



UNIVERSITY OF  
MPUMALANGA

Creating Opportunities

# EVALUATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MPUMALANGA STRATEGIC PLAN (2015 – 2022)

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“One of the role models of how to  
establish a university.” KII

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## Acronyms

APP – Annual Performance Plan

ARIGC - Audit, Risk, and ICT Governance Committee of Council

CHE - Council of Higher Education

DHET – department of Higher Education and Training

DVC - Deputy Vice Chancellor

E-MANCO - Extended Management Committee

EXCO – Executive Committee

FTE - Full Time Equivalent

GBV - Gender Based Violence

GFIC - Management Committee (MANCO), Governance, Finance, Investments Committee

HR – Human Resources

ICT – Information communication Technology

IT – Information Technology

LCA – Lowveld College of Agriculture

MANCO – Management Committee

nGAP - Number of New Generation of Academic Project

NRF - National Research Foundation

SMART - Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound

SRC - Student Representative Council

UMP – University of Mpumalanga

VC – Vice Chancellor

# Executive Summary

The University of Mpumalanga's (UMP) 2015 – 2022 Strategic Plan is coming to an end, and a new Strategic Plan is being finalized. The 2015 – 2022 plan was the first Strategic Plan for the University since it enrolled its first cohort of students in 2014. The strategic document, that was approved in 2015 was the first comprehensive plan that outlined what the University's strategic focus would be for seven years, 2015 to 2022. The key strategy focus areas were i) Governance and Strategic Leadership and Management, ii) Teaching and Learning, iii) Research and Knowledge Generation, iv) Planning and Institutional Support, v) Quality Student Experience, vi) Engagement and Partnerships, vii) Finance and viii) Human resources. To assess the University's performance against defined strategic goals and objectives in the strategy, the University defined a set of activities, which were tracked annually, and each activity reported as being achieved or not. Each focus area was assessed and a percentage score of achieving a set of activities was reported. In addition to this assessment, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) through the Annual Performance Plan also set four performance targets that looked at student enrollment, student graduation, staff research outputs and academic staff to student ratios.

The University decided to undertake an evaluation of the UMP 2015-2022 Strategic Plan. The evaluation is meant to assess if the University achieved its strategic goals and objectives, what worked well, what challenges were experienced, if the COVID-19 outbreak had an impact on the plan and what lessons can be drawn from implementing the Strategic Plan. This document reports some of the key findings of the evaluation.

## **Main Findings and Recommendations**

### **Governance, Strategic Leadership and Management**

Governance, Strategic Leadership, and Management sat with the UMP Council, its various sub-committees and the University's Management Committee (MANCO) led by the Vice Chancellor (VC). Based on the annual performance indicators, the Governance, Strategic Leadership and Management goals and objectives were achieved year on year, with scores of 100% in 5 out of the 6 years that were assessed. In the other year, 91% of defined activities were achieved under this strategic focus.

Some of the key achievements noted under Governance, Strategic Leadership and Management included developing, reviewing, and approval of key University policies. These policies which were

critical for a new institution covered finance, risk management, human resources, occupational health, information and communication technology and legal issues.

As reported by interviewed University management and Council members, roles and responsibilities of Council and MANCO were clearly defined, and this enabled Council to play its over-sight role effectively. The collegial working relationship between council led by the chairperson and the university's senior leadership led by the VC, was cited by almost all interviewed key informants as a key reason why these participants were proud to be part of the University. Although the University Council has a diverse membership, the successes achieved over the last seven years of implementing this Strategic Plan suggest a strong consensus of ideas over this period.

As the University is finalizing its new Strategic Plan, the term of office of four members of Council who have served Council since 2014 including that of the chair' term of office is coming to an end. One hopes that with the incoming new members there is continuity and building up of the strategic vision of the University.

### **Teaching, Learning, Research and Knowledge Management**

The Teaching and Learning as well as the Research and Knowledge Generation strategic goals and objectives of developing a comprehensive University, with highly qualified and capable staff that encourage relevant and quality research, has been achieved. The University saw rapid growth on all academic indicators; the number of academic programmes (qualifications) on offer increased from 3 in 2014, 9 in 2016, to 48 in 2022; the number of students enrolled from 169 in 2014, 1262 in 2016 to 7100 in 2022 and the number of students graduating from 203 in 2015 to 1113 graduates in 2021. The number of academic staff also increased from 13, 3(23%) of whom had PhD qualification in 2014 to 160 of whom 73 (48%) were PhD holders in 2021. Close to a fifth of all PhD graduates over the years came from the UMP staff development programme. The University compares favorably with other universities in terms of the percentage of staff with PhD, it is 2% points from achieving the 50% target as defined in the Medium Strategic Framework (2015 – 2019) by Government. There are three fully functional Faculties in the University, namely Agriculture and Natural Sciences, Economics and Management Sciences and the Education Faculty.

The University did well in terms of achieving recruitment, graduation and student staff ratio targets set by DHET. In the past six years, the University achieved perfect scores 3 out of 6 times on the Learning and Teaching strategic goal/objective internal indicator, while it achieved perfect scores 4 out of 6 times on the Research and Knowledge Generation indicator. The University is competitive in terms of number of publications per academic staff, averaging 0.62 against an average target of 0.55

units over the 7 years. The University completed its academic programmes in 2020 and 2021 despite the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and the associated lock downs.

The University's target student enrolment is 25000 to 30000 across all programmes when it has reached its maximum capacity. New programmes will be introduced as the University grows. There was acknowledgement that there is a critical shortage of healthcare professionals in the province, specifically nurses and doctors, but also nationally, so one of the key programmes being considered as an offering are qualifications in health sciences. Agriculture, mining, and tourism were mentioned as the other niche areas the University plans to enhance and/or introduce going forward.

Although entrepreneurship modules are offered as part of the Bachelor of Commerce programme, the University should consider making the entrepreneurship short course a credit bearing module offered across other programmes. University graduates often leave universities with good subject matter knowledge, but with little or no skills such as writing a business proposal, bookkeeping, record keeping, financial management, marketing etc, which are all needed for starting and running a successful business. So, offering this course as a credit course where students are formally assessed for competency equips graduates with the necessary skills need to successfully start and operate their own businesses.

The University's research themes are designed such that the programmes are inter-disciplinary. As the University introduces new programmes such as the Bachelor of Social Work, and add higher qualifications, this should contribute towards the inter-disciplinary programmes and research approaches that deal with the multitude of social challenges that the country is facing. These include challenges with mental health, substance abuse including alcohol abuse, violence and specifically gender-based violence, and adolescent health including teenage pregnancy.

The VC, who has worked as a Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) Research before, proactively took up the responsibilities of leading the University's research portfolio. The University is in the process of appointing a DVC Research, and once appointed, this should alleviate the VC's workload. The University should continue monitoring where it is in term of eligibility to apply for NRF Research Chair positions especially for those programmes that will be fully mature, i.e., having all the required programme qualifications up to PhD and Post doctoral programmes, so that they can start the process of applying for the key chair positions.

The University should also strive to achieve more diversity in terms of race and geographic catchment for its student population. The University is well positioned to be a regional training institution, targeting countries such as Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia.

## **Quality Student Experiences**

As part of the University's vision of training and nurturing holistic graduates, the University offers a variety of extracurricular activities and societies. The University has done well in some of these activities, with key highlights being the soccer team winning the local league and being promoted to a league just below the Glad Africa league, the University doing extremely well on the ENACTUS competitions, a national community innovation programme, winning close to 20 trophies between 2017 and 2021 among other achievements.

The "Love my Campus Campaign" was initiated in the University to promote a sense of belonging and pride of the University among staff and students. The campaign has seen UMP staff and students making a pledge to look after their University infrastructure, and one of the desirable outcomes of this is that there has been little vandalism of University property even during students' protests and demonstrations. The student representative council, which is part of UMP's MANCO team has had good working relationship with the University leadership.

## **Support services: Institutional Planning, Finance and Human Resources and New Infrastructure Projects.**

The University of Mpumalanga boasts some of the most iconic infrastructure of a university in the country. All except the Siyabuswa campus buildings are new, and they were built over this Strategic Plan period. The undertaking of overseeing this construction of over R2 billion required close budgetary and time monitoring and management, which the University provided. Some of the successfully completed infrastructure projects include the IT Building, Hospitality and Tourism Building, the Multipurpose Academic Teaching Building, the Multipurpose Administration Building and the Dining Hall Extensions, Conference and Wellness Centre and the Residential & Dining and Hotel and Conference Centre, Agriculture and Natural Sciences building and the Library. Several frameworks to support planning were also completed, including the Integrated Planning Framework, the Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS) and the Data Management and Governance Framework. The planning and institutional support performance score continued to increase from 70% in 2017 to 100% in 2021. The ICT infrastructure at the University enabled the University to have few interruptions during the height of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The University has managed to form critical partnerships and engagement in the province, nationally and internationally. The partnerships have resulted on reciprocal staff and student visits, hosting of workshops/seminars as well as offer joint short courses.



The integrated ICT system that links most of the University's systems from student records, human resources, procurement, and finance have created an efficient way of doing business. The various policies and oversight committees from Council and MANCO has also assured the achievement of the financial strategic goals and objectives over the years.

The University has performed well, achieving most of its set targets on the Human Resources strategic goals and objectives indicators, with perfect scores in 3 of the 6 years.

The University had clean audits over the 6 years period, 2016 to 2021. The finance department however needs to workshop some of its key policies and procedures across the University faculties to iron out some of the financial management challenges that were raised, such as delayed processing of invoices.

UMP needs to finalize any remaining outstanding issues related to the incorporation of Lowveld College of Agriculture (LCA). This should be done within the university protocols and guidelines.

### **Measurement Framework.**

The University needs to consider using a Framework that appropriately and strategically monitor and evaluate progress and achievements of the new Strategic Plan and associated implementation plans. Although several measurement frameworks are available, the Theory of Change Model, with associated Monitoring and Evaluation Logic Model are increasingly being used in organizations. These frameworks will assist with differentiating activities and processes, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. At the lowest level are activities and processes needed for the university to effectively undertake its mandate. These include, infrastructure, staff levels (at the right levels, both academic and support), finances, and systems such as ICT, HR etc. At the highest level, which is the impact level is to produce 'holistic' graduates who are innovative, entrepreneurial, employable, and responsible citizens. An accompanying M & E logic framework that defines Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) indicators across levels need to be developed. The framework will help the University to monitor and more importantly evaluate outcomes and the impact of the University beyond the University activities.

## **1. Introduction**

The University of Mpumalanga (UMP) was established in August 2013, as one of two new post-independence (1994) universities in South Africa. The University was established as a comprehensive university that offered programmes from short courses and certificate qualifications all the way to doctorate degrees. As a new university, it made sense that its growth trajectory was deliberately planned to be incremental. The University started with a limited suite of programmes as its first academic offerings in 2014, specifically in agriculture, tourism and hospitality management, information communication technology and education. The University has since seen exponential growth in all aspects including the number of programmes offered, the number of students enrolled and successfully graduating, the number of staff, both academic and support staff, and the range of research outputs. The University has also seen massive expansion of its infrastructure, including lecture halls, administration blocks, student accommodation, a conference centre, and a University hotel at its modern new campuses in Mbombela and Siyabuswa districts in Mpumalanga.

The journey to opening the first university in Mpumalanga started with an Interim Council (IC) whose focus was on developing basic structures, systems, and processes to provide a foundation for the establishment of the University in 2013. Initially the IC, through a smaller Strategic Management Team, provided both governance and day to day management of the institution. The substitutive University Council was appointed in 2014 through nominations made by key stakeholders that included the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), the Mpumalanga Provincial Government, and the private sector. The IC approved several initial key policies that covered the functioning of Council, delegation of authority, appointment of staff, conditions of service, a code of conduct, student affairs, and finance to enable the University to start its operations. The IC conducted interviews for the first Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (academic), the Deputy Vice Chancellor (planning and quality assurance) and the Registrar of the University. These were confirmed and ratified in August 2014 by Council, and hand over of the management and running of the University from the Strategic Management Team to the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor, Prof TV Mayekiso and her team took place in September 2014.

In July 2015, Council approved the first Strategic Plan for the University of Mpumalanga (Vision 2022). The Strategic Plan included the vision, mission, values, and the educational philosophy of the University. In conjunction with this plan, an Integrated Planning Framework for the University was also developed. An academic structure for UMP was established, i.e., Management Committee (MANCO), Governance, Finance, Investments Committee (GFIC), and Executive Committee (EXCO) and the University Senate were approved by Council in September 2015.

The University's vision is *"To be an African University leading in creating opportunities for sustainable development through innovation"*, while its mission is to offer quality education and training by developing a holistic scholar through teaching and learning, research and scholarship and engagement with strategic partners.

## **2. Evaluation of the 2015-2022 University of Mpumalanga Strategic Plan**

The University of Mpumalanga's seven-year Strategic Plan is coming to an end in 2022 and a new Strategic Plan is being developed and will be finalised soon. A decision was made to evaluate the last Strategic Plan to assess if defined strategic goals and objectives were achieved, what worked well, challenges experienced and to note lessons learnt during the implementation of the just ending Strategic Plan. This report summarises the main findings of the evaluation of the 2015-2022 Strategic Plan of the University, and it covers the eight strategic areas of the plan as listed below and in appendix A.

1. Governance, Strategic Leadership and Management.
2. Teaching and Learning.
3. Research and Knowledge Generation.
4. Planning and Institutional Support.
5. Quality and Student Experience.
6. Engagement and Partnerships.
7. Finance.
8. Human Resources (HR).

### **1.1 Objectives of the Evaluation**

The main objective of the evaluation was to assess achievements, challenges and lessons learnt during the implementation of seven-year Strategic Plan of the University of Mpumalanga (2015 - 2022).

### **1.2 Evaluation Questions**

Some of the evaluation questions that the evaluation intended to answer are:

1. Did the 2015 – 2022 Strategic Plan for the University of Mpumalanga achieve its strategic goals across each of the eight strategic areas?
2. Which of the eight strategic areas/objectives/targets performed exceptionally well?
3. What were some of the implementation successes and challenges faced during the implementation of the strategy?

4. How did COVID-19 impact the implementation of the Strategic Plans, and what are the implications for the new Strategic Plan.
5. What are some of the key lessons that can be drawn from implementing the 2015 – 2022 Strategic Plan, and how can these inform the new strategic areas?

### 1.3 Methodology

The evaluation used mixed methods that included reviewing of key documents, key informant interviews, reviewing of secondary data that included enrolment, graduation, and other research data. Appendix A is a summary of the evaluation matrix used as part of the evaluation.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) set annual targets for the University as part of its Annual Performance Plans (APP). In addition to these DHET performance targets, the University also developed a comprehensive set of indicators to assess its performance against the strategic goals and objectives as defined in its seven-year Strategic Plan. Assessment of these internal measures were reported to University Council as well as documented as part of the University's annual report that also went to the DHET. The first reporting of the performance of the Strategic Plan was in 2016, although the University had been reporting back to DHET every year since the university opened based on the APPs.

#### 1.3.1 DHET Indicators

The DHET ministerial approved targets covered four domains: Access, Success, Efficiency and Research Outputs.

