



DIVISION of
STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT
CAREER SERVICES
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The silent heroes of Career Services

~Appreciating your organisational network in
delivering your career service strategy~

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University of the Western Cape
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Fairway Hotel, Johannesburg

Why this topic?



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2006-2022

2023

- Until 2016, lost in the hierarchy of SDS -> CSSS-> OSD -> CS
- Until 2020, the department was responsible for Student Orientation, Career Advisory, Graduate Recruitment AND the SRC+ CHC election. *(This is a conversation for another day!)*
- Until 2021, had only one Full-time Career Services Staff Member in the team of 3 vs 20-25 000 student population + alumni *(Thankfully, this has changed; we now have four full-time staff with four contractual roles)*
- Keep up with the evolving demands of recruiters and the growing needs of students
= Maximising use of available yet limited resources for service delivery.

The quote “Culture eats strategy for breakfast” by management consultant and writer Peter Drucker resonates.

1. I understood early on that my organisational networks could not only improve the implementation of our Career Service strategy but also had the power to stranglehold endeavours.
2. *UWC’s history and culture speak for itself. As an institution, we are inspired by our distinctive role in building a more equitable and dynamic society; we continue to empower our students, staff and partners to advance its mission of serving the greater public good and searching for humane and sustainable solutions to the challenges of our time.*
3. @ UWC, we within student support services hope to believe that Student Success is **everybody's** business and that **everyone** can play a role in our student's success

But it is easier said than done.

...Connections required rebuilding or reestablishment...protocols are written, but implementation is a different kettle of fish.

The challenges as a historically disadvantaged institution, the #FeesMustFall movement and, more recently the pandemic and its impact on our organisational networks have been substantial.

Thus, we regularly try to reflect on how we relate and network in our ecosystem.



1. Strategy and role players



Whatever your strategy, reflecting on who in our ecosystem forms part of the strategy is vital to determining the role they play in achieving your goals



BUT Do we only call on them when needed?



How do we harness the sense of community in our ecosystem?



How often do we return to map our 'network' and refresh/revive our network?

2. Optimising and analysing our network composition



- It is important to find the right balance and mix of connections to help meet our goals.
- Knowing and understanding that the different tiers in your network can provide you with different and valuable titbits of information that can impact strategy.
- Build a visual board to ‘map’ out their roles, and evaluate how strong or weak your relationships with them are.
- Or survey these networks to identify the strengths and weaknesses in your ecosystem.
- Check for diversity, density, centrality, and the reach of your connections.



3. Engage your network effectively

- In harnessing the sense of community in your institution, you can optimise your network composition and maximize its value and impact.
- This means communicating clearly and consistently with your contacts and aligning their roles, expectations and interests with yours. It also means providing value and support to your contacts and reciprocating their contributions and feedback.
- Remember that networks are dynamic and evolving, so you need to monitor and adapt your network regularly to show their relevance and effectiveness.



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Let's do a quick litmus test to see how dynamic your network is within your institution.

How connected are you really?
Is there diversity, density, and centrality,
and how far is the reach of your
connections?

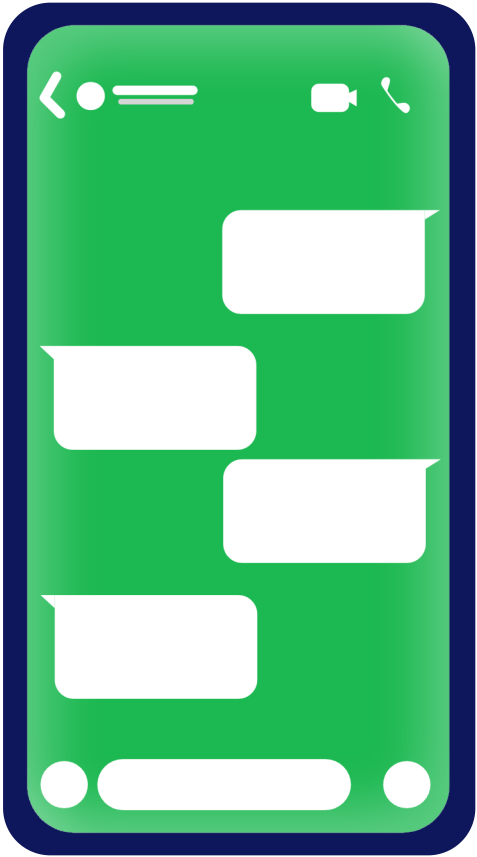
Sending the email request is the easy part.



