Week, demonstrating a commitment to educational outreach and community engagement. Compliance with the Sports and Recreational Events Act (SASREA) was prioritised, ensuring participant and staff safety. Whilst overall compliance was strong in emergency preparedness and security, improvements are needed in policy and procedure development, to ensure better alignment with SASREA.

Environmental sustainability

- A significant solid waste collection backlog across the university premises and student residences was identified. This could lead to increased pests and unpleasant odours, posing health and safety risks. Immediate action was taken by engaging the municipality's solid waste division, which is now actively collecting waste from university premises.

Continuous monitoring and improved practices are essential to maintain a clean and safe environment for students and staff.

- There have been instances of oil and diesel spills around the premises, posing a risk of contamination and potential damage to soil and water resources. Such spills raise serious concerns regarding soil and groundwater pollution. Immediate actions were taken to contain the spill and prevent further seepage into drains and surrounding soil.

- The rooftop photovoltaic (PV) system with battery backup was successfully installed at one of the buildings, in collaboration with other units. This project not only provides financial and environmental benefits, but also serves as an educational tool, and boosts the university's reputation in sustainability and innovation. It aligns with the university's goals of energy efficiency, resilience, and environmental responsibility.

6.18 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) SYSTEMS AND SERVICES

2024 underscores significant strides in digital transformation and operational efficiency, while addressing critical challenges in infrastructure and cybersecurity. The following systems and services were implemented within the information and communication technology (ICT) environment during the period under reporting:

- The Project Management Office (PMO) was formally established, to strengthen the delivery and governance of ICT projects. Key initiatives undertaken include the following:
  - o PMO maturity assessment: Conducted to evaluate current project management practices and identify areas for enhancement.
  - o Development of a Maturity Roadmap: Designed to guide the PMO's evolution, ensuring standardised processes and improved project outcomes.
  - o Formation of a cross-functional team: Established to build internal project management capacity by integrating members from various ICT sub-units, fostering collaboration and enhancing expertise across the team.

- Implementation of the university's first AI-powered cybersecurity technology, **Darktrace**, to monitor, and automatically respond to, cyber threats based on learned behavioural patterns of the organisation.

- Completion of the initial evaluation of the enterprise resource planning (ERP) system's fitness for purpose, and exploration of alternative solutions to the current Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS) system, in alignment with the assessor's recommendations for the university's fitness for purpose. This marks the first step in mitigating the top three ICT risks associated with the outdated ERP system and its high dependency on a sole provider.

- **Implementation of robotic process automation (RPA) in student funding**

- The university successfully implemented its first **RPA** initiative, automating key finance processes related to **student funding**. This milestone has led to significant improvements in **efficiency, accuracy, and stakeholder experience**. As part of this initiative, a total of **38 finance business processes** were identified as high-impact opportunities for future RPA automation.
- Project key objectives and benefits:
  - **Operational efficiency:** Reduced staff time spent on repetitive, manual tasks, enabling focus on high-value strategic work.
  - Improved **scalability and turnaround times**, allowing for increased productivity and faster processing.
  - **Cost optimisation:** Lowered operational costs by eliminating inefficiencies and reallocating resources to critical areas.
  - Enhanced **financial sustainability** by optimising resource utilisation through automation.
  - **Accuracy and compliance:** Minimised errors in task execution by automating rule-based processes, ensuring compliance with institutional and regulatory standards.
  - Improved governance and accountability through **consistent and reliable process execution**.
  - **Stakeholder engagement and satisfaction:** Enhanced service delivery for students and staff by **automating administrative workflows**, reducing delays and improving reliability.
  - Increased trust and satisfaction by ensuring **faster and error-free service delivery**.
  - **Data-driven decision-making:** Enabled **real-time analytics** through structured data capturing, providing actionable insights for continuous improvement.
  - **Sustainability and innovation:** Established a **digital workforce** to augment existing staff capacity, ensuring scalability without additional hires.

This achievement has laid the foundation for future **AI and machine learning** integration, driving further digital transformation. With **38 finance business processes identified** for further automation, this RPA initiative represents a **significant step** in modernising administrative operations, optimising resource utilisation, and improving institutional efficiency.

6.19 THE QUALITY OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO MANAGEMENT, AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESSES INVOLVED

The VALPAC submissions scheduled for 2024 include the 2023 Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) staff submission that was concluded on

28 February 2024; the 2023 HEMIS postdoctoral submission concluded on 25 March 2024; the 2023 HEMIS student second submission concluded on 25 April 2024; the 2023 HEMIS space submission concluded on 13 May 2024; and the audited 2023 HEMIS student third submission concluded on 22 July 2024, as per the schedule from the DHET. The first 2024 HEMIS student submission was concluded on 25 October 2024.

The 2024 monitoring reports for the second semester, namely the size and shape reports, were submitted on 18 August 2024, and tabled at the Senate meeting of 02 September 2024. These reports relate to the first-time entering (FTEN) student profile and registration monitoring.

We continue the expansion of our business intelligence (BI) portal, PowerHEDA, including the development of strategic governance, and the monitoring and evaluation dashboards. The Workload Model for academic staff is in progress, and includes timetable, supervision and HR information. The Application Ranking System (ARS) has also been developed, in collaboration with the Registrar, ICT and faculties, to assist with the ranking and selection process of applicants.

6.19.1 Academic support, student governance, and student affairs

The Office of the Registrar embarked on a process of reviewing its business processes, and developed a strategy that now guides its operations. The Registrar's Division is integral to the effective operation of CUT, serving as the steward of student records and a facilitator of institutional governance. The Office of the Registrar is charged with maintaining the integrity of academic and administrative records, while delivering services that meet the needs of various stakeholders. The Strategic Plan sets forth a clear vision, mission and objectives for the forthcoming period 2025 and beyond, and details the initiatives that will be implemented to realise these goals and, most importantly, to address the identified shortcomings.

The plan is designed to ensure alignment with CUT's Vision 2030, Annual Performance Plans (APPs) and core values, and to uphold a commitment to continuous improvement across all functions. By doing so, the Office of the Registrar not only enhances its own performance, but also contributes to the overall performance of CUT, strengthening the institution's reputation and brand.

In summary, this Strategic Plan represents a proactive approach to the ongoing advancement of the Office of the Registrar. Commencing this strategic journey, there is a strong focus on collaborative efforts with various internal stakeholders to fulfil the strategic objectives identified in this plan. Successful implementation of the Strategic Plan for the Office of the Registrar is

therefore dependent on broader institutional collaboration, commitment and support, on its path towards a more effective, responsive and service-driven future.

This section outlines the activities related to student registrations, assessment and graduations process improvement initiatives.

6.19.2 Catalytic projects to improve operations

In line with the recommendations of several reviews and the independent assessor's recommendations, the Registrar's Office conducted a full process mapping exercise, documenting workflows across all core functions, including admissions, examinations, graduations and certification. This revealed inefficiencies, unnecessary manual interventions, and inconsistent practices across units. Based on these findings, a process re-engineering initiative was launched to streamline operations, eliminate duplication, and simplify service pathways.

The Operational Efficiency project was aimed at improving operational efficiency within the Academic Administration Section through process mapping using the Nintex Promapp solution. This initiative is also crucial for achieving CUT's digital transformation vision of "secure, available, and efficient applications, supporting services, and dependable data through systems of record, of engagement, and systems of innovation that work seamlessly together and operate with data that is reliable, current, and complete".

The objectives of the project:
- Reduce inefficient processes due to decentralised operations in integrated processes, in the current student lifecycle management system.
- Enhance data quality, data integrity, and accuracy.
- Promote data governance.

The project aims to enhance the university's operations through a Target Operating Model (TOM) based on standardised processes. This will centralise and streamline operations, improving team performance and enhancing the student experience.

The attached progress report highlights technology initiatives in Academic Administration. These initiatives are aimed at streamlining and enhancing business processes, ultimately improving overall efficiency within the section.

Table 42: Academic Administration technology initiatives

Subsystem	Business Owner (BO)	Delivery status	Additional inputs	Estimated delivery date
iEnabler Qualification and Subject Cancellation	Academic Structure and Student Enrolment ServicesTop of Form Bottom of Form	Completed.	N/A	
iEnabler Appeals	Academic Administration	Completed.	Business Owner to update the Implementation Plan.	
iEnabler Offer Application Acceptance	Academic Administration (ASSESSU & Assessment and Graduations Unit (AGU))	Completed.	Business Owner to update the Implementation Plan.	
iEnabler Communication and iComms	Academic Administration (ASSESSU & AGU)	Completed.	Business Owner will indicate when there is new communication to be activated.	Completed.
ID Verification	Academic Structure and Student Enrolment Services	In progress.	The Business Owner is busy testing independently with ICT.	15 Nov. 2024
Special Exam Enhancement	AGU	In progress.	Revised quotation; funding could not be secured.	
Application Ranking System (ARS) Application Programming Interface (API) integration with Integrated Tertiary Software (ITS) System	Academic Structure and Student Enrolment Services	In progress.	A meeting was held with IDSC on 15 November 2024 to update stakeholders and to give guidance on the API rules for admission automation.	6 Dec. 2024

The key objective was to enhance the efficiency, responsiveness, and overall service delivery of the Registrar's Office.

6.20 STUDENT AFFAIRS

6.20.1 Student governance

The new SRC leadership teams assumed office at both campuses in September 2023, and held their Strategic Planning Session to craft their Annual Operational Plan for 2024. As part of the continuous induction programme, as well as leadership training and development, the

SRC attended the Leadership Capacity Building Programme, focusing on the critical elements of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development, at the Welkom Campus from 12 to 14 January 2024. The themes covered included the fundamentals of student leadership; strategic role and purpose of the SRC; ethical leadership skills; time management and academic performance; basic principles of effective communication and negotiation skills; emotional intelligence; GBV and femicide; student mental health management skills; project management skills; Social Change Model of Student Leadership; and reflections on life post-student politics. To enhance this programme, there are scheduled further engagements with the Executive Management team on emerging key issues, and the focus area is set to be on student centredness and what that means at CUT. The Dean: Student Affairs continued to meet quarterly with the SRC for pulse-check engagements beyond the structural arrangements within Student Affairs and across institutional governance structures. The plan is to meet every term, following the recent disruptions triggered by outstanding NSFAS matters.