Table 1: Department of Higher Education and Training target definitions:

Domain	Description
<b>Access</b>	Access measured the total number of students enrolled in a year, both undergraduate and post-graduate students in the fields of science, engineering, technology, and education
<b>Success</b>	Success measured the total number of students graduating in a year against a given target for that year.
<b>Efficiency</b>	Efficiency had several measures related to academic staff. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Number of permanent instructional/research professional staff</li> <li>2. Percentage of staff with doctoral degrees</li> <li>3. Number of New Generation of Academic Project (nGAP) staff (staff development)</li> </ol>

	4. Ratio of enrolled students to Full Time Equivalent (FTE) instructional/research staff
<b>Research</b>	Research measured the number of publication units per instructional/research staff

### 1.3.2 Annual Performance Plan Indicators

The annual performance plan indicators were developed as a comprehensive way of monitoring and tracking the performance of the University's different strategic areas' activities. Each of the eight areas' activities as listed on the Strategic Plan had specific goals, and each goal had specific objectives. Under each objective several activities were then defined, and every year the University assessed each activity to see if it was done/achieved or not and counted it as 1 if done/achieved otherwise 0 if not achieved or done. The total number of activities achieved divided by the total number of activities defined in each activity area was then converted into a percentage to indicate the performance in that area.

Table 2: Performance Domains/Activity and Goals

Domain/Activity Areas	Goals
<b>Activity Area 1: Governance and Strategic Leadership and Management.</b>	Establish effective and efficient governance and strategic management arrangements in support of UMP's mandate.
<b>Activity Area 2: Teaching and Learning</b>	Goal 1: Develop a Programme Qualification Mix (PQM) and enrolment plan that is appropriate for a multi-campus comprehensive university and that is responsive to our context. Goal 2: Develop and sustain capacity and ability of staff as educators. Goal 3: Broaden access to UMP and support access with success.
<b>Activity Area 3: Research and Knowledge Generation</b>	Goal 1: Create and support an environment that fosters research quality and productivity. Goal 2: Develop and sustain the research capacity of staff and students. Goal 3: Conduct research that contributes to local, regional, national and global sustainability.
<b>Activity Area 4: Planning and Institutional Support</b>	Goal 1: Promote the development and maintenance of iconic infrastructure and facilities.

	<p>Goal 2: Establish effective systems and processes in support of integrated planning.</p> <p>Goal 3: Establish and enhance quality institutional support services.</p>
<b>Activity Area 5: Quality Student Experience</b>	<p>Goal 1: Create an effective and progressive student leadership.</p> <p>Goal 2: Promote a vibrant and active student life.</p> <p>Goal 3: Promote the holistic development of students.</p>
<b>Activity Area 6: Engagement and Partnerships</b>	<p>Goal 1: Promote, engagement for public good.</p> <p>Goal 2: Develop and sustain beneficial local, regional, national and international partnerships that contribute to a sustainable future.</p> <p>Goal 3: Promote and sustain the recognition of engagement as one of the core missions of UMP.</p>
<b>Activity Area 7: Finance</b>	<p>Goal 1: Establish the UMP's financial sustainability and sound financial management and control.</p> <p>Goal 2: Develop a diverse range of income streams.</p> <p>Goal 3: Ensure efficient utilisation of assets and resources.</p>
<b>Activity Area 8: Human Resources</b>	<p>Goal 1: Create and sustain an affirming institutional culture for all staff.</p> <p>Goal 2: Attract, develop and retain talented UMP staff.</p> <p>Goal 3: Facilitate Employee Wellness programme that will benefit all staff.</p> <p>Goal 4: Ensure effective and efficient HR systems and processes.</p>

Each year the University developed an Annual Performance Plan and starting in 2016 the University had two performance measures/assessment matrices that they reported on: the DHET as defined in table 1 and the internal performance framework that closely monitored, evaluated, and reported on the performance outcomes of Strategic Plans, table 2. The key findings of this evaluation will report on both the DHET assessments and the internal performance indicators.

## 2 Evaluation Findings

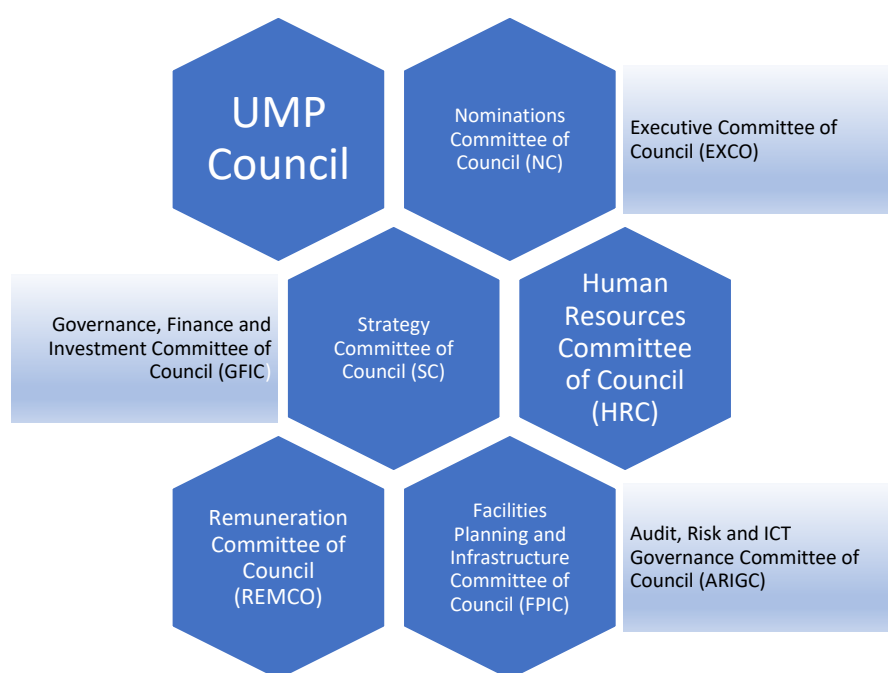
### 2.1 Governance and Strategic Leadership

The University of Mpumalanga Council, which was appointed in 2014, provides the overall governance of the University. Council membership consists of appointees from Government, members of the University senior management, and specially appointed experts who provided guidance on specific areas such as finance, human resources, investment etc.

#### 2.1.1 Council Sub-Committees

To ensure proper guidance and leadership of specific functions of the University, various committees made up of Council members, seconded subject experts and members of the UMP staff and students were established, figure- 1 below. Council activities operated through these different specialised committees. Each of these committees was instrumental in reviewing, inputting, presenting, and informing other Council members about the key aspects of policies for adoption and approval as necessary. Some of the key governance matters dealt with included strategy, financial governance, appointment, and conditions of service of staff, disciplinary matters, ensuring a positive academic environment, the language and admission policies of the University. To complete the governance of the University, other University structures such as the Management Committee (MANCO) of the University, the University Senate and other University committees contributed to the work of the University Council.

Figure 1: University of Mpumalanga Council Committees



Starting from the formation of the University, Council realised the importance of sustainability during the building and growth phase of the University. Emphasis was placed on an incremental growth approach, i.e., making sure that student enrolment numbers were in line with staffing levels, appropriate and adequate physical infrastructure, lecture theatres, teaching laboratory facilities, ICT infrastructure, housing, and transport systems. The development of appropriate structures, application for accreditation to DHET and the introduction of new programmes, were thus implemented based on this incremental approach.

#### 2.1.2 Governance and Strategic Leadership Performance: Internal Measures

The University has consistently done well in terms of Governance and Strategic Leadership as defined in table 1. The University accomplished all its set activities (100% score) in all the seven years of the Strategic Plan except in 2016, the first year this indicator was used, when it achieved 91% of its defined activities for that year.

After the approval of the Strategic Plan in 2015, a risk register that identified potential risk and defined strategies to mitigate these risks was developed as part of the annual plans. The Audit, Risk and ICT Governance committee of Council was responsible for monitoring this risk register. In 2016, Council reviewed and approved 17 key policies. In 2017, Council approved the Siyabiswa Strategic Plan which was meant to shape the development and proper integration of the Lowveld College of Agriculture (LCA) into UMP. In 2017, Council also approved the Policy on Management of Performance Information, a framework meant to guide management of information. In 2018 Council approved 11 policies, while in 2020 a total of 15 new and revised policies were approved.

In 2018, the University was assessed by DHET to see if it was compliant with the legal prescripts expected of universities in terms of providing higher education in South Africa. The assessment covered Governance, Finance and Administration, HR, Audit, Risk and Information Communication Technology (ICT) Governance, Information, Communication and Data Protection, Occupational Health, Safety and Environment as well as General Legal Compliance and Miscellaneous matters as defined in the Legal Compliance Audit Checklist by DHET. The University was certified to be compliant by the assessment.

One of the key successes as mentioned by members of the University Council, as well as by other key informants who were interviewed was the appointment of an effective visionary Vice Chancellor (VC). The VC has overseen the growth of the University from 3 programme offerings to 56 programmes, from a student enrolment of under 200 to over 7 000, and massive infrastructure development and completion. Council also noted the number of women in the University leadership as being on the right track.



Stable leadership has been a feature of the period 2015 to 2022. The University Council membership has remained almost intact, and the various University management bodies that include MANCO led by the VC, and the able leadership within various academic and support services, have been credited with the noticeable success of establishing a new university. One key informant noted that:

*“This is one of the role models of how to establish a university”*

Governance has been characterised by a clear division of responsibilities between council and MANCO, and with a strong visionary MANCO leadership, Council has been able to focus primarily on its oversight responsibilities. It was mentioned, for example, that unlike other councils which have been reported to spend a lot of time evaluating bids, undertaking procurement work, and other day-to-day functions of a university, UMP units responsible for these tasks have successfully carried out these operational functions, thus allowing Council to undertake its oversight role effectively. This has had positive impacts that include timely delivery of most of the University’s projects including its infrastructure. Council has been commended for its effective interaction with the SRC leadership and they attribute this to the good induction system for the student leaders.

One of the major achievements of the University has been its ability to put in place clear systems, including having functional and active committees, filling critical departmental positions, comprehensive policies and procedures and clear reporting lines. The University updates its risk register annually, identifying risks and putting in place appropriate mitigating measure. This process has resulted in the University achieving clean audits for the past seven years.

It was repeatedly mentioned that the University lives its values, with the leadership of the University leading the way. As noted by one key informant.

*“The way Council, EXCO and MANCO has demonstrated transparency, diligence, and an intolerance of cutting corners.... The University has done well and should keep this up”*

Overall, Council expressed satisfaction with the performance of the University. One member gave it a rating of 95% in terms of both the academic programme and research programmes. It was noted that the University was doing even better than some of the well-established universities, and the University was on its way to achieving a comprehensive university as initially planned.

### 2.1.3 Management Committee (MANCO)

The Management Committee of the University, made up of the Vice-Chancellor (chair), the Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) Academic, DVC Planning and Institutional support, the Registrar, the Dean of Students, Executive Director Finance, Executive Director Human Resources, members co-opted by the VC that included the Coordinator Stakeholder Liaison, Marketing and Communication Director

were approved by the EXCO of Council at the end of 2014. The VC co-opted the Senior Director of Operations and the Siyabuswa campus Director in 2016, when one of the previously co-opted members retired, MANCO is responsible for advising the VC on the day-to-day management of the University.

The Audit, Risk, and IT Governance Committee of Council (ARIGC) committee regularly received appropriate MANCO reports including the Risk Register and the associated measures put in place to mitigate identified risks. A Risk Management sub-committee of MANCO provided operational and monitoring of risk, while the ARIGC provided oversight over the University. Regular workshops on leadership and management were organised to support the Extended Management Committee (E-MANCO), a committee that included the next lower level of management of MANCO (directors and deans). In 2020, two workshops for E-MANCO were held on leadership and management. Although there is no data to assess how effective these workshops were, key informants indicated that the workshops have been helpful in their work.

#### 2.1.4 Organisational Values and Culture

All key informants who were asked about the Governance and Management, Leadership, organisational values and culture of the University were positive about the working relationship between the University Council, EXCO and the University MANCO led by the VC. Interviewed members indicated that there were clearly defined and exclusively delineated roles and responsibilities between Council and the University's MANCO. Participants who were interviewed pointed to the effective leadership of the chair of Council and the VC, and their harmonious working relationship that was a determining factor in the successful establishment and operation of the University. Council was generally satisfied with the level, detail, and accuracy of reporting from the University MANCO.

Key informants, ranging from student representatives, representatives from organised labour to Council members, attributed the success of the University in all aspects to the leadership of the university and the fact that Council worked to integrate the university's values of excellence, integrity, diversity, collaboration, adaptability, relevance, and inspiration as described in its Strategic Plan. It was mentioned in the interview with student leaders that the University leadership led by the VC lived the University values, which they wanted to emulate.

#### 2.1.5 Governance Challenges

In this strategic phase (2015-2022) the University Council has functioned effectively to support the expansion and development of the University. Nevertheless, respondents cited a few challenges. It was felt that some Council members tended to import and impose their experiences and/or

academic cultures from other universities. It was also mentioned that unfortunately some Council appointees brought other agendas including trying to drive certain political agendas within the University. Some of these members acted as if their role was to supervise Council rather than being part of the collaborative strategic vision and leadership of the University. Council has played its role, and has managed disruptions firmly, taking the necessary action when needed but in a constructive way. They successfully enforced all the regulatory compliance requirements and managed identified risks well. The University has also effectively managed community expectations, including student enrolment and calls for employing locals on all projects.

Although Council members are recommended to serve for a maximum of two consecutive terms, it was noted that government should consider varying this requirement, especially for institutions that were just starting off. There is clearly a danger in having too many new people on Council, thus there is a risk of losing of institutional memory and continuity. This was also mentioned as being true for senior leadership of the University, where it was suggested that Government should reconsider reviewing the retirement rules to allow for talented, effective academics to continue working beyond the statutory retirement age.

There was mention of the need for the University in the medium term to be thinking about a third-stream income to mitigate the impact on financial viability and sustainability once ring-fenced funding ends, possibly in the next 10 years. Several suggestions were given including the provision of high revenue short courses. Other respondents cautioned that this approach to revenue generation needed to be balanced with the core business of the University, and to ensure that teaching, learning and research does not suffer as a result. It was noted that the Faculty of Agriculture was well positioned to contribute to third income generation through farming projects. The Faculty currently supplies the University hotel with farm produce, and the surplus produce is sold to Food Lovers Market. The Faculty however does not have any standing contracts to supply farm produce. The Faculty is however considering opening a farm store to generate more income.

It was mentioned by some academics that MANCO had too many responsibilities, and the University should consider decentralising some of its functions and to delegate some functions to relieve management pressures, for example on approvals. It was said that it made sense that line managers approve, for example, claims within faculties because these are the people who are better positioned to know what is going on the ground. It was pointed out that the University was not yet at a point to decentralise some functions as this would create inefficiencies. As the University grows, and systems that can be cascaded down to Faculties and Schools are in place, then some functions can be reviewed and decentralised as appropriate.

## 2.2 Academic Programmes

The University developed an academic plan for 2016 – 2018 derived from the University Strategic Plan (2015 – 2022), which served as an operational document to enable the implementation of the academic programme. Teaching and Learning policies necessary for accreditation of new qualifications were developed. The academic structure which defines schools, faculties and associated subject themes was defined. Schools were responsible for the design, delivery and assessment of modules that make up diploma and degree programmes. In 2015, the first faculty of the University, the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences was established, and its Dean was appointed. The academic programmes offered at the UMP has grown in leaps and bounds, from 3 programmes when the University first opened its doors in 2014 to 48 programmes currently on offer in 2022, table -3. In total there are 56 approved programmes, with 8 new programmes will be on offer in 2023. Before the Strategic Plan was finalised and implemented in mid-2015, there were a total of 7 academic programmes that enrolled students in 2015.

### 2.2.1 The Growth and Evolution of UMP Academic Programmes

In 2016, the first year that the Strategic Plan became operational, a total of 9 academic programmes were on offer across the two UMP campuses of Mbombela and Siyabuswa. In 2018, the University had an enrolment of 2 471 students in 12 academic programmes, with three programmes being offered for the first time that year. The first four post-graduate programmes (Honours and Masters programmes) in the Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources were approved by DHET in 2018, and students in these programmes were enrolled for the first time in 2019. In 2020, 2021, 2022 there were 26, 32 and 48 academic programmes on offer at UMP, a close to 20 times growth between 2014 and 2022 or 200% growth a year, table 3 and Appendix B.