**True connections if you have them
on speed dial!**

Grab some paper to tally your responses.

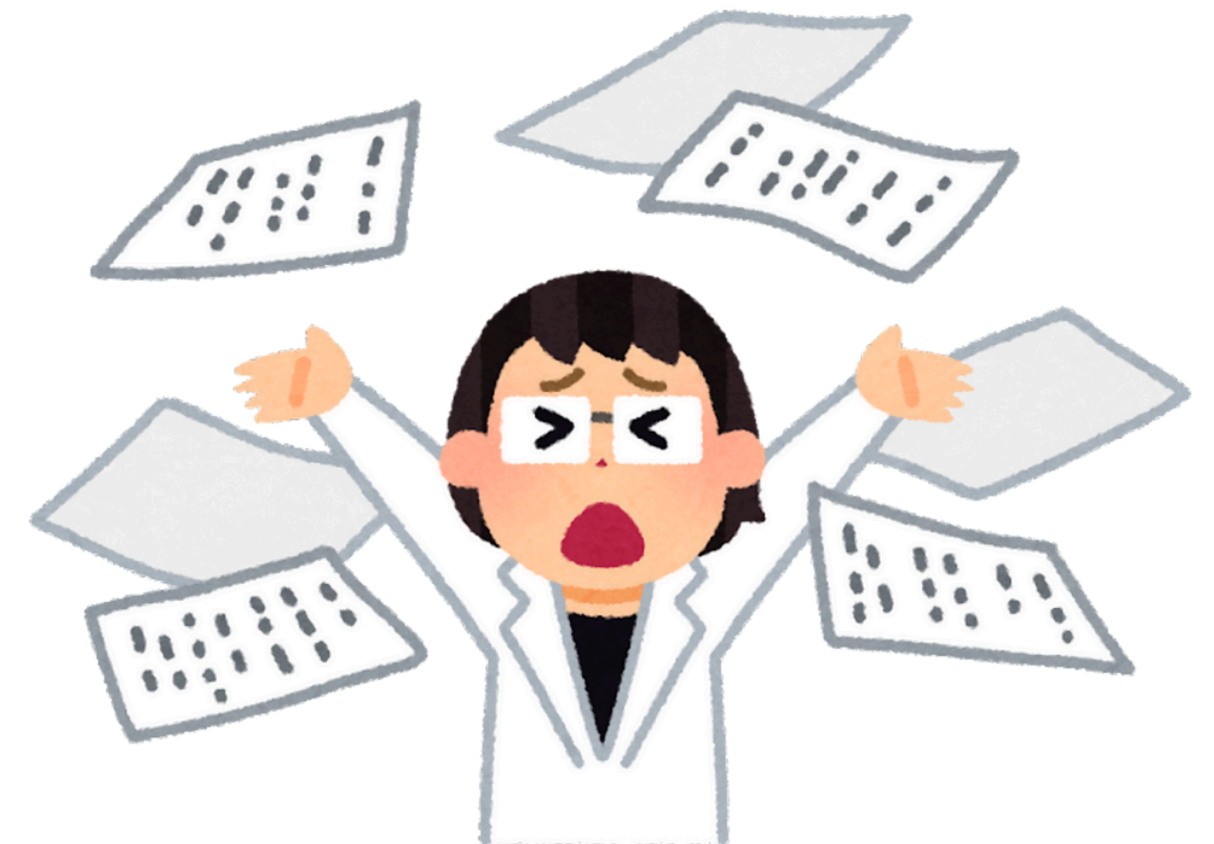
**Raise your hands if you have the following connection on
speed dial**



