A photograph of the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. The main building, a grand neoclassical structure with a portico of tall columns, is the central focus. It is flanked by large, mature jacaranda trees in full purple bloom. In the foreground, a green lawn is visible, with a person walking across it. A stone wall with two small fountains runs along the edge of the lawn. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

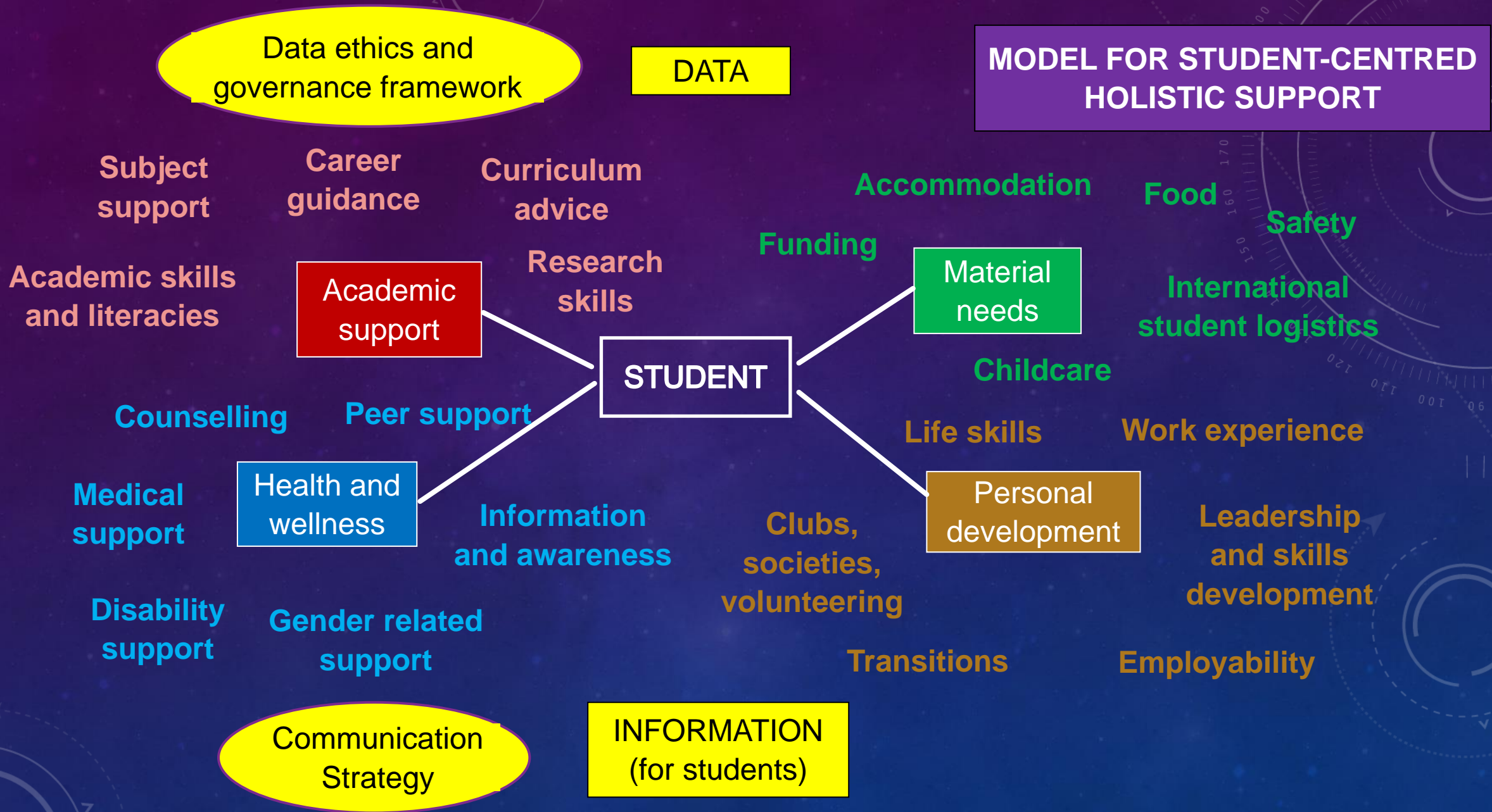
A people-centred, sustainable institutional approach to student success