Over the years Council and the University has developed and approved several policies that have facilitated accreditation and the introduction of new programmes. For example, in 2017 Council and the University approved the Policy for the Development of New Academic Programmes, Policy for the Review of Academic Programmes, Policy on E-Learning, Policy on Programme Advisory Boards, Staff Development Policy and the Workload Allocation Guidelines. The University has been relatively successful in developing academic programmes that have been approved by MANCO and Council and then accredited by the Council of Higher Education (CHE).

### 2.2.2 Teaching Staff and Qualifications

Figure 2 below shows the growth of the academic teaching staff between 2014 and 2021. In 2014, there were 13 academic staff, and this number has since grown to 160 in 2021. Teaching staff with doctorate degrees (PhDs) grew from 3 (23%) in 2014, 33 (31%) in 2018, 59 (46%) in 2020, to 73

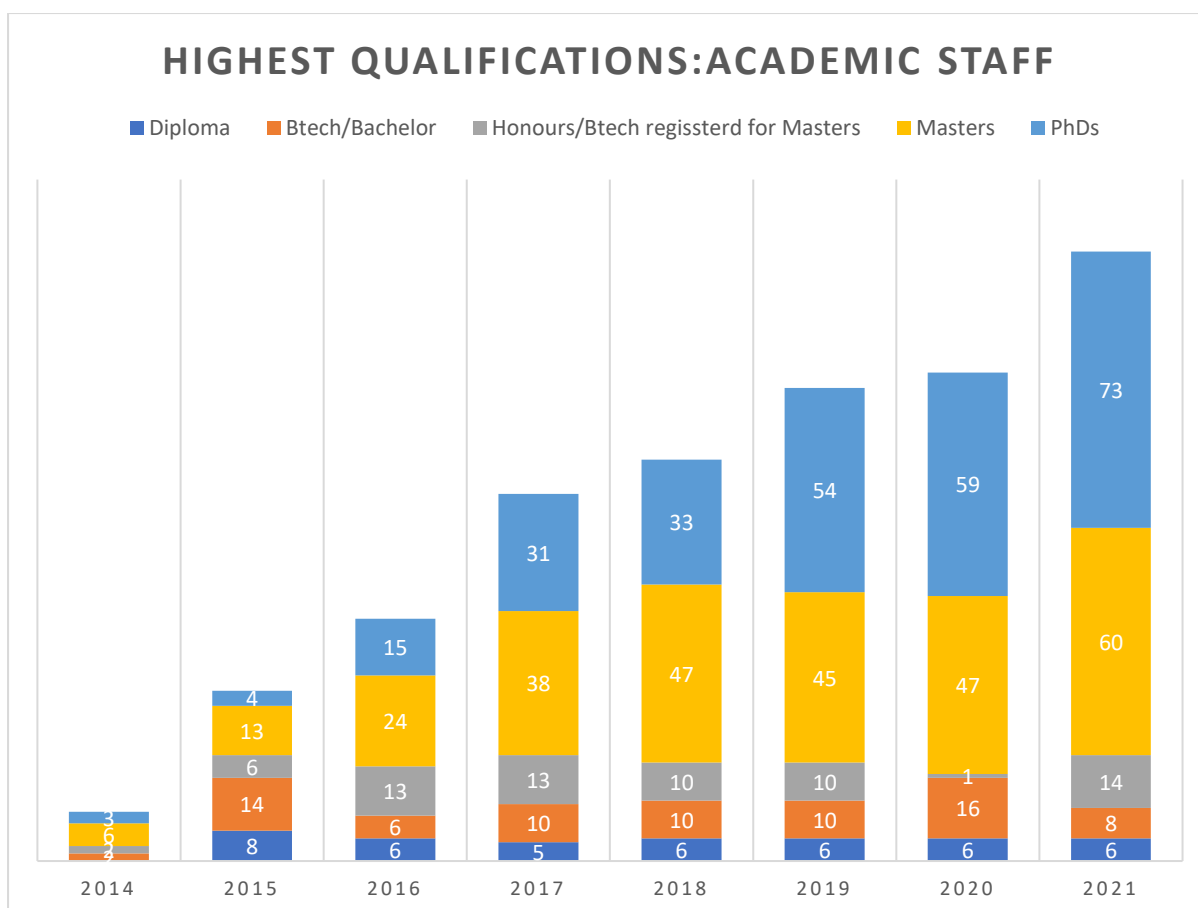
(48%) doctorate holders in 2021. This is very comparable to most of the top universities, and UMP is close to achieving the target of having 50% of academic staff being holders of PhDs as outlined in the Medium-Term Strategic Plan of 2014-2019<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, in 2014, 6 members of the academic staff had Masters degrees, and this grew to 60 in 2021. The incorporation of the Lowveld College of Agriculture (LCA) into UMP, meant that at the beginning of the University, most staff from LCA were holders of Diploma, Bachelor of Technology (BTech) or bachelor's degrees only, and the University staff development has focused on upskilling all staff to have higher qualifications.

The New Generation Academics Programme (nGAP) was a staff development programme funded by DHET aimed at attracting young academic professionals into universities. Four nGAP lecturers in Biology, Nature Conservation, Development Studies and Tourism and Heritage joined the University in 2017, bringing the total number of nGAP lecturers to 9. In 2018, 4 nGAP posts in Heritage and Culture, Plant Propagation, Animal Production, and Information Communication Technology were allocated, and these posts were filled in 2019. In 2020, UMP had 160 full time Instructional/Research professional staff, and 17 nGAP staff. The ratio of students to FTE instructional/research staff was 17:1, slightly higher than the target of 25:1, and this was a result of higher enrolments in 2020. The number of UMP staff who successfully completed their PhD studies were 2 in 2017, 1 in 2018, 4 in 2019, and 4 in 2020, while in 2021, 6 staff members successfully completed their studies and graduated with a PhD. The areas of study for the 2021 PhD graduates included Psychology, Civil Engineering, Education, Economics and Management Sciences, Information Science and Agriculture.

Figure-2: Highest UMP staff academic qualifications by year

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<sup>1</sup> Staffing South Africa's Universities Framework <https://www.justice.gov.za/commissions/feeshet/docs/2015-Staffing-SAUniversitiesFramework.pdf>, accessed 12 August 2022



### 2.2.3 Growth in Student Enrolment

Student enrolment in the University's 3 programmes grew from 778 enrolments in 2014 to 7117 students in 2022, table 3 below and appendix B. Of the first new programmes to enrol students, the diploma in Hospitality grew from 21 student in 2014, 56 students in 2016, 115 in 2018, 134 in 2020 to the 554 in 2022; the Bachelor of Agriculture in in Agricultural Extension and Rural Resource Management grew from 40 students in 2014, 106 in 2016, 120 in 2018, 134 in 2020 and to 154 in 2022, while the Bachelor in Education in Foundation Phase Teaching had 76 students in 2014, 301 in 2016, 406 in 2018, 429 in 2020 and 442 in 2022. The first Bachelors of Honours programmes were introduced in 2019 in Development Studies with 20 students and Agricultural Extension and Rural Resource Management with 18 students, and these programmes currently have 26 and 17 students enrolled in 2022 respectively. In 2019 and 2022, an additional 3 and 6 new Honours programmes respectively were introduced with 15 and 56 students enrolled in each respective year as shown on table 3. The first Master student was enrolled in 2019 for a Masters in Science in Agriculture programme, and this programme has growth to 27 Masters students in 2022. In 2020, 10 students in

Masters in Development programme, 20 Masters in Education of Early Childhood Education programme, and 10 students in Masters in Agriculture in Agricultural Extension Services programme were enrolled as the first Masters students in these programmes. In 2022 the same programmes had enrolments of 17, 33 and 20 students respectively. In 2022, two new Masters programmes, Masters of Arts (2 students) and Masters of Commerce (3 students) were introduced. The first PhD candidates at the University of Mpumalanga were enrolled in 2022, 7 for a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Agriculture and 5 candidates in PhD in Development Studies.

The University received R2,5 million and R1.8 million bursary funding for Honours and Masters students respectively for 2021 from NRF/NSFAS.

Table 3: Student enrolment, academic programmes 2014 - 2022

Programme	Total Student enrolment								
	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Higher Certificate</b>									
<b>Higher Certificate in Information Communication Technology in User Support</b>									59
<b>Diploma</b>									
<b>Diploma in Agriculture</b>	610	520	504	556	650	746	724	731	737
<b>Diploma in Nature Conservation</b>			46	120	173	237	266	303	389
<b>Diploma in Animal Production</b>							45	95	169
<b>Diploma in Hospitality Management</b>	21	40	56	70	115	189	300	414	554
<b>Diploma in Information Communication Technology in Applications Development</b>		25	59	117	183	251	298	370	395
<b>Bachelor's degrees</b>									
<b>Bachelor of Development Studies</b>			77	193	304	415	473	536	644
<b>Bachelor of Agriculture in Agricultural Extension and Rural Resource Management</b>	40	78	106	121	120	145	134	143	154
<b>Bachelor of Science (General)</b>						108	165	252	365
<b>Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences</b>							66	137	227
<b>Bachelor of Commerce (General)</b>					61	109	141	233	318
<b>Bachelor of Administration</b>							126	258	515
<b>Bachelor of Arts (General)</b>					104	317	555	763	907
<b>Bachelor of Information Communication Technology</b>									103



<b>Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase Teaching</b>	107	206	301	401	406	413	429	433	442
<b>Bachelor of Science in Agriculture</b>			54	154	276	423	440	454	451
<b>Bachelor of Laws</b>									262
<b>Advanced Diplomas</b>									
<b>Advanced Diploma in Agriculture in Agricultural Extension</b>			59	35	62	14	26	16	18
<b>Advanced Diploma in Nature Conservation</b>						9	10	11	13
<b>Advanced Diploma in Agriculture in Post-Harvest Technology</b>						17	19	28	21
<b>Advanced Diploma in Agricultural Production Management</b>						28	21	21	20
<b>Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management</b>					9	7	15	22	14
<b>Advanced Diploma in Information Technology in Applications Development</b>							17	21	29
<b>Post Graduate Diplomas</b>									
<b>Postgraduate Diploma in Nature Conservation</b>								4	4
<b>Postgraduate Diploma in Information Communication Technology</b>									19
<b>Postgraduate Diploma in Hospitality Management</b>									11
<b>Honours Degrees</b>									
<b>Bachelor of Honours in Development Studies</b>						20	28	20	26
<b>Bachelor of Honours in Agricultural Extension and Rural Resource Management</b>						18	14	20	17
<b>Bachelor of Arts Honours in Geography</b>									1
<b>Bachelor of Arts Honours in English</b>								6	7
<b>Bachelor of Arts Honours in Sociology</b>								3	14
<b>Bachelor of Commerce Honours In Economics</b>								6	13
<b>Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology</b>									13

<b>Bachelor of Arts Honours in Industrial Psychology</b>									20
<b>Bachelor of Arts Honours in siSwati</b>									5
<b>Bachelor of Science Honours in Entomology</b>									3
<b>Bachelor of Science Honours in Geography</b>									8
<b>Bachelor of Science Honours in Ecology</b>									7
<b>Masters Degrees</b>									
<b>Masters of Development Studies</b>							10	19	17
<b>Masters of Education in Early Childhood Education</b>							20	26	33
<b>Masters of Agriculture in Agricultural Extension</b>							10	24	20
<b>Masters of Science in Agriculture</b>						1	11	27	27
<b>Masters of Science</b>								7	24
<b>Masters of Arts</b>									2
<b>Masters of Commerce</b>									3
<b>PhDs</b>									
<b>Doctor of Philosophy in Agriculture</b>									7
<b>Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies</b>									5
<b>Doctor of Philosophy</b>									5
<b>TOTAL:</b>	778	869	1262	1767	2463	3467	4363	5403	7117

Table 4 below show the distribution of student enrolment by sex over the years. Proportionately there are more female students enrolled in all the faculties than males.

Table 4: Student Distribution by Sex

		Year							
Faculty		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>Agriculture and Natural Sciences</b>	<b>Females</b>	299	407	570	798	1107	1272	1480	1842
	<b>Males</b>	324	421	533	666	890	994	1184	1440
<b>Education</b>	<b>Females</b>	120	186	247	257	267	284	313	328
	<b>Males</b>	86	115	154	149	146	165	146	147
<b>Economics and Management Sciences</b>	<b>Females</b>	26	87	170	383	695	1091	1498	2195
	<b>Males</b>	14	46	93	210	362	557	782	1148
<b>Total</b>		869	1262	1767	2463	3467	4363	5403	7100

#### 2.2.4 Student Graduation Rates

Reflective of the student enrolment numbers over the years, the University had its first 148 graduates in a Diploma in Agriculture in 2015, and in 2022 a total of 1113 students graduated in various programmes, as illustrated in table 5. In 2016, 58 and 14 individuals graduated in Bachelor of Agriculture and Diploma in Hospitality Management respectively as the first ever graduates for these two programmes. In the same year 131 graduates in Diploma in Agriculture also graduated. In 2021, the Faculty of Agriculture had graduates in the Diploma in Agriculture, 307 graduates, Bachelor of Agriculture, 254 graduates, postgraduate programmes, 29 graduates, and for the first time 10 students graduated in its Masters programme. The Faculty of Agriculture subsequently enrolled its first PhD students in 2022. The Bachelor of Education (B Ed) Programme has seen a constant number of graduates over the years, with 100 in 2016, 98 in 2017, 95 in 2018, 89 in 2020 and 104 graduates in 2022. The Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences had its first graduates in 2016, with 14 students graduating with a Diploma in Hospitality Management, and since then the Faculty has seen its first undergraduates, 52, post-graduates, 18 Honours and its first master's graduate in 2018, 2019 and 2020 respectively. In 2020 the same Faculty had 50 students graduating with diplomas, 336 graduating with undergraduate degrees, 18 graduating with honours degrees and 5 graduating with master's degrees.

The Chancellor of the University, then Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa officiated at the 2017 graduation ceremony where 237 students graduated. The 2021 graduation which held online due to COVID-19 challenges saw 647 graduates (degrees and diplomas).



Chancellor and Members of Council at the Graduation 2017

The university has been offering academically talented student merit awards. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, a total of 146, 112 and 212 students received these awards. The merit awards recipients got monetary rewards ranging from R5440 to R9060 in 2020/2021 depending on their final overall scores.

One of the key students' programmes is the Vice Chancellor's scholarship awards. The VC's scholarship award has grown, with 21, 15, 38, 33 and 33 students being first time awardees each year between 2017 and 2022 respectively. The students who are provided with Personal and Leadership Development Programmes have continued to do well academically and several of the recipients have gone on to register for post-graduate studies. Both merit awards and the VC scholarship awardees also received merit certificates during the excellence awards ceremonies that are held at the end of each year.