The challenges of funding and the impact thereof on student academic performance remain a major concern. Efforts to address the challenges on a case-by-case basis continued, particularly during the examination period. These included food security support from Meals on Wheels and partners such as ABSA. As one of their legacy projects, the SRC focused on a sustainable Nutrition Programme on which Student Affairs guided them, given the variety of models colleagues have had the opportunity to work with in their efforts to promote student agency, as well in addressing food security and related challenges.

The Student Affairs Council (SAC) met on 13 May 2024, and discussed a variety of issues related to student affairs, including funding, accommodation, wellness, sport, academic support, etc. The significance of the development and socialisation of enabling policies in the student affairs environment was emphasised.

The SRC Terms of Reference (ToR) Workshop took place on 13 and 14 April 2024, facilitated by Adv. Phetheni. This gave the SRC an opportunity to critique and deliberate on its ToR, for the desirable amendments to the document to be made, in order for it to be responsive to the ever-changing institutional and higher education landscape

The recruitment process for the position of Dean: Student Affairs was concluded. Dr Bernard Sebake was appointed, and started work on 1 September 2024. This appointment brought more stability within the student affairs environment, ensuring the necessary strategic and operational leadership within the institution.

The relatively new Dean: Student Affairs hit the ground running, having arrived when preparations for the SRC elections process were at an advanced stage. His in-depth experience in managing and leading student affairs portfolios is proving invaluable in building the foundations of a reimagined CUT student affairs portfolio, starting with him building the necessary rapport with the student leadership and the broader student society community.

6.20.2 Students' Representative Council (SRC)

The new SRCs serving both the Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses commenced their term in October 2024, following their election in the previous quarter. Training and development sessions have been conducted with them, to familiarise them with the operational and governance processes of the institution and their role therein, as well as covering leadership development in preparation for their term of office. The new Dean: Student Affairs has been leading the implementation of these, and have been using them as an opportunity for mutual familiarisation with the student leadership. In terms of composition, the Bloemfontein Campus SRC is comprised of both EFF and SASCO affiliations, whilst the Welkom Campus SRC is singularly PASMA affiliated.

6.20.3 Student outreach and social responsibility

The Governance and Student Life Unit, together with various recognised student structures, executed the first leg of the outreach programmes, themed **#TakeInitiative**, as part of a commitment to advancing Nelson Mandela's selfless life, values and principles, to make a positive impact in the surrounding communities. This was held on 16 August 2024. The focus was on unemployed individuals who ordinarily gather next to the Lejweleputswa Municipality offices in Jim Fouché Park and next to Unitas High school in anticipation of receiving food and getting odd jobs to survive. Those in need were served with a warm, nutritious cup of soup, bread and fruits. Student leaders engaged with them, to assess their skills and the kind of sustainable support they may need to improve their situation. The initiative was a success, and was greatly appreciated by beneficiaries.

6.20.4 Student leadership development

The Bloemfontein SRC Deputy President hosted the Student Female Conference on 23 August 2024 in Japie van Lill Auditorium. This was meant to empower young female university students to be the best version of themselves. The topics addressed by guest speakers included family structure (starts at home), social norms, embracing individualism, understanding your emotions, standards, meditation, reading, self-care, relationships, etc.
The event was well attended by more than 200 students, with internal and external speakers addressing young women on issues that are affecting them.

The SRC Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses had a Leadership Training Workshop entailing personality profiling and a team-building exercise from 14 to 18 October 2024 at Vrede Thanda Tau Resort. The session was also used to reflect on the broader overview of the SRC's contribution to the transformation of the university, with a view to building a student-centered university. The Dean: Student Affairs spent the interactive two days sharing the vision of reimagining student services within CUT as part of building a student-centred university.

6.20.5 Student health and wellness

Higher Health has recognised CUT for its continued efforts to enhance student health and wellness programmes by addressing the five wellness dimensions. In addition, the Wellness Centre implements academic improvement, examination study skills, and self-care strategies to support students. There is indeed still a long way to go, and the journey is never really accomplished, but efforts to minimise difficulties along the way ensure that we keep going.

A variety of training interventions aimed at supporting the well-being of students, to enhance their awareness and understanding of personal health status and increase their resilience, were facilitated by the Student Wellness Unit. These included:

- the training of ten male Peer Helpers by the organisation *Brothers for Life* on the topics of sexuality, GBV and relationships;
- the training of nine female Peer Helpers on challenges faced by women, and on relationships in the context of women;
- a team-building exercise focused on leadership development and motivation, attended by 12 Peer Helpers and three Wellness Centre staff members;
- a workshop on 24 April 2024, attended by 73 students, on the importance of psychological well-being and know-how for improving personal psychological well-being; and
- an Examination Preparation Workshop on 08 May 2024, attended by 55 students, which covered several topics, such as stress management, positive attitude, brain foods, ethical practice, and revision techniques.

The Wellness Centre facilitated several health and wellness programmes aimed at promoting students' awareness and understanding of living a healthy lifestyle. This included the following:

Community outreach programmes

On 26 July 2024, in celebration of Mandela Month, the Wellness Centre staff visited Boikucho Old Age Home in Bloemfontein. The initiative exemplified the community spirit that Nelson

Mandela advocated for, as the Wellness staff and the Peer Helpers aimed to bring joy and comfort to the elderly residents by pampering them with haircuts, hand and foot massages, etc.

On 3 August 2024, the Wellness staff and Peer Helpers participated in the Anti-Bullying Campaign at Kagisho Comprehensive School, where eight groups of grade 8 learners were equipped with knowledge, skills and values on handling and dealing with bullying on social media and in the community.

Memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Childline Free State

In July 2024, the Wellness Centre signed an MoU with Childline Free State, committing to provide on-site psychological services for both Child Welfare Bloemfontein and Childline Free State. The relationship with Childline would allow CUT psychology interns to work with younger children and married couples, and have access to a broader spectrum of conditions that are not available in higher education institutions.

Men Championing Change

The Wellness Centre hosted *Men Championing Change* (MCC) talks in collaboration with Mosamaria Aids Ministries, a non-governmental group funded by the Department of Social Development. The programme was held in the CUT men's residences from 23 to 31 July 2024. The purpose was to engage male students in meaningful discussions about their roles in promoting health and well-being, and serving as positive role models for addressing societal challenges, including HIV/AIDS and GBV.

LGBTQIA+ Debate

The Wellness Centre organised the 2024 LGBTQIA+ Debate in collaboration with the Institutional Renewal and Transformation (IR&T) Unit. The debate aimed to foster an open and critical dialogue on LGBTQIA+ issues, highlighting areas where the university can improve inclusivity. The objectives of the debate were: (1) to raise awareness through illuminating the experiences and challenges faced by LGBTQIA+ individuals within and outside the university; (2) to educate by providing a platform for discussing LGBTQIA+ issues and promoting understanding amongst the CUT community; (3) to promote inclusivity by exploring and addressing gaps in the university's policies and practices regarding LGBTQIA+ inclusivity; and (4) to empower students through enabling them to voice their concerns and propose actionable solutions for enhancing inclusivity at CUT.

From 5 to 8 August 2024, the Wellness Centre held the 2nd Health and Wellness Week Campaign of the year at the Bloemfontein Campus. Various external stakeholders from the Department of Health, Department of Social Development, Virgin Active, and Higher Health rendered services to students and staff. Services included, but were not limited to, blood pressure checks; eye testing; blood sugar tests; dental care; pap smears; TB screening; HIV/AIDS testing, as well as stalls providing information regarding GBV, substance abuse, mental health, and LGBTQIA+.

6.20.6 Nutritional Support Programme for students

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Office, through Institutional Advancement; Governance and Student Life; and the Wellness Centre; and in partnership with the SRC, commenced an expanded Nutritional Support Programme, to provide daily meals to unfunded/financially distressed students at both campuses (Bloemfontein and Welkom) during May 2024. At its commencement, the programme supported 915 students (531 in Bloemfontein, and 384 in Welkom). In order to benchmark the programme and explore avenues for making it more sustainable in the long term, benchmarking visits and/or conversations were undertaken with UJ and the University of the Witwatersrand (Wits).

The programme aimed to support students with 1 to 2 meals per day, and commenced in earnest on 6 May 2024 at the Bloemfontein Campus, and on 8 May 2024 at the Welkom Campus.

6.21 STUDENT SUCCESS INTERVENTIONS

One of the priority interventions planned for 2024 to promote academic progression and student academic support beyond the current provisions by CILT, was the ongoing engagement with Siyaphumelela, the student success initiative funded by the Kresge Foundation. This is one of the increasingly effective initiatives that have made great strides at national level with selected universities. The Siyaphumelela principles resonate with our ambitions in that they centre around collaborative efforts to advance equity in South African higher education by:

- establishing a more student-centred culture, to improve student completion rates and reduce race and gender differences, amongst other equity differences;

- improving institutional capacity to collect and use student data to improve student success across the higher education system; and

- expanding evidence-based student success efforts on a national scale using a networked approach that builds on existing strengths, shares capacity throughout the system, and serves institutions based on their current needs and abilities.

We are already in the third phase of this process, having just been invited to submit a full proposal, following the concept note we submitted in January 2024, and the site visit that the funders made to CUT in February 2024. It was all hands on deck from my office, in the lead; the DVC: Teaching and Learning; and CILT, to ensure that we join the Siyaphumelela initiative as a second university of technology to be a partner. Siyaphumelela uses a collective-impact approach to systemically change how universities serve students nationally and within institutions, focusing on institutional change. It was a model we wish to pursue even if we were to participate in the network through partners they already have.

