

Opportunities for Responding to Student Learning Needs through Institutional Leadership, Institutional Design and Basic Student Support – The SPU Experience

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Institutional Growth

- Sol Plaatje University established by gazette on 23 August 2013
- First academic year starts on 17 Feb 2014
- Current Academic Programmes:
 - Humanities – BA, HC (Heritage Studies)
 - Science – BSc; BSc (Data Science); IT Dipl
 - EMS – B.Comm; Management Dipl
 - Education – Senior & Intermediate Phases

Enrolment growth - Size and Shape

	Planned/expected enrolment					
	Actual 2014	Actual 2015	Actual 2016	Actual 2017	Actual 2018	Proposed target 2019
First-time entering undergraduates	124	235	300	450	730	700
Total undergraduate	124	330	710	1 050	1 560	1 900
Postgraduate to masters level	0	0	0	0	0	100
Masters	0	0	0	0	0	0
Doctors	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total postgraduate	0	0	0	0	0	100
Occasional students	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL ENROLMENT	124	330	710	1050	1560	2000

SPU as 'small' university - 2025: 7500 students

Student profile and performance

- 2018: 35% Kimberley; 39% rest of Northern Cape; 26% rest of SA; 58% women;
- Predominantly African and Coloured; rural and township schools; few “A” symbols in Grade 12; around 10% from homes that speak English
- Past 4 years: >85% university average course pass rate – some slippage here
- Around 75% cohort students on track to graduate
- New NSFAS limits likely to be favourable

2017 developments at SPU

- 1057 students enrolled (730 in 2016)
- 111 Academic and 79 Administrative Staff (130 total in 2016); ~40% academics hold PhD; ~50% hold Masters degrees.
- 111 graduates: 13 BSc. Data Science; 32 B.Ed; 41 Diploma; 25 Certificate
- Graduates represent 65% completion in minimum time

2017 – first Bachelor's Degree Graduates at SPU
B.Education



2017 – first Bachelor's Degree Graduates at SPU
B.Sc (Data Science)



