



# BUILDING FOR SERITI : EVIDENCE, IMPACT AND CARE

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Francois Strydom: UFS partner presentation

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

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UFS  
CENTRE FOR TEACHING  
AND LEARNING (CTL)

# 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**.

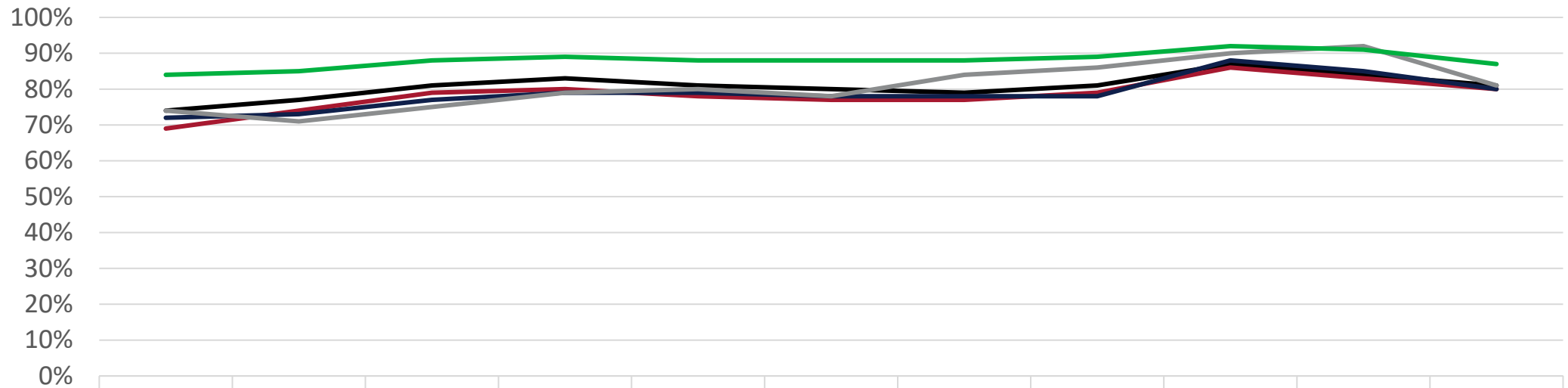
Focusing on student success and degree attainment work is about dignity as Nelson Mandela so poignantly reminds us:

***“Overcoming poverty is not a gesture of charity. It is an act of justice. It is the protection of a fundamental human right, the right to dignity and a decent life. While poverty persists, there is no true freedom.”***

At UFS we are deeply motivated by restoring dignity with integrity BUT especially the creation of a sustainable legacy that will continue to reduce inequalities in degree attainment and advance access to a better life.