Table 5: Student graduation numbers 2015 - 2021

					Year			
Agriculture and Natural Sciences		2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
	Diploma Programme	148	131	75	191	179	211	307

	<b>Undergraduate programmes</b>		58	52	54	105	141	254
	<b>Postgraduates</b>					18	13	29
	<b>Master's programmes</b>							10
<b>Education</b>								
	<b>Undergraduate programmes</b>			100	98	95	89	104
<b>Economics and Management Sciences</b>								
	<b>Diploma Programme</b>		14	10	13	19	34	50
	<b>Undergraduate programmes</b>				52	61	138	336
	<b>Postgraduates</b>					18	21	18
	<b>Master's Programmes</b>						1	5
<b>Total</b>		148	203	237	408	495	648	1113

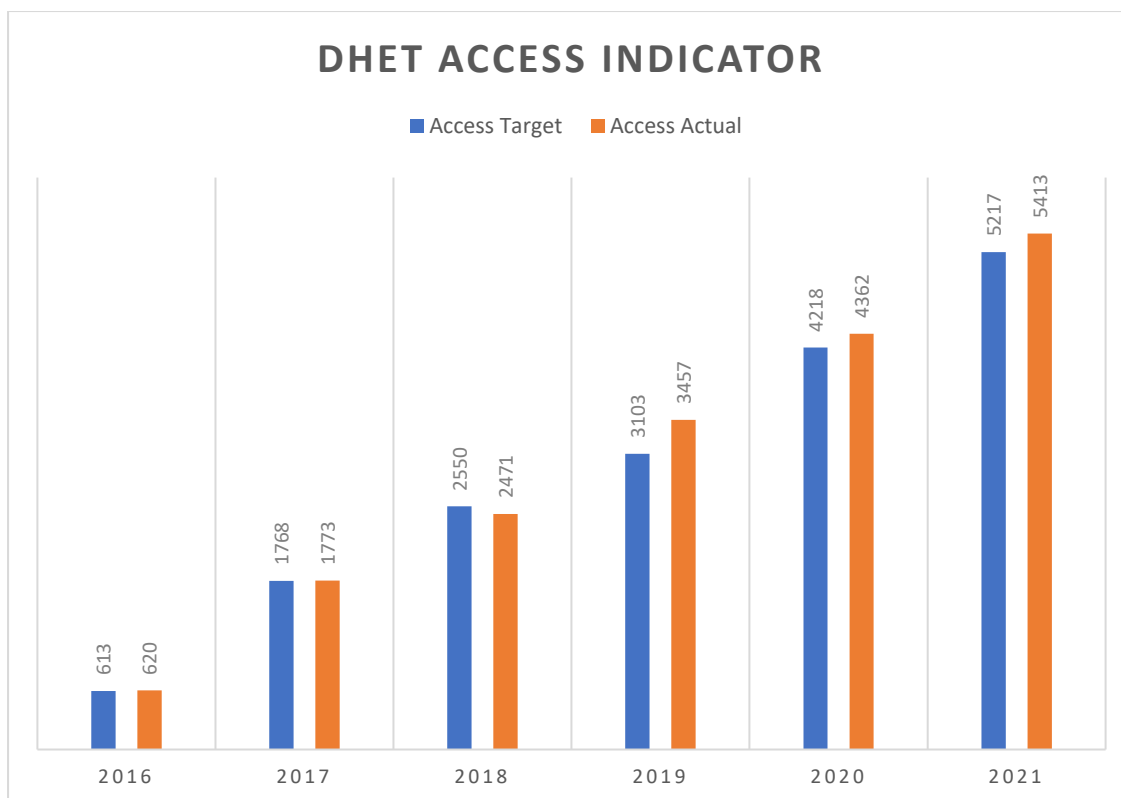
Note: First graduates for any programmes are the first non missing cell in a row.

### 2.2.5 DHET Assessment Indicators: Teaching and Learning

Across the six years of tracking the DHET “access” indicator (i.e. student enrolment figures) UMP was always within the set targets, as shown in figure 3. In 2016, the target was 613 new enrolments, and the University enrolled 620 students, while in 2018, the target was 2550 and the University achieved 2470 enrolments. In 2019, 2020 and 2021, the University surpassed the access student enrolment targets by 354 (11%), 144 (3%) and 196 (4%) respectively. 1 772 students were enrolled for the first time in 2021, against a DHET target of 1800 in 2021. Due to the popularity of the business/management programmes, the programme enrolled 1607 students against a 2021 target of 1299, or 24% above the target in 2021. There was also higher enrolment against the target (765 vs 667 or 13% higher) in the humanities programmes as new lecture venues were opened and the demand for this programme increased.

The University met its success target in 2017, achieving a score of 16% against a target of 12% of student population graduating. The University however did not achieve its target of ‘success’ in 2018, where it was 25% below the target and in 2020, when it achieved a score of 10% against a score of 26%.

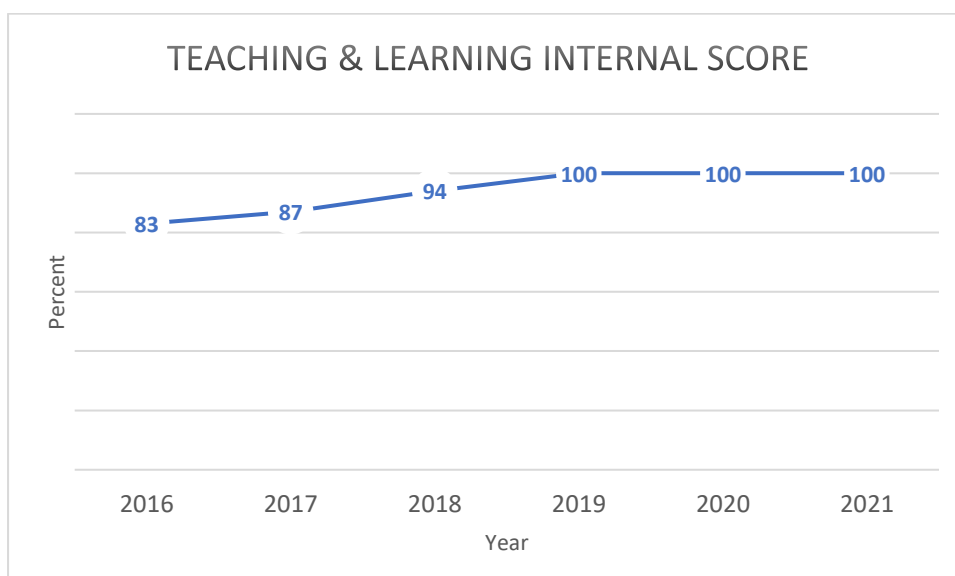
Figure 3: DHET Access Indicator : Headcount Student Enrolment.



#### 2.2.6 Indicators Linked to the Internal Strategic Plan: Teaching and Learning

Figure 4 below demonstrated that from 2016, UMP consistently saw an improvement in successfully implementing and achieving set targets on teaching and learning. 89% were achieved in the first year of implementing the Strategic Plan, 94%, three years later, and in 2019 and 2020, the University achieved and met all the internally set activity targets.

Figure 4: Teaching and Learning Activity Score 2016 - 2022



### 2.2.7 COVID-19 Outbreak and UMP Response

The largest unforeseen event that the world and the country experienced and had to deal with in 2020 was the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the subsequent series of lockdowns that were imposed that year. South Africa recorded its first case of COVID-19 in March 2020, and the country was placed under a total lock down by the Government. This meant that the normal movement of students and staff, including attending face to face classes at institutions including the University of Mpumalanga, could not take place.

The University of Mpumalanga put in place several interventions that enabled it to continue with its business including its core function of teaching and learning, research, and engagement. During this period a hybrid system of online teaching (almost exclusively during the hard lockdown) and face to face were used. The UMP Task Team on COVID-19 and the E-Learning Task Team that were formed to advise the University management on a comprehensive response to the epidemic. The task team was highly commended for their work which saw the University fulfilling and completing its academic calendars for 2020 and 2021. The University developed a calendar for the Programme of Academic Staff Support for Teaching and Learning, and eight workshops on 'online teaching and Moodle' were conducted at Mbombela and Siyabuswa campuses. Online teaching and learning champions were identified in each school. The University had introduced Moodle much earlier than the COVID-19 outbreak and this resulted in a seamless transition to online teaching and learning during the pandemic.

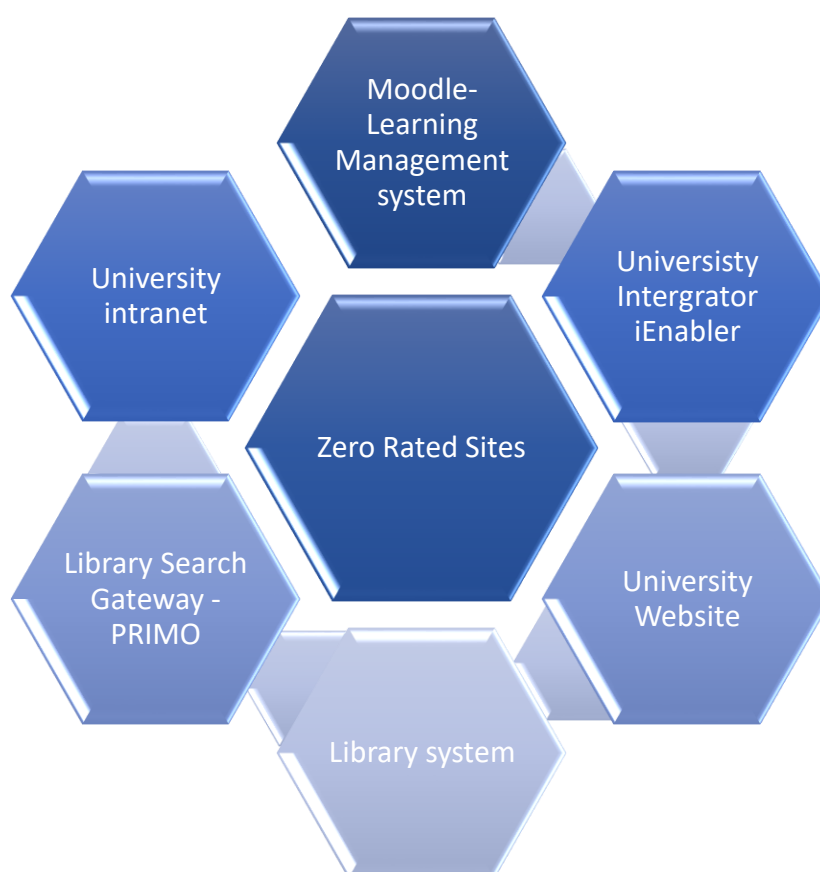
As requested by the DHET, universities in the country were asked to develop Multimodal Teaching and Learning Plans which were meant to help universities on their response to the pandemic. DHET provided the University with a COVID-19 Responsiveness Grant to support the University's activities in 2021, and the utilization of this grant was monitored by the University Management Committee (MANCO).

Students' registration and enrolment and student orientation to the University including the common module for 1<sup>st</sup> year students for 2020 had been done when the country went on total lockdown. However, First Year Experience events were held online, and mentors provided academic support online during lockdown.

The Robert Gumedde Family Keni Foundation donated 300 laptops to the University following a request from the Vice Chancellor (VC). These laptops were loaned to students who needed them to enable them to continue their schoolwork after the COVID-19 outbreak. To further enable online

teaching and learning the University provided data bundles to students during lockdown through three of the largest mobile network operators (Vodacom, MTN and CellC). This applied to all students, both funded and self-funding students. As a result, students were able to access online teaching and learning while off campus. The University also entered into agreements with four mobile network operators (Vodacom, MTN, CellC and Telkom) to zero-rate some University sites offering students and staff educational content, figure 5.

Figure 5: Zero-Rated Academic sites accessed by students during COVID-19 period



The Moodle online teaching platform that the University had been using before the COVID-19 outbreak was upgraded from version 3.7 to version 3.9 to increase its effectiveness, i.e. to fix identified bugs and security issues. The upgrade also enabled the accommodation of more people on the platform at any given time. The University adopted and used an online platform, Respondus to administer online examinations which were offered for the first time in November 2021. There was a seamless integration between Moodle and the Respondus Lockdown Browsers on the laptops of lecturers, invigilators, and students. This enabled the successful writing of examinations with proper invigilation, monitoring, timing, and submission of completed examination scripts. Both students and staff at both UMP campuses received training on the effective applications of the online platforms,



with a total of eight workshops on online teaching and Moodle being conducted. Staff and students continued to receive online support from the Information Technology (IT) department during this period. The University also had major upgrades to bandwidth across the two campuses that enabled faster uploads and downloads of data, which enabled more seamless teaching and learning.

During 2021 IT facilitated the migration of the Archibus server that hosted the University's Facilities Management System to the MicroSoft Azure server which provided better access, availability, as well as better data security. The University also implemented FortiMail, an email gateway security system to provide advanced protection against email associated threats such as spam, phishing, spear-phishing, ransomware, and business email compromise.

An audit to assess compliance with the COVID-19 protocols was commissioned by ARIGC through external auditors, and the University was certified as being compliant. This confirmed that the controls and systems put in place during the pandemic were reported as being effective and adequate.

#### 2.2.8 Teaching and Learning Challenges

Some of the challenges experienced by the Education Faculty include the placement of its graduates, with a reported 140 foundations phase teachers not being employed (based on a database the Faculty started complying with in 2017). There has also been a reported shortage of suitable schools for student teacher assessments for specific languages, for example it was mentioned that there is only one school in Witbank to assist with assessments of IsiSwati. There were also a limited number of trainee assessors for certain languages. It was reported that it took longer for lecturers and students from the Faculty of Education to get used to the online teaching and learning systems compared to other faculty students and lecturers, because the education programmes were used to face to face instructions. There were also challenges with connectivity issues, where students found it difficult to connect to the University system because of bad connectivity in rural areas. This meant that students sometimes missed online classes.

It was mentioned that the Siyabuswa campus was relatively isolated. This made it difficult to attract sufficiently qualified and experienced staff who would relocate with their families and who would stay for an extended period. It was also mentioned that there was inadequate staff housing and other amenities to attract staff and a more diverse range of students.

Academic staff mentioned that they would like to see more support for the academic programmes, e.g. project managers. For example, one school mentioned that their administrative support was inadequate. She mentioned that there was only one faculty officer who dealt with everything and

was therefore overwhelmed and noted that academic staff had to take up some of these administration responsibilities.

#### 2.2.9 Power Cuts and Loadshedding Challenges

Power outages have been a feature of South Africa for the past 15 years but has become more frequent in 2022. The University identified loadshedding and power blackouts as a significant risk to the functioning and performance of UMP. Stand-by generators at the University have provided power backup. The set-up of the IT network system of the University has meant that load shedding elsewhere has impacted on connectivity to the University IT system negatively, especially at the Siyabuswa campus. To ensure consistent uninterrupted power during loading shedding periods, and to protect the IT infrastructure, Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPS) were installed at the Siyabuswa campus in 2021. This ensured less downtime for users, and it also protected possible data and information loss for the University.

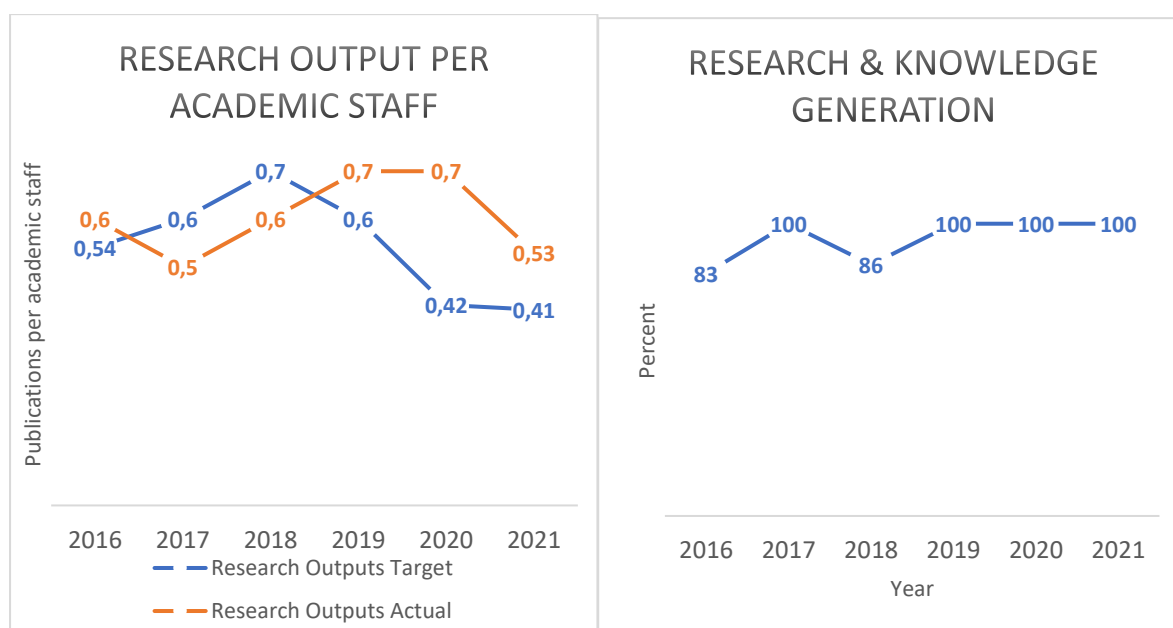
### 2.3 Research Outputs and Knowledge Generation

The University of Mpumalanga has performed well in terms of research outputs, i.e. published peer reviewed papers, book chapters, books and conference presentations. By the fourth quarter of 2015, the UMP research plan was developed and finalised, and research focus areas were defined. To increase research outputs, the University engaged the help of a retired professor to mentor aspiring researchers in 2015 and this has assisted on building research capacity.

