



**Residence Educational Programme (REP):** facilitating student learning in DUT residences

**Siyaphumelela Conference**  
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## OUTLINE OF THE PRESENTATION

- Scope and objectives of the Residence Educational Programme (REP).
- Underlying analytical framework [Systems Thinking ]
- Qualitative and Quantitative data collected over the past three years (2013-2015).
- Aligning the REP with the goals of the *Siyaphumelela* Project.

## STUDENT HOUSING MISSION STATEMENT

"Our interests and concerns are to ensure that the **personal, social and academic development of students** is achieved through participation in proactive programmes which address current issues and problems, as well assisting in the individual's adjustment to the community at large."

## DUT STRATEGIC PLAN (2015-2019)

### Strategic Focus Area I

#### Building sustainable student communities of living and learning:

- Provide enabling **living** and **learning** environments that promote student success and advance the intellectual, social and emotional growth of our students.
- Cultivate a shared understanding of **student-centeredness** that underpins students' attainment of the desired DUT graduate attributes.

## REZLIFE PROGRAMME

Academic	Social	Sports
Spelling Bee	Mr & Miss Thick	Residence league (soccer & netball)
House Committee Induction	Mr & Miss Green	Sports Awards
Residence Literary Society	First Year City Tour	
Academic Excellence Awards	Cultural Day	
Debates and Speech Contests		

### Module/Subject-focused academic support (REP)

## DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

- Senior Rezlife Officers
- Residence Assistants (Postgrad students)
- House Committee members

## IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT RESIDENCES

"Student residences are of strategic importance because they are ideal locations for both **teaching and learning** and **social and recreational life**, not least because they can create a sense of community. It is suggested that student residences have, or ought to have, four key functions:

A pedagogical function – *residences are places of teaching and learning, Induction and orientation;*

- A cultural function – *clubs and societies are strongest in student residences;*
- A social function – *having fun is key to student life;* and
- A leadership function – *residences are a training ground for student leadership."*

*"Swartz, D. (2010). Presentation to the National Conference of the South African Chapter of the Association of College and University Housing Officers International. Unpublished PowerPoint presentation, Durban."*

## REP OBJECTIVES

- To provide **support** to undergraduate students in residences.
- To assist students with the processes of **adaptation** and **integration** into the culture of the university.
- To **improve** subject-specific knowledge and understanding, literacy levels, reading and comprehension skills of students.

## DHET PERSPECTIVE(S) ON UNIVERSITY STUDENT RESIDENCES

"Residential learning communities try to integrate the academic and accommodation experiences. Also known as 'residential colleges' or 'living-learning communities', they are touted as improving retention, as students in such communities are reported to spend more time talking about their academics and studying outside the classroom"

*Ministerial Report on Student Housing in SA Universities (2011:17)*

## REP AIM

*The REP is guided by the following broad aim:*

To provide academic, psycho-social support and development to undergraduate students in residences.

## REP TUTORS

- Tutors, Mentors & Advisors (TMAs) – Recipients of REP
- Senior students
- Performed well academically (65% and above)
- Intensive 3 day training
- Remunerated according to the university accepted rate

## REP ACTIVITIES

### Tutorials

The tutorials are aimed at improving success and retention rates and to nurture DUT graduate attributes. These tutorials are conducted in residences from 18:00 – 20:00

Monday – Thursday and are facilitated by tutors who are senior students.

## REP ACTIVITIES CONT'D

### Residence Literary Society

The RLS aims to promote reading for pleasure and to enhance the role of literature as a creative critique of contemporary social issues that affect all of us in various ways. It also wants to promote reading as a tool for intellectual growth and development.

Activities offered in the RLS:

- Book reviews
- Publication of critical essays in a variety of platforms
- Seminars by literary scholars
- Visits to residences by authors

## REP ACTIVITIES CONT'D

*BOOK TITLES AND AUTHORS CHOSEN FOR THE RLS:*

- Black Diamond – Zakes Mda
- I ran for my life – Kabelo Mabalane
- To quote myself – Khaya Dlanga
- Pale Native – Max Du Preez
- Touch my blood – Fred Khumalo
- Way back home – Niq Mhlongo

## REP ACTIVITIES CONT'D

### Mind Opener Series (MOS)

These are industry tours that assist in stimulating students' critical, analytical and intellectual abilities to deal with complex problems in their fields of study, in order to enhance students' learning experience. Exposure to the world of work is a crucial component of the on-going orientation process for first-year students and for those students who are left with two or three semesters before completing their studies.

## SUCCESS INDICATORS

- Provision of peer student support in selected modules to undergraduate students in DUT residences.
- Completion of the qualification in minimum time.
- Above average (excellent) academic performance.
- Graduating students who exemplify DUT graduate attributes.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- Conceptualize the university as an ecological system (ecosystem) with one clearly defined goal to which all constituent sub-entities contribute directly and indirectly.
- Define learning as a comprehensive, holistic, transformative activity that integrates *academic learning* and *student development*.
- Create a campus-wide (systemic) focus on student success.

