



SUSTAINING SERITI : INNOVATION, CARE AND SUCCESS

Francois Strydom: UFS partner presentation

T: +27 51 401 7421 | E: ctl@ufs.ac.za | www.ufs.ac.za/ctl

 UFSUV |  UFSweb |  UFSweb |  ufsuv

Inspiring excellence, transforming lives through quality, impact, and care.

Defining student success

The SeSotho word "**Seriti**" means:

Something between the English words for "**dignity**" and "**integrity**". It relates to the **shadow or aura that people cast as they go through life**, a shadow that **grows through good deeds and leaves a legacy of impact**.

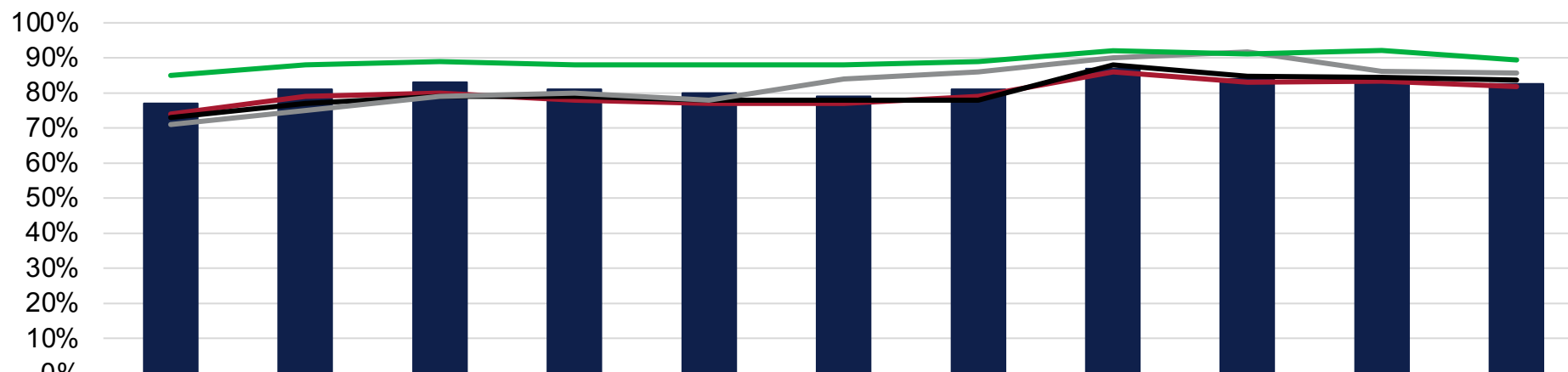
Focusing on student success and degree attainment work is about dignity as Nelson Mandela so poignantly reminds us:

“As long as poverty, injustice and gross inequality exist in our world, none of us can truly rest.”

At UFS, the team continues to be inspired by this vision of restoring dignity with integrity and finding ways to make it sustainable.

What have we been able to achieve through Siyaphumelela?

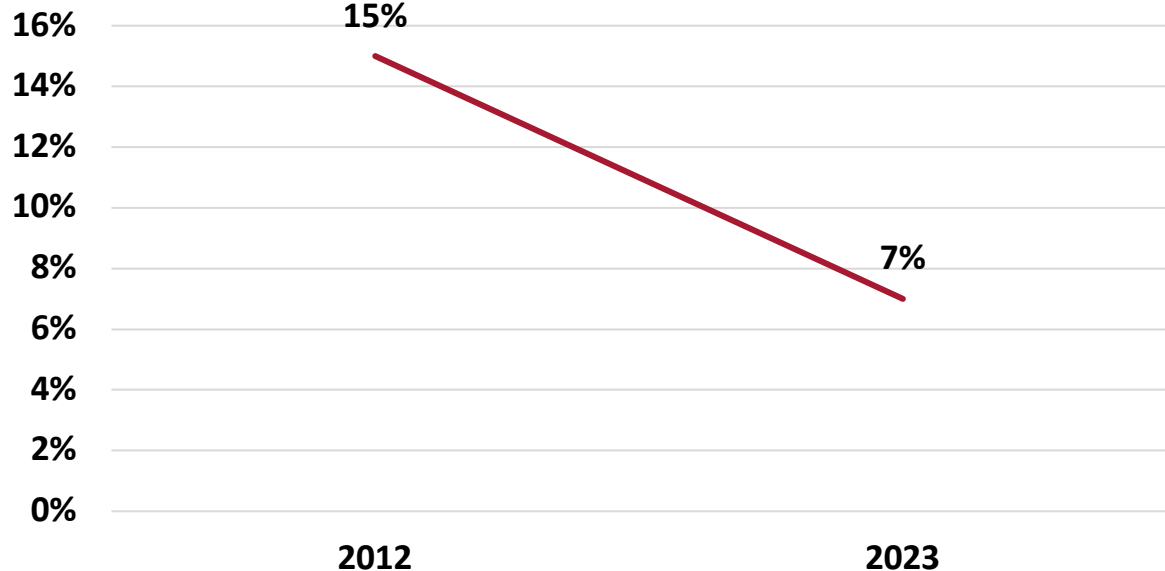
UFS success rates over the past 10 years