#### 2.3.1 DHET Assessment and Internal Strategic Plan Linked Indicators: Research & Knowledge Generation

The internal Strategic Plan-linked annual performance assessment for Research and Knowledge generation showed that the University consistently achieved its targets in 4 of the 6 years of reporting, figure 6 below. The University also performed well on the peer reviewed publications per staff member indicator, based on the DHET indicators. The University exceeded or met the DHET set targets in 2016 (0,6 vs target of 0.54), 2019 (0,7 vs target of 0,6), 2020 (0,7 vs target 0.42), and in 2021 (0,53 vs target of 0,420). In 2017, the University published 45 journal articles in DHET recognised accredited journals, had 10 book chapters, and 6 conference presentations. The University submitted 33 units for their publications in 2017 but were allocated 25 units because of a new system used for calculating publication units by DHET. These allocated units still compared favourably to the 17 units achieved in 2016 by the University. In 2021, the University obtained 64 units in the DHET Research Output Evaluation Report, down from the 71 units in 2020.

Figure 6 : Research Outputs and Knowledge Generation



The University achieved 100 on instructional/research professional staff compared to the 115 targets, while the number of nGAP staff engaged was on target (9 staff) in 2020. The Full Time Equivalent (FTE) ratio indicator of students to FTE institutional/research staff was 24 students to 1 staff member compared to a target of 22:1 in 2020. In 2021, the University achieved a score of 172 against a target of 171 on the instructional/research professional staff indicator, and it had 17 nGAP appointed staff. The ratio of FTE instructional/research staff to students was 30:1 against a target of 25:1, and thus was due to higher student enrolments.

Other key achievements in 2017 included the following:

- Appointments of 3 Postdoctoral fellows.
- Two UMP staff successfully completed and graduated their PhD studies.
- National Research Funding (NRF) funding research support was provided.
- The NRF rating of one additional academic staff member; and
- The University identified and agreed on seven research themes to focus on in the coming years.

The NFR provided funding to the tune of R150 000 for a Staff Mobility Grant, R174 000 for research purposes, and it also funded all the research projects of nGAP scholars in 2017. The University received €52 372 (~ R1 million) of funding from the Learning and Teaching Tool Fuelling University Relations with the Economy (LaTFURE) consortium in 2017. In 2018, 1 staff member successfully

completed and graduated with a PhD degree, and 2 new staff members with NRF ratings were appointed to the University teaching staff. 2019 marked another milestone in terms of staff professional development, with 1 staff member completing a Masters degree and another completing a PhD. Five staff members applied and were successful on their NRF ratings in 2019. There were 8 members with NRF rating in 2020. Eight more staff members graduated with higher degrees, 4 Masters and 4 PhDs in 2020, bring the percentage of staff with PhDs to 46% of staff.

In 2018 the University established the Institutional Research Themes and Sub-themes committees and appointed associated key leads. Initial funding for this work was allocated by the University. The University's external fund-raising increased year on year between 2018 and 2020. In 2018, the University raised R2.2 million, in 2019 it raised R5.7 million, and this figure increased to R7.8 million in 2020, although the total amounts secured that year was R10 million, the difference being a carryover commitment for 2021. In 2021, UMP raised R12.5 million for research, with R9.7 million committed for that year. Some of the key funders for the University research programmes included the NRF, DSI, NRF/BRICS, DHET (NESP), WRC, WRC/Wader, WIOMSA, Oak Foundation, NEMISA, European Commission (Erasmus+) and Rhodes University.

In 2020, three UMP researchers were selected by DHET to take part in the Futures Professors Programme. In the same year two UMP staff won the NRF Rated Excellence Award.

### 2.3.2 Research and Knowledge Production Challenges

Although several schools have found some balance between teaching and research, some schools such as the education programme have found it more challenging to publish. The reasons cited include high teaching loads, and a lower number of senior staff with research experience. However, some staff in the faculty of education who are undertaking post-graduate studies are managing to produce research papers.

## 2.4 Student Experience and Support

The University of Mpumalanga is committed to developing holistic graduates as part of its vision as outlined in their Strategic Plan. The vision of the University is to produce graduates that are *“resourceful, responsive and responsible, innovative and entrepreneurial, confident and effective communicators; ethically and socially aware change agents; adaptable and possess sound discipline knowledge”*. So besides emphasizing academic excellence, the University promotes student participation in other extra mural activities. Students are encouraged to participate in a variety of activities including Student Representative Council (SRC) led activities, student residence committees, sporting activities and societies offered across the University. They are also encouraged to participate in national and regional activities and competitions.

Following up on the VC's inaugural speech in 2015 the University developed a new common module called "Mpumalanga in Context", which was developed in 2018 and was targeted at all first-year students at the University. The module was meant to provide all students enrolling at UMP with an understanding and appreciation of being enrolled at the University by learning the geological history of Mpumalanga Province, learning about different traditions, different world views and cultural values including indigenous knowledge systems grounded in the African context. The Common Module was successfully piloted among 1<sup>st</sup> year Bachelor of Development Studies and the Diploma in Natural Conservation students in 2019, and it has since been implemented every year among first year students.



#### First Year Orientation

One of the biggest developments at the University was the launch of the "Love My Campus" campaign, a project meant to promote a sense of belonging and pride of the University among staff and students. Staff and students alike took a pledge and made a commitment to take care of their infrastructure, art facilities, equipment and promised to always keep the University clean. The "Love my campus campaign" provides t-shirts to new students and staff, and everyone wears their t-shirt every Thursday. As part of the campaign, love my campus competitions are held and prizes are given. Student are encouraged to come up with relevant programmes for these campaigns. This campaign has given a sense of ownership and belonging to the University community and has

resulted in noticeable positive outcomes such as the protection of University property and keeping University premises clean.

The first Student Representative Council for the University and a Campus Representative Council (CRC) for Siyabuswa were installed in 2014. Each cohort of SRC members have received training on effective student leadership and governance. The University has successfully held peaceful SRC elections over the years. In 2017, the SRC President, the SRC Secretary general, the SRC Sports and Recreation Officer accompanied the Dean of Students on a benchmarking visit of Strathmore University in Kenya. In the same year, the newly elected SRC president for 2018 attended and participated in the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual International Leadership Conference organised by Makerere University Business School in Uganda. The first female SRC president was elected at UMP in 2021, a major milestone for any university in South Africa. The University achieved 100% of its annual internal targets for 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 on Quality Student Experience.

The relationship between the University and students through engagement with the SRC has been beneficial on resolving issues before they degenerated into serious conflict. Student demonstrations, which have been infrequent, have been generally peaceful. As reported by student representatives and the dean of students, the University management regularly engages with students and discuss issues openly. MANCO hold quarterly meetings with the SRC, and the Dean of Students meets with the SRC monthly. These meetings as well as ad hoc urgent meetings have resulted in issues being resolved amicably before they escalate further. A MANCO and SRC gala dinner are held annually to honour the outgoing SRC members. The University issues certificates for leadership training programmes to outgoing SRC members. Interviews with student leaderships highlighted the following as key successes:

- The relationship between MANCO and students through the SRC was strong, it was indicated that MANCO were very supportive of student leadership, they listened and provided constructive advice, and always looked for solutions to challenges. It was reported that students were generally happy with MANCO's support.
- The University supported students in many ways including providing part time work for needy students.

Student leadership have commended the mentoring they received from MANCO, that has enabled them to acquire relevant leadership skills. They have also learnt to understand and appreciate different options and work with people from different back grounds, thus living one of the University values of "diversity". Students also presented their view on what leadership meant as highlighted in the quote below from one of the leaders



*“As a leader you need to lead them (student body) and not the students leading you.”*

The leader explained that this meant that *“students may demand certain things, but it does not mean that as a leader you take that blindly to MANCO”*. He further explained that students need to understand that not every decision is going to favour them (students), and as a leader one must communicate well with students for them to see and appreciate all viewpoints and why certain decisions were made.

The University is aware of the increasing problem of gender-based violence (GBV) in the country. A gender forum was established in 2019 where students took part in awareness campaigns, t-shirts with GBV messaging are distributed and students signed a pledge to fight GBV. The University has also provided support on mental health challenges to the student population. The University employs a full-time student counsellor who is a clinical psychologist at the Mbombela campus, and two sessional psychologists at the Siyabuswa campus. There is also an online mental health service that students can make use of.

The COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 brought new challenges. The University appointed two contract professional nurses to provide additional health support to students on both campuses. Students adhered to and observed COVID-19 protocols and guidelines, and the University did not report any losses of life among the student population during 2020 and 2021. The Student Counselling Centre provided counselling and mental health services to students.

As part of supporting the entrepreneurship drive, the University invited businesspeople and UMP graduates who are running their own businesses to give talks on entrepreneurship day. Students were also provided with several personal development programmes that included financial literacy, personal development, assertiveness, leadership programmes, study skills, reading skills, psycho-social programmes, and health awareness programmes. There are programmes that support student living with disability.

#### 2.4.1 Student Accommodation

As a new institution that was growing rapidly, the University had to ensure adequate and appropriate accommodation was available and provided to all its students who needed accommodation. Whilst all students were housed in University accommodation when the University opened its doors in 2014, increased enrolment over the years meant that not all students could be accommodated on campus. With the rapid increase in student numbers in 2015, the University developed a policy framework for student accommodation. One of the outputs was a Private Accommodation Policy on the Accreditation of private accommodation to cater for students who

could not be housed on campus. The policy spelt out the minimum requirements such as security requirements, internet connectivity, transport to and from campus and residence amenities set-up requirements that potential accommodation services providers needed to meet for them to qualify, be accredited and be registered on database that students could use when looking for private off campus accommodation. This is the database that students are expected to use to secure their own private accommodation. For on campus accommodation, the house warden system was introduced, house committees and floor representative systems were established to support the residency management on campus. The University currently (2021/2) provides approximately 25% of the student population with on campus accommodation.



### Student Residence

As the University grows, the demand for more student accommodation represents a Strategic Planning challenge. The University developed a five-year student accommodation strategy that will see an additional 320 housing units being available to student on campus by 2025. There was a call for proposals for investors to invest in student accommodation to cover the huge demand for private off campus accommodation. The University will use a “build, operate, and transfer” model. This project is expected to commence in 2024/2025, and this should see an additional 1000 student units coming on-line during the first phase.



#### 2.4.2 Student Sporting and Society Activities

The University supported the development of sporting codes and the subsequent uptake of sports by students that included soccer, netball, volleyball, basketball, tennis, squash, chess, athletics, marathon, aerobics, morabaraba<sup>2</sup> and diketo<sup>3</sup>. Societies were also established at the Mbombela and Siyabuswa campuses. UMP became an affiliate of the Varsity Sport for the first time in 2016. In 2019, the University's 8 track tartan athletics field, which is rated as a Class 2 Athletics Facility by the International Athletics Associations Federations (IAAF) was completed. Students have participated in inter campus, regional and national competitions that have included notable wins in soccer and athletics events among other achievements. The Siyabuswa soccer team won the 2019/2020 local soccer league (in Mpumalanga) and was promoted to one league below the Glad Africa league, the second league in the country.

In 2016 other societies were added to the programmes offerings including Choral Music Society (Choirs), Debating Societies, Drama Societies, and the Zion Music Choir. The University also established several Living and Learning Communities in 2016 which include activities around Day of the Child, Peer Helpers, Community Engagement and the ENACTUS.

The ENACTUS, an annual innovation competition based on university led community projects has been one of the main successes of UMP over the years. The ENACTUS UMP team which grew in membership from 12 in 2016 to 65 in 2017 won 7 trophies from the two community projects they presented at an ENACTUS national competition held in July 2017 in Sandton, Johannesburg, figure 7. In 2018, the team was the third overall runner-up winning 5 trophies. Their Hatching Hope Chicken Project was the overall winner of the NEDBANK Scaling for Impact Challenge Award, and the team received a trophy and R50 000 in prize money. The project was also the overall winner of the Harmony Gold Business Solutions for Community Development Award, and the team received another trophy. The Team also won the qualifiers trophy and the semi-finalists trophy. The success of the ENACTUS team continued in 2019 where the UMP team came third in the national competitions held in Sandton. The team's Hatching Hope Chicken Project (HHSP) was the overall winner of three awards, the Harmony Led ENACTUS Challenge, The Nedbank Triple Bottom Line Sustainability Award and the Harmony Business Solution for Community Development ENACTUS Award. The team won a total of 5 trophies at the 2019 competitions. In 2020 in a virtual awards ceremony, the team in addition to being the overall winner of the same categories in 2019, also won the FORD C3 Building Communities Project Partnership Award. The team came second on the

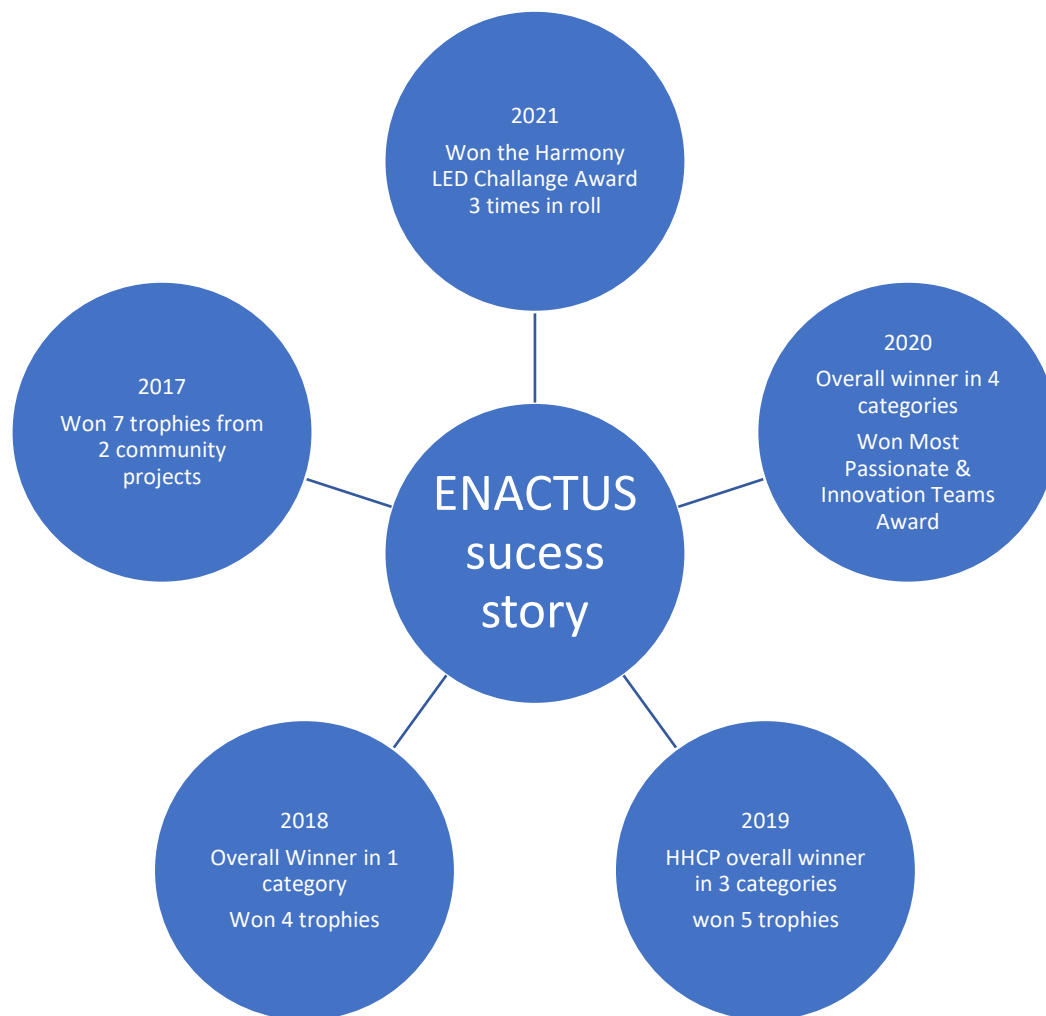
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<sup>2</sup> Morabaraba is a traditional two-player strategy board game played in South Africa and Botswana.