# What have we been able to achieve through Siyaphumelela?

Institutional success rate

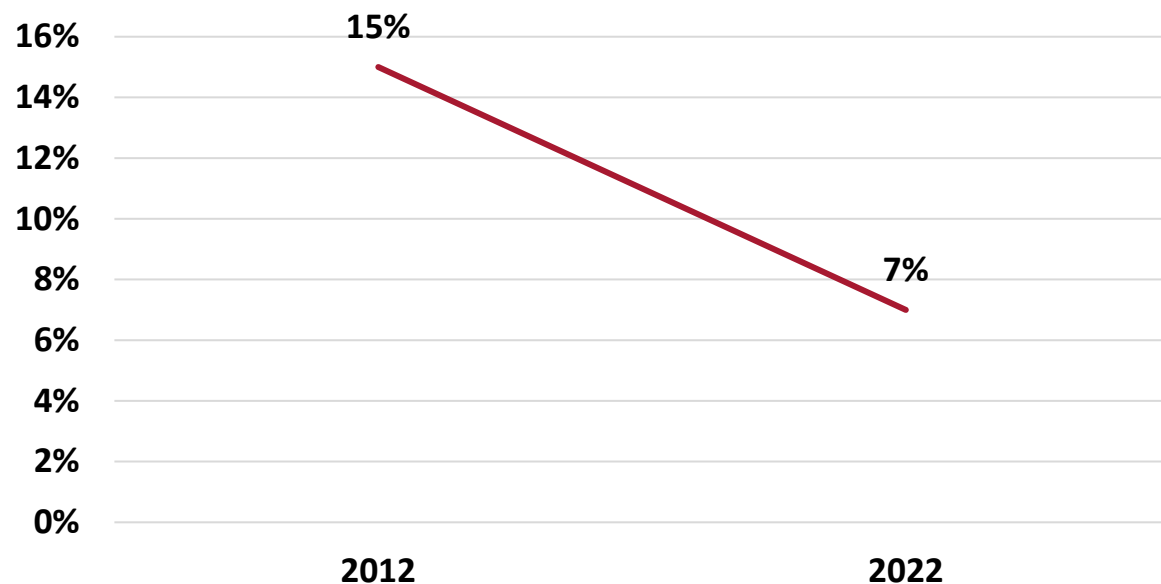


	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Grand total	74%	77%	81%	83%	81%	80%	79%	81%	87%	84%	81%
African Total	69%	74%	79%	80%	78%	77%	77%	79%	86%	83%	80%
Coloured Total	72%	73%	77%	79%	79%	78%	78%	78%	88%	85%	80%
Indian/Asian Total	74%	71%	75%	79%	80%	78%	84%	86%	90%	92%	81%
White Total	84%	85%	88%	89%	88%	88%	88%	89%	92%	91%	87%

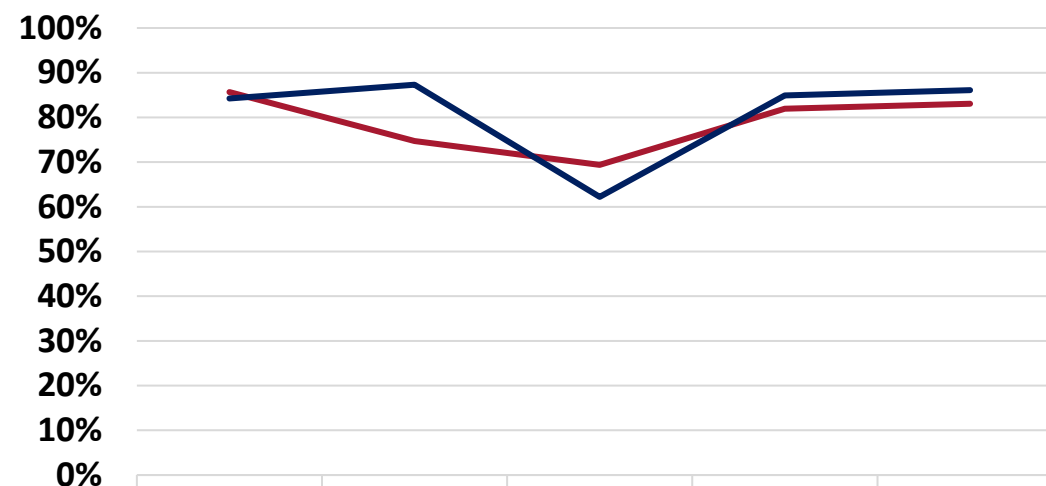
Grand total African Total Coloured Total Indian/Asian Total White Total