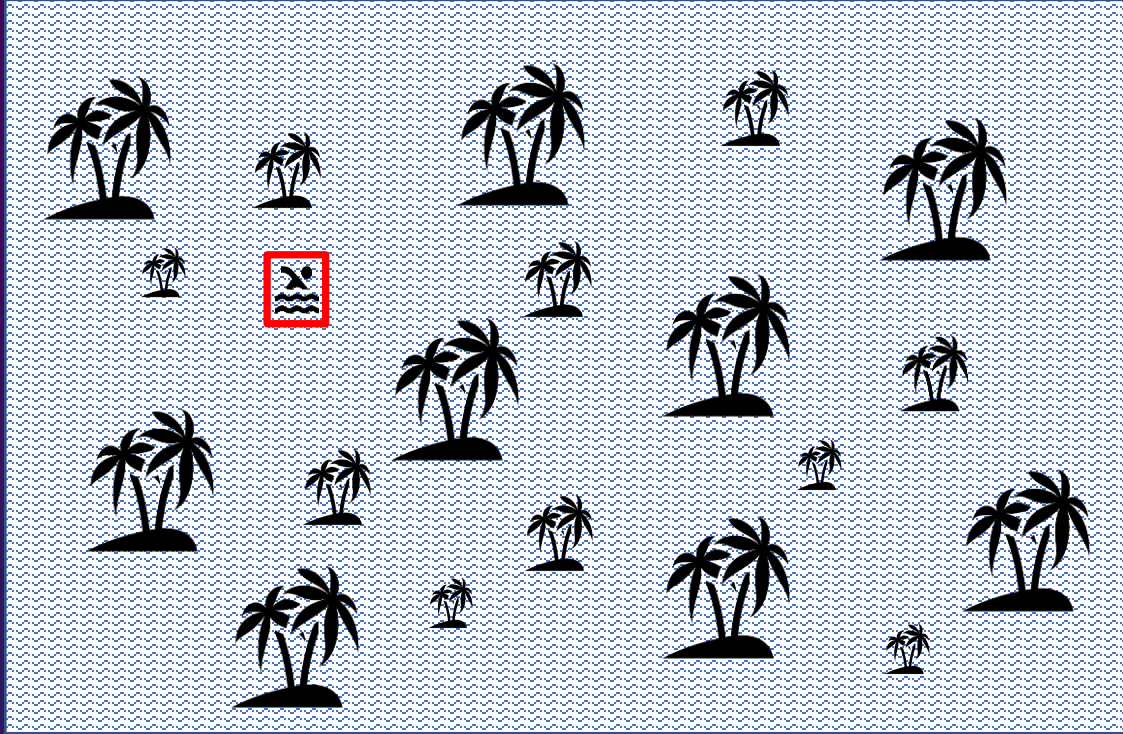
Diane Grayson
Senior Director: Academic Affairs
University of the Witwatersrand

UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

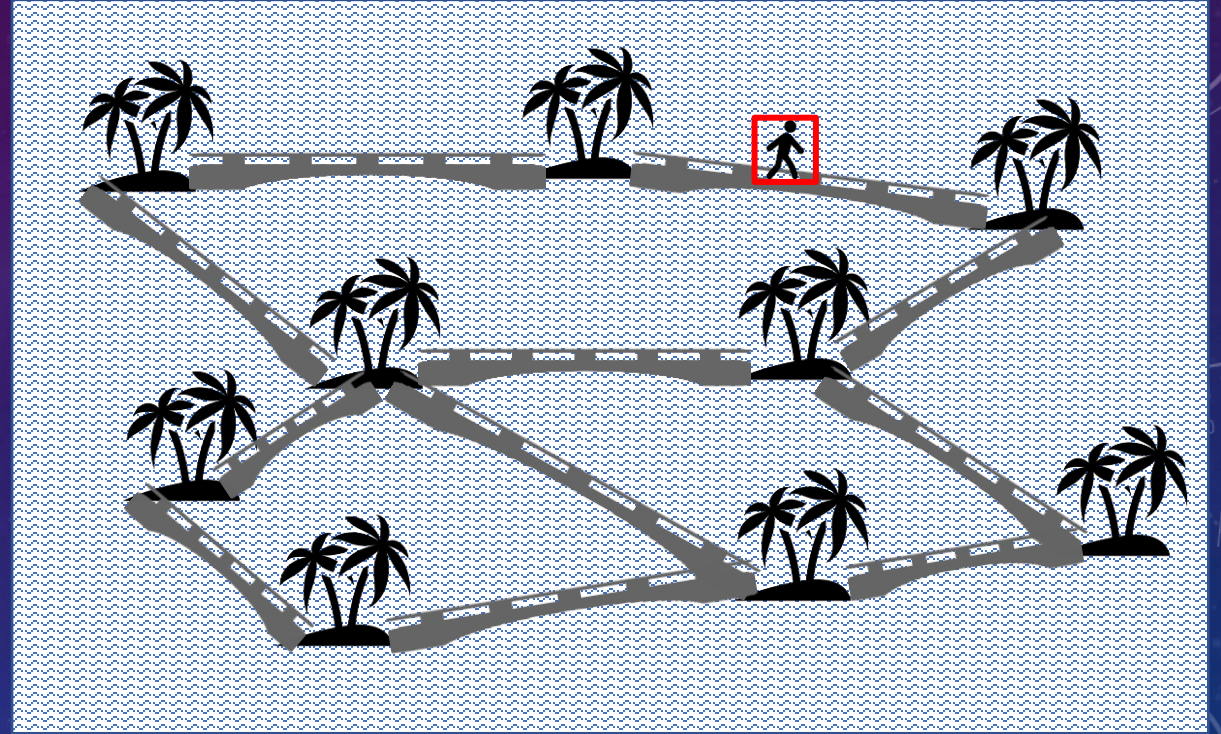


**MODEL FOR STUDENT-CENTRED
HOLISTIC SUPPORT**





2018



2023

At Wits, many structures have not changed but interconnections have

Registrar

CFO

DVC: Systems
& Operations

Dean of
Students

Senior DVC
Academic

Faculty
Deans

Student
enrolment

Financial
aid

ICT

Health care
providers

T&L Centre

Assistant
deans

Institutional