Engagement with Siyaphumelela continued with regard to the student success initiative funded by the Kresge Foundation. Following CUT's progression to the third phase of the funding application process, during which the university was invited to submit a full proposal, CUT was invited to send delegates to the 2024 Siyaphumelela Network Conference in June 2024. Representatives from the Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Office, CILT and the SRC attended the conference on behalf of the university. This conference celebrated ten years of the Siyaphumelela Initiative, noting its growth in terms of support given, from five universities in 2014, to 20 of South Africa's 26 public universities in June 2024. The conference provided a platform for key South African role players and international experts in student success to discuss evidence-based practices and national systemic interventions.

CILT was allocated an amount of R434 917 in February 2024 to establish an Academic Advising Hub, to provide students with a dedicated space where Peer Advisors could conduct individual consultation sessions with students and record engagements on the HEDA-powered learner case management system. The furnishing and installation of desktops in the Academic Advising Hub was completed in May 2024. The data on the learner case management system shows that 958 students (540 in Bloemfontein, and 418 in Welkom) were supported through the Academic Advising intervention.

The Basic Computer Skills sessions that commenced in February 2024 were held in the Student Academic Support Centre Computer Lab on Thursdays and Fridays each week. The sessions were marketed through the Supplemental Instruction (SI) and Academic Advising (AA) WhatsApp groups and "eThuto Community" pages. FTEN students registered for the

DLC module (a compulsory module for all first-year students) participated in these sessions. Data on student participation is captured on the learner case management system. The data revealed that the same students participate in other intervention activities offered by CILT. Student access, success and progression is a particular focus of CUT, as a strategic intent and in making the student journey on campus a productive one characterised by well-rounded academic and social growth, including general wellness. Several initiatives that are collectively aimed at advancing this objective are taking place across both campuses.

6.22   ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Our alumni are more than graduates; they are ambassadors, partners, and key contributors to the ongoing growth and success of the university. In 2024, significant strides were made to strengthen alumni relations as a strategic pillar supporting CUT's vision of becoming an innovative, socially responsive institution of technology. Some significant events are presented below.

6.22.1 Alumni engagement

A survey was conducted amongst new graduates during the 2024 autumn graduation ceremonies in Bloemfontein and Welkom. The purpose of the survey was to gain alumni's perspectives, measure graduate satisfaction, and tailor programmes to the needs of alumni. The survey focused only on graduates who attended physically.

Chapter launch: A major highlight for the reporting period was the successful launch of the Cape Town CUT Alumni Chapter on 8 May 2024. A coordinator, who acts as the Chairperson of the chapter; a convenor, who acts as Secretary of the Chapter; as well as six additional members were elected. The chapter joins approximately one dozen others in a community that seeks to support the endeavours and development of CUT. It is intended to develop a platform for coordination and linkages between the chapters in the near future.

CUT Alumni Newsletter: The Alumni Newsletter holds great importance, significance, value and impact for the institution in terms of connecting and engaging alumni as their most permanent stakeholder. Through the Alumni Newsletter, the unit helps build and maintain a positive reputation for CUT.

On 15 October 2024, the 13th edition of the CUT Alumni Newsletter was published. This edition highlighted Women's Month festivities; alumni events commemorating CUT's 20th anniversary as a university of technology; profiles of accomplished CUT alumni; and significant university events. The newsletter serves as a crucial communication channel, fostering engagement and

connection within the CUT alumni community. It provides a platform for alumni to stay informed about university news, events, and the accomplishments of their peers, thereby strengthening the bond amongst CUT alumni.

Women in the Workplace CUT Alumnae High Tea: The Women in the Workplace CUT Alumnae High Tea was a resounding success. The event was held at the CUT Hotel School on Saturday, 17 August 2024. The event celebrated the achievements of CUT alumnae during Women's Month, commemorated the university's 20th anniversary as a university of technology, and provided a valuable platform for networking, camaraderie, and inspiration for the womenfolk attending.

Highlights included a captivating baking demonstration by Chef Tristin Rogers and an inspiring address by the CUT Institutional Registrar, Dr Sally Dzingwa. Attendees also had the opportunity to learn about the CUT Student Nutritional Support Programme, and student placements and graduate internships.

The event's impact was significant. CUT alumni expressed enthusiasm for volunteering for university projects, and the formation of a committee will provide a platform for ongoing collaboration. The event's reach was amplified through social media platforms, and showcased on the CUT website, expanding its audience and impact. Additionally, its feature in the CUT Alumni Newsletter solidified its enduring legacy and maintains its relevance.

6.23 FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY OF THE UNIVERSITY: CURRENT AND FUTURE STATUS

The university's cash-flow position increased with R4 million during the period ending December 2024 (for the same period in 2023, it decreased with R22 million). The non-current investments have a balance of R244 million – an increase of R29 million from R215 million at the end of December 2023. The current investments have a total balance of R1.087 billion (December 2023: R1.020 billion). R478 million relates to earmarked grants, and R609 million relates to CUT surplus held to cover the operations for the rest of the year and the dry months. CUT must aim to have at least R300 million in short-term cash management solutions at year-end to be able to operate effectively during the months of December to March, when no funding is received. The required amount became less as NSFAS is making upfront payments to the university. The total outstanding student debtors with at the end of the year decreased with R32 million, to an amount of R2.466 billion (Dec. 2023: R2.498 billion). CUT received R1.349 billion from NSFAS in 2024 – R1.162 billion relating to students registered for 2024, and R187 million relating to prior years' student debt.

6.23.1 Financial sustainability and partnerships

Current and future status

The university's cash-flow position decreased with R66 million during the first quarter of 2025 (for the same period in 2024, it decreased with R46 million).

The long-term investments have a balance of R245 million – an increase of R1 million from the R244 million at the end of December 2024. The cash management solutions have a total balance of R1.066 billion (December 2024: R1.129 billion). R496 million relates to earmarked grants from prior periods. R170 million relates to earmarked funds for the infrastructure projects received during March 2025 and the balance of R400 million relates to the CUT surplus held to cover the operations during the dry months.

CUT must aim to have at least R300 million in short-term cash management solutions at year-end to be able to operate effectively during the months of January to March, when no funding is received.

The total outstanding debtors with debit balances at the end of the first quarter of 2025 increased with R1.1 billion, to an amount of R3.6 billion (March 2024: R3.3 billion).

CUT received R241 million from NSFAS during the first quarter of 2025 – R190 million relating to 2025 registered students, and R51 million relating to prior years' student debt.

The 2024 registration template claim, amounting to R1.267 billion for 13 796 students, was submitted to NSFAS. By the end of December 2024, a total of 911 students' funding has been blocked by NSFAS. NSFAS is still investigating the funding exceptions of the affected students. The financial implication of the exceptions on the tuition fees is R22.497 million.

The 2025 registration template claim, amounting to R1.294 billion for 14 233 students, was submitted to NSFAS.

The cash inflow from student debtors other than NSFAS was R49 million.

Student funding

Given the significant impact that student funding has on institutional stability, and to underline the importance of joined-up action to address the challenge, a delegation from CUT, led by the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, and inclusive of the SRC, met with the NSFAS leadership

in Cape Town to find productive ways of addressing the pain points. The meeting provided an opportunity to identify some pathways to resolve several challenges related to the payment of allowances and to set the stage for, for example, the deployment of NSFAS staff on campus to assist students.

Also during the reporting period, accommodation service providers were re-evaluated, resulting in 3 244 beds achieving an A-grade status.

6.24 DEVELOPMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

The Municipal Infrastructure Support Agent (MISA) funded eight students, and payment to the value of **R161 165** was received.

The first quarterly report of the 2024 academic year registered a total of **R11 333 762, 65.**

The EDTP SETA has made a commitment through the Institutional Advancement Office to support the institution by providing teaching practice support interventions to the value of R500 000 for the Education students. A Workplace Skills Plan (WPS) was submitted, and the institution received a Discretionary Grant of R1 million.

A proposal for the training of women and youth in renewable energy, to the value of R4 million, was submitted to the Hotazel Manganese Mining Education trustees. The engagement is ongoing. They have supported the institution with R1,7 million for six months for 20 graduates' historical debt.

The Mining Qualification Authority (MQA) have signed an MoU with CUT on 18 March 2024, to strengthen relations and expand their purse offering in supporting the university with institutional-related projects. The MQA supported CUT with R1 728 000 for the stipends of eight interns placed across the university for a period of 24 months. In 2024, we signed an MoU with MQA to continue supporting CUT with bursaries and other special projects.

The Advancement Office raised R631 000 through hiring out institutional facilities, activation space, and hostels in 2024.

Senqu Municipality signed an MoU with CUT for a working partnership. In the MoU, ten key areas will be covered, ranging from skills development, to the District Development Model, infrastructure development, innovations, and research interventions.

In 2024, the Advancement Office collaborated with Meals on Wheels and the Governance and Student Life Unit to kickstart the Nutrition Programme. The Fundraising Office mobilised approximately R500 000 to kickstart the project for 2024.

The Fundraising Office raised and allocated R500 0000 from Absa and the Albert Wessels Trust.

With reference to the internal fundraising efforts, the Fundraising Office raised R100 000 by hiring out facilities and activation space to external corporates doing marketing on the institution's premises, in close cooperation with the Finance Division.

The institutional Gearshop had a sales revenue of R3.4 million for the period under review. The institution has approved monetary support to value R920 000 from strategic projects funding for this initiative.

Senqu Local Municipality has also entered into an MoU with CUT, for CUT to help with ten key areas, amongst others the Workplace Skills Plan gap, District Development Model, infrastructure development, innovation, and research intervention. Such MoUs are a source of third-stream income for the university.