# What have we been able to achieve through Siyaphumelela?

Achievement gap between African and White students



Retention rate from year 1 to 2

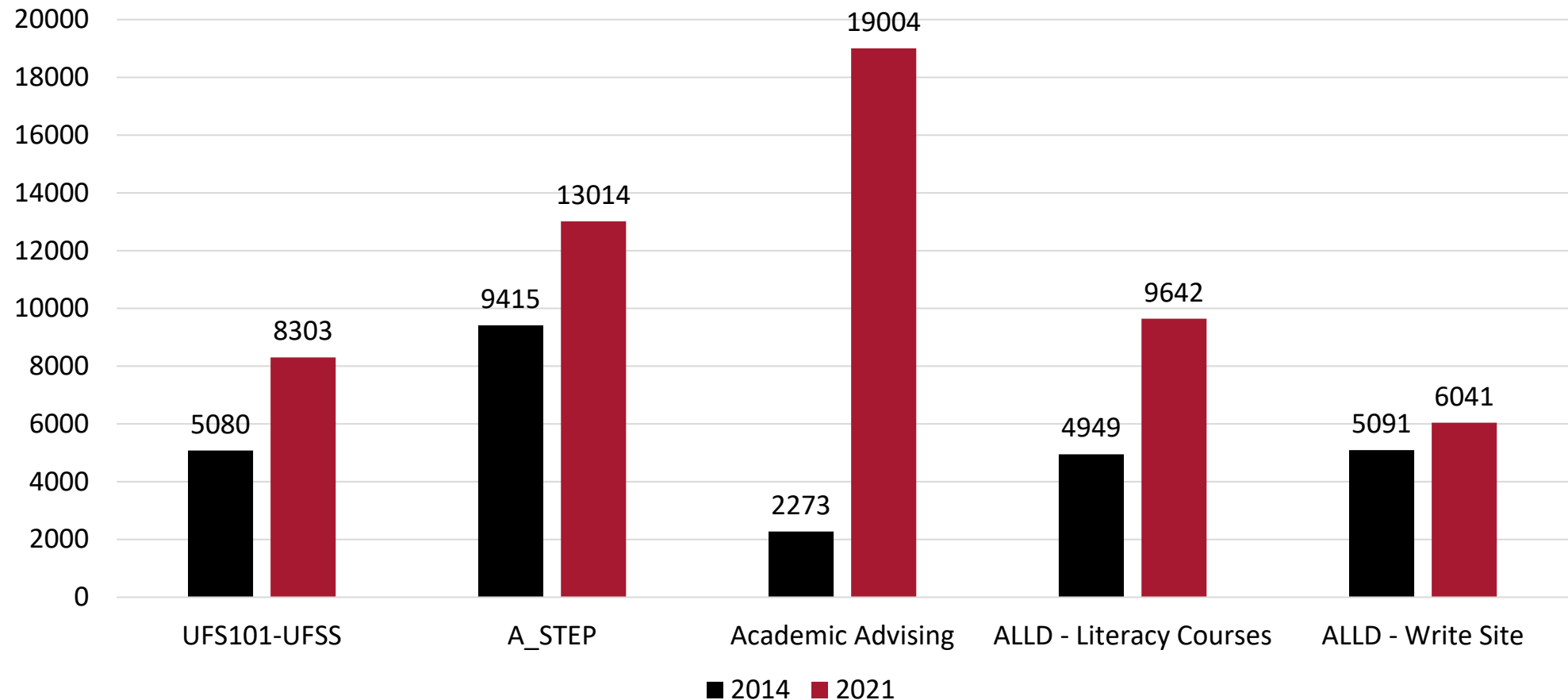


	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Extended	86%	75%	69%	82%	83%
Mainstream	84%	87%	62%	85%	86%