**At least two
Faculty Deans**



At least 4 Deputy Deans: Research / Learning and Teaching



At least 10 Administrators to the Deans or Faculty Managers



**At least 15 Academic
Departmental Chairs.**

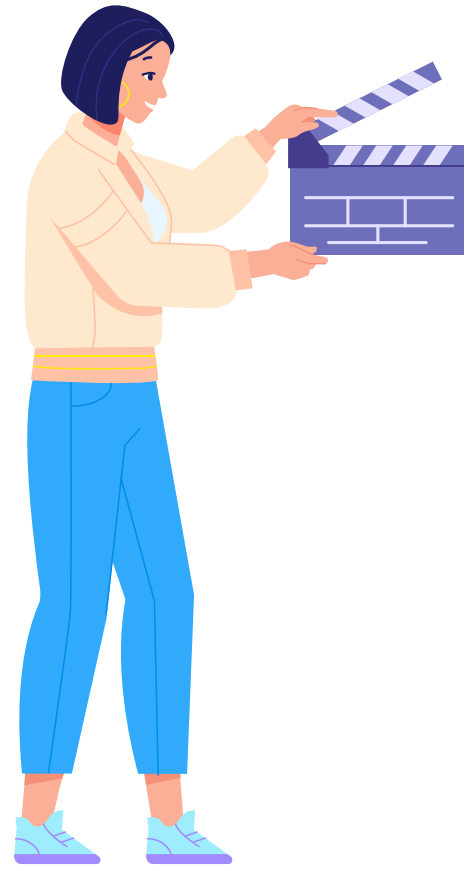


At Least 20 Lecturers.



At least 15-20 Departmental Administrators.





**At least 5-7 HoDs / Directors of
Student Support Units or Centres**

**At least 10-15 Student Support
Services Colleagues**



Institutional or Faculty Alumni Relations



Institutional or Faculty Public Relations



Institutional or Faculty Donor Relations



Student Leadership - At least 2 SRC Members



Student Leadership - At least 2 CHC Members



Student Leadership - At least 3 Faculty Student Councils



At least 3 Student Structures





Service Desk support Ticket ONLY OR?



E-Learning / BlackBoard, etc.