6.25 STATEMENT OF SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL IN ATTAINING THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

In reviewing the 2024 performance period, I am pleased to reflect on the significant progress made in advancing the strategic objectives set out under CUT's Vision 2030. The 2024 academic year was marked by a renewed commitment to innovation, inclusivity, academic excellence, and operational efficiency. More importantly, universities continued to face reduced government funding allocations, mainly due to national fiscal constraints and competing budgetary pressures. These challenges have impacted on our projects as planned, and have affected our performance to some extent. The block grants (especially teaching input and research output subsidies) did not keep pace with the rising operational costs, requiring institutions to tighten budgets and prioritise critical functions. Delays in NSFAS disbursements created instability, resulting in late student registrations, disruptions in academic calendars, and increased institutional debt books. In the beginning of the year, students faced the risk of being excluded from academic activities due to unpaid fees and poor academic performance, leading to protests and reputational challenges for universities.

Leadership and strategic alignment

Throughout 2024, I remained steadfast in providing ethical, transformative and strategic leadership. A key priority was to ensure that the institutional activities, investments and initiatives remained aligned with CUT's Vision 2030 pillars. This was achieved through the effective leadership of the Executive Management team, strengthened governance oversight, and active engagement with the CUT Council and Senate.

Academic excellence and student success

I championed initiatives aimed at enhancing student employability and entrepreneurial development, positioning CUT graduates to be future-ready innovators, consistent with our graduate attributes.

Research, innovation, and industry engagement

There was a marked increase in accredited research outputs and postgraduate enrolments. Under my leadership, strategic partnerships with industry, research councils, and international collaborators were deepened, thereby reinforcing CUT's standing as an institution of applied innovation and societal relevance.

Operational excellence and sustainability

I placed strong emphasis on institutional sustainability by prioritising infrastructure development, financial stewardship, and human capital development. CUT's operations were further optimised through strengthened risk management, governance reforms, and a culture of accountability and continuous improvement.

Transformation, social justice, and community engagement

Transformation remained central to my leadership approach. Initiatives focusing on equity, diversity and social justice were prioritised, to promote an inclusive institutional culture. Discussions around the culture of fear continue to dominate engagements with our stakeholders. Hence, our endeavour to address these persistent challenges, correct historical error, and move the university towards its vision is continuing.

6.26 CONCLUSION

In assessing my performance for the period under review, I am confident that the key objectives set were largely achieved, with tangible evidence of institutional growth, resilience, and renewed strategic direction. I remain aware, however, that continuous improvement is essential.

As Vice-Chancellor and Principal, I reaffirm my commitment to building on these achievements by fostering a university that is innovative, transformative, inclusive, and globally competitive. I look forward to continuing this journey in partnership with all CUT stakeholders.

I would like to acknowledge the entire CUT Council for the kind of engagements we have been able to hold during this period, and for the continued commitment and support for CUT's Vision 2030. I would also like to commend the Management team, the student leadership, labour, and all related role players within the broader university community for their unwavering support and commitment to the CUT brand during this period.

We remain grateful to our stakeholders for their contributions in various forms.

SIGNED BY:

_____

PROF. PZ DUBE
VICE-CHANCELOR AND PRINCIPAL

SECTION 7
REPORT ON EXPOSURE, ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF RISK

7.1 ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT (ERM) STATEMENT

CUT has established an ERM Framework to proactively identify, assess and mitigate risks, while capitalising on opportunities to achieve its strategic objectives. By incorporating a structured process, the institution aims to effectively manage risks and opportunities to support the achievement of its strategic objectives. This framework aligns with international best practices, ensuring a robust structure that fosters proactive risk management. The framework is designed to ensure transparency, accountability and resilience across all levels of the institution. It plays a critical role in fostering a culture of risk awareness and resilience, enabling the institution to navigate uncertainties, while optimising opportunities that contribute to its long-term success.

The CUT Council, as the highest governance body, holds ultimate responsibility for risk management oversight at CUT. Council delegates oversight of the ERM to the Audit, Risk and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Governance Committee (ARIC), a subcommittee of Council. ARIC comprises both internal and external members with expertise in audit, risk management, governance and finance. The committee meets quarterly to review the institution's overall risk profile and reports; assess the effectiveness of mitigation strategies; and ensure alignment with the university's risk appetite and tolerance levels. ARIC also interacts closely with assurance providers, providing input into risk assessments and control activities.

The Chief Risk Officer (CRO) functionally reports to ARIC, to ensure independence of the function, and coordinates the implementation of the ERM Framework and related policies and procedures. The Risk and Compliance Advisory Committee (RCC) supports the Management Committee (Mancom) in reviewing the effectiveness of the risk management activities and monitoring adherence to the institution's risk appetite and tolerance levels. Furthermore, the ERM Framework undergoes review to maintain its relevance and effectiveness. Lessons learned from previous risk events and mitigation efforts are incorporated into future planning, strengthening the institution's overall risk resilience.

7.2 RISK MANAGEMENT MODEL

7.2.1 Risk identification and assessment

The risk management process within the institution follows a cyclical and continuous approach to ensure that risks are effectively managed. The first stage, risk identification, involves recognising potential risks through stakeholder workshops, interviews, and reviews of operational processes. These risks are then categorised into strategic, operational, financial, compliance and reputational risks, to facilitate structured management. Once risks have been identified, they undergo a detailed risk assessment process, where they are evaluated based on their likelihood and potential impact using a risk matrix. This assessment enables prioritisation, ensuring that resources and mitigation efforts are focused on risks with the highest potential impact on the institution.

The institution maintains several risk registers to ensure a comprehensive and structured approach to risk management. The Institutional Risk Register serves as a central repository for documenting and tracking all identified risks, including their likelihood, impact, mitigation measures, and status. This register enhances transparency and accountability by providing a consolidated view of risk exposure and management efforts. Complementing this is the Opportunity Register, which focuses on identifying and leveraging opportunities that align with the institution's strategic objectives. This register promotes a proactive mindset towards managing positive risks that can contribute to institutional growth and sustainability.

In addition, the institution maintains a Fraud Risk Register, which identifies areas that are vulnerable to fraud, and outlines preventive and detective controls. This register underscores the institution's commitment to ethical practices and financial integrity. Similarly, the Ethics Risk Register focuses on risks related to unethical behaviour, ensuring compliance with ethical standards, and fostering a culture of integrity and accountability. Operational risks are managed through Operational Registers, which document risks specific to operational processes, ensuring the continuity of critical functions and supporting efficient service delivery. Additionally, the institution also developed the Risk Appetite and Tolerance Level Statement, which defines the level of risk the institution is willing to accept in pursuit of its objectives. This guide informs decision-making, resource allocation, and strategic planning, ensuring a balanced approach to risk-taking.

Lastly, an Emerging Risks and Incident Register was also developed. This register is essential for tracking and monitoring newly arising risks and incidents, assessing their impact and severity, and documenting the actions and controls implemented to prevent, detect or correct their causes and consequences. By maintaining a systematic record of emerging risks, the institution enhances its

ability to anticipate potential threats, respond proactively, and strengthen resilience against evolving challenges. Several other risk profile assessments and reports are developed, maintained and monitored, as part of ensuring comprehensive risk coverage and enhancement of the organisation's risk maturity level.

7.2.2 Mitigating measures and controls

The risk mitigation phase involves the development of detailed action plans that outline specific measures, assign responsibilities, and establish timelines for implementation. Continuous monitoring and reporting are integral to the process, with risks regularly tracked, and progress on mitigation measures reported to ARIC.

CUT employs four primary risk response strategies: avoiding, transferring, mitigating or accepting risks. Controls, including policies, procedures and processes, are designed to address risks that could hinder the achievement of institutional objectives. Management is responsible for implementing these controls, which are regularly reviewed for relevance and effectiveness. The university maintains a dynamic risk management process, with continuous monitoring, reporting, and updates to risk registers to reflect changes in the risk landscape.

In essence, CUT's risk management practices are strategically designed to provide assurance to stakeholders. This assurance is rooted in the effective management of identified risks, demonstrating the institution's commitment to achieving its strategic goals and objectives, while maintaining resilience and sustainability.

7.3   SIGNIFICANT RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

As indicated, the university maintains risk registers and an Opportunity Register through a systematic process. This approach has enabled the identification of key risks that could potentially hinder the institution's objectives, as well as opportunities that can be leveraged to enhance sustainability and growth. By assessing both risks and opportunities, the institution ensures a balanced strategic approach that supports resilience, innovation, and long-term success. The following sections outline the top ten highest-ranked institutional risks and opportunities, together with corresponding mitigation measures and strategies for exploitation

7.3.1 Financial sustainability

The university continues to face significant challenges in maintaining its financial stability, due to a reduction in government grants, fluctuations in enrolment, and the non-recovery of student and NSFAS debt, which have strained resources. In response, the institution has made progress by engaging with private and public entities for student funding, setting clear fee collection targets, and

incorporating third-stream income into the Annual Performance Plan (APP), Institutional Operational Plan (IOP), and performance agreements for 2024. Additionally, efforts to review various income streams, such as the Centre for Rapid Prototyping and Manufacturing (CRPM); Product Development Technology Station (PDTS); and the Hotel School, as well as enterprise programmes, are ongoing, to diversify funding sources and strengthen financial sustainability.

7.3.2 Performance management

In terms of performance management, the risk lies in the potential failure to effectively plan, implement, monitor and evaluate performance targets, which may result in the university not achieving its goals. Poor performance management systems could lead to non-compliance, data manipulation, or even fraudulent activity, which may undermine the institution's credibility and effectiveness. As a result, the university must ensure that the performance management system is robust, transparent, and aligned with strategic goals.

The university has made notable strides by refining its performance management system through consequence management, aligning the CUT Competency Framework with the Vision 2030 values. Monitoring through quarterly performance reporting helps to track progress, while consequence management facilitates enhanced accountability. However, unresolved disputes over performance review outcomes and the incomplete final design of the 360-degree review still pose challenges, indicating the need for stronger oversight and improvement in performance management measurers.