Developing the Institutional
Philosophy through Leadership
and Management at SPU

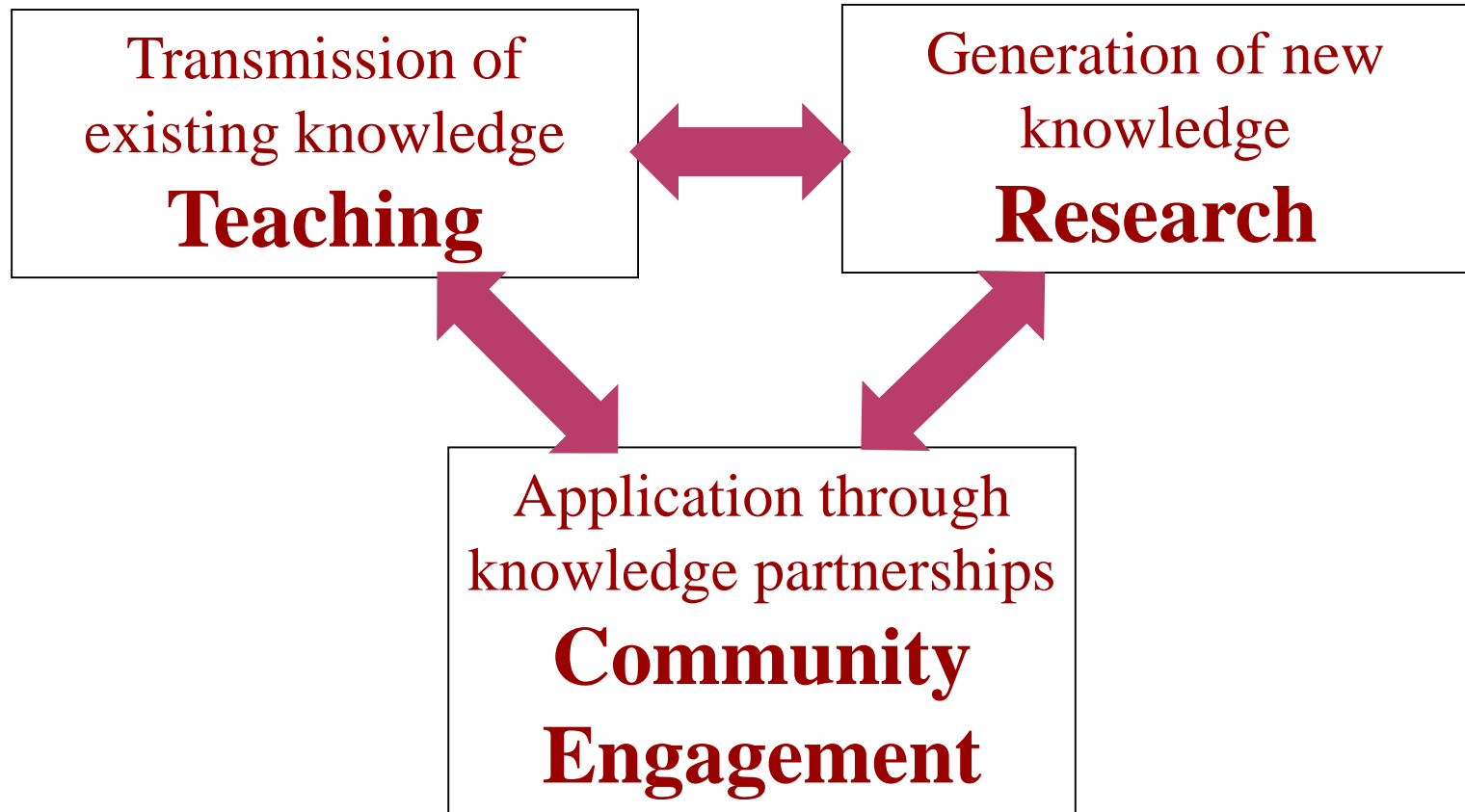
Academic “Posture” of SPU

- To be modest in the range of academic disciplines, drawing on need and uniqueness of Northern Cape
- To be very ambitious about the depth of intellectual engagement in these disciplines

Core Values at SPU

- Academic freedom and institutional autonomy
- Nurture and cherish diversity of opinion, intellectual rigour and search for truth
- Act as the conscience of our community through critical public engagements
- Ensure a positive and developmental response to the damage of apartheid
- Educate graduates who are critical and positively engaged citizens