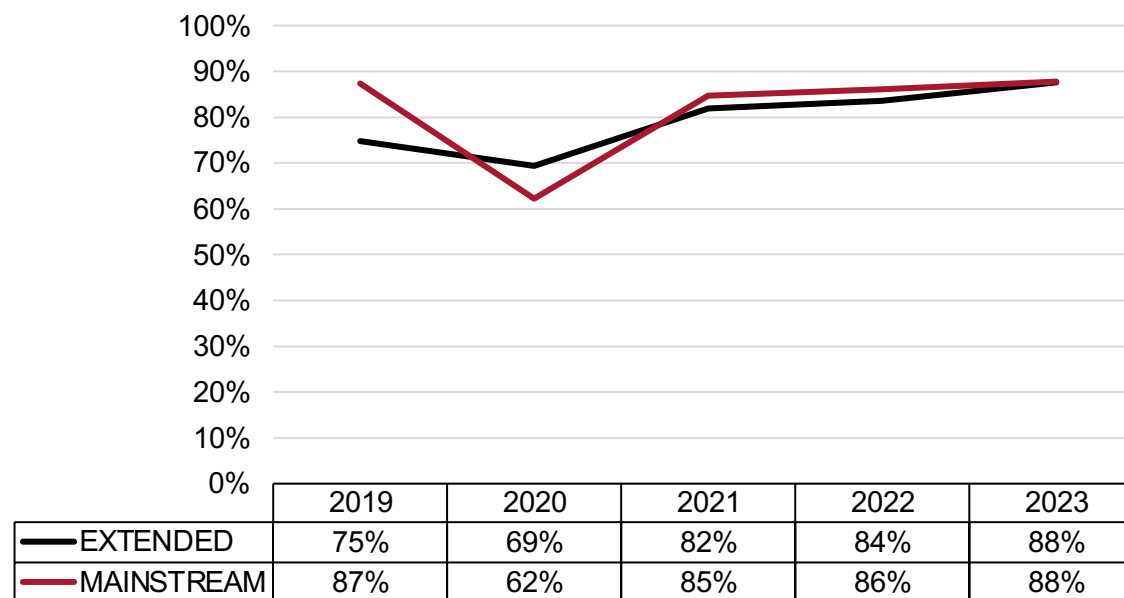
| | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 |
|----------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| ■ Grand Total | 77% | 81% | 83% | 81% | 80% | 79% | 81% | 87% | 84% | 84% | 83% |
| — African | 74% | 79% | 80% | 78% | 77% | 77% | 79% | 86% | 83% | 83% | 82% |
| — Coloured | 73% | 77% | 79% | 79% | 78% | 78% | 78% | 88% | 85% | 84% | 84% |
| — Asian/Indian | 71% | 75% | 79% | 80% | 78% | 84% | 86% | 90% | 92% | 86% | 86% |
| — White | 85% | 88% | 89% | 88% | 88% | 88% | 89% | 92% | 91% | 92% | 89% |

What have we been able to achieve through Siyaphumelela?