Research

Student
Advisors

BIS

International
Students

FYE

QA

Psychologists

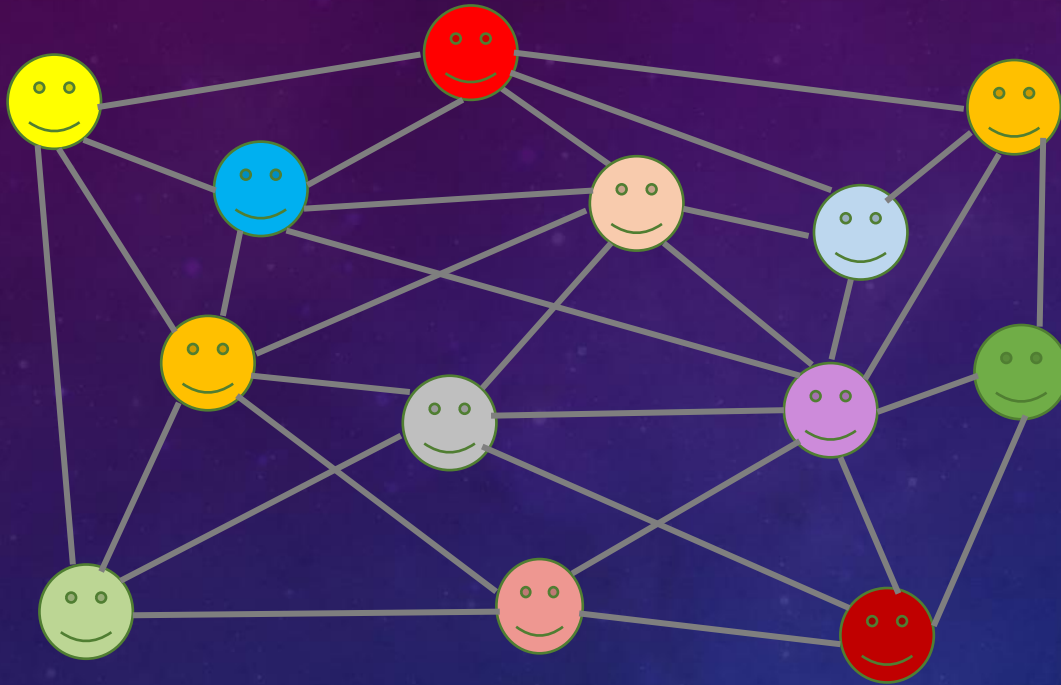
Food
security

Academics

Accommodation

Student fees

NETWORK OF PEOPLE



+ systems thinking

People are the
system **elements**

People are
interconnected

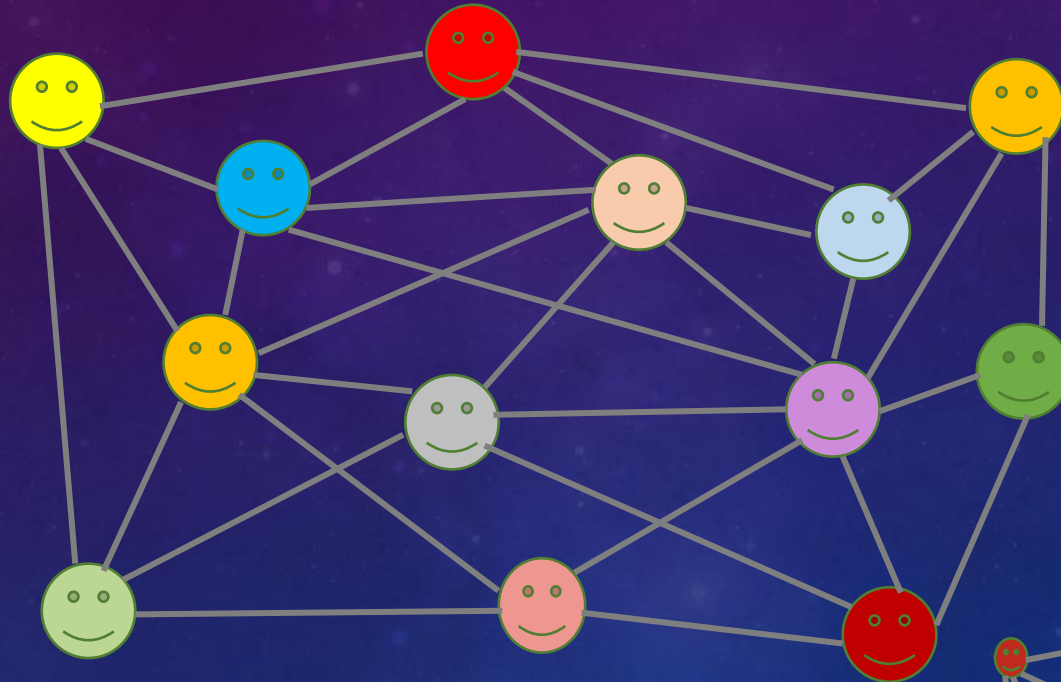
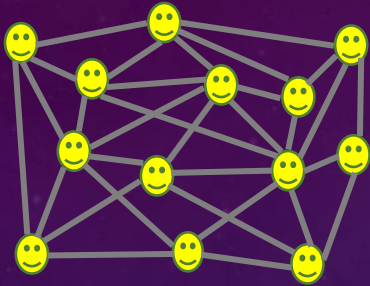
The **interconnections** are
both information flows
and relationships