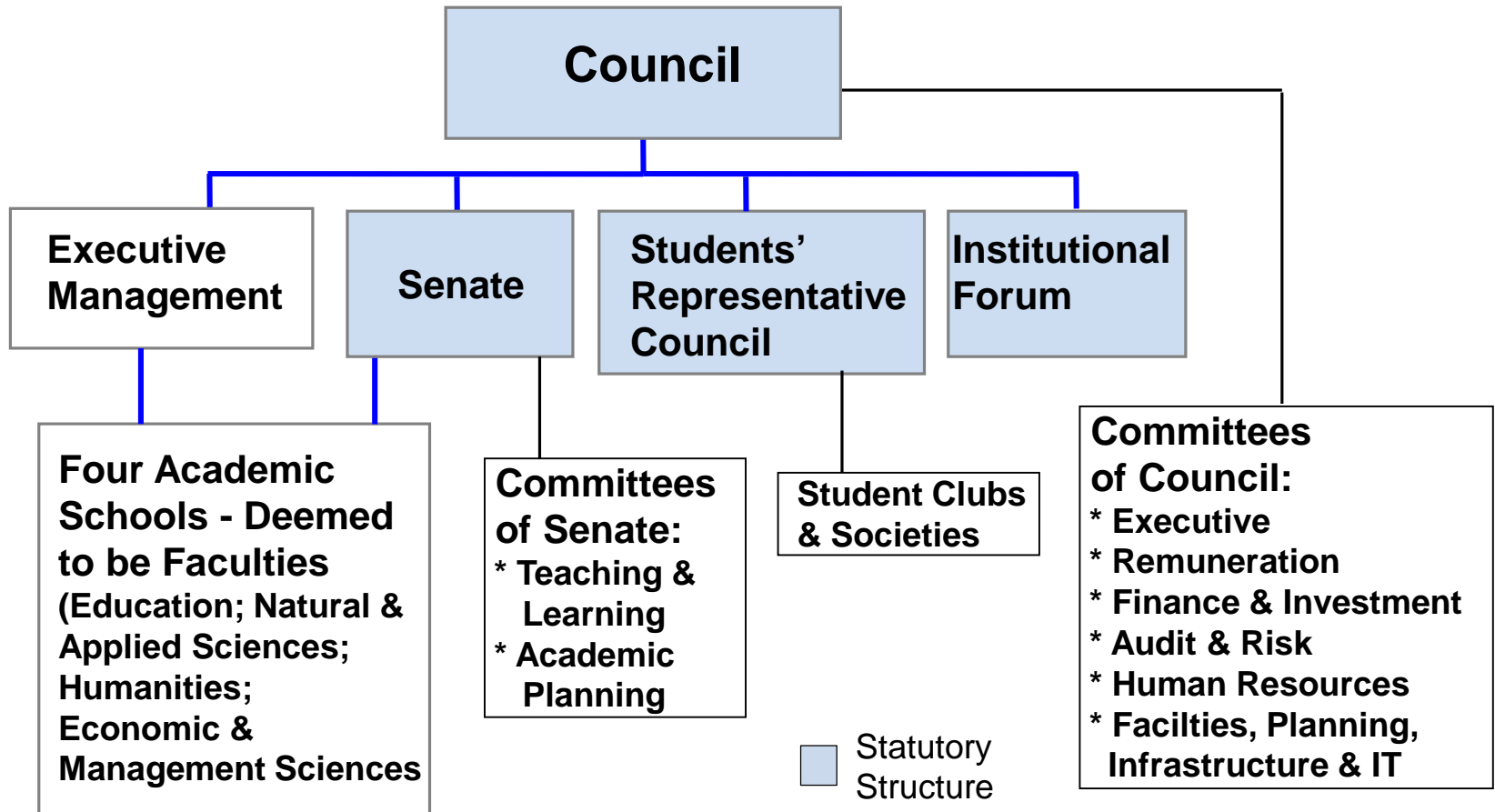
Three legs of the University



Strategic guides for development of academic profile

- First consolidate and become known as a good undergraduate teaching institution
- This means avoiding bridging or foundation programmes – Higher Certificate instead
- Develop academic staff research capacity in parallel but with some lag – primarily coursework postgraduate programmes in 2019/2020
- Build knowledge partnerships for urban and provincial development that grow teaching and research contributions

Importance of Governance



Academic Policies and Practices

- Values-driven and focused on supporting and facilitating learning
- Pedagogically defensible rules relating to admission, performance and progression
- SRC participation in development of rules
- Consistently applied but with empathy for individual cases

Developing Teaching Competence

- Competency-based approach to curriculum
- Focused teaching development seminars, symposia and workshops with academics
- Allocations of teaching development grant funding for initiatives at the School level
- Support and encourage participation in national initiatives on teaching