## THE ECOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY

'Ecology' points to systems of relationships between organisms and their environment. The term has also come to have positive value attached to it, in the wake of environmental degradation. Accordingly, the *ecological university* is one that takes seriously its relationships with its total environment and it does what it can to further the wellbeing of that total environment. The ecological university cares about its environment. (Ronald Barnett, *Being a University*, 2015: 5)



## SCOPE OF THE REP

YEAR	2014	2015	2016
Total number of students in Residence	7 906	7 698	7 720
Total Headcount	26 472	27 023	27 050

## STUDENT PARTICIPATION

YEAR	SUBJECTS/MODULES	TUTORS	STUDENTS	RESIDENCES
2014	48	54	2150	19
2015	58	58	1916	18
2016	57	58	2200	24

## INTERNAL ECOSYSTEM

The *Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching* (CELT) works closely with selected academic departments in all six faculties to contribute to student success.

**Selected Participating Departments** : Economics, Mathematics, Mechanics, Education, Nursing, Financial Accounting, Microbiology, Anatomy, etc.



### ALIGNMENT WITH SIYAPHUMELELA GOALS

1. The REP focuses on identified high impact modules / DFW (Drop-Out, Failure, Withdrawal).
2. Introduction of new / additional co-curricular activities to enhance holistic learning (e.g. Reading and Critical Reflection through the **Residence Literary Society**)



3. Systematically gathering and analyzing data to determine the impact of REP on student success.

4. Exploring ways of involving all relevant **academic, support, and administrative** departments in REP and related initiatives. Thus creating an institutional ecosystem with a shared objective of contributing to enhanced student success at DUT.



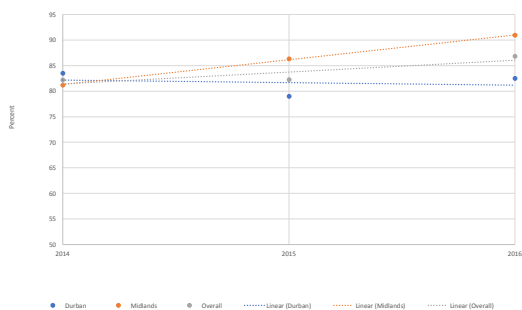
## DATA COLLECTION

- Monthly Reports by TMAs
- Semester results – TMAs
- Quarterly Debriefing Meetings
- Surveys (students)
- Results/Pass rates from Management Information System (MIS) – students

## SUBJECT PASS RATES (PER CAMPUS)

Subject	Campus – Percent Passed					
	Durban		Midlands		Overall	
	2014	2015	2016	2014	2015	2016
Anatomy	100	100	94	-	-	-
Development Software	73	77	60	-	-	-
Economics 1	94	98	100	-	-	-
Electrical Engineering 1	84	63	62	-	-	-
Financial Accounting 1	90	88	97	-	-	-
Mathematics 1	86	85	92	-	-	-
Mechanics 1	41	48	70	-	-	-
Physics	100	100	94	-	-	-
Principles of Navigation	83	71	-	-	-	-
Anatomy & Physiology 1A	-	-	-	93	96	93
Applied Mechanics 1	-	-	-	83	75	87
Chemistry (Education 1)	-	-	-	71	90	98
Cost Accounting 1	-	-	-	63	62	94
Env Tourism Biology 1	-	-	-	95	92	100
Education 1	-	-	-	90	95	99
Financial Accounting 1	-	-	-	82	88	92
Marketing	-	-	-	72	48	93
Mathematics 1	-	-	-	71	82	73
Pharmacology 1	-	-	-	62	85	92
Physics (Education) 1	-	-	-	92	94	71

## OVERALL CAMPUS PASS RATES



## COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS BY TMAs

1. Generally, REP is seen as a useful intervention by students, tutors, and lecturers.
2. In addition to English tutors use other official languages such as IsiZulu, isiXhosa in tutorials.
3. There is a need for more teaching facilities: venues, equipment, computer labs, etc.



4. There is a need to involve more lecturing staff / faculty in REP.
5. There is a need to assess impact of REP on student academic performance in a systematic manner.
6. A similar initiative would be beneficial for non-resident students.
7. Poor attendance in tutorials when there are no formal assessments (tests and exams) & overcrowding during assessment times.



## COMMENTS BY STUDENTS

“The REP made me to enjoy coding and understand it which made me to do more practices and improved my academics” – *IT Student*

“In the REP tutorials, that is where you get freedom to ask anything especially the ones you don’t understand during the lecture, so these tutorials assist me to gain the most knowledge I have up until now.” – *Maths Student*

“I didn’t understand many things which are basic stuff. The tutor tried and made me understand” – *Bcal Student*

“My REP tutor added value to my performance and it made me understand and see that I can do things better.” – *Economics Student*

## FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

- REP similar component for day scholars
- More residence students participating = More Subjects/Modules
- Intensive Data Analysis (Institutional Planning Office)

