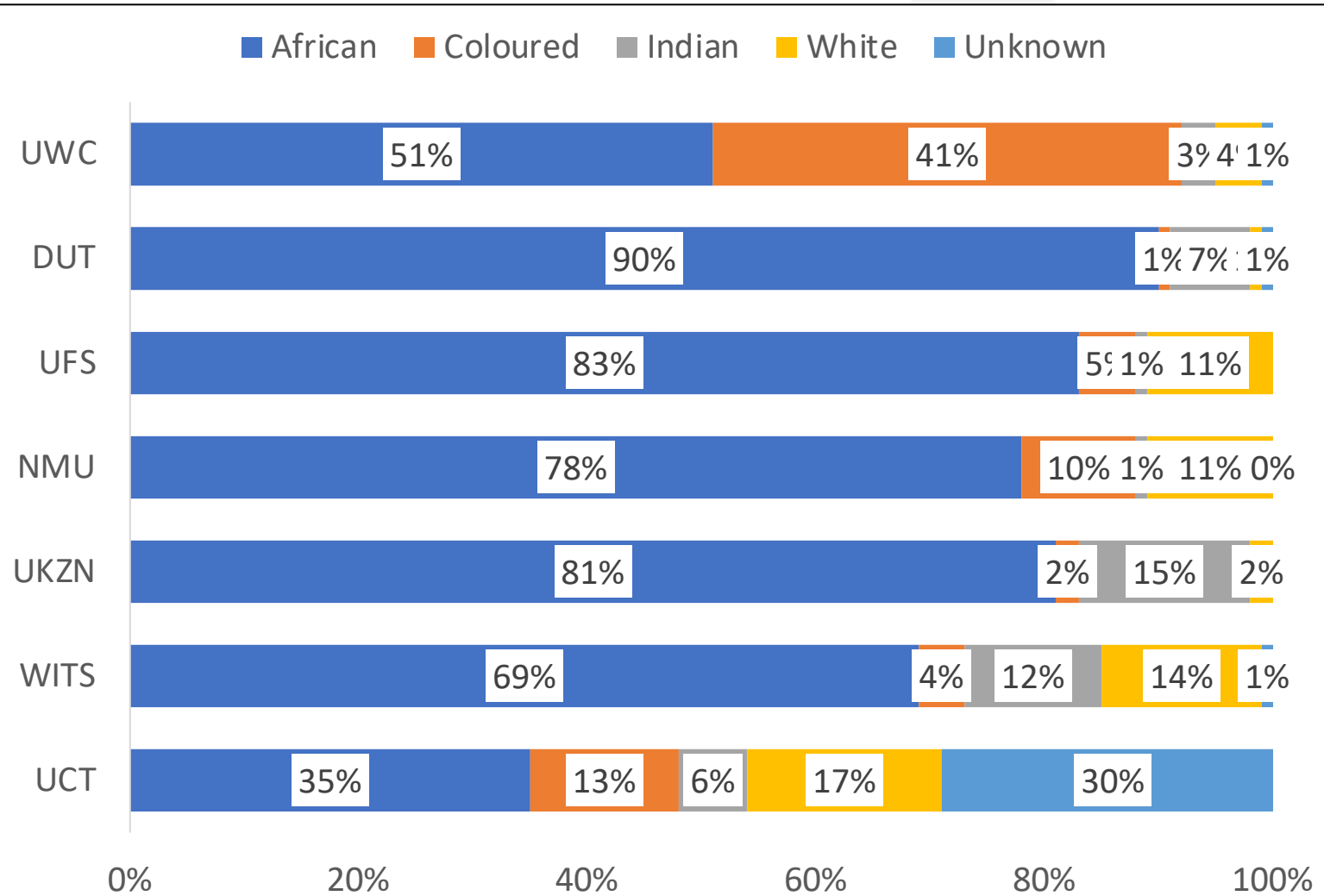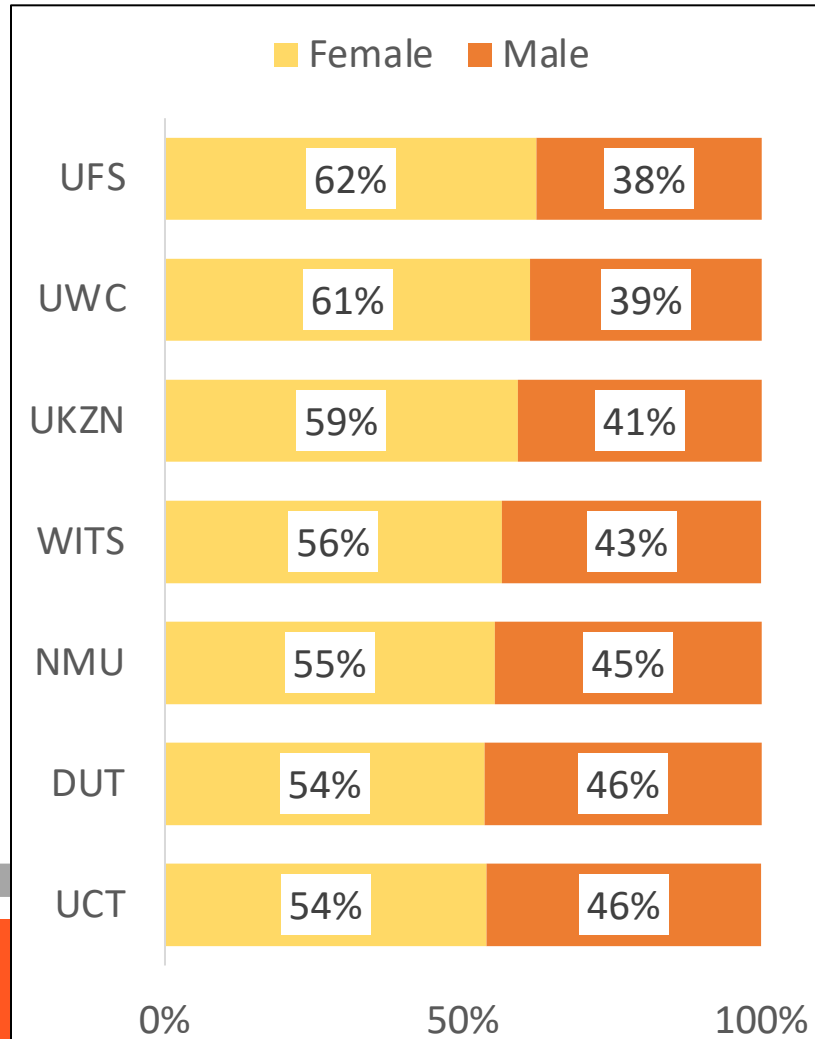# Summary of Siyaphumelela Student Success Indicators, Observations from Siyaphumelela Interventions and Discussion