Colleagues



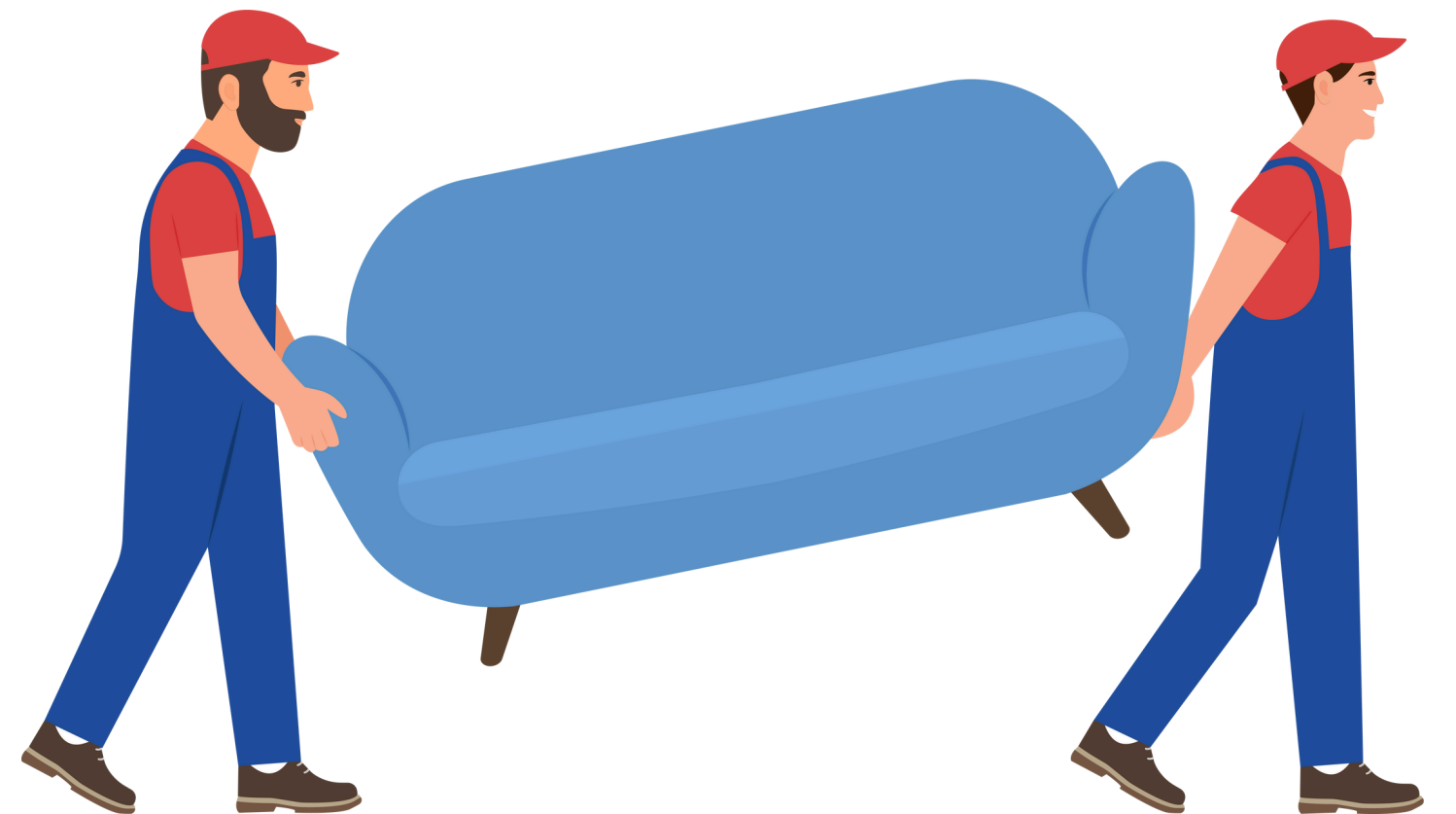
Information and Communication Services



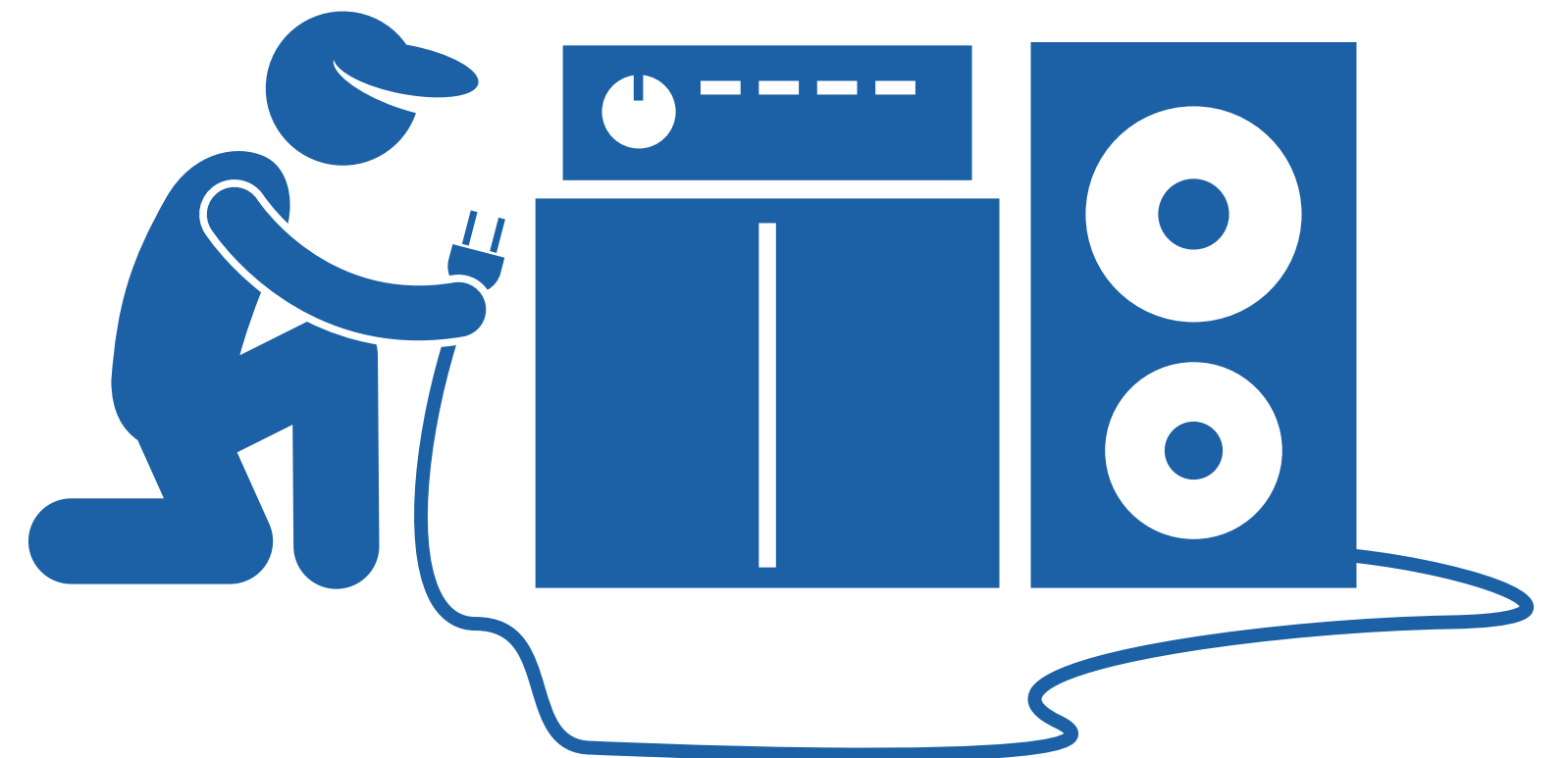
Venue Management



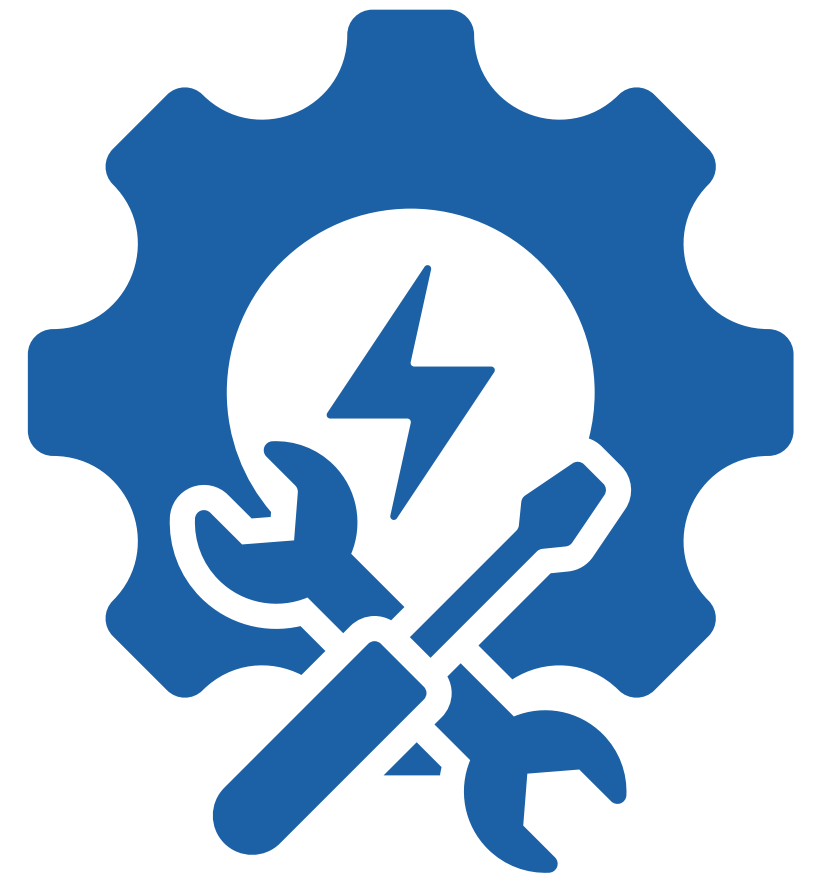
Asset Management



Audio Visual Services



Electrical Services



Campus Protection / Traffic Services



Cleaning Services



**So how connected is
connected...?**

23/23

Many of these connections are your silent heroes!

- **Do they realise their significance?**
- **Do you show appreciation for their role?**
- **Apart from faculty breakfasts, etc., how are other silent heroes shown their value and appreciation for their contribution to the career service strategy?**

*Thank you for
going above
& beyond.*



Appreciating our silent heroes

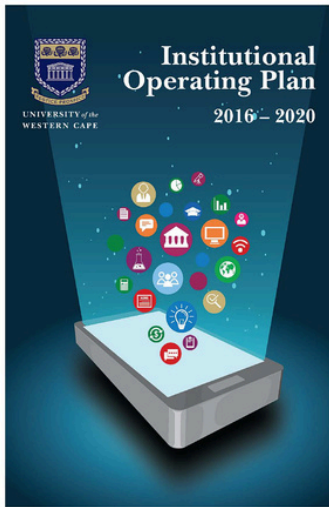
CREATING A PROFESSIONAL CULTURE EMBEDDING STUDENT EMPLOYABILITY IN THE CURRICULUM

by Lester Malgas and Nazrana Parker

"In preparing students to be excellent professionals and citizens, the University will seek ways of increasing their opportunities to experience the world of work and to participate in practical community service. Our graduates should enter the world of work imbued with a culture of professionalism, and should be critically familiar with the practices and codes of their chosen field."