Achievement gap between African and White students



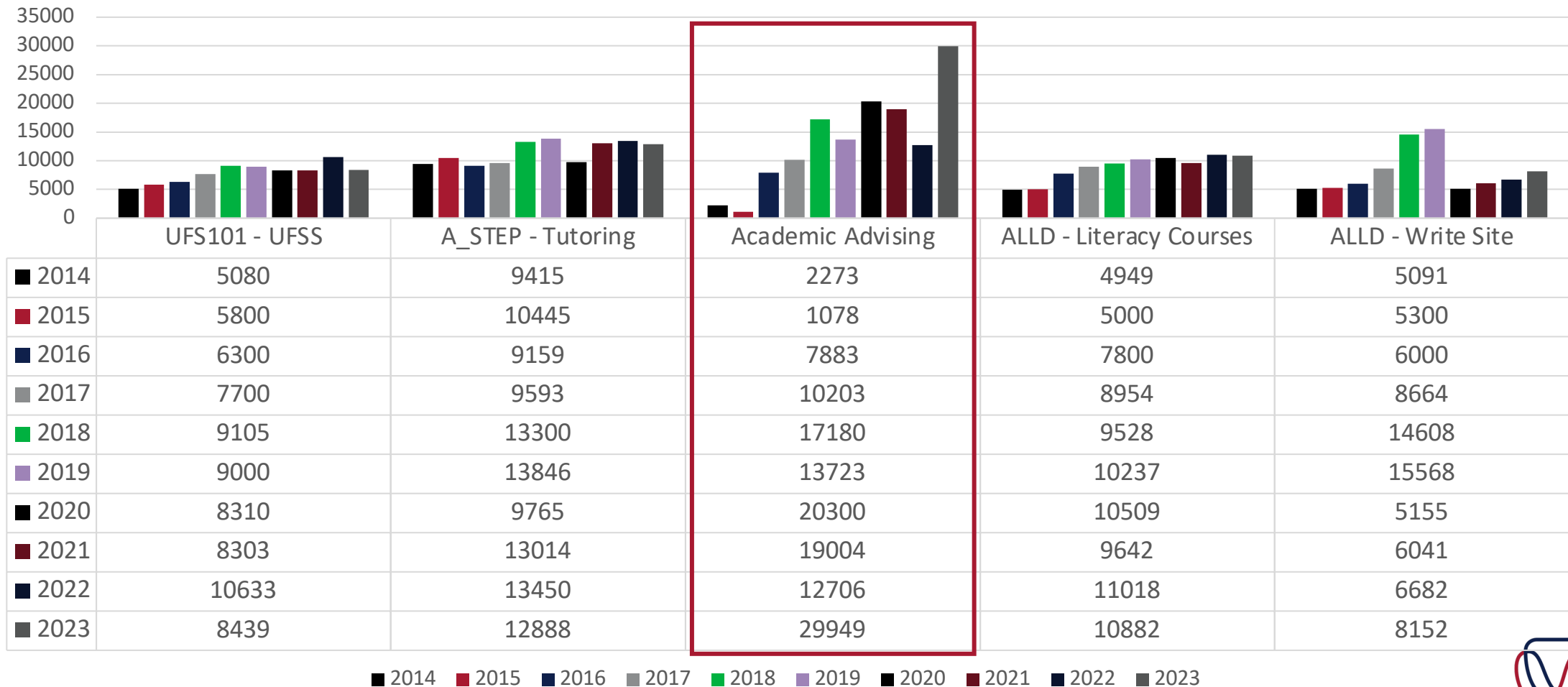
Retention rate from year 1 to 2



How have we been building for Seriti?

High-Impact Practices (HIPs)