Ashton Maherry

*Saide*

# Enrolments
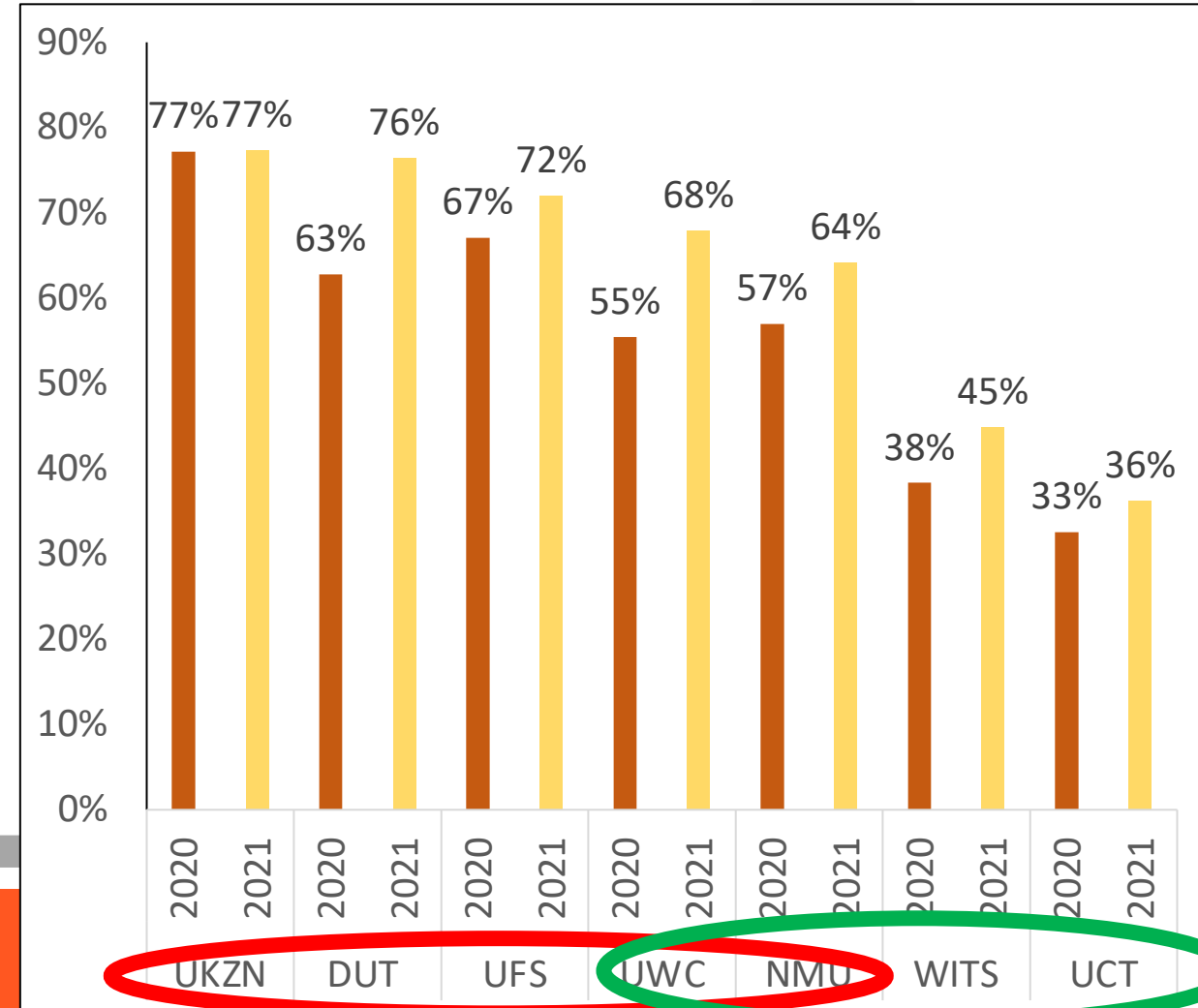


| | Female | Male |
|---|---|---|
| UFS | 62% | 38% |
| UWC | 61% | 39% |
| UKZN | 59% | 41% |
| WITS | 56% | 43% |
| NMU | 55% | 45% |
| DUT | 54% | 46% |
| UCT | 54% | 46% |