People have a
common **purpose**

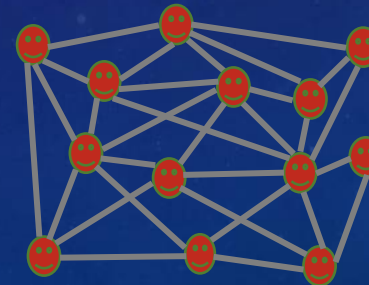
NETWORK OF PEOPLE

On committees
(working groups)
each person
represents a
constituency

Representatives
identify concerns,
facilitate
information flows



The network also facilitates
information flows



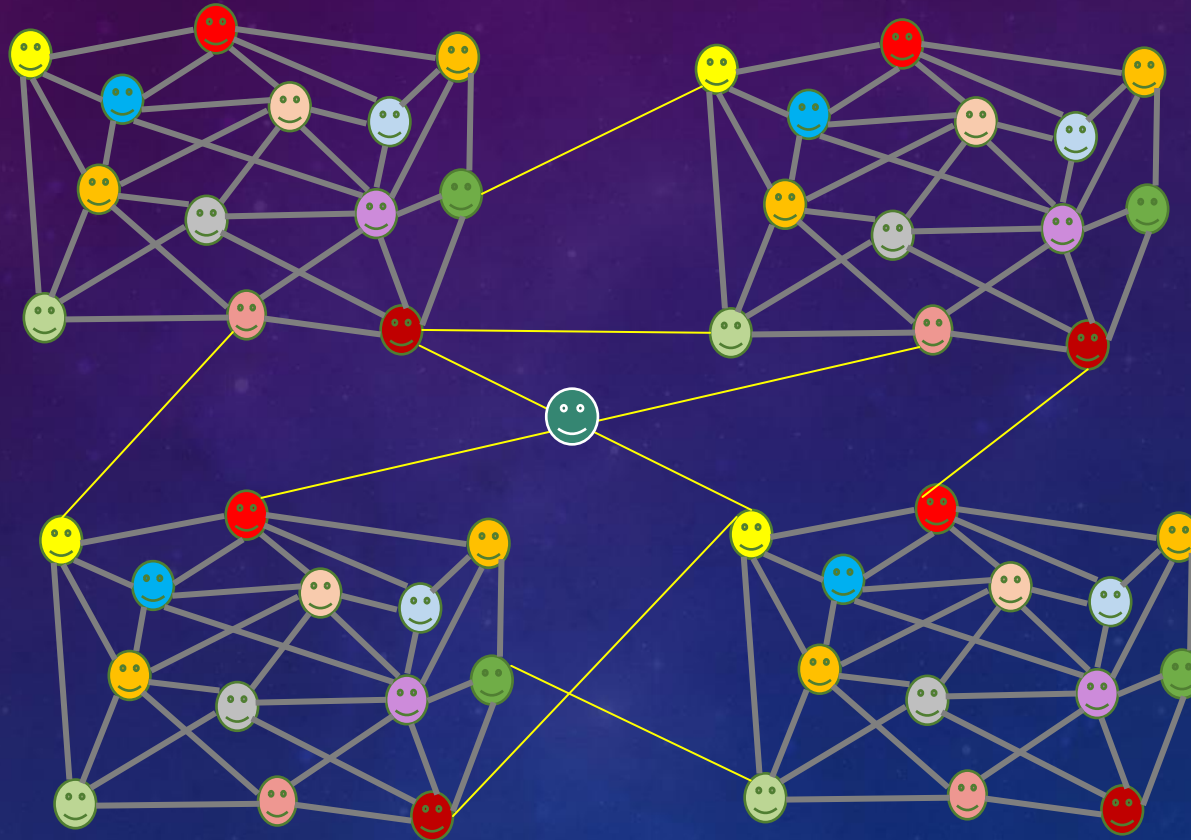
2020 – EMERGENCY REMOTE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Activate all courses on the LMS, monitor usage

Enable students and staff to access the LMS, internet

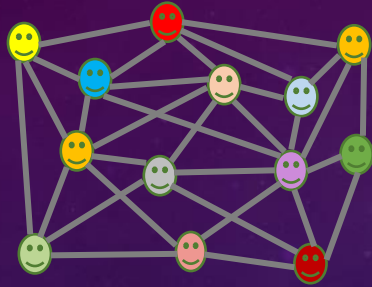
Support students with online learning and psychosocial issues