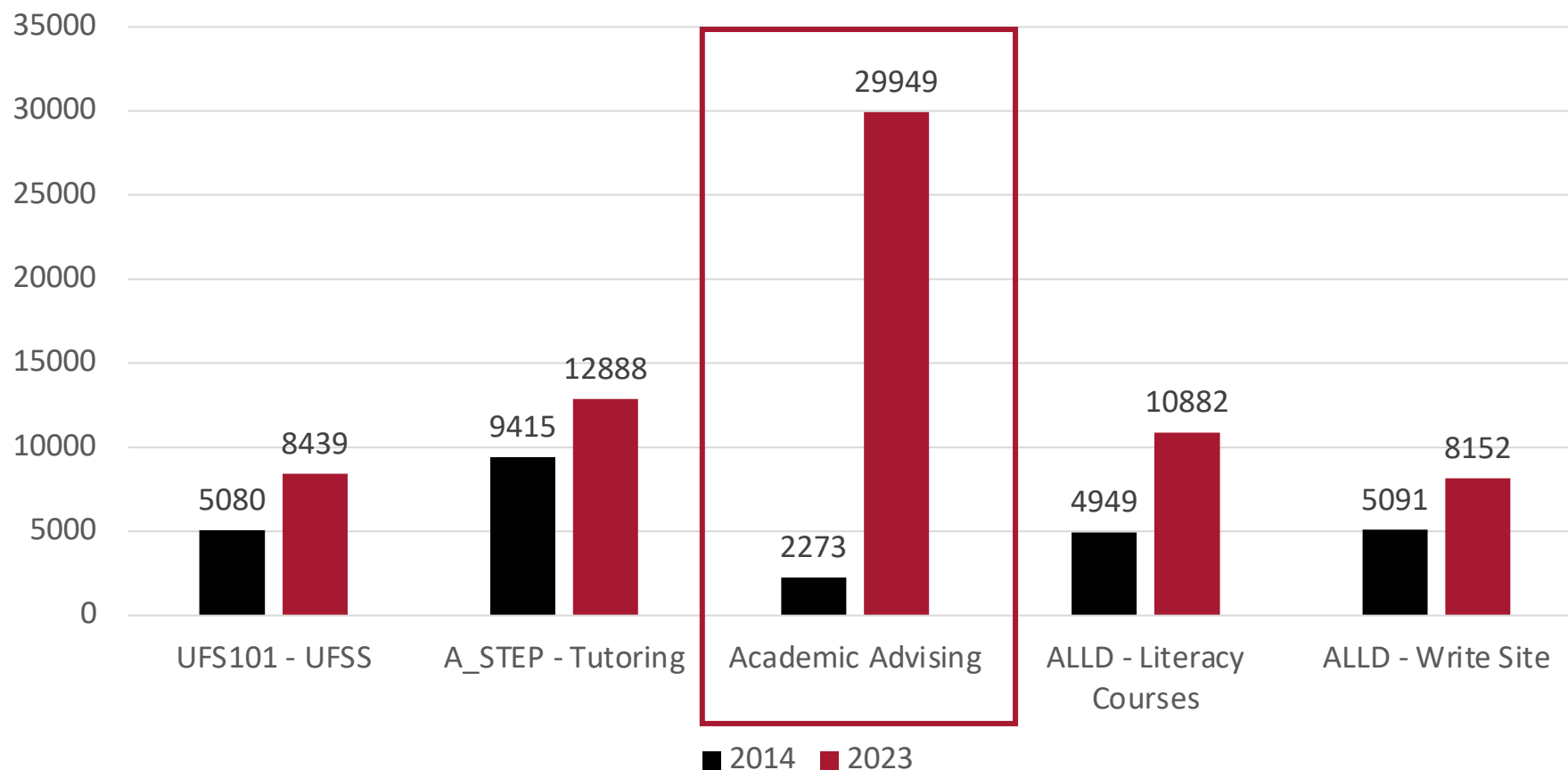
Students supported in HIPs 2014-2023



How have we been building for Seriti?

High-Impact Practices (HIPs)

Students Supported in HIPS 2014 vs 2023



Academic advising at UFS



| Activity | Reach (no. of students) |
|---|--|
| Student Appointments (individual with advisors and success coaches via telephone calls) | Central Advisors: 593 Success coaches: 7858 |
| GPS ChatBot: WhatsApp/Telegram | Access programme: 1870 First Years: 8626 Seniors: 2066 |
| Online advising reach (Facebook, Instagram, Kovsie Advice) | Facebook: 1534 Instagram: 2696 Kovsie Advice: 225 |
| Group advising (incl. workshops) | Advising Learning Community: 531 Workshops: 1784 |
| Peer Advisors training and webinars (incl. tutors, RC's, TA's, mentors and success coaches) | Training: 1104 Webinars: 1062 |
| Total | 29 949 |

Scaled academic advising services

GPS CHATBOT

IN THE BOT'S LIFETIME:

 **5 Million MESSAGES**

78 715 BOT USERS 

The BOT handled over

 **700 000 MESSAGES**

in January and February of 2024

99.5% HELP REQUESTS
resolve rate

99.5%



42 232 Human Hand-Offs

On average, students send the BOT

63 MESSAGES



52% of users return to the BOT for help



57% OF USERS

message the bot outside of office hours

SCALED RESPONSIVE STUDENT TRACKING PROJECT



Perspectives from a GPS success coach

Sihle Maxegwana



Bachelor of Commerce - BCom, Investment
management

Bachelor of Commerce - BCom(Honours),
Financial Economics and Investment



Our journey is only possible because of each other



higher education
& training
Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



Siyaphumelela
we succeed



Achieving
the Dream



Michael & Susan Dell
FOUNDATION



Advice for new Siyaphumelela colleagues

- **BUILD FOR SERITI:** Relentless commitment to collaboration for social justice.
- **FOCUS ON DATA:** Leadership has to be focused on evidence-based decision-making and innovation
- **BE OPEN TO LEARN:** Re-designing the learning environment based on globally benchmarked research, listening and learning from others' efforts and practices
- **THINK SCALE:** How can we help the more with data and technology?
- **SUSTAIN SERITI:** Recognise and use the amazing talent around you, remember where you are:

It always seems impossible until it's done

– Nelson Mandela



Thank you

T: +27 51 401 7421 | E: ctl@ufs.ac.za | www.ufs.ac.za/ctl

 UFSUV |  UFSweb |  UFSweb |  ufsuv

Inspiring excellence, transforming lives through quality, impact, and care.

UNIVERSITY OF THE
FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE
VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA
FREISTATA



UFS
CENTRE FOR TEACHING
AND LEARNING (CTL)