# How have we been building for Seriti?

## High-Impact Practices (HIPs)

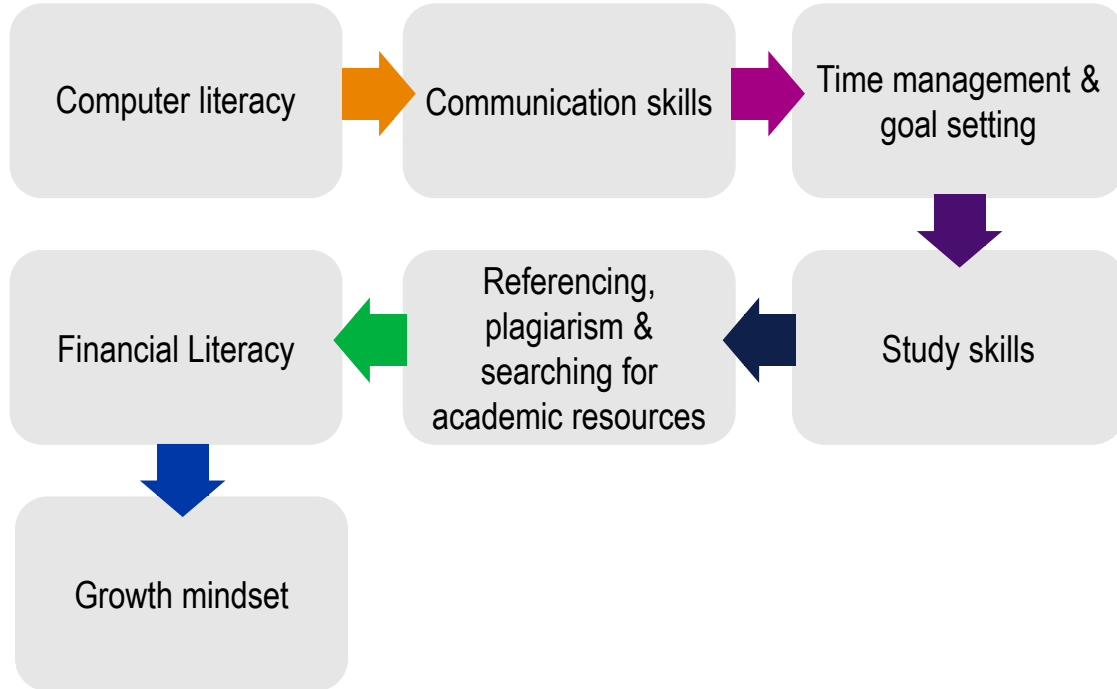
Students supported in HIPs: 2014 vs. 2021



# Supporting first-year students' transitioning: UFSS

UFSS – mandatory 16 credit course for ± 8200 per year

- Purpose: Assist student with transition and lay foundations for success



- **66-78% correlation with other first-year modules final marks**



# Supporting first-year students' transition: UFSS

Module	UFSS mark	AP score	Quintile	Sample Size
2021_1504 (main)	81%	0%	1%	4508
2021_1522 (ext)	70%	6%	3%	1960
2022_1504 (main)	82%	5%	6%	5236
2022_1522 (ext)	72%	1%	5%	1936

- Students' UFSS marks on average contributed 25 times more to their average first year final marks than their AP score and 20 times more than their school quintile status.
- As with the national data, UFS also enrolls more students from **quintile 1-3 schools** each year. This data shows the **effectiveness and impact of transitional support on students' retention**.



# Providing peer support: A\_STEP tutorials

- The A\_STEP programme **trains and employs over 400 tutors.**
- In 2022, **10217 face-to-face** tutorial sessions took place.
- **Quality assurance:**
  - Student evaluations
  - Tutor portfolios
  - Additional blended training sessions





# Qualitative responses from students on the value of tutorials

- Tutoring is essential, **especially for first years when they're trying to get used to the environment**...they're more like the link between the lecturers and the students.
- These **sessions are more interactive**, you can ask more questions.
- Tutors, as they are still students, but senior, they are more like our peers, **it's much easier to interact with them**.
- **In small groups you get to voice out your opinion more** and what you're struggling with rather than in a bigger class, because in a bigger class, you think that someone else will ask the question.
- **Tutorials in different languages is a brilliant concept**. It helped all of us.

# Academic Language and Literacy Development (ALLD)

- **Only 1 out of every 4 UFS students who write NBTs are proficient in academic literacy.**
- **National Benchmark Test (NBT) algorithm:** Around 8000 predictions, with an 85% accuracy rate. Automated emails to students - automation cut down a process that took around **four weeks to four minutes.**
- **Impact analysis:** when African students participate in at least 1 individual Write Site session, they pass 8.1% more credits, and they are 15.3% more likely to graduate.
- There is a **15% average first year final mark correlation** with EAL course participation.
- Students from **quintile 1-3 schools** who participated in an academic literacy course have **8% higher average final marks** than those not participating in literacy courses.