7.3.3 Infrastructure and campus environment

The risk here relates to the adequacy of campus infrastructure, and the potential disruptions caused by inadequate resources; insufficient student accommodation; and a lack of sufficient support for utilities and security systems. Such issues may reduce the university's ability to provide a conducive learning environment, and may harm the student experience and academic performance. The university intended to implement technology enhancements to complement physical infrastructure, while also focusing on upgrading security systems and obtaining certification for in-house management. Moreover, resources are being appointed to execute maintenance plans, and alternative water and energy solutions are being explored. Major infrastructure projects, such as new student residences and academic buildings, are underway. However, some mega projects have been delayed due to financial constraints, but significant progress was made to complete these during the year.

7.3.4 Governance and management practices

This risk concerns the potential failure of the university's Governance Framework to align with good governance principles, which could result in mismanagement, poor decision-making, and a lack of

accountability at leadership level. Poor governance practices may hinder the university's ability to achieve its strategic objectives, and may tarnish its reputation. The university is in the process of reviewing and reconfiguring its Governance Framework, through the implementation of the independent assessor's recommendations and leadership development initiatives. The university is also rolling out programmes to strengthen its ethical culture, with ongoing efforts to implement strategies that improve leadership cohesion and decision-making processes. Additionally, the CUT Statute has finally been approved, marking a significant milestone.

The Vice-Chancellor and Principal has been appointed as the Ethics Champion, and other staff members, together with the Students' Representative Council (SRC), have been appointed as Ethics Ambassadors. This move underscores the commitment to fostering an ethical environment throughout the institution. Furthermore, a number of senior managers have been appointed, including, amongst others, the Executive Director: Resources and Operations; Executive Director: Vice-Chancellor and Principal's Office; Dean: Student Affairs; and Chief Advancement Officer, which further strengthens leadership capacity and supports the university's strategic goals.

7.3.5 Compliance and litigation

The risk arises from non-compliance with key regulations and policies, which could expose the university to legal actions, fines, and reputational damage. Failure to comply with laws such as the Protection of Personal Information Act (PoPIA), the Labour Relations Act (LRA) and others can create legal liabilities and undermine the university's integrity. The university is taking proactive steps by implementing a comprehensive Compliance Framework, policy and procedure. Advanced training for PoPIA committees and staff is being rolled out, alongside compliance risk assessments and audits, to ensure adherence to legal and regulatory standards. A final audit report on the excessive use of part-time lecturers was due in the first quarter of 2025.

Additionally, the university conducted a PoPIA compliance review, identifying several action plans to address gaps and enhance compliance. These action plans will assist the institution in strengthening its data protection practices, ensuring full alignment with PoPIA requirements and mitigating potential risks associated with non-compliance. By implementing these plans, the university aims to enhance its overall Compliance Framework and protect sensitive data, supporting its long-term legal and operational objectives.

7.3.6 Protests

The risk related to protests is the potential for student, labour and community protests to disrupt university activities, threaten safety, and damage infrastructure. Such disruptions may derail academic schedules, negatively affect students' experience, and damage the institution's reputation. To manage

this risk, the university is focusing on proactive measures, such as leadership development programmes for the SRC, addressing admission and historical marks issues, and training Protection Services staff to handle protest situations. In addition, agreements with external stakeholders are being strengthened, to better manage and respond to protests. The automation of administrative processes is also being introduced, to reduce protest-related disruptions.

7.3.7 Reputation and branding

The risk to reputation and branding revolves around the possibility of negative publicity, ineffective branding strategies, or a poor public image. This risk threatens the university's ability to attract students, faculty, and external stakeholders, and could diminish its competitive edge in the higher education sector. The university was engaged in a process of enhancing its Branding and Marketing Strategy, based on the results of a brand perception survey. In addition, the university is addressing internal audit recommendations, and is implementing measures to improve media presence and public relations efforts. These strategies are focused on strengthening the university's brand perception and reputation.

7.3.8 ICT infrastructure and cybersecurity

This risk involves the inadequacy of ICT infrastructure and systems, leading to potential disruptions, cyberattacks, and data breaches, which could result in the loss of valuable information, financial damage, and operational downtime. To address ICT infrastructure and cybersecurity risks, the university is implementing more advanced threat detection systems, outsourcing its Security Operations Centre for enhanced monitoring, and improving ICT continuity planning. Additionally, the university conducted a Ransomware Response Planning Workshop, and continues to roll out cybersecurity awareness training. Although progress is being made, some procurement processes and ICT infrastructure improvements remain pending.

7.3.9 Skilled employees and human capital

The risk of not attracting and retaining skilled staff could stem from an uncompetitive recruitment process, unsatisfactory working conditions, or insufficient development opportunities. The inability to recruit or retain qualified employees could impede the university's growth and overall performance. To manage this risk, the university is reviewing its recruitment and remuneration policies, offering wellness programmes, and conducting a comprehensive skills audit to assess staff competencies. The implementation of a Strategic Workforce Plan is in progress; however, financial constraints have delayed the activation of new staff positions.

7.3.10 Academic process efficiency and integrity

Ineffective admission, student assessment, and marks administration processes may result in inaccuracies, delays, or inconsistencies, and quality management over learning materials and assessment content may adversely affect the academic programme and reputation of the institution. To address these risks, several mitigating measures have been implemented. The university has completed the implementation of quality improvement plans (QIP) and established monitoring processes to enhance academic process efficiency in areas where the need was identified. As part of the admission process, fraudulent documents are identified and forwarded to legal services for further action. Additionally, Senate has supported the use of National Senior Certificate (NSC) downloaded results, which serves as an assurance for the validity of matric data on the system, reducing reliance on submitted documents from students. To ensure the validity of academic transcripts, the university utilizes the services of MIE to verify transcripts from external institutions. Additionally, USAf conducts training on the identification of fraudulent documents, and refresher training is being conducted internally. A Standard Operating Document (SOD) has been put in place to update the status of documents verified.
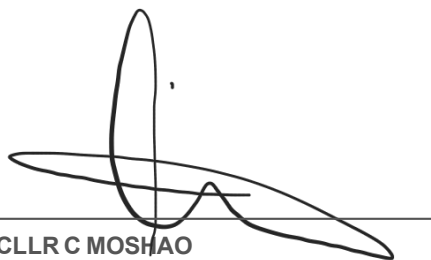
The university is currently finalizing ID verification in collaboration with Adapt IT and Home Affairs, and moving away from reliance on hard copies. Furthermore, Senate has approved the assessment procedure and recommended the assessment policy to Council for approval. These measures collectively support the university's efforts to enhance the efficiency, integrity, and quality of its academic processes, thereby safeguarding the institution's reputation and ensuring compliance with academic standards.

Each risk presented specific challenges, but with the corresponding controls and mitigating measures in place, the university has actively worked to minimise these risks and ensure its long-term success. Regular monitoring and reassessment of strategies was**, AND CONTINUES TO BE, CRUCIAL FOR ADDRESSING EMERGING CHALLENGES AND ENSURING CONTINUED PROGRESS AND SUSTAINABILITY.**

SIGNED BY:

_____   _____
MR TK MOTHUDI   **CLLR C MOSHAO**
CHIEF RISK OFFICER   **INTERIM CHAIRPERSON: ARIC OF COUNCIL**

SECTION 8
ANNUAL FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The budgeting process for all Council-controlled funds commences with the appraisal of the ministerial guidelines and the CUT Council's guidelines on budget allocations. Council's guidelines provide direction in terms of the percentage of fund allocations, as indicated in the Headline Budget.

Council's guidelines are set to ensure that the annual budget is allocated in a manner that ensures the achievement of the institution's strategic and operational objectives.

An evaluation of available funding and associated streamlining is undertaken, and the funds are allocated using the Resources Allocation Model (RAM). As some areas are not yet fully aligned with the outcomes of RAM, cross-subsidisation still takes place to ensure stability, whilst strategies are formulated to eliminate such cross-subsidisation as far as possible. Stakeholders are involved in the entire process, from gathering information on the availability of funds to planning activities. The budget is approved by all the relevant committees, and ultimately by Council.

Monitoring of the budget takes place on an ongoing basis, with results being discussed with the relevant budget holders. Any over- and/or under-expenditure is dealt with accordingly, to ensure that the achievement of objectives is not compromised. Management accounts are prepared on a quarterly basis, and the results thereof are discussed at committee levels, and submitted to Council for noting purposes.

8.1   THE UNIVERSITY'S FINANCIAL STATUS

The institution's primary strategic goals were defined in section 1 as:
* institutional advancement;
* teaching and learning;
* research and innovation;
* university life; and
* financial sustainability.

A brief discussion of the last goal (financial sustainability) is presented next.

8.2   FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

This strategic goal ensures that the institution has sufficient financial resources to achieve its objectives on an annual basis, as well as in the long term. Furthermore, the institution has annually implemented cost-containment measures and budgets for a contingency fund, as well as for reserve growth, to ensure future financial sustainability.

The institution's financial performance decreased from a net surplus of R523 million in 2023, to a net deficit of R147 million in 2024. An analysis of the results indicated that this was due to the skewed income and expenses. Income increased with R298 million (17.11%), whilst expenses increased with R967 million (79.55%).

These skewed increases were mostly due to the following:

An increase of R195 million in income from the Pothole Project.
An increase of R200 million in the expenditure for the Pothole Project.
An increase of R586 million in expected credit loss (ECL) movement.

The institution's financial position declined. Student debt decreased by R32 million, and the impact of the increased ECL resulted in a decline of R175 million in total assets. The total liabilities decreased by R15 million.

The Property Plan and Equipment increased with R225 million, mostly due to the construction costs of new buildings, whilst non-current investments increased with R29 million, and current investments with R67 million.