Support staff with online teaching and assessment

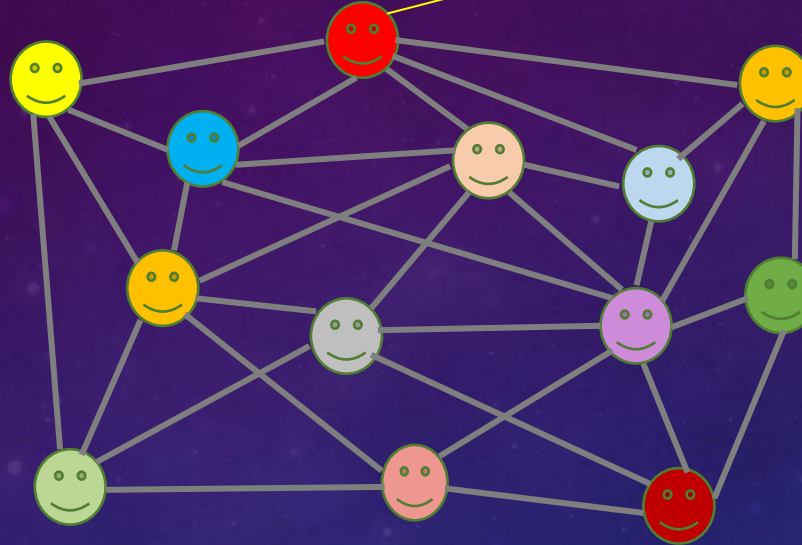


2021 IMPLEMENT A NEW LMS

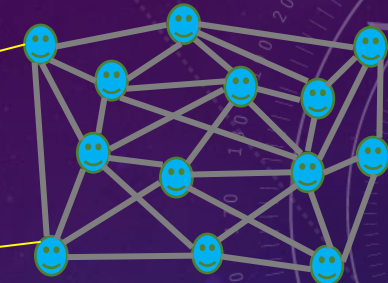
– USE AGILE APPROACH



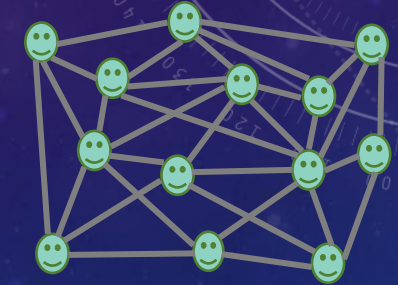
Wits-Canvas task team



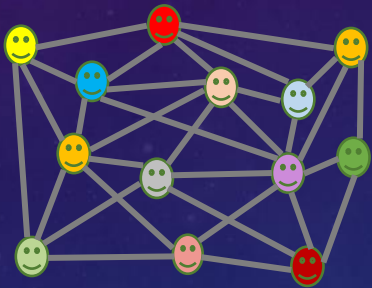
Project implementation committee



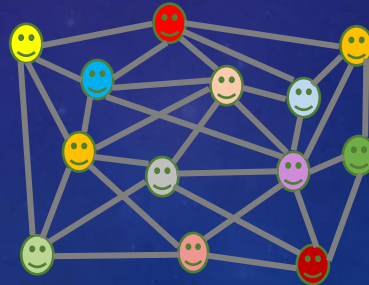
Executive



Instructional designers CoP



Student support task team



Communications task team

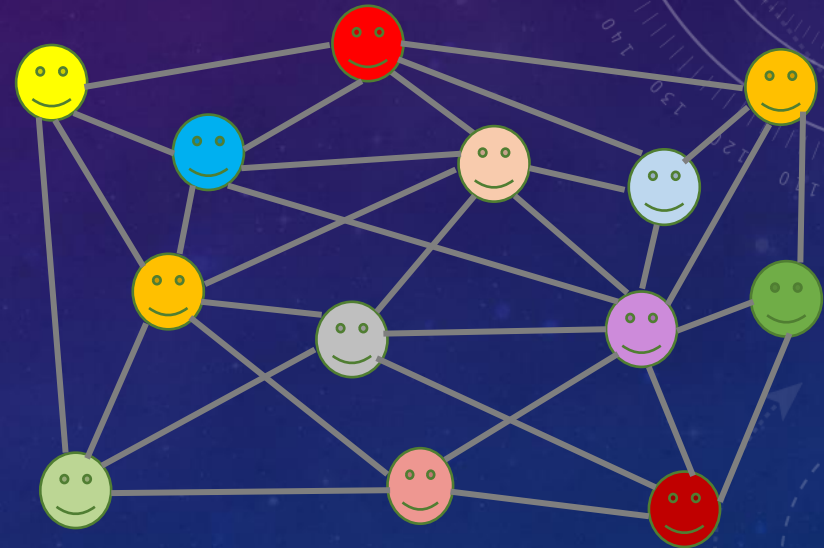


Student advisors CoP

GATEWAY TO SUCCESS

Orientation to Academic and Student Life

- Jointly led by Senior Director Academic Affairs and Dean of Student Affairs
- Compulsory, 2-week holistic, integrated transition programme run in blended mode (3 weeks in 2022)
- Interdisciplinary “Climate Change and Me” online course, plus online Digital Abilities and Academic Integrity courses
- On campus faculty-based plus student life activities



In 2022 we had 4 months
to plan for 6000 students

THE NETWORK OF PEOPLE MODEL PROVIDES

- A means of bringing together relevant stakeholders quickly and easily for specific purposes
- A sense of belonging among staff as well as students
- Connections across the institution that strengthen relationships, facilitate information flows and reduce feelings of isolation
- A sense of common purpose and commitment to student success in ever-widening circles of people

“Connection is the energy that is created between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment.

Belonging is the innate human desire to be part of something larger than us.”

(Brene Brown, “Daring Greatly”)

WITS 2033 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

“Our people are at the centre of what makes Wits great. We are collegial, open-minded, and respectful, and we are accountable and always act with integrity. We foster a welcoming environment and embrace the diversity of our backgrounds....