Two Important Teaching Questions

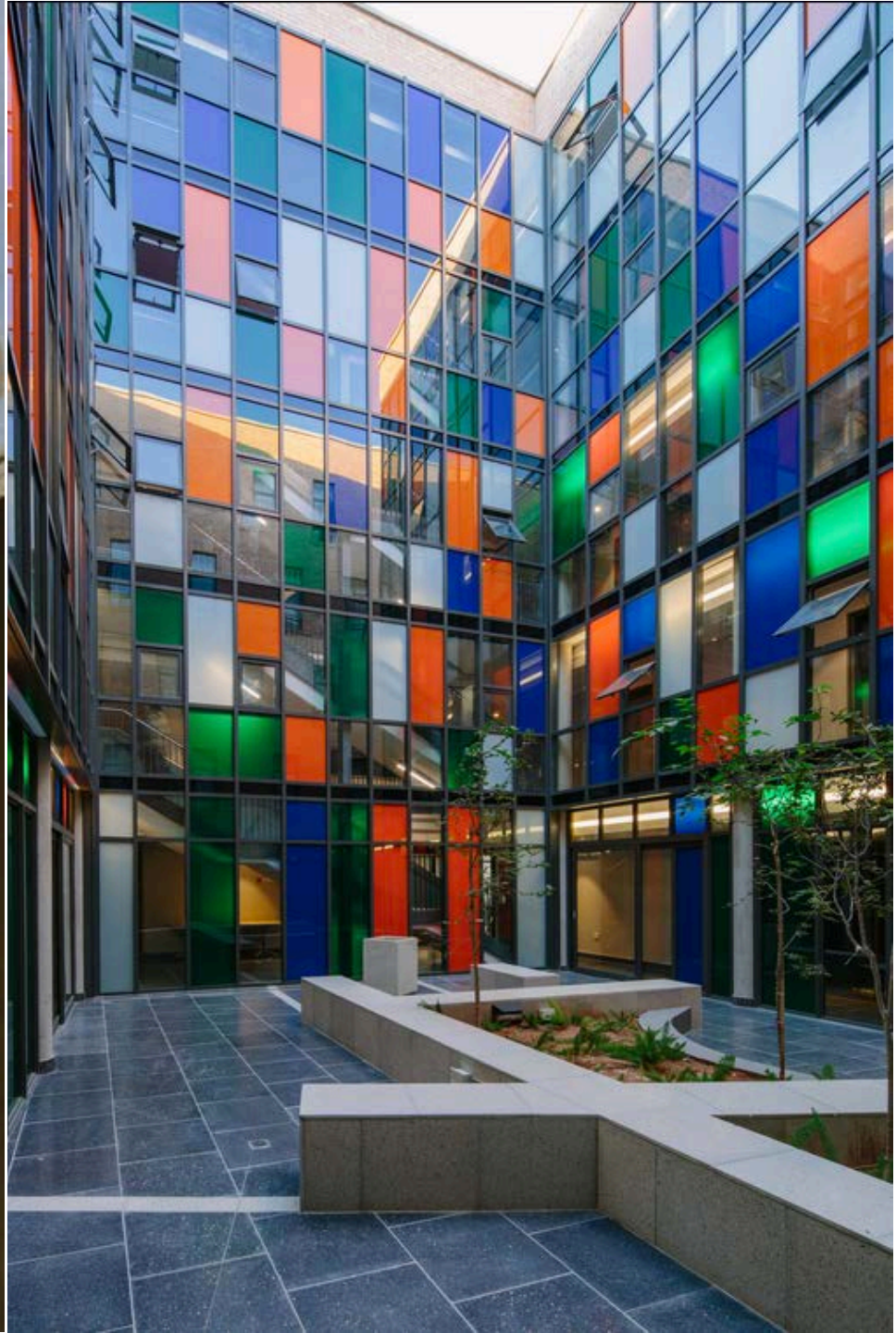
- If content knowledge is so ubiquitously available, what case do we make for asking our students to attend our classes?
- How do we respond to the very real possibility that one of the reasons for our students' poor academic performance is that we did not teach them properly?

Teaching and learning infrastructure

- All campus spaces have good quality wireless access
- Pedagogy takes for granted that all students have a laptop computer – bursary implications!
- SPU is committed to the tutorial-based approach to teaching
- Residences are primarily learning spaces

Supportive Learning Spaces







Student/Staff Bicycle Project



Central Campus Development - 2016



Nov 2017

**NEW SCIENCE
LABORATORY
BUILDING**

LIBRARY:
2017 Fulton Award for
excellence in the use
of Concrete

RESIDENCE/ACADEMIC
Commendation at
World Architecture
Awards: Berlin, Nov 2017

**NEW TEACHER
EDUCATION BUILDING**



Students and Volunteerism: Street Children Soccer Project



- * 12 SAPS members
Trained as soccer coaches
- * 4 “Soccer Legends”
involved
- * ~70 children from
shelter and on street
Participating
- * SPU students provide
homework assistance
at the shelter
- * Good support from
Dept of Social Dev
and SAPS

Supporting students with basic learning and living needs

- ~65% of students in residence
- Financial aid: ~83% covered by Financial Aid in 2017; no fees for clear pass; 2018 will be better for 1st years
- Encourage participation in sport, debates and community engagement – alert to marginalisation
- Ensure that all students eat properly and get Psycho-social support – need ways to identify the needy students



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