8.3   FINANCIAL AID TO STUDENTS

Financial aid totalling approximately R1,429 billion was provided to students in 2024. This amount comprised CUT funds, NSFAS grants, and externally funded bursaries and scholarships. Financial aid was awarded to students based on academic performance and financial need.

- **CUT funding:** In 2024, the university allocated R22,618 million of the Council-controlled funds towards student bursaries.
- **NSFAS loans and NSFAS pre-funder bursaries:** Approximately R1,294 billion was claimed from NSFAS, and R31,714 million from pre-funder bursaries.
- **Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and other donors:** Additional funding to the value of approximately R80,519 million was received from various funders, with varying conditions. These funds were either actively sourced by CUT, or via external funders.

Table 43: Summary of the internal bursaries and allocations up to 31 December 2024

CATEGORY	BUDGET FOR THE YEAR	AMOUNT ALLOCATED	VARIANCE
Academic bursaries			
Senior merit awards	7,818,528.60	8,935,325.52	1,116,796.92
Work-study	300,000.00	6,266.90	293,733.10
Eduloan	500,000.00	450,885.27	49,114.73
Bursaries: Students' Representative Council (SRC)	400,000.00	-	400,000.00
Bursaries: wardens	400,000.00	534,200.00	134,200.00
Senior staff study bursaries		-	-
Sport	5,000,000.00	5,703,264.00	703,264.00
CUT staff and dependents			-
University of the Free State (UFS) staff	2,000,000.00	2,134,446.50	134,446.50
Vice-Chancellor (VC)'s prestige scholarships and bursaries	200,000.00	-	200,000.00
Total budget for the year	16,618,528.60	17,764,388.19	1,145,859.59
Innovation Fund	6,000,000.00	5,415,405.00	584,595.00
Total from Strategic Budget	6,000,000.00	5,415,405.00	584,595.00
TOTAL	**22,618,528.60**	**23,179,793.19**	**561,264.59**

8.4 INCREASE IN STUDENT FEES

CUT reviews student fees on an annual basis. Student fees contributed 33.49% (2023: 37.45%) of the total income of the institution.

The university strives to manage the cost of services carefully and efficiently, while ensuring that the quality of service is maintained. The recommendations made to the CUT Council in respect of tuition fees and related fee increments are consulted with the Student Fees Committee (SFC). All stakeholders, including the SRC, are represented on the SFC. Several factors contribute to the increase in costs, such as the following:

- Higher education is expensive, and the cost of providing such education usually increases at a higher rate than that of general inflation.
- Maintenance of the physical campus, and the expansion of the range of options for classrooms and research laboratories, form a major part of the costs involved in providing higher education at a university of technology.
- Costs are affected by the demand for additional facilities.
- Costs are associated with addressing matters pertaining to health and safety.

8.5   CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the financial management processes at CUT reflect a structured and strategic approach aimed at achieving both operational efficiency and long-term sustainability. Despite a challenging financial year, marked by a significant shift from surplus to deficit due to skewed income and expenditure patterns, primarily driven by the increased expected credit losses, the institution remains committed to financial prudence. Investments in infrastructure and continued support for students through substantial financial aid demonstrate CUT's dedication to its strategic goals. Ongoing efforts in budget monitoring, stakeholder involvement, and cost containment are essential to navigate financial pressures, while sustaining academic and institutional advancement.

SIGNED BY:

MR M NEMUTSHILI
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

CLLR P MOSHANYANA
CHAIRPERSON: PLANNING, FINANCE   AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE (PFRC) OF COUNCIL

SECTION 9
REPORT OF THE AUDIT, RISK AND INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT) GOVERANCE COMMITTEE

9.1   INTRODUCTION

ARIC performs independent oversight of the activities within the institution. The committee has performed its duties and responsibilities during the financial year in accordance with its approved charter/terms of reference. ARIC is a crucial governance structure within the institution, established to provide oversight of financial reporting, internal controls, risk management, and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. This section outlines the activities of the committee for the reporting period, in alignment with best practices in corporate governance.

The primary responsibilities of the committee include overseeing financial reporting, internal controls, risk management, internal audits, external audits, compliance, and combined assurance. In terms of financial reporting, the committee is responsible for reviewing the integrity of the institution's financial statements, and ensuring that they comply with applicable accounting standards and regulatory requirements. It also assesses the adequacy of disclosures and the clarity of financial information presented to stakeholders. Regarding internal controls, the committee evaluates the effectiveness of the institution's internal control systems, including ICT controls, and monitors the implementation of corrective actions to address any identified deficiencies. In terms of risk management, the committee oversees the institution's Risk Management Framework, ensuring that significant risks are identified, assessed and mitigated.

During the reporting period, the committee reviewed and approved a number of risk management reports, plans and regulations, to ensure that the institution effectively identifies, mitigates and manages risks, while complying with applicable laws and regulations.

9.2   ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT (ERM)

9.2.1 Institutional Risk Register 2024

The 2024 Institutional Risk Register was considered. Its purpose is to provide a comprehensive overview of the top strategic risks that the institution faces. It allows the committee to assess both the likelihood and impact of these risks, and to evaluate whether the mitigation strategies in place are effective in addressing threats, while maximising opportunities. The register was monitored and updated periodically, and supplemented by other registers, as well as risk profile assessment reports, as part of the committee considering all issues of risk that may result in some form of exposure.

9.2.2 Fraud risk management

The university is committed to preventing and detecting fraud and corruption in all of its operations. The Fraud Risk Register 2024 was reviewed, with its primary purpose being to identify specific areas of potential fraud within the institution. The report helps the committee to assess the adequacy of existing fraud prevention measures, internal controls, and policies aimed at preventing, detecting, and responding to fraud risks. This review ensures that the institution is taking proactive steps to safeguard itself from fraudulent activities. The Fraud Prevention Plan was also reviewed, and assists with articulating initiatives to reduce incidents of fraud and corruption that may potentially have an impact on the university. The plan serves to indicate the university's commitment to maintaining the highest ethical standards, and to fostering a culture of honesty, transparency and accountability in all our operations.

9.2.3 Opportunity Register 2024

The Opportunity Register 2024 was examined to assess the potential for growth and innovation within the institution. Its purpose is to align risks and opportunities, helping the institution take calculated risks that contribute to achieving its strategic goals. By balancing the desire for growth with necessary risk management, this register ensures that opportunities are evaluated within the institution's acceptable risk parameters.

9.2.4 Risk appetite and tolerance levels 2024

The committee reviewed the risk appetite and tolerance levels 2024, which outline the acceptable levels of risk the institution is willing to bear in pursuit of its strategic objectives. The purpose of the Risk Appetite and Tolerance Levels Statement is to ensure that the

institution's risk-taking is aligned with its capacity and willingness to accept risk, ensuring long-term sustainability, without over-exposing the institution to undue risk.

9.2.5 Business continuity management (BCM)

The Business Continuity Plan (BCP) was reviewed, and will assist in reducing the negative impact experienced by the organisation in the event of a major business disruption, by reducing the time taken to recover operations to an acceptable level. The overarching BCP is valuable in guiding the response to major business disruptions, and the recovery of critical operations to predefined levels following a business disruption. The committee received reports related to the implementation of the BCM programme and the facilitation of validation sessions with key officials, to assist in the effective implementation of BCM processes, and to strengthen the overall response capabilities.

9.3 COMPLIANCE

9.3.1 Compliance management regulations

The compliance management regulations were reviewed to assess the institution's adherence to regulatory requirements. The purpose of these regulations is to ensure that the institution's compliance frameworks are robust and up to date, allowing the committee to monitor and manage relevant compliance risks effectively. Additionally, the consequence management and accountability procedure was reviewed, to assess how the institution manages accountability for non-compliance or misconduct. This procedure outlines the steps for addressing policy breaches or unethical behaviour, ensuring that those responsible for infractions are held accountable. The purpose of this procedure is to ensure consistency in applying corrective actions and maintaining a culture of accountability within the institution.

9.3.2 CUT Regulatory Universe

The committee reviewed the Regulatory Universe, a crucial document that outlines the range of legal and regulatory requirements to which the institution is subject. The purpose of the Regulatory Universe is to ensure that the institution facilitates compliance with all relevant laws, regulations and standards across various sectors, including finance, education, data protection, and labour. This document helps the committee to stay informed of new and evolving regulations, ensuring that the institution's operations are aligned with its legal obligations, and that it mitigates risks associated with non-compliance.

9.3.3 Lifestyle audit regulations

The lifestyle audit regulations were reviewed to ensure compliance with ethical conduct and transparency, particularly in relation to staff and Management. The purpose of these regulations is to identify potential conflicts of interest or unethical behaviour through lifestyle audits, ensuring that the institution's staff maintain integrity and accountability in their professional and personal conduct.

9.4   OVERSIGHT OF ETHICS AND INVESTIGATIONS

ARIC considered reports regarding activities to promote an ethical culture across the university, as well as investigations into suspected irregularities reported through the whistle-blower hotline and other mechanisms. This formed part of reaffirming the university's unwavering commitment to fostering a culture of ethics, integrity, transparency and accountability.

In addition, a dedicated panel of forensic investigators was appointed to enhance the investigative capacity of the university. This panel will streamline the investigation process, ensuring the prompt and effective resolution of cases. With their expertise, the institution is now better equipped to carry out thorough and timely forensic investigations, strengthening accountability and integrity within its operations.

9.5   COMBINED ASSURANCE

ARIC oversees the implementation of the Combined Assurance Plan, ensuring a coordinated approach to assurance activities across the university. This model prioritises significant risks, optimises resource allocation, and fosters collaboration between internal and external assurance providers.

To strengthen coordination, the university established a Combined Assurance Committee (CoAC). The CoAC meets biannually to review combined assurance activities, assess implementation progress, and identify coverage gaps. It provides status reports to relevant governance structures, ensuring alignment with the Combined Assurance Framework. The 2024 Combined Assurance Plan was developed through a rigorous process, incorporating risk analysis, alignment of risk-based assurance plans, and stakeholder consensus. This risk-driven approach ensures that resources are allocated to priority areas, with risk owners actively participating in selecting assurance activities.