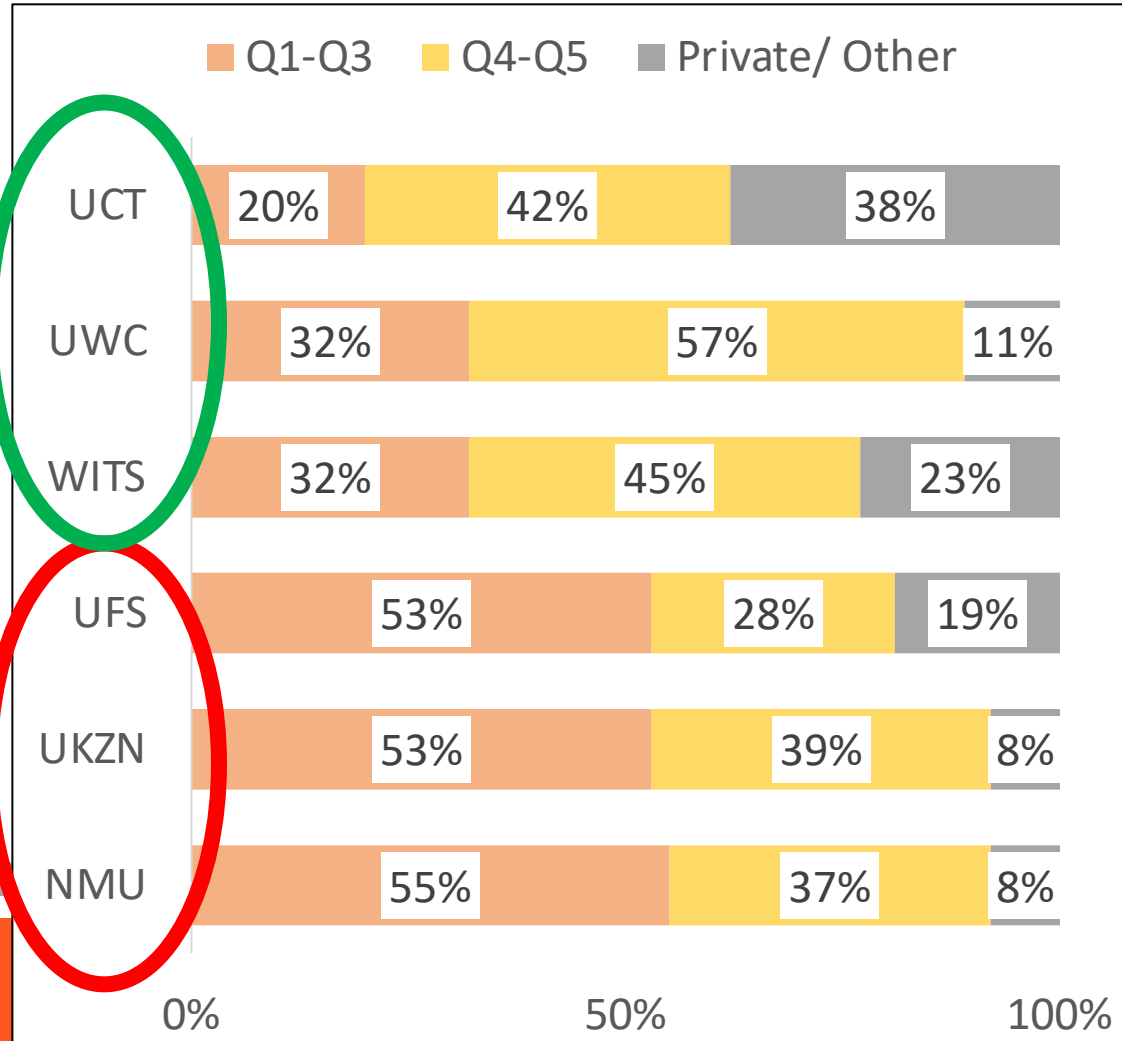| | African | Coloured | Indian | White | Unknown |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| UWC | 51% | 41% | 3% | 4% | 1% |
| DUT | 90% | 1% | 7% | | 1% |
| UFS | 83% | 5% | 1% | 11% | |
| NMU | 78% | 10% | 1% | 11% | 0% |
| UKZN | 81% | 2% | 15% | 2% | |
| WITS | 69% | 4% | 12% | 14% | 1% |
| UCT | 35% | 13% | 6% | 17% | 30% |

# Quintile



Percentage of NSFAS sponsored undergraduate students, 2020 and 2021.

# Institutional Commitments

**Siyaphumelela institutions commit to develop annual goals for student success by improving the following indicators for 3- and 4-year degrees and 3-year diplomas (and, within these indicators, remove differences based on race, gender and school quintile, if data are available):**

- First year retention to second year, based on first time entering cohort.
- Success rates of undergraduate study, defined as the completed full-time equivalents expressed as a percentage of the enrolled full-time equivalents.
- Qualification completion (throughput) rates within minimum time plus one or two years.

And commit to the institutional practice to

- Use data analytics to review the high impact modules in which students fail, withdraw, or receive otherwise unsatisfactory grades to identify opportunities to improve student success, and implement these.

# Four key student success indicators

1. Retention of first-time entering undergraduate students from study year one to study year two enrolled in 3- and 4-year B-degrees as well as 3-year undergraduate diplomas by population group and gender.

2. The success rates of undergraduate students enrolled in 3- and 4-year B-degrees and three-year diplomas by population group and gender.