<sup>3</sup> Diketo, also known as Magave, Upuca, or Puca, is one of ten recognized indigenous games of South Africa and Lesotho.

Unilever Waste Plastics Challenge Award. The team was also awarded the inaugural Most Passionate and Innovative Teams Awards. The UMP ENACTUS coordinator won the Faculty Advisor of the Year Award for 2020. The success of the ENACTUS team continued in 2021 where the team won the Harmony LED Challenge Award for the third years in a row, was second in the Nedbank Thematic Awards and Harmony Thematic Award and were finalists in the Standard Bank Future Makers Category.

Figure 7: UMP ENACTUS team achievements 2017 - 2021.



Some of the community focused societies that students initiated based on their subject of study include an IT society which went to schools to promote IT subjects among learners, the environmental society that supported and participated in recycling projects and a trainee-teachers

society which provided mathematics tutorials in schools and surrounding communities to improve mathematical skills among these groups.



ENACTUS Trophies

#### 2.4.3 Challenges Faced by Students

The #FeesMustFall movement swept the country in 2015, and UMP experienced unrest related to this movement. UMP students took to the streets in March 2016 in support of this cause and two teaching days were lost as a result. Students went back to the streets in September 2015 for similar demonstrations and this time seven academic days were lost. To protect University property, and to reduce risk to staff and other students, the University decided to send all students home for a week during this period. Students returned to classes after the 7 days. The University took a proactive stance by inviting the student leaders/organisers of the #FeesMustFall movement at UMP to a conflict management and resolution workshop, and this seems to have helped on how challenges that came after were dealt with.

Students' leadership who was interviewed raised safety concerns for off campus students. They reported a significant range of serious issue including the following:

- Break-ins in at student residences.
- Noise levels coming from taverns for students living off campus and close to taverns.
- Risk of GBV for all students especially female students living off campus.

- Off campus accommodation not measuring up to accreditation standards (landlords cheating the system by removing or replacing some of the minimum requirements once accreditation was completed); and
- Difficulties with getting out of these contracts once signed.

It was noted that most student preferred staying on campus. Student leaders also raised the issue of alcohol abuse among the student population, and suggestions were made that the University should be made an alcohol-free campus.

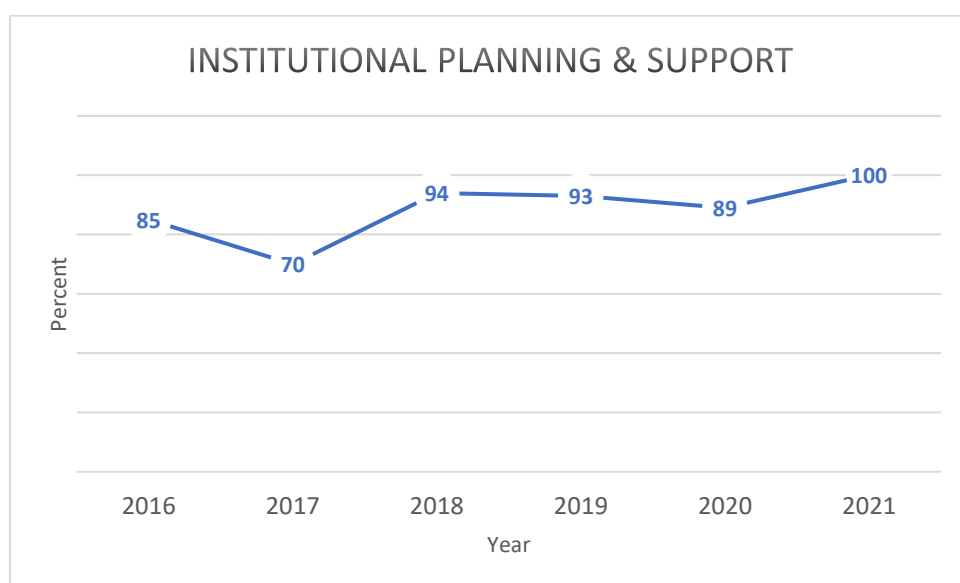
There as a perception that Siyabuswa students felt like the “stepdaughters / stepsons” of the University. The fact that the major infrastructure project took place at Mbombela made them think that management prioritised the Mbombela campus over the Siyabiswa campus. One of the manifestations of this thinking is likely to have led to students at Siyambuswa boycotting writing online exams in 2020/21. This was despite the fact that all students new their timetables two months before the examinations started, and they could have raised any issues before hand and not a day before the examinations started. Besides all other students at Mbombela took their exams online. This has unfortunately meant that Siyabuswa students had to carry these courses over into 2022, thus increasing their examination workload which may impact their performance. Some students have lost their scholarships as a result. It was however noted that the Siyabuswa CRC often did not follow procedures and protocol when they raised any issues. The Siyabuswa CRC falls under the UMP SRC, thus any issues are supposed to be raised through this single SRC structure. It must be noted that the Mbombela campus was/is a new campus with the largest student population and most programmees of the University, it is the main campus of the University, thus the large infrastructure developments.

The student leadership felt that finance should be decentralised, and the SRC should manage their own budget to enable them to decide on how and where to spend their allocated resources. They also mentioned that students should manage their own accommodation budgets. They said most of the time it took long for finance issues to be resolved and approved, and if the University could put in place proper accounting measures, then it should be possible to decentralise management of funds. The governance of finance and risk management however makes this a difficult ask, the student budget is an allocation from the University budget, thus all financial matters are expected to follow University finance protocols, policies and regulations including the supply chain regulations of the University.

## 2.5 Planning and Institutional Support

The Planning and Institutional Support strategic objective was designed to support the strategic, academic, and operational planning of the University. Based on assessing a set of internal activity targets on the Strategic Plan, measurable improvement has been achieved over the years, with the lowest score of 70% in 2017 that went up to the most recent score of 100, where all planned activities were achieved in 2021, as shown in figure 8.

Figure 8: Internal Strategic Plan Linked Indicators: Institutional and Planning Support



Some of the achievements in 2016 included the development of an Integrated Planning Framework, Higher Education Management Information System (HEMIS), Data Management and Governance Framework and the acquisition of the Higher Education Data Analyser (HEDA) that is used for student data analytics. The main achievements in 2017 included the development of the following:

- An Emergency Evacuation Plan and Continuity Plan.
- An ICT Disaster and Business Continuity Plan.
- An ICT master Plan.
- Introduction of an Intranet and Share Point.
- Implementation of Moodle E-Learning system; and
- Upgrading of the Siyabuswa ICT infrastructure.

2018 saw a key milestone on the infrastructure front where the following buildings were completed: the ICT Building, Hospitality and Tourism Building, the Multipurpose Academic Teaching Building, the Multipurpose Administration Building and the Dining Hall Extensions as well as the successful renovations in the administration building. The ICT infrastructure, the Electrical Site Infrastructure,

the Lower Campus Central Services Chiller and the 2 times 1 MVA additional standby generator were also successfully completed.



Multipurpose Administration Building

The University developed a 3-year Security Management Plan as well as a Safety, Health, and Environment (SHE) Plan and started implementing these in 2018. In 2019, construction of the Hotel and Hospitality , Conference and Wellness Centre and the Residential and Dining hall and Student Support Building was completed. The 2015/16 – 2019/20 Infrastructure Project development Plan was updated to extend to 2021/23.

Further upgrades to the ICT infrastructure at both campuses were made including upgrades on the Microsoft Azure server and increased internet speed links between the two campuses. To protect ICT hardware, loss of data and minimize downtime on work, Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) units were installed in the server room at the Siyabuswa campus in 2020. In the same year, the Quality Management System for monitoring construction projects and the Project Management System were developed and approved by the Planning and Infrastructure Committee of Council.

In 2021, the South Campus Civil and Electrical Infrastructure projects were successfully completed, and certificates of compliance issued. Construction of the ICT and Security Building, Academic and Archive Building, the 20MVA Bulk Electrical Substation, the Irrigation Laboratory, the Students Pavilions, the Infrastructure and Operations Building, the South Campus Drop-off Facility were on target and certification of target achievement for completion were issued.

To enhance online teaching and learning, Moodle was upgraded. This resulted in improved security and resolution of bugs in earlier versions of the system. The University acquired Respondus, an online real-time invigilation system, that enabled students to write examinations online. There was



seamless integration between Moodle and Respondus, and the University successfully used the Respondus lockdown browser to administer examinations for 2020/1. The ICT committee developed the following policies ICT Security Policy, the Mobile Device Management Policy, the ICT Remote Access Policy and the File sharing and Transfer Policy which were presented to MANCO for consideration.

In 2016, the objectives that were not achieved were the procurement and implementation of the Archibus Facilities Management System and undertaking a monitoring and evaluation workshop that had been planned. Gaps in implementation in 2017, as captured by the lowest score of 70% in that year included irregular monthly inspections by the Safety Health and Environment (SHE) representatives, incomplete upgrading of road marking signage, and incomplete installation of flood lights at the Siyabuswa campus. There were delays on completing construction of the ICT and Security Building because of delays on the tendering processes in 2019, the projects were projected to commence in 2020. The outbreak of COVID-19 and the subsequent lock down had a negative impact on some of the key construction projects.

#### 2.5.1 ICT Infrastructure to Support the Academic Programme

In 2015, an assessment and evaluation of the ICT system was done, and Moodle was selected as the preferred teaching platform. This decision proved to be very beneficial in 2020, when the COVID-19 epidemic started. The ICT's Chief Information Officer was appointed at the beginning of 2016 and was tasked with finalising the ICT plan which had been developed. The Information Technology System (ITS) Integrator is the ICT system that pulls together the different ICT components of the University including student systems, registration, examinations, graduations etc, staffing systems, HR and finance, and it was initiated in 2016 and successfully migrated. In 2017, Council approved the ICT Disaster Recovery Plan. Information Communication and Technology (ICT) is one of the key components of any model organisation for seamless and optimal operations. The ICT Committee developed a number of key policies that included the ICT Security Policy, the Mobile Device Management Policy, the ICT Remote Access Policy and the File sharing and Transfer Policy that were tabled at MANCO and later submitted to council.

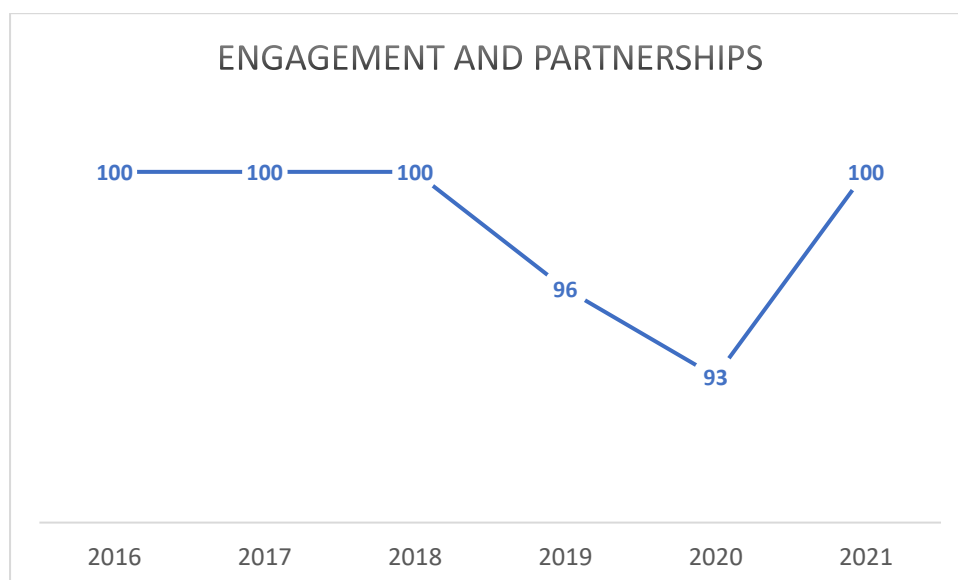
The University spent R14.5 million on ICT infrastructure in new buildings, while R13.4 million was used as capital and operational costs for the year 2017. Seven hundred and sixty thousand rands (R760 000) was spent on software licenses. Moodle, the teaching and learning system was moved to the cloud to reduce both administration and support costs. In the same year, the IT department developed an Equipment Allocation Policy that was approved by Council in the same year. In 2018, the ICT Strategic Plan, including the Cyber Security Strategy, was developed and it was approved by

MANCO. MANCO also approved Phase 2 of the Siyabuswa campus ICT upgrades at a cost of R1,6 million. In the same year R60,2 million ICT investments were made including ICT networking, audio-visual equipment, security equipment and computer equipment at the Mbombela campus as part of the new infrastructure. The ICT Strategic Plan 2020-2022 was approved by MANCO and it was submitted to ARIGC for noting in 2019.

## 2.6 Engagement and Partnerships

The University has consistently performed well on engagement and partnerships over the years, meeting all its activity targets in 4 years (2016, 2017, 2018 and 2021) across the 6 years between 2016 and 2021.

Figure-9: Internal Strategic Plan Aligned Targets: Engagement and Partnerships.



The University signed several Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) to promote engagement with stakeholders, promote intellectual engagement, build partnerships with relevant stakeholders that included schools, higher learning institutions, industry, professional bodies, civil society, non-government organisations (NGOs), and with government.

UMP has established and expanded research partnerships, collaborations, networks, and linkages nationally and internationally. The Table below shows all the MoUs signed both nationally and internationally. Although COVID-19 had a minor negative impact of some of these, most MoUs are active and those that were affected are being reactivated.

