

Strategic Network & Funding

1. Internal Collaborations:

Working with faculties to establish and advance student academic support programmes. I have also initiated a learning analytics core group for the purpose of advancing the learning analytics within Sol Plaatje University to enhance student support initiatives through collaborative partnerships with the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Programme Development (CTLPD), Library and Information Services and the Division of Student Affairs (DSA). Further, to create a shared system integrating student service data, academic support, library, residence, sport, health and wellness, and student development collaboratively. The system will allow for learning support pathways, including developing an early warning system to identify at-risk students and proactively develop personalised support programmes.

These collaborations ensure synergies in providing tailored support to students and breaking siloes through sharing ideas, data and making collaborative decisions for student success.

2. External Collaborations:

The external collaborations with Walter Sisulu University (WSU) and Vaal University of Technology (VUT) are mainly initiated as a strategic partnership to enhance student success through collaborative projects centred on data-driven planning, digital transformation, and shared innovation. The joint initiative will ensure the development of scalable, impactful systems for early intervention, student engagement, academic support, and the integration of e-learning platforms.

3. External Funding:

To scale student support initiatives, it is important to consider external funding to augment institutional resources. Therefore, the sources of additional student academic support initiatives are:

- **The FASSET SETA-** funding over 250 students annually on Additional Academic Support from 2023 to the present. The relationship will continue in 2026, with funding of R2 400 000.00.
- **Kresge Foundation Grant:** focusing on establishing learning analytics and scaling student support, which is psychosocial and academic support. The funding circle is 2024-2027, with over R1 400 000.00 per academic year.
- **UCDG Collaboration Grant-** aimed at enhancing institutional academic advising. The first circle (2021-2024) awarded R1 200 000.00. It allowed us to train academic advisors, create an academic advising data management system with

real-time tracking of student-academic advisor interaction and implement the peer academic advising programme. Circle 2 (2025-2027) will further enhance the academic advising initiatives established during Circle 1 and provide opportunities for academic advisors to participate in and attend conferences for growth.