3. Tracking of high impact modules – module pass rate.

4. Throughput rates for undergraduate 3-year diplomas, 3-year degrees and 4-year degrees.

Indicator 1: First year retention to second year, based on first time entering students.
Percentage change in the retention rate of first-time entering students of 2018 (that returned in 2019) and the retention rate of first-time entering students in 2022 (that returned in 2023)

- All institutions have first-year retention rates of more than 86%, with three at 92%. Only 2 institutions showed a decrease in first-year retention of between 1-3%.

- **Gender**: 5 institutions reported that the difference in retention between females and males decreased. 5 Institutions still have a difference of 4-6%

- **Race**: two institutions reported African retention rate from the average retention rate decreased, two stayed the same, and two increased.

**Indicator 2:** Success rates of undergraduate study, defined as the completed full-time equivalents expressed as a percentage of the enrolled full-time equivalents

| Type | Institution | Joined | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | Difference 2018-2021 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Siya Participant | Vaal University of Technology | 2022 | 76% | 74% | 85% | 86% | 10% |
| Siya Participant | Walter Sisulu University | 2020 | 80% | 80% | 90% | 88% | 8% |
| Siya Participant | University of Venda | 2020 | 83% | 82% | 82% | 91% | 7% |
| Siya Partner | University of KwaZulu-Natal | 2020 | 84% | 85% | 91% | 90% | 6% |
| | University of Limpopo | | 83% | 84% | 90% | 89% | 6% |
| Siya Participant | North West University | 2021 | 83% | 83% | 92% | 89% | 6% |
| | University of Fort Hare | | 81% | 84% | 86% | 86% | 6% |
| Siya Partner | Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University | 2015 | 79% | 79% | 86% | 84% | 5% |
| Siya Partner | University of the Free State | 2015 | 80% | 81% | 88% | 84% | 5% |
| | University of Mpumalanga | | 82% | 82% | 83% | 87% | 4% |
| | Tshwane University of Technology | | 77% | 77% | 81% | 81% | 4% |
| Siya Associate | University of Pretoria | 2015 | 83% | 84% | 88% | 86% | 4% |
| Siya Participant | Sefako Makgatho Health Science University | 2022 | 90% | 87% | 96% | 93% | 3% |
| | Mangosuthu University of Technology | | 81% | 80% | 87% | 84% | 3% |
| Siya Partner | University of Witwatersrand | 2015 | 80% | 82% | 86% | 83% | 3% |
| Siya Partner | Durban University of Technology | 2016 | 87% | 87% | 89% | 89% | 2% |
| Siya Participant | University of Johannesburg | 2022 | 86% | 86% | 89% | 87% | 2% |
| Siya Partner | University of Western Cape | 2020 | 82% | 82% | 88% | 83% | 1% |
| Siya Participant (old) | University of Zululand | 2020 | 84% | 83% | 86% | 85% | 1% |
| | Central University of Technology | | 77% | 76% | 82% | 77% | -1% |
| Siya Participant | Cape Peninsula University of Technology | 2020 | 79% | 80% | 82% | 78% | -1% |
| Siya Participant | Rhodes University | 2022 | 83% | 84% | 82% | 81% | -2% |
| | University of South Africa | | 69% | 69% | 79% | 67% | -2% |
| Siya Participant | Sol Plaatje University Northern Cape | 2020 | 85% | 83% | 83% | 83% | -2% |
| | University of Stellenbosch | | 87% | 87% | 90% | 83% | -4% |
| Siya Partner | University of Cape Town | 2020 | 85% | 85% | 90% | 80% | -5% |

Siyaphumelela
we succeed

- But how do Siyaphumelela Network 2.0 institutions compare to the sector?
- What can we attribute to Siyaphumelela

**Indicator 2:** Success rates of undergraduate study, defined as the completed full-time equivalents expressed as a percentage of the enrolled full-time equivalents.

- All institutions above 80%. 3 institutions increased and 3 decreased

- **Gender**: Difference in success rates between females to males is between 5-9%

- **Race**: African student success rates have increased for almost all partners (between 77%-86%)

- **First-time entering students** success rates increased for almost all partners. (between 79-87%).

- **NSFAS students** underperform in almost all institutions except for 1 institution. In one institution the difference is -9%.

# High Impact Modules from 2020 to 2022.

High Impact Modules are defined as those with high enrolments and high failure rates.