*EALL teaches you not only to write academic papers but develop your skills and to apply those skills in other modules.*

*It doesn't only teach you English and how to speak it, but it also makes you understand your modules' instructions carefully and to answer according to what is asked.*

# Academic Advising

- **UFS advising reached 12706 students in 2022** through individual appointments, online advising, group advising and workshops, and training peer advisors (tutors, teaching assistants, mentors, residence committee members, and success coaches).
- As part of a multi-institution collaborative UCDG enabled through Siyaphumelela, the following highlights of 2022 can be shared:
  - **303 Professional Academic Advisors trained** to date through the Academic Advising Professional Development Short Learning Programme.
  - **18 of the 26 institutions** participated in training.
  - **Eletsa**, the South African association for academic advisors' membership continued to grow (74 members).
  - Two **National Academic Advising Seminars** have taken place.

# But....there are still challenges

- **Success rates do not lead to degree attainment in minimum time**
  - Less than 40% of students in 3-year degrees graduate in minimum time
- **Achievement gaps**
  - 20%-25% gaps
  - Females graduating faster than males
  - White students graduating faster than African students
- **Career development and employability**
  - Producing competitive graduates

# Forming new partnerships towards Seriti



## Digitally Enhanced Student Success and Employability Programme

### Student Success



### 1. Digital Skills and Competencies

*Creating & implementing an institutional digital literacy framework for higher education and beyond*

- Digital literacy framework & curriculum pathway development
- Embedding of digital framework into existing modules & course content



### 2. Scaled Responsive Student Tracking

*Leveraging analytics and technology to identify and reach out to students proactively to provide support.*

- Tracking for rapid response & support
- Tracking & support to systems development
- Minimising time to degree and achievement gaps

### Employability



### 3. Career Development & Employability

*Integrating career development efforts at the UFS in a career development and employability pathway.*

- Career pathway development
- Scaled employability

# UFS Digital Skills and Competencies Pathway

## LEVEL 1



ICT Proficiency (Blackboard, UFS systems, Basic MS)



Digital citizenship (awareness and identification)



Information, data and media literacy (Identification and detection)



Digital creation (Identification)

## LEVEL 2



ICT Proficiency (Intermediate MS)



Digital citizenship (Differentiation and application)



Information, data and media literacy (Interpretation and implementation)



Digital creation (Creation)

## LEVEL 3



ICT Proficiency (Advanced MS)



Digital citizenship (evaluation and creation)



Information, data and media literacy (Assess and organise)