**Table 6: MoUs signed with UMP**

Year MoU Signed/Life	Partner/Collaborator	General/Specific	Comment
<b>EUROPE AND AMERICA</b>			
<b>2016-2020</b>	Learning and Teaching tools Fuelling University relations with the Economy in	Dual studies in Hospitality and Tourism Management. WIL in	Successfully completed



	Mozambique and South Africa(LaTFURE)	Agriculture. Research and Capacity Building	
<b>2016-2019</b>	University of Central Florida, USA	Hospitality and Tourism Management. Research and Capacity Building	Interrupted by Covid-19 pandemic
<b>2017-2019</b>	Kirkwood Community College, Iowa, USA	FANS & Development Studies. Research and Capacity Building	Interrupted by Covid-19 pandemic, to be resuscitated
<b>2015-2017</b>	Novi Sad University, Serbia	Agriculture	Being resuscitated
<b>2019-2023</b>	Western University of Sydney, Australia	FANS, Human and Social Sciences, Health Sciences. Research and Capacity Building	Interrupted by Covid-19 pandemic to be resuscitated
<b>2018-2023</b>	Friedrich Alexander Universitart, Germany	FEDBS. Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2018-to date</b>	FH JOANNEUN University of Applied Sciences	Staff and Student exchange under Erasmus+ in Hospitality and Tourism management + Agriculture	Active
<b>2018-2023</b>	Padagogische Hochschule St Gallen Switzerland	FED: teacher training, programme development and special needs education	Interrupted by Covid19 pandemic
<b>2019- to date</b>	Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, Australia	School of Biology and Env Sciences Research and Capacity Building.	Active
<b>2019-to date</b>	University of Minnesota	General	Active
<b>2019-2022</b>	OAK Foundation	School of Biology and Env Sciences. Research	Active
<b>2020 to date</b>	Harper Adams University, UK	School of Agricultural Sciences. Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2020 to date</b>	Henley Business School		
<b>2020 to date</b>	Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University, Loerrach, Germany	General and mostly on School of Hospitality and Tourism Management. Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2020- to date</b>	Empowering universities' Learning and rEsearch caPacities in the one Health Approach for the maNagement of animals at the wildlife, livestock and human interface in SouTh Africa (ELEPHANT)	School of Biology and Env Sciences. Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2021-</b>	Coventry University, UK	Human ad Social Sciences. Research and Capacity Building	To be active now that we have
<b>2022</b>	Ghent University, Belgium	School of Agricultural Sciences. Research and Capacity Building	Active

<b>2022</b>	Asia Pacific University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	School of Development Studies: Entrepreneurship	Active
<b>2022</b>	University of Botswana		
<b>AFRICA</b>			
<b>2016-2021</b>	Muni University, Arua, Uganda	School of Agricultural Sciences the School of Mathematical and Computer Science. Research and Capacity Building	Interrupted by Covid19 pandemic but to be resuscitated
<b>2018-to date</b>	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (UEM), Mozambique	Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Sciences and the School of Hospitality and Tourism Management. Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2017-2022</b>	University of Swaziland	Agriculture, Commerce, Business Management and ICT	Interrupted by Covid19 pandemic to be resuscitated
<b>2018-2023</b>	Makerere University Business school, Uganda	Commerce, Economics, Management and other Business programmes.	To be activated now that we have FEDBS
<b>2018-2023</b>	Millenium University of Malawi	General	
<b>2016-2021</b>	Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)	School of Mathematical and Computer Science. Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2016- to date</b>	Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA)	UMP Alumni and CFERI	Active
<b>2016- to date</b>	Southern African Technology Network (SATN) now THENSA	General Training of staff studying M&D degrees	Active
<b>2017 to date</b>	Department of Science and Technology Consortium (Nkomazi Project on Medicinal Plants)	FANS and Development Studies. Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2018-</b>	South African National Biological Institute (SANBI)	School of Biology and Env Sciences	to be activated
<b>2018-2023</b>	South African National Parks (SANPARKS)	Capacity building and research; School of Biology and Env Sciences and Hospitality management students on WIL placement.	Active
<b>2019- to date</b>	Agricultural Research Council (ARC)	Agricultural Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2018- to date</b>	National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa	School of Mathematical and Computer Science. Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2018- to date</b>	Southern African Wildlife College	Diploma in Nature Conservation students' practicals.	Active
<b>2018-to date</b>	Archbishop Thabo Makgoba Development Trust (ATMDT)	Yearly Public Lectures on Moral and Ethical Leadership + Students' Essay Competition	Active

<b>2018 to date</b>	Water Research Commission	School of Biology and Env Sciences and School of Agricultural Sciences. Research and Capacity Building	Active 2018 to date
<b>2019- to date</b>	University of Venda	General	Active
<b>2019 to date</b>	Rhodes University	School of Biology and Env Sciences Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2020- to date</b>	South African Environmental Observation Network (SAEON)	School of Biology and Env Sciences	To be activated
<b>2020 to date</b>	WIOMSA	School of Biology and Env Sciences Research	Active
<b>2021 to date</b>	South African Institute for Aquatic Biodiversity	School of Biology and Env Sciences Research and Capacity Building	Active
<b>2021 to date</b>	Centre of Excellence: Human Development, Wits University	General	Active
<b>2022</b>	Stellenbosch University	School of Social Sciences	Active
<b>2022</b>	University of Limpopo	General	Active
<b>2022</b>	University of Limpopo Collaboration Agreement	School of Mathematical and Computer Science. Research and Capacity Building.	Active
<b>2022</b>	Citrus Research International (CRI)	School of Biology and Env Sciences Research and Capacity Building	Active

The University of Mpumalanga staff and students from both campuses actively participated in community projects, and one of the highlights of this participation are the ENACTUS competitions (documented under students experiences above). In each year of its existence the University has joined national and international celebration events that included the Mandela Day, where the University community participated in various community projects. The University also celebrated Africa Day where staff and students participated in various African cultural activities, thus promoting diversity.

In 2018, the University partnered with external stakeholders to offer a Short Learning Programme on entrepreneurship, which was reported as a huge success by key informants. In 2019, the University offered a Short Learning Programme in Entrepreneurship to members of the public and issued certificates of competence at the end of the training. As part of the exchange programme and academic visit programmes, the University hosted students from Kirkwood Community College who worked with students registered for the Diploma in Nature Conservation on a joint project.

The University worked on an engagement project with the Ehlanzeni District Municipality in 2019. The University of Mpumalanga participated in three farm assessments and compilation of production plans involving Ngugwane Farm, Nkabo Water Technologies, and CSK Agricultural Co-op in the Ehlanzeni District Municipality in 2020.

The University held a virtual Career Expo for students. To foster and improve employability of final year students, UMP co-hosted the Student Exposure Programme in collaboration with the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition in September 2021. The University successfully launched its Alumni Chapters in Limpopo and Gauteng at the end of 2019 and 2020 respectively. The University in collaboration with the Portuguese Embassy offered a Portuguese Short Learning Programme course between October and December of 2021.

Due to COVID-19 challenges, a planned urban farming project with the City of Mbombela to address food security could not be implemented in 2020.

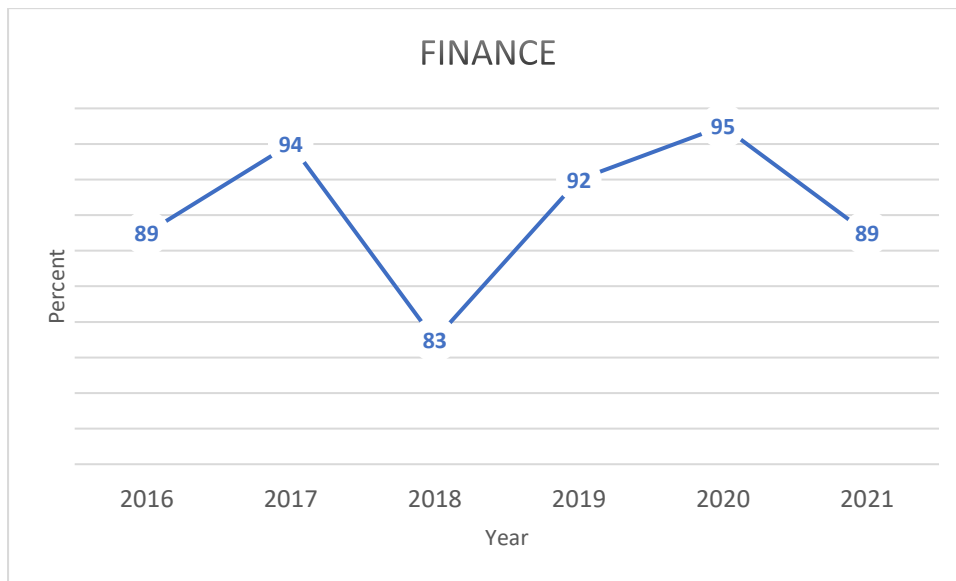
As part of the partnership and engagement programme, the University has worked to expose students to international initiatives. For example, three students accompanied the VC on her visits to Malaysia. As part of the exchange programmes, three students from Germany visits UMP, and the SRC president undertook a six-month exchange visit to Austria. The areas that students were exposed to included entrepreneurship, agriculture, tourism, and incubators.

## 2.7 Finance

From the inception of the University, the Governance, Finance and Investment Committee of Council (GFIC) has provided guidance and advice to Council and other committees of Council with delegated authority on governance, financial, investment and related matters. The GFIC has been the focal point on reviewing and advising on approvals of finance related policies in the University.

Finance has achieved scores of 83% or higher on measured activity objectives based on the Strategic Plan over the period 2016 and 2021, as shown in figure 10 below. The lowest score was in 2018, when the finance activity area achieved a score of 83%, while scores above 90% were achieved 3 out of 6 times.

Figure 10: Internal Strategic Plan Linked Indicators: Finance



The Supply Chain Management Policy was submitted and approved by Council in 2017. Whilst the student debt was flagged as a possible risk in 2016, it was reported that there was significant improvement in the working relationship between the University and NSFAS which resulted in improved recovery of student debt in 2017. The Integrated Tertiary System (ITS) budget module was set up, tested, and commissioned in 2020 using the COVID-19 multi-modal plan budget allocation. The utilisation of the Integrated Tertiary System (ITS), and online integrated IT system to upload 2020 tuition and residence fees further improved the management of student funding. In November 2021, Finance implemented automated payroll claims through ITS Personnel iEnabler. Finance could however not implement the automation of subsistence and travel claims through the ITS Finance iEnabler because the system development by ADAPT IT was not completed. The Online Procurement and Management system requirements were discussed with ADAPT IT but could not be taken further because developers had not been identified.

The University appointed an Investment Broker in 2016, and it updated UMP's fixed asset register. UMP have received unqualified audits since 2015. The University's infrastructure continued to grow, with assets registrations of R600 million and R511 million in 2018 and 2019 respectively. The upgrade to sporting facilities at a total cost of R27 million, funded through the National Lotteries Commission grant, was completed in 2019.

In 2020, a template for developing a financially sustainable business plan for third stream income was developed. This was piloted and used for the University Shop and the Hotel and Catering business plans. A Fundraising Policy was submitted to MANCO for approval, while a Third-Stream Income Strategy that was developed by E-MANCO was also approved. In 2021 a workshop to raise

awareness of the importance of generating third stream income was held with E-MANCO, Research Management, School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Hotel Catering Services, and the Engagement Committee. In 2020 Finance reviewed the cost implications of offering two short courses, the Portuguese Short Learning Programme and the Farmers Training Project Business Plan as options for third-stream income and this has been acknowledged as one possible third-stream source.

Council approved the Petty Cash Policy in 2020 as well as the Non-Current Assets Policy in 2021 to enable timely and accurate recording and safeguarding of non-current assets. The revised Supply Chain Management Policy that was approved in 2020, was uploaded onto SharePoint and it was successfully workshopped with users. ARIGC approved a Standard Operating Procedure Manual on Change of Banking Details that were developed to strengthen controls of updating banking details.

The activities that were not fully implemented in 2016 included the development of the budgeting framework, revision of the Supply Chain Management Policy, and the Standard Operating Procedures. In 2017, the only outstanding activity that was planned for but not implemented was the development of a fund-raising strategy. The planned activity that was not met in 2020 was the implementation of the online requisition and purchase orders system, and this was due to the requirement of upgrades of the Integrator first.

Although academic staff indicated satisfaction with the finance department, they also raised several concerns. Some of the issues raised included:

- Documents getting lost, thus causing delays on approvals.
- Purchase orders signed by finance, but goods not delivered, and
- Managing of NRF funding which sometimes had to be returned because finance processes delayed spending of funds in the allocated financial year.

The finance department indicated that some of these challenges were a result of staff not following financial procedures properly as prescribed, e.g. not submitting requests on time to allow for all approvals to be effected properly. They indicated that staff needed to understand the need for control measures to be followed to avoid negative findings during audits.

It was noted that inhouse training of some finance staff was required. The training could focus on the finance related systems of the University that include ICT systems, policies, and procedures. There was also need for workshops with staff to give them all the required information on how finance works, thus providing them with the necessary information needed for seamless engagement with the finance department.

## 2.8 Human Resources

The Human Resources (HR) internal indicators improved throughout the Strategic Plan period, achieving all the planned activities in 2018, 2020 and 2022. For the first two years, 2016 and 2017 the indicators were 81% and 83%, but went up to 100% in 2018, as shown in figure 11 below.

Major HR achievements in 2017 included the implementation of the Change Management Programme as part of the Pioneering Journey for UMP (focusing on Siyabuswa's new staff members who had joined that year), the Leadership Development Programme for Executives and the finalisation of the three-year Employment Equity Plan for UMP. The UMP's Leave System also went live online.

As reported under academic staff above, the University supported staff development, with both academic and non-academic staff taking up the opportunity for further professional development funded by the University.

To incentivise excellence and staff retention, the University implemented the Policy on Promotion, Development and Recognition of Excellence, and performance bonuses were paid to qualifying staff in 2018.

In 2019, UMP conducted value induction workshops which were meant to raise awareness of the common UMP values and to encourage all UMP staff members to live these values. The University held workshops for employees to capacitate them on major HR policies that included Sexual Harassment, Leave Provisions, Grievance Procedures, PDRE and management of injury on duty. The University started developing a UMP Values Handbook in 2022 which will be used for the onboarding of new staff.

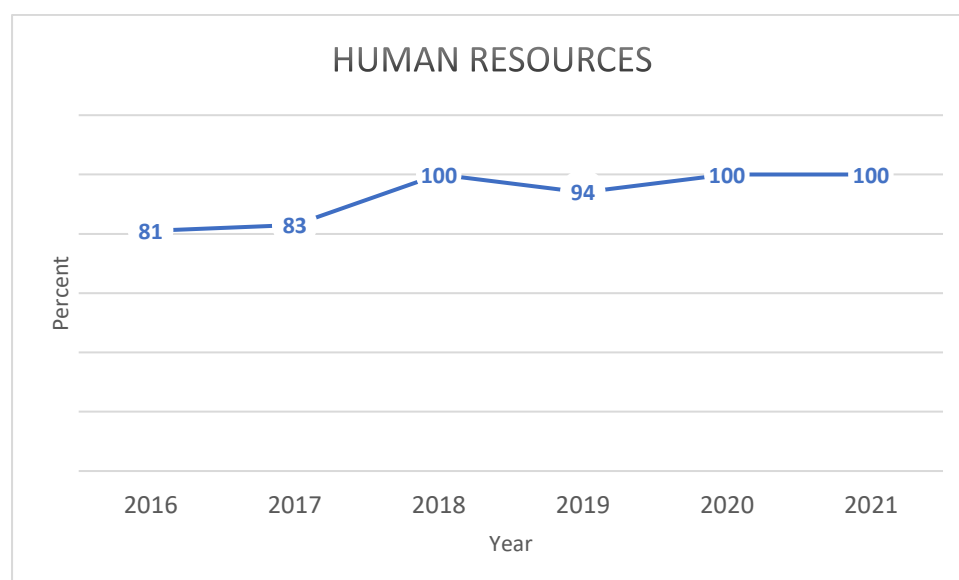
The Human Resources department achieved all the activities they had planned to implement in 2020 and 2021 despite the COVID-19 outbreak and the associated disruptions it brought with it. Induction sessions were held online during the hard lockdown, and an in-person induction for new staff was done in December of 2020. A talent management strategy with associated implementation workflow and frameworks was developed. A Workplace Skills Plan was submitted to the Department of Labour and Employment in May 2020. In 2021, the University developed an Integrated Wellness Strategy anchored around four pillars: physical wellness, psycho-social well-being, financial wellness, and COVID-19 management as part of holistic approach to wellness for employees.