- Institutions are identifying high-impact modules but are **not intervening**.
- Only two institutions reported an increase in pass rates in their high-impact modules.
- **Gender**: Males underperform in these modules.
- **Race**: African students also underperform in these modules

# Throughput in minimum time: 3-year diplomas (2014 compared to 2020 cohort)
# Diploma and Degree split is from 2021 data.

| cohort | Minimum time | Minimum time plus 1 | Minimum time plus 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2014 | 24% | 18% | 10% |
| 2015 | 25% | 18% | 10% |
| 2016 | 24% | 17% | 10% |

- Only 3 institutions offer 3 year Diplomas and all three reported an increase in throughput. One institution increased by 16% (33% to 49%), and another increased by 8% (15% to 23%)

- **Gender**: Two institutions reported an increase in their male pass rates, whilst one institution decreased by 14% (20% to 6%).

- **Race**: African students increased in 2 institutions but still underperform compared to Indian/Coloured.

# Throughput in minimum time: 3-year degrees (2014 compared to 2020 cohort)
## Diploma and Degree split is from 2021 data.

| cohort | Minimum time | Minimum time plus 1 | Minimum time plus 2 |
|--------|--------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 2014 | 30% | 49% | 56% |
| 2015 | 31% | 50% | 57% |
| 2016 | 50% | 59% | 62% |

- 4 Institutions reported an increase in their throughput rates, with the largest increase of 17% (22% to 39%). Two institutions reported a decrease, with the largest decrease being -15% (47% to 32%)

- **Gender**: Male throughput rates are lower than females for all institutions

- **Race**: Although African throughput rates have increased they still underperform compared to other races

Throughput in minimum time: 4-year degrees
(2014 compared to 2019 cohort)
Diploma and Degree split is from 2021 data.

| cohort | Minimum time | Minimum time plus 1 | Minimum time plus 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2014 | 48% | 62% | 67% |
| 2015 | 48% | 63% | 68% |
| 2016 | 46% | 62% | 68% |

- 4 Institutions reported an increase in their throughput rates, with the largest increase of 12% (40% to 52%). One stayed the same and one decreased by 6%.

- **Gender**: Male throughput rates are lower than females for all institutions

- **Race**: African throughput rates increased for 3 institutions, decreased for 2, and stayed the same for 1, and overall African students still have lower throughput rates than other races

# Summary of Siyaphumelela Student Success Indicators

| | Indicator | Comment |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Retention of first-time entering undergraduate students from study year one to study year two | Generally good progress has been made with retention. Further investigation is needed to determine if this is a result of institutional interventions, NSFAS funding, or both. |
| 2 | The success rates of undergraduate students enrolled in 3- and 4-year B-degrees and three-year diplomas | Generally progress has been made except for NSFAS funded students and for males in comparison to females |
| 3 | Tracking of high impact modules | Progress has not been made except for two institutions that intentional intervene in the identified modules with academic advising and supplemental instruction |
| 4 | Throughput rates for undergraduate 3-year diplomas, 3-year degrees and 4-year degrees. | 3 year Diploma – good progress for all students, but more interventions needed to reduce gender and race performance gaps |
| | | 3 year Degrees – some progress is being made but more work is needed to reduce gender and race performance gaps |
| | | 4 year Degrees – some progress is being made but more work is needed to reduce gender and race performance gaps |

# Observations from Siyaphumelela Interventions

**Including Student Success in the Strategic Plan**

All Partner Institutions have student success in their strategic plan

1) Student Experience

2) Teaching and Learning/Academic Excellence

One institution directly mentions transforming the curriculum

# Establish, maintain and refine a **broadly representative student success committee** or task team

Further investigation into:

- How many students are included
  - Noted the inclusion of Post Grad students to build data analytics capacity
- Governance and reporting structures (report to faculty boards, report to senate)
- Working Groups e.g. Data Working Group, Holistic Student Supports Working Group
- Caution against too many senior academics on the committee

# Develop sustained capacity to implement and manage a **data chain**.

- Institutions generally report themselves as doing better than the evaluation

- Very wide range with some partners doing well and some not making progress

# Use data analytics to review 10 courses/modules with **high enrolment and low pass rates**.

- Institutions are reviewing the high-impact modules but only one institution is intervening

- Some institutions have taken a research-based approach having spent effort in understanding the problem with the aim of intervening in 2024

- Focus moving forward in Siyaphumelela 3.0

# Strengthen and integrate data analytics across multiple departments.

- One institution has done well, with one institution reporting that they disseminate rather than integrate.