(UWC EDUCATIONAL OPERATIONAL PLAN, 2016-2020)

Career Update explores how academic departments are preparing students for the job search and the world of work. Careers Service at the Office for Student Development is not, and neither should be, the sole driver of graduates' employability and job-readiness of our students. Career Update discovered that several academics are leading the charge in preparing their students for the world of work and which has been



MRS ROSEMARY EAGER

I WAS MOTIVATED BY THE POOR STANDARD OF CVs RECEIVED FOR OUR WORK STUDY POSITIONS.

Rosemary Eager, a Junior Lecturer in the Department of Biodiversity and Conservation Biology, has incorporated elements of the job search into the Life Sciences 152 module of the Extended Curriculum Programme. Careers Service conducts a presentation on compiling a CV and Letter of Motivation to the class. Students are required to hand in a first draft of their CV and Letter of Motivation in response to a mock job advertisement and receive individual feedback on these two documents. They have an option of having their second draft reviewed before submitting both drafts to their lecturer as part of their assignment. A detailed rubric is also provided. This exercise confronts students with the realities of the job search and to prepare for their career journey "I was motivated by the poor standard of CVs received for our Work Study positions," she says. "Of course, these students"

she continues, "this may be their first encounter with the job search." Many academic departments, however, do not focus specifically on the job-readiness of their students. Mrs Eager reasons, "I understand why some departments focus solely on academics or less on the job-readiness of students." She adds, "time is usually a factor as lecturers are under pressure to complete the curriculum." She acknowledges that with the faculty's Extended Curriculum Programme, "there is time to focus on job search preparedness." There are additional ways of preparing students for the world of work, for example, talks by industry professionals and alumni, and practical exposure to the field of biodiversity through site visits. Mrs Eager said that they offer work-study positions to their senior and postgrad students and inform them about internships, graduate trainee positions and networking opportunities with alumni or prospective employers.

Professor Andy Hsieh, Deputy Dean of Research at the Faculty of Economic & Management Sciences, is putting a significant amount of thought and effort into the job-readiness of his students. "As the Head of the EMS Department of Finance in 2012," he says, "I discovered that there was a misconception of prospective employers and students about each other. Although our students were well equipped through our Finance programmes, they lacked the necessary soft skills and confidence to showcase themselves to prospective employers."



PROFESSOR ANDY HSIEH

OUR STUDENTS LACKED THE NECESSARY SOFT SKILLS AND CONFIDENCE TO SHOWCASE THEMSELVES TO PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYERS.

gap" and "mental distance" between students and prospective employers has closed significantly. Employers reported that our students are brilliant and thirsty for knowledge," says Professor Hsieh. "Our students are now less intimidated by job interviews," he adds, "and enthusiastic about their career path."

Professor Hsieh has done much to make his students marketable. In 2015, he mentored a group of third year Finance students who won the 40th Annual National JSE Investment Challenge, dominating Wits (2nd above) and UCT (3rd place), thus raising the UWC flag. These students, Trevor Chabukula, Adonisa Sodawa, Dube Mzwahle, and Athekesi Makhala, along with their mentor, were featured on many local media platforms, including newspapers, magazines and national television, further bolstering the morale and spirit of our Finance students. In an effort to put UWC on the map and thus the potential of our Finance students, Professor Hsieh has given interviews and written opinion pieces on financial issues for major media houses.

Fortunately, Professor Hsieh is not a sole player in the Department's efforts. "We are fortunate to have Professor Katherine Hodnett who joined us in 2013," he says. Professor Hodnett has a wealth of experience in developing and teaching postgraduate research modules. She has restructured the post-graduate Finance Research modules to encourage presentations and debate in the classroom, training students to welcome challenges and become out-of-the-box problem solvers.

"She is an often needed support"

on how well-spoken our students are," says Professor Hsieh. Many graduates ascribe their success to the learning in the Finance Honours Research modules.

And there's more. To further strengthen students' chances of competing in a cut-throat industry, students are tasked with presenting recent financial major events or announcements for review and debate with classmates and staff in the Finance Seminar and Finance Research post-graduate modules. In this way, students are kept abreast of current affairs which will put them in good stead at an interview. Networking is also an important strategy for Professor Hsieh. "In past years, I invited alumni to a networking evening with our students."