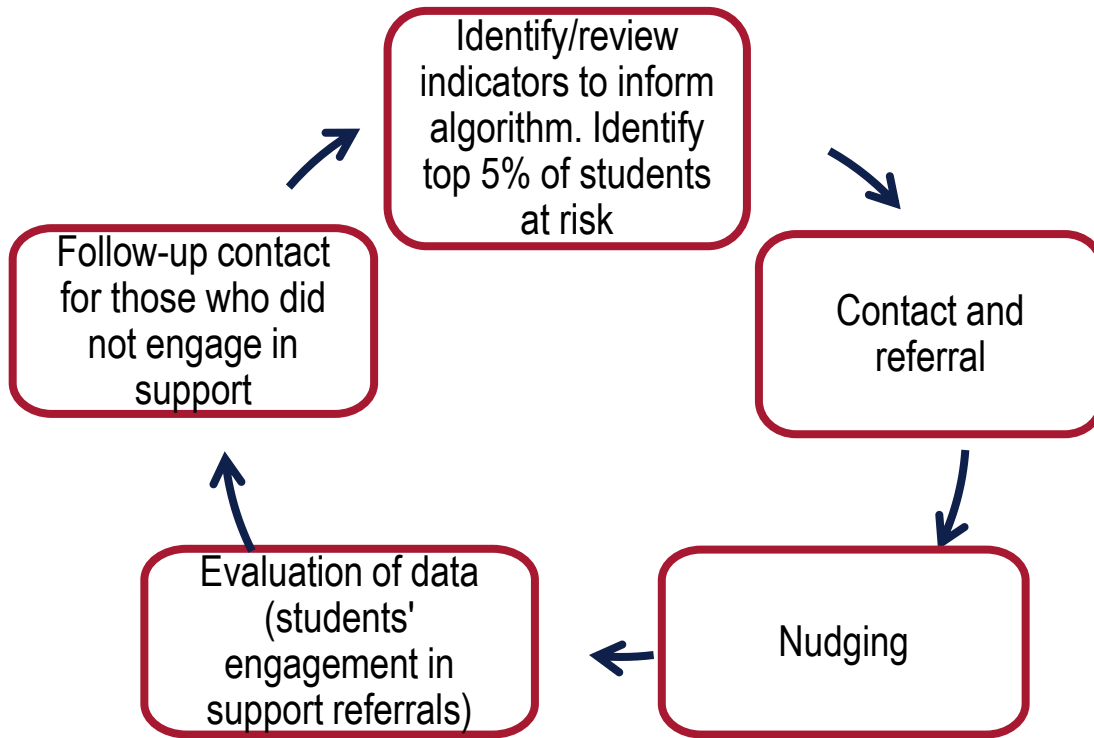


Digital creation (Evaluation)

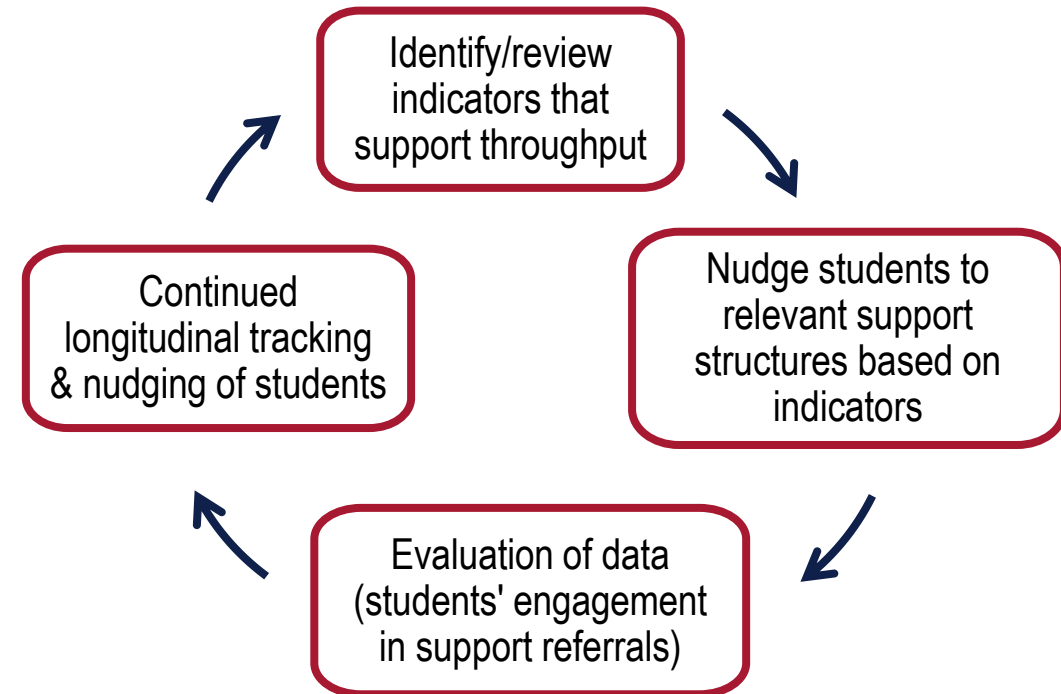
LEVEL 4 – Industry specific demands

# Scaled Responsive Student Tracking Project

## Scaled Responsive Student Tracking Project (SRSTP): **Rapid response**



## Scaled Responsive Student Tracking Project (SRSTP): **Throughput tracking**





# Career development and employability pathway



# Kresge as co-builders of Seriti

- **Thank you** for believing in South Africa and staying with us on this journey.
- We look forward to **continuing to work with you** on how we can **scale and build *seriti*** in South Africa but also in the USA.





# Thank you

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