This integrated model ensures balanced oversight, with assurance activities tailored to address risks such as governance gaps, financial sustainability challenges, compliance failures, and cybersecurity threats. The Combined Assurance Model has enabled CUT to address critical risks proactively, ensuring a structured and responsive approach to governance and risk management.
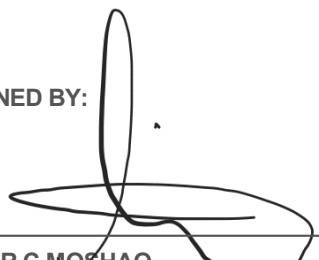
9.6   INTERNAL AUDIT

The committee reviewed and approved the Internal Audit Strategic and Operational Plan for audit engagements relating to the 2025 financial year, including the governing policies and procedures of the Internal Audit Unit. The committee endorsed and approved the appointment of the Chief Audit Executive (CAE), a position that was vacant from 01 January 2023. The committee further discussed and approved the progress reports on the approved plan, including matters relating to the management and administration of the Internal Audit Unit and the results of the individual audit engagements that were completed.

9.7   CONCLUSION

ARIC has executed its oversight role of assurance, risk, and ICT governance in an effective and efficient manner, in accordance with its terms of reference and the principles of good corporate governance.

The committee confirmed that it was satisfied with the contents of this Annual Report, and recommended it to Council for approval.

SIGNED BY:

_____
CLLR C MOSHAO
INTERIM CHAIRPERSON: ARIC OF COUNCIL

_____
CLLR R MAHABEER
CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL

SECTION 10
TRANSFORMATION REPORT

10.1 INTRODUCTION

CUT's transformation initiative is a comprehensive undertaking designed to cultivate inclusivity, diversity and equity throughout the university. Through strategic planning, collaboration with stakeholders, and policy implementation, the university aims to create an environment where everyone feels valued and supported in their academic and personal pursuits. This initiative includes promoting representation, access and empowerment, while addressing systemic barriers and fostering a culture of belonging and respect. CUT is dedicated to fostering an inclusive, diverse and equitable environment for all members of its community.

This section offers a progress update from the Institutional Renewal and Transformation Unit (IRTU). The report covers the reporting period, and provides an overview of the broader transformation-related activities implemented during that time.

The following sections offer feedback on some of the strategic and operational activities that had been completed at the time of reporting.

10.2 POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Whilst the Council on Higher Education (CHE) develops transformation guidelines for higher education institutions, it would be wise to await their official statement. This will guide our policy development, ensuring alignment with the university's strategy. Discussions are underway to update CUT's overall strategy, which will clearly define the role of transformation and its comprehensive plan. Transformation will not merely be a function, but a catalyst for the university, ensuring that CUT achieves its strategic objectives outlined in the Transformation Plan.

10.3 PROMOTING A CULTURE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

The IRTU played a vital role in cultivating a culture of human rights and social justice within the university. It served as a catalyst for promoting diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives throughout the institution. By actively engaging with students, faculty and staff, the unit facilitated dialogue, awareness and education on human rights issues. It also worked to implement policies and practices that uphold social justice principles, ensuring fair treatment and opportunities for all members of the university community. Furthermore, the IRTU collaborated with external organisations to advocate for broader societal change, and contributed to the advancement of human rights both locally and globally. The following are some of the activities undertaken:

Human Rights and Freedom Day Commemoration

The Human Rights and Freedom Commemoration held on 24 April 2024 featured the theme, "Empowering Voices: Celebrating Three Decades of Human Rights Advocacy", which resonated deeply with attendees. In 2024, the commemoration also marked two significant milestones: the 30th anniversary of South Africa's democracy and the 20th anniversary of the university's founding. These occasions offered a chance to reflect on the nation's and the institution's journey from Apartheid and colonialism to democracy and prosperity. The Human Rights and Freedom Day Commemoration was a well-organised event attended by many members of the university community, providing them with a valuable opportunity to learn about, and understand, their rights both within and beyond the university.

Women's Day Celebration

On 13 August 2024, the IRTU, in collaboration with the CUT Women's Committee, hosted a commemoration for Women's Month 2024. The event's theme was: "Celebrating two decades of unwavering commitment to empowering women at the Central University of Technology, propelling progress forward". The occasion was graced by the presence of esteemed women representing various divisions, sections, departments, faculties and units within the university. Speakers reflected on the challenges faced and progress achieved, acknowledging the bravery and resolve of women who participated in the ongoing struggle for equality. In her welcoming address, Prof. Pamela Dube, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, emphasised the importance of celebrating and honouring women as a way to show appreciation to the CUT

community, particularly women: "We believe that advancing the development of our women is crucial for realising our 2030 Vision." The university recognises their significance as members of the CUT community; their full participation in various roles, leading up to managerial and leadership roles; their education; and their collective contribution to co-creating their future as the nation's leaders, movers and shakers.

The 2024 LGBTQIA+ event

On 23 July 2024, the IRTU, in collaboration with the Wellness Centre, cordially invited all members of the CUT community – managers, faculty, support staff, alumni and students – to the 2024 LGBTQIA+ event. The 2024 theme, "Reflecting, Empowering, and Uniting Our Communities", highlights the significance of social harmony and co-existence between LGBTQIA+ individuals and the wider community. The event aimed to foster understanding of, and educate the CUT community about, LGBTQIA+ individuals and the challenges they encounter, both within and outside the university, thereby promoting inclusivity, addressing biases, and underscoring the university's commitment to diversity and equity.

10.4 DEMOGRAPHIC TRANSFORMATION

The IRTU is an integral component of recruitment and selection procedures at CUT. The involvement of the IRTU in recruitment and selection processes enables CUT to foster a more diverse, inclusive and efficient workforce that aligns with the university's strategic goals.

10.5 PROMOTING LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

The university thoughtfully promotes Sesotho, Afrikaans and English as its three primary languages in South Africa's Central region. Fostering linguistic diversity at a South African university is not only a matter of social equity and cultural preservation, but also a strategic investment in academic excellence, inclusivity, and societal harmony. To this end, the King Moshoeshoe Memorial Lecture, an annual event dedicated to promoting Sesotho and SeMoshoeshoe (honouring the leadership values and legacy of King Moshoeshoe I), was held over two days, from 17 to 18 October 2024, in Lesotho. The lecture convened representatives from higher education institutions and education stakeholders from Lesotho and neighbouring countries, particularly South Africa.

10.6 DEVELOPING ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE

10.6.1 Advocacy and engagements

The IRTU's involvement in advocacy and engagement within a university of technology is strategically important for several reasons. It is a strategic initiative that promotes meaningful change, fosters an inclusive environment, and advances the university's transformation goals. By actively engaging with stakeholders and advocating for positive change, the unit contributes to a more equitable, diverse and vibrant university community. The following are activities in which the university participated:

10.6.2 Strategic partnerships

Forming strategic partnerships is of utmost importance for a university's transformation unit, to optimise its impact, harness external resources and expertise, nurture innovation, cultivate networks and relationships, and collectively strive towards the creation of a more inclusive, equitable and dynamic university community. Towards this end, the following collaborations were established:

The Gender Practitioners Community of Practice (CoP) in South African Universities:

From 1 to 3 July 2024, representatives from CUT's IRTU were pleased to participate in the 5th Biennial Gender Practitioners CoP Conference at North-West University (NWU)'s Vanderbijlpark Campus. The Gender Practitioners CoP in South African Universities was formed to address the need for gender practitioners at South African universities. This collaboration is beneficial to CUT, as we work towards establishing a Gender Equity Office.

Men's Conference:

From 27 to 28 of August 2024, CUT and the University of the Free State (UFS) collaborated in the 3rd Annual Maskunity Men's Conference, to discuss challenges facing young men today and to work towards eliminating gender-based violence (GBV). The event saw enthusiastic participation from students at both CUT campuses (Welkom and Bloemfontein) and both UFS campuses (Qwaqwa and Bloemfontein).

Certified Fraud Examiners South Africa Chapter (ACFE SA):

On 25 July 2024, the IRTU was invited by ACFE SA to deliver a continuous professional development (CPD)-accredited presentation on enhancing fraud prevention strategies through the application of logotherapy principles.

7th International Conference on Gender and Sexuality:

From 19 to 20 September 2024, the IRTU of CUT presented at the 7th International Conference on Gender and Sexuality. The conference, titled "From Policy to Practice: Seizing Opportunities to Advance Gender Equality, Sexual and Gender Diversity", brought together delegates from 20 countries for a global discussion of important issues related to gender equity and inclusivity. This conference offered CUT and other participating institutions a valuable opportunity to review their progress, share innovative methods, and reaffirm their dedication to gender and sexual diversity, which are all essential elements in creating a more inclusive and equitable future for higher education.

10.7 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The University Transformation Advisory Committee (UTAC) plays a pivotal role in ensuring that transformation issues are effectively addressed and implemented, in alignment with CUT's Vision 2030. The IRTU convened quarterly meetings with UTAC to facilitate this process.
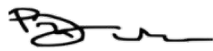
10.8 CONCLUSION

The 2024 Transformation Report showcases CUT's increasing dedication to cultivating a more inclusive, equitable, and socially just academic environment. Through the efforts of the IRTU, the university has made considerable progress in integrating transformation as both a strategic priority and a cultural value. From advancing human rights education and gender equity, to promoting linguistic diversity, CUT has shown its commitment to removing systemic barriers and empowering all members of its community. The successful implementation of key commemorative events, stakeholder engagements, and strategic partnerships – both locally and globally – highlight CUT's leading role in promoting change within higher education.

Transformation at CUT is no longer considered a secondary initiative, but a dynamic and integrated process that supports the university's Vision 2030. The collaborative work between the IRTU, UTAC, faculties, departments, and external stakeholders has established a strong foundation for continued progress.