We commit to:

- Exposing our students to a cosmopolitan student life and experience that fosters a sense of belonging and the development of lifelong networks and friendships;
- Offering our students a wide range of student development experiences and challenging intellectual engagements that enables them to become active citizens and leaders in all sectors of a diverse society;
- Promoting an environment of care and holistic wellness...
- Using evidenced-based data, science, and research to identify barriers to student success

Academic
integrity

Online
learning

Accommodation

Subject
support

Career
guidance

Curriculum
advice

Funding

Food

Safety

Academic skills
and literacies

Research
skills

Writing
support

Employment
Portal

International
student logistics

Counselling

Peer support

Life skills

Work experience

Medical
support

Mentoring

Information
and awareness

Clubs,
societies,
volunteering

Leadership and
skills development

Disability
support

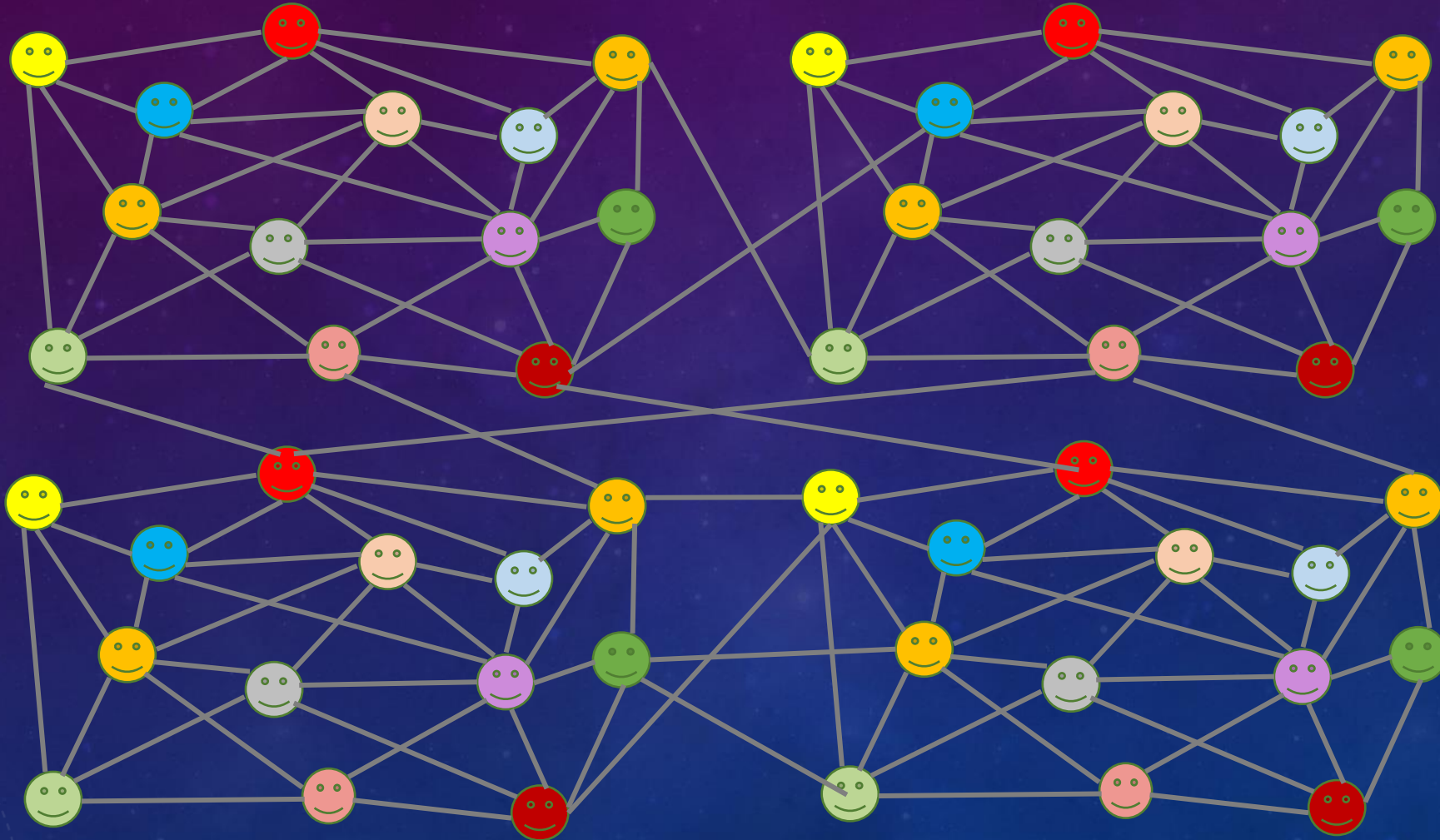
Gender related
support

Transitions

Employability

Co-curricular
transcript

Long term sustainability enhanced because
student success is **EVERYONE'S** business!