- Successes:
  - A data working group results in integration across multiple departments
  - Data/BI person represented on faculties T&L committees.

# Scaling evidence-based student success efforts (1)

- DUT: Internal Student Services Summit; Data Day; share good practice: monthly reports to AEM, all faculties receive progress reports with Siyaphumelela as a standing item on faculty board, reports to Student Services Board, Siyaphumelela is included in the Annual Report

- NMU: LT COLLAB (LTCollab has been established where the various learning and teaching enhancements have been brought together under one umbrella) – Student Success Coaching around five themes: coaching process; academic success strategies and skills; personal; career; academic planning and procedures. RADAR – early warning and detection system used by coaches. Emthonjeni Student Wellness: uses a hybrid and comprehensive approach to mental health and well-being.

# Scaling evidence-based student success efforts (2)

- UFS: Scaled Responsive Student Tracking Project – high-tech high-touch approach: data analytics are used to inform the contact centre, where trained peer advisors contact students directly to identify and respond to students' support needs. Peer advisors capture data which is analysed to inform analytics and refine the process. High Impact Practices: academic literacy modules for first years and the UFSS transitional skills module.

- UKZN: Advancing Technology-Enriched Teaching and Learning, Digital Literacy Portfolio: 1) Student digital competency survey during registration 2) institutionalized online digital literacy certificate course for students and staff

# Scaling evidence-based student success efforts (3)

- UCT: expansion of Central Advising and Referral Service (CARES); automated advising (chatbot); academic recovery programme for retention

- UWC: Design and implement a programme for training of tutors, mentors and FYTOs in supporting students mental health (still in the design phase). First Year Transition online course: Assertive Communication, Building Empathy and Perspective-taking Skills, Self-directed Learning and Critical Thinking in the First Year; Etiquette in the Digital World for Students

- Wits: Gateway to Success (Institutional orientation introduced in 2021)

# Changed policies or practices (1)

- Institutional surveys policy
- Food security programme
- New ERP system with AutoScholar and PowerHEDA
- Data Governance Committee and charter
- Culture of data to make informed decision-making
- Additional funding for Resource Allocation Model to fill vacancies
- UCDG to appoint peer mentors, tutors, SI leaders and academic advisors
- Reimagined induction programme for new lecturers
- Socially just assessment practices

- Revised language policy
- Counselling and campus health services, facilities and recreational opportunities and students societies, and living and learning programmes
- Change in approach to academic advising
- Use of data analytics to improve teaching and learning is being accepted
- Strategic Plan: Research-led emphasis on parity between research, teaching, and learning for impact; promoting the learning experiences, academic support strategies; regionally engaged; globally competitive graduates and knowledge.

# Changed policies or practices (2)

- Data-driven decision-making
- Personalised support services
- Curricular revision
- Institutionalizing Academic Advising
- Enhanced Digital Learning
- Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives
- Brining student success initiatives under one umbrella
- Breaking down of siloes
- Policy on the Ethical Use of Data

- First Year Transition online course
- Institutional Strategy: Student success is a central institutional priority: enabling teaching and learning environment that actively nurtures student success.
- Student Success Committee and various Student Success Working Groups
- Collaboration with regional institutions

# Critical Success Factors for Student Success (draft)

- Executive-level buy-in
- Institutional buy-in: Strategic and Operational Plans
- Key collaboration of Institutional Researchers/Planning/Quality/HEMIS/MI/Business Intelligence ←→ Academic Support ←→ Student Support
- Integrated Student Success Committee
  - Working Groups: Data, Holistic Student Support, Teaching and Learning for student success that involves Quality Assurance
- Institutional lead willing to work collaboratively and across departments
- Effective use of UCDG with student success and data analytics with capacity building for non-academic staff
- Student success projects are designed collaboratively, involving students in the design and implementation
- Coaches work with institutional leads to embed the above points