Moving forward, CUT remains dedicated to ongoing reflection, learning and innovation, to foster a university culture that respects, supports and empowers every individual to contribute meaningfully. Whilst the transformation is ongoing, the progress made in 2024 positions CUT to advance even more boldly and purposefully in the future.

SIGNED BY:

_____

PROF. PZ DUBE
VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL

_____

CLLR R MAHABEER
CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL

SECTION 11
ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING (DHET)

In accordance with the provisions of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended, the Minister of Higher Education and Training holds legislative authority to oversee public higher education institutions, and to issue directives, where necessary, to safeguard effective governance, management, and the public interest. During the reporting period, CUT received a ministerial directive, following the submission of the independent assessor's report compiled by Prof. Norman Duncan, which was commissioned in terms of section 47 of the Higher Education Act.

The DHET has equally demonstrated a commitment to provide both leadership and operational support to CUT in navigating related challenges. It is also worth expressing that the DHET is not merely a passive observer, but an active partner in addressing some of the challenges CUT has experienced in the past few years (both before and after the independent assessment by Prof. N Duncan in 2022). This section of the report will briefly provide the progress towards the implementation of the independent assessor's report, as per the requirements of the ministerial directive, as well as an overview of the oversight visits and regular reporting mechanisms that are being used to track compliance and to ensure that we uphold good governance.

11.1 MINISTERIAL DIRECTIVE

Following the recommendations made by the independent assessor, the Minister formally communicated the intention to subject CUT to a period of greater monitoring and support. This directive, received on 5 March 2024, outlined a three-year Oversight Framework aimed at ensuring improved governance, institutional recovery, and alignment with national higher education priorities.

As part of these special measures, CUT is required to engage in quarterly meetings with the DHET, facilitated by the Deputy Director General: University Education, and to submit progress updates through mid-term and annual reports throughout this period. These mechanisms are intended to support institutional improvement, foster accountability, and strengthen oversight. The directive from the Minister includes two key components:

Council responsibilities

Council was required to:

- provide details of its ongoing strategies, activities and progress towards CUT's strategic goals, demonstrating how it has responded to, and implemented, the independent assessor's recommendations; and
- illustrate how it has facilitated, and will continue to foster, positive relations amongst members in order to restore and sustain effective governance.

In compliance, Council submitted a comprehensive progress report to the Minister on 12 April 2024.

Reporting requirements

Council was further directed to:

- report biannually to the Minister, via the DHET, on the institution's progress through mid-term and annual reports; and
- continue with this special reporting process from 2024 to 2026, or until all critical issues have been resolved.

In alignment with this directive, a bilateral oversight meeting was held on 12 November 2024, convened at the request of the Minister. The meeting, chaired by Dr M Socikwa, Deputy Director General: University Education, served to reinforce the expectations of the ministerial directive. During the session, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal presented a detailed institutional update, focusing on the following:

- Progress on the implementation of the independent assessor's recommendations.
- Monitoring mechanisms established to address identified challenges.
- Framework and expectations for ongoing reporting.
- Institutional stability and governance.
- The strategic positioning and long-term vision of the university.

In response to requests for further clarity, CUT submitted a comprehensive report to the DHET on 5 December 2024, addressing all outstanding matters. The Ministerial directive establishes robust oversight and accountability measures, to ensure that CUT maintains strong governance, financial sustainability, academic integrity, and stakeholder confidence during this recovery period.

11.2 PROGRESS FOLLOWING INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT

The post-assessment phase has marked a significant turning point for the institution. Whilst challenges remain, the progress made thus far reflects a clear commitment to transformation, accountability, student-centred approaches, and good governance. The university acknowledges the continued importance of oversight, support and collaboration in ensuring the successful implementation of all recommendations. Providing an overview of these remedial actions and process monitoring is important to demonstrate accountability. In holding Management accountable, Council monitors the university's progress following the independent assessment on a quarterly basis.

In complying with the ministerial directive, and in response to the findings of the independent assessor, we have undertaken a series of targeted interventions to address finding and recommendations. The attached spreadsheet (Annexure A) recommendations and responses provide a detailed account of the progress and corrective actions taken.

All corrective actions and governance improvement initiatives undertaken by the university are subjected to independent verification and quality assurance. The Internal Audit Unit reviewed and vetted the implementation processes. Furthermore, a portfolio of evidence has been compiled to substantiate progress made, and to demonstrate the university's commitment to transparent, measurable and accountable implementation. This assurance process strengthens the credibility of CUT's response to the ministerial directive, and affirms that reforms are grounded in verifiable action.

There is a total of **66** recommendations in the independent assessor's report. Our view with regards to the milestones that were achieved by Management is presented below.

Figure 30: Recommendations fully implemented/closed and partially implemented

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ASSESSOR REPORT

■ Fully Implemented | Closed   ■ Patially Implemented
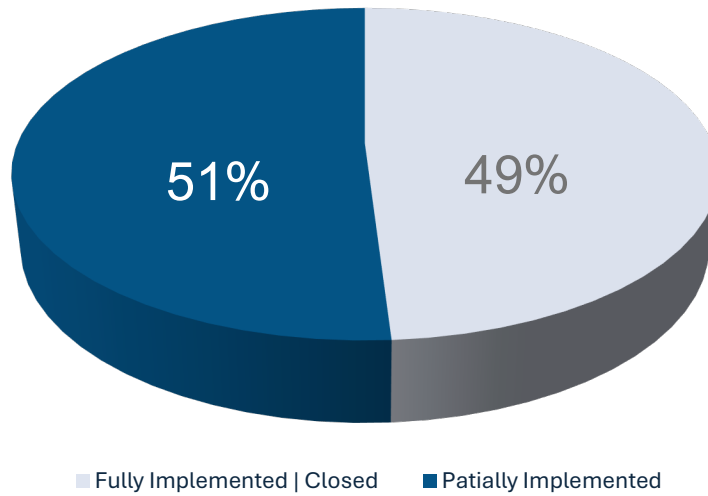
The recommendations were categorised according to the respective divisions/units/sections, as indicated in the table below:

Table *44: Recommendations per division/unit/section*

	Office of the VC	Committee Services	CFO	ICT	CRO	CAE	HR	Legal	Registrar	Total
Fully implemented/ closed	5	5	5	0	7*	1*	3	1	5	32
Partially implemented	3	5	6#	3	1	1	2	2#	11	34
Total	**8**	**10**	**11**	**3**	**8**	**2**	**5**	**3**	**16**	**66**

\# One (1) recommendation has been duplicated (CFO and Legal).
* One (1) recommendation has been duplicated (CAE and CRO).

Whilst significant progress has been made, the university acknowledges that there is still much to be done to fully implement all the recommendations arising from the independent assessor's report and the ministerial directive. We are mindful that meaningful institutional change is a phased and often complex process. Nonetheless, the university remains firmly committed to sustained effort, continuous improvement, and full compliance. The ongoing implementation work is being actively monitored, with clear timelines, internal oversight mechanisms, and regular reporting to the DHET.

11.3 DHET OVERSIGHT

This reporting period also saw the oversight visit by the DHET to monitor the state of readiness for the 2024 academic year. The DHET officials visited CUT on 12 February 2024, had pre-arranged walkabouts, and met with CUT stakeholders, including the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, the Executive Management team, and the Students' Representative Council (SRC). The matters discussed included progress reports on applications and registrations, commencement of classes, academic exclusions, higher certificate articulation, orientation programmes for new students, student accommodation, NSFAS-related matters, and funding arrangements for postgraduate students.

With the advent of the seventh administration under the democratic dispensation and the establishment of the Government of National Unity, the ministries of Science and Innovation and Higher Education and Training have now been separated. With that, we have seen the appointment of a separate and new Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nobuhle Nkabane. The Minister had planned engagements with the post-school education and training sector during this reporting period.

CUT is committed to fulfilling its public mandate and to restoring stakeholder trust through demonstrable improvements in governance, institutional culture and ethical leadership. The university acknowledges the importance of ministerial oversight in safeguarding the integrity and long-term sustainability of public higher education institutions.

11.4 CONCLUSION

The 2024 Annual Report was compiled in full compliance with the applicable reporting framework and regulatory requirements. It presents a consolidated overview of the university's performance across its core academic, research and administrative functions, offering a transparent account of progress made against the strategic objectives set in our Strategic Plan.
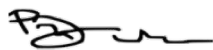
This report reflects on a year of meaningful achievement, guided by a commitment to academic excellence, impactful research, and responsible governance. Our performance outcomes are not only aligned with our strategic priorities, but also underscore our continued efforts to contribute to national development imperatives through strategic engagement with the DHET. These focused efforts and engagements with the DHET have been instrumental in positioning the university on a firm trajectory towards institutional self-sufficiency and restored autonomy.

These engagements are steadily guiding us out of the scope of the ministerial directive, as we demonstrate improved performance, strengthened governance, and a renewed culture of accountability. The progress on the recommendations of the independent assessor reflects our commitment to becoming a self-performing institution that is capable of sustaining excellence and innovation without external intervention.

We acknowledge and commend Senate for its pivotal role as the university's highest academic governance structure, ensuring the integrity of academic standards and quality. The Institutional Forum (IF) is also recognised for its invaluable advisory role, particularly in advancing our transformation agenda and fostering an inclusive institutional culture. The inclusion of the audited financial statements reaffirms our commitment to transparency, accountability, and prudent financial stewardship.

Finally, we express our sincere appreciation to the entire CUT community, our students, staff, alumni, and governance structures, as well as our business and industry partners. Your dedication, collaboration, and unwavering support remain the driving force behind our collective success. Together, we are shaping a brighter future for CUT and the communities we serve.

SIGNED BY:

_____
PROF. PZ DUBE
VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRINCIPAL

_____
CLLR R MAHABEER
CHAIRPERSON COUNCIL