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG



A PEOPLE-CENTRED, SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH TO STUDENT SUCCESS?

A student's experience

Caitlyn Leigh Thomas

(BSc Chemistry with Chemical Engineering)

and

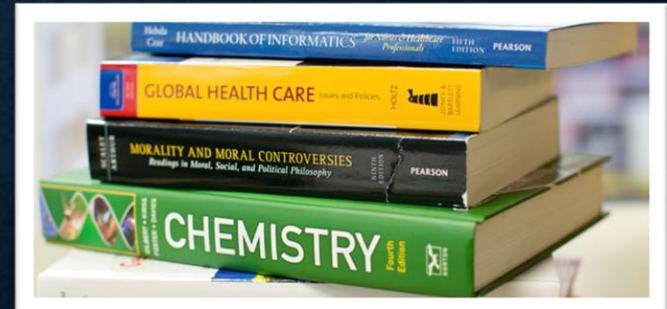
Professor Diane Grayson

SECONDARY VS. TERTIARY EDUCATION *ENVIRONMENT*



**High
School**

University



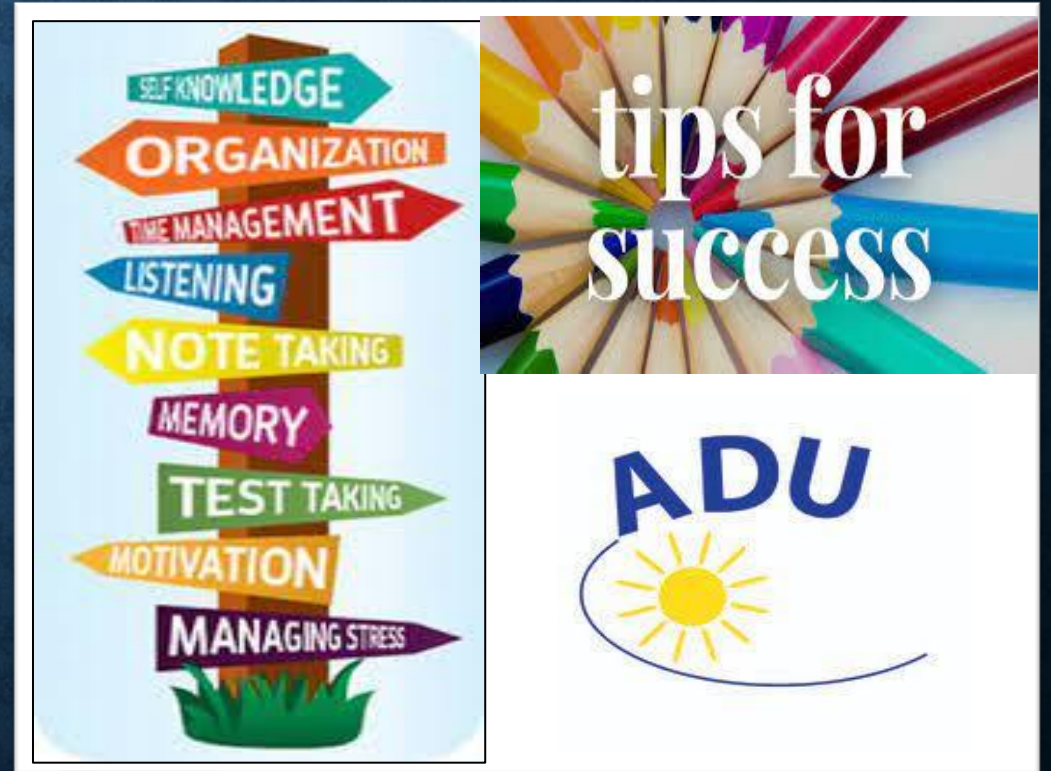
SUPPORT RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT WITS UNIVERSITY WHICH I HAVE UTILIZED

GTS



HOW I BENEFITED FROM UTILIZING THESE RESOURCES

**Skills
attained**

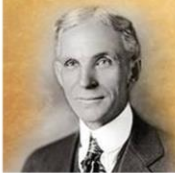




WITS. FOR GOOD.

THANK YOU FOR **LISTENING**

**Coming together is a
beginning. Keeping
together is progress.
Working together is
success.**



Henry Ford
*American industrialist,
the founder of the Ford Motor Company*