Professors Hodnett and Hsieh maintain ties with UWC Careers Service, encouraging their students to take advantage of attitude tests and mock interviews, among other. They often act as a conduit between Careers Service and prospective employers.

Mrs Nuraan Davids-Latief is an Information Systems Lecturer and Coordinator of the full-time B Com Honours Information Systems programme. Her approach to job-readiness of her students is nothing less than rigorous. Her engagement with industry enabled her to find out what employers expected of our graduates, and to determine how students should prepare themselves for graduate recruitment. This led her to



MRS NURAAN DAVIDS-LATIEF

I'M SOMEWHAT OF AN ACTIVIST FOR STUDENTS TO DEVELOP THEIR OWN PERSONAL COMPETENCE PORTFOLIOS AS PART OF THEIR JOB SEARCH PREPARATION AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT.

framework as part of her Master's thesis titled "An examination of the e-Competence requirements of potential information systems graduate employers in the Western Cape and the information systems curriculum at University X." Her holistic e-competence framework contains 50 specific competencies (including knowledge, skills and attitudes) that form the basis of the graduate attributes that each student is required to have, in order to be "work-ready."

"I'm somewhat of an activist for students to develop their own personal competence portfolios as part of their job search preparation and employability skills development," she laughs.

The charts on her office wall reveal that this is anything but a laughing matter. These diagrams demonstrate a deep and comprehensive knowledge on the drivers and levers of employability for Information Systems students, knowledge she is passionately applying in practice.

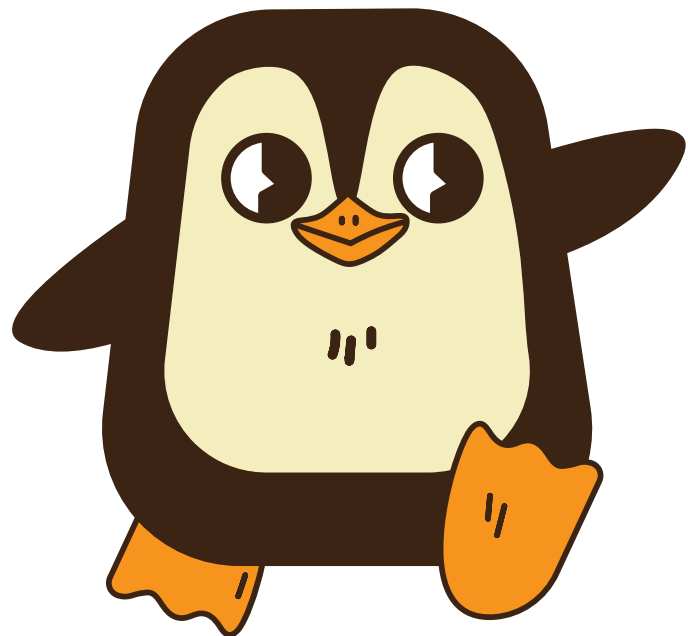
Mrs Davids-Latief is exceptionally au fait with the business and career streams available to her students, and speaks articulately on how certain academic modules optimally orient students to technical or management career paths. She has an open-door policy for students on job search and career advice. "Students often ask me for advice about their career path as it impacts on their subject choices in the second and third year, and electives in their Honours programme."

All these initiatives, however, do not occur in a silo. "I sustain a good relationship with Careers Service as I often and students there," she says. "I have invited the Careers Service Coordinator, Nazrana Parker, to speak with the full-time Honours students at their Orientation and usually allocate a day for her to workshop with the students on their job search preparation. We have developed a great relationship over the years, so I am also on speed dial with her," she continues. All this supports her view on the critical role of academic departments in preparing students for the world of work. "The more academic departments engage with Careers Service," she adds, "the more opportunities for collaboration will emerge."



"STUDENTS OFTEN ASK ME FOR ADVICE ABOUT THEIR CAREER PATH AS IT IMPACTS ON THEIR SUBJECT CHOICES IN THE SECOND AND THIRD YEAR, AND ELECTIVES IN THEIR HONOURS PROGRAMME."

Share your views about this article with studies@uwc.ac.za



WADDLE I DO WITHOUT YOU?





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WESTERN CAPE

DIVISION *of*
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How does Career Services function without our Silent Heroes Thoughts and comments