Academics who were interviewed reported that HR provided satisfactory support, with one respondent stating that:

*"... HR is very agile on appointments, and quickly solves challenges".*

It was also mentioned that to support the HR process, the VC gets things done quickly and smoothly, and that there was good support from MANCO when it came to appointments of new staff.

Figure 11: Internal Strategic Plan Linked Indicators: Human Resources



The relationships between the University and unions have been relatively good, and no major issues of disagreement have been reported. Organised labour indicated that there was good access and engagement with MANCO. Labour indicated that they were positive about what has been achieved.

The incorporation of the LCA into the University brought several challenges including rationalising employee grades and benefits. Some of the challenges that resulted in the 2016 activities not being fully implemented included outstanding issues and policies such as the Leave Policy, Medical Aid policy, salary increment, recruitment and retention policy, and collective bargaining agreement with organised labour. Engagement with the Bargaining Forum continued to try and finalise some of these policies issues. The last phase of the Harmonization Project to ensure fair placement of incorporated staff on UMP salary scales, and the issue of rationalising the two package structures, total cost to company vs the traditional Basic plus Benefit package, persisted in 2017, and had not been finalised, thus the lower score in 2017. In 2018, an independent chairperson with agreed terms of reference was appointed to strengthen and quicken the collective bargaining process. The one activity that lagged in 2019 was developing user-friendly HR systems and processes, which resulted in the 94% score that year.

One of the areas that was mentioned as needing some confirmation from the HR department was the need for a knowledge management and data management system to preserve institutional memory as key staff and leadership came and went.



Although the University has a Promotions Policy, one key informant mentioned that the University needed a promotion policy, and HR should prioritise this, and that the University should also put in place systems and efforts to retain talented staff, including those who are retiring. This shows that there are University information gaps among some staff members.

COVID-19 showed that people can work from anywhere, thus the University should think about providing everyone with laptops including secretaries and administrators who traditionally use desktops.

### **3 Discussions and Recommendations**

Establishing a new university anywhere in the world is a major task. In some instances, new universities emerge from existing infrastructure and systems, such as existing colleges which are upgraded to universities. The University of Mpumalanga, however, started from scratch, with no meaningful physical infrastructure or workforce. The University has seen impressive growth over the nine years of its existence. Three (3) academic programmes have increased to 56, a staff complement of 13 has grown to 161, the student population has expanded from 170 to 7 100, and an infrastructure investment programme worth billions of rand has been actioned within a short period of time. It can be acknowledged that for the University to have achieved this level of success, critical implementation systems needed to have been put in place and implemented systematically. One such important system is a clear and implementable Strategic Plan, which this evaluation has attempted to assess.

#### **3.1.1 Governance, Strategic Leadership and Management**

The governance and leadership of UMP spearheaded the evidently successful implementation of the UMP Strategic Plan. The clear delineation of roles and responsibility of the University Council, EXCO and the University's MANCO enabled each body to undertake its work effectively, and Council could as a result provide its oversight role properly. MANCO performed the day-to-day running of the University without being micro-managed. The success of the collective work of Council through its sub-committees can be seen through the performance of the various outputs of the University, from growth and success of the academic programmes, growth of enrolment and graduation rates, recruitment and retention of key university staff, successful infrastructure built to clean audits. It is evident that each sub-committee played its role in supporting the successful implementation of the University's Strategic Plan. The University has consistently achieved its governance and leadership indicators over the year, meaning that all planned activities were implemented as planned.

Strategically the University is in a strong space, with most of the key policies required to successfully run an academic institution in place. These include policies on critical aspects such as finance, human resources, ICT, and risk management. The collegial working relationship between Council led by the Chairperson and the University's senior leadership led by the VC, was cited by almost all interviewed key informants as a key reason why these participants were proud to be part of the University. They were also proud of the organizational culture and credited senior leadership of being living examples of the values that the University adopted. Although the University council has a diverse membership, the successes achieved over the last seven years of implementing this Strategic Plan suggest a strong consensus of ideas over this period.

### 3.1.2 Teaching and Learning

The incremental growth of the academic programme has been impressive and in line with the objectives of the Strategic Plan. The growth of staffing levels has been in line with accredited and approved new programmes as well as with student enrolment numbers. The University has managed to recruit strategically, and at the same time encouraged early incorporated academic staff to pursue higher degree qualifications. This has resulted in the number of staff with PhD qualifications growing significantly from 23% in 2014 to close to 50% in 2021, over 100% growth.

The University aimed to be a comprehensive university offering a variety of programme courses as well as different levels of qualifications from certificate to PhD level. The University still has some way to go in terms of the diversity of qualifications that it offers, but it has achieved its objectives of offering programmes at different levels (diploma to PhD level). One of the key programmes that most interviewed key informants agreed should be considered soon as a new offering are qualification in the health sciences. There was acknowledgement that there is a critical shortage of healthcare professionals in the province, specifically nurses and doctors. The shortage is however nationwide, thus the demand will be nationwide. To have a fully-fledged medical school, the University will need to go on an aggressive recruitment drive to attract well qualified and experienced academics. The preparatory work for the medical programmes will not be as straight forward as other programmes because it will need to involve other players such as the Department of Health and the Provincial Government to establish a teaching hospital. The University should consider undertaking a feasibility study as soon as possible to assess the resources and capacity needed to establish a Faculty of Health Sciences, or indeed a Medical School, and how to attract well qualified and experienced health sciences academics.

Almost all interviewees suggested that the University's new programmes should be informed by provincial needs, thus agriculture, mining and tourism were identified as some of the key areas to

focus on. In agriculture the University could expand its focus to other areas not currently being offered such as animal production, work with other departments such as the IT department to explore innovative products that increase crop production, conserving soil culture, and managing and conserving water resources. There are limitless opportunities for training around mining, e.g. occupational health, mining engineering, geology to metallurgy.

The University introduced an entrepreneurship programme in the School of Commerce, and this has been offered as a short course to members of the public, and as an optional non-credit course to students. The current programmes offered by the University of Mpumalanga such as agriculture, hospitality and tourism are ideal programmes for aspiring entrepreneurs. The University should consider making this a credit course offered across the University. The course should include different modules from, how to start a business to how to successfully manage one. University graduates often leave universities with good subject matter knowledge, but with no skills such as writing a business proposal, bookkeeping, record keeping, financial management, marketing etc, which are all needed for setting up and running a successful business. National Government and Provincial Government will need to formulate policies and strategies that make it easier for trained graduates to access business loans, land, and the necessary concessions such as tax breaks for those starting out in business. The country's current challenges of high unemployment need a different kind of thinking, one that challenges the current education and training system. The University needs to offer programmes and innovative solutions to address some of the challenges associated with the high unemployment rates in the country, by training and skilling to make graduates job ready, but more importantly to equip their graduates to be innovators and entrepreneurs.

South Africa has many social challenges, and the University should position itself to provide potential solutions to these challenges through its training and research programmes. Some of the social challenges the country faces include mental health, substance abuse including alcohol abuse, violence and more specifically gender-based violence, and adolescent health including teenage pregnancy. These challenges often require a multi-disciplinary approach. Although the University Research themes are inter-disciplinary, the University should consider enhancing these programmes to support the country to deal with such complex issues effectively. The University should support the development of societal change agents, including teachers, social workers, psychologists, neuroscientists, and other professionals who can influence young people positively.

The University's graduation rates are good and compare favourably with other universities. The completion rates are within the expected time frames. It is important for the University to continue monitoring the standard of its qualifications. This can be done in several ways including external

evaluation of selected programmes, partnering with other universities, and sharing moderation of examinations and minor research thesis. The University already does this to some extent, for example by having external examiners of PhD thesis and Masters reports, but this needs to go beyond just external examinations.

The University should also strive to achieve more diversity in terms of race and geographic catchment for its student population. The University is well positioned to be a regional training institution, targeting countries such as Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Angola, and Namibia. There is need for the University to establish its footprint in Africa, and to align itself with some of the continental trends in higher education. Focus areas could include indigenous systems that support climate resilience, preservation of biodiversity, post-harvesting preservation methods, food security, energy solutions, equity and inclusion, and traditional arts among others.

The University's targeted total enrolment is 25000/30000 students in any given year. The current student to instructional/research staff ratio is in line with that at other South African universities. It is possible that there will be increased pressure from DHET to increase student enrolment as the University completes its infrastructure development projects. The University will need to continue monitoring and balancing the growth of student enrolment, programmes, and staff numbers. With a target student population of 25 000/30 000, the demand for student accommodation is going to be huge. A mixed model of university-provided accommodation and privately funded but secure accommodation will be required. The current "many small-scale accommodation provider model" with the associated accreditation process will become cumbersome and unsustainable. The "build, operate and transfer" model should be piloted and optimised to cater for the expected increase in demand for student accommodation.

### 3.1.3 Research Outputs and Knowledge Generation

The University has made progress in terms of research outputs, especially peer reviewed journal articles. With the growth of the PhD programme and Post-Doctoral programme this should increase even further. Not all programme areas and staff are involved in research. Teaching workloads and inexperience with undertaking research were cited as reasons why some staff are not involved in research. The University put in place support programmes such as research methods workshops, writing workshops, qualitative and quantitative methods workshops, and these should continue. The University should also encourage the production of other research outputs such as book chapters, books, and more importantly policy briefs on key areas relevant to both Provincial and National Government. The University should play a key role as a knowledge and evidence generation institution for key stakeholders in the province and beyond.

The University has had some notable successes with raising research funds. The Strategic Plan does speak about the University developing a third-stream income. This can be approached in several ways. For example, the University can proactively look for commissioned work that covers both staff level of effort, operational costs as well as an acceptable margins. The challenge with this model is that the client often detects/determines the research work to be done, which might not be in line with the academic programme and research interests of the University. The other option is for the University to develop concept notes that attract substantive funding and are implementable over longer periods of time, i.e. multi-year projects. These are much more attractive, since the University dictates the research area, and more importantly can easily embed Post Graduate students such as Masters, PhDs and Post-Doctoral students in these initiatives. These produce the kind of outputs desirable for a university, i.e. post-graduates, research outputs such as publications, and generally solve real world challenges. The University is not yet in a position to apply for NRF funded Research Chair Positions, but it should continue monitoring the requirements needed to do so. These positions come with funded posts and often attract good funding. The University should be appointing a Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC) Research soon, and this should alleviate the workload of the VC, who is currently performing this function. The new DVC would provide strategic leadership for the research agenda of the University, including defining research focus, mobilising resources, and building research partnerships.

#### 3.1.4 Student Experiences, University Life

From the information gathered it was not clear what the proportion of the student population who were actively engaged in extra-mural activities offered at the University was. The University has good sporting facilities and provides many opportunities for students to join societies. The University should publicise its sporting and society activity successes widely. This might encourage more students to take up and participate in the many offerings at the University, enabling the University to realise its dream of developing holistic graduates. The University leadership has done well to nurture future leaders through the SRC and to provide leadership models for other students.

#### 3.1.5 Support Services: Institutional Planning, Finance, Human Resources and Partnerships

The systems put in place by the University, including appropriate policies, guidelines and SOPs, integrated ICT infrastructure, risk mitigation measures, seem to have worked well. It is interesting to note that for a relatively new university, the impact of Covid-19 on the University programmes appears to have been minimal. The University managed to complete both academic years in 2020 and 2021 mainly because the University had contingency systems in place, including an ICT teaching platform way before the COVID-19 outbreak. The University's leadership was also able to mobilise resources to cater for the additional resources such as student laptops and data during this time.

The growth and development of the University's infrastructure has been noteworthy, but there is a need to develop a comprehensive funded maintenance plan that is cost-effective and sustainable.

Most university systems including student record management, planning, human resource, and finance seem to be functionally integrated and working well. The University's human resources and finance departments worked well, scoring highly on the activity assessment scores over the years. The finance department however needs to workshop some of its key policies and procedures across the University faculties to iron out some of the financial management challenges that were raised. There will be instances where approvals will need to be fast tracked, and the finance department should therefore review some of its policies and procedures to cater for this to avoid situations where funding is returned to funders. There is need for a balance to be struck on the requirement of hard copy and filing needed mostly for auditing, and the paperless ICT based systems that is becoming the norm for most operations.

The University needs to finalise any remaining outstanding issues related to the full incorporation of LCA into UMP. This should be done transparently, as this remains a concern for organised labour who flagged it as an outstanding issue. Perceptions about the UMP leadership favouring the Mbombela campus over the Siyabuswa campus need to be addressed in an equitable and participatory way. From the interviews conducted, the fact that Siyabuswa is situated in a rural village, lacks amenities and adequate off-campus accommodation for staff, and is far from any major urban centres, are key factors that may be contributing to this perception.

The University has managed to build strong strategic partnerships in Mpumalanga, nationally and internationally. Such partnerships and engagements will become increasingly important as they provide an opportunity to share ideas and/or to undertake joint projects, and they tend to be good vehicles for applying for joint funding. Strategic partnerships in the province afford the University opportunities to play a key role in some of the provincial work.

### 3.1.6 Assessing Framework, Measuring Achievements

The University needs to review the activity-based way of assessing its achievements that was used during the last Strategic Plan. There are different frameworks that can be used, but one of the more widely used is Theory of Change Model that is often linked to a Monitoring and Evaluation Logic Framework. These frameworks will assist with differentiating:

- **Activities and Process** such as funding needs and levels, staffing needs and levels, infrastructure needs, policies, etc (measured mostly as absolute numbers and quantities).

- **Outputs** such as student enrolment figures and growth, programmes offered and growth, student accommodation needs, etc (measured as numbers, percentages and trends).
- **Outcomes** – such as percentage of students graduating on time, percentage of student graduating with distinctions, percent of post-graduate students graduating, etc (measured mostly as percentages/relative measures and trends tracked over time)
- **Impact(s)** – such as percentage of graduates placed on employment, UMP contributions to critical skills such as health care workers, etc (measured as percentages/relative measures and/or indices, and attributed given)

At the lowest level are activities and processes needed for the University to effectively undertake its mandate. These include, for example infrastructure, staff levels (at the right levels, both academic and support), finances, and systems such as ICT, HR, policies etc. At the highest level, which is the impact level is to produce ‘holistic’ graduates who are innovative, entrepreneurial, employable, and responsible citizen. An accompanying M & E logic framework that defines Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) indicators of each of the levels defined above will need to be developed. This framework will need to be developed in line with the new Strategic Plan and the associated implementation plans. The current activities-based indicators combine measures across activities, processes all the way to impact indicators, which is not ideal. The framework will help the University to monitor and more importantly evaluate outcomes and the impact of the University beyond just its activities.

## 4 Conclusion

This evaluation has found that since its inception in 2014 the UMP has performed well by virtue of strong and committed leadership, as well as effective adherence to the core objectives of the first Strategic Plan. What is clear is that the UMP has a solid base to build from and the successes and gains derived from the Strategic Plan 2015-2022 should be consolidated and expanded in the next Strategic Plan. It is anticipated that the new Strategic Plan builds on the strengths of the first Strategic Plan while looking to formulate new strategic objectives that are informed by the evidence of this evaluation, the experiences of staff involved in the genesis and growth of UMP as well as new and evolving academic challenges that have emerged in the past seven years. The University leadership and Council should reflect and build on the strong consensus of ideas that has enabled the emergence of UMP as a major university in South Africa, but also look to generate new and innovative thinking that take the University to the next level. UMP should strive to establish a

teaching and research footprint in Africa, that aligns with some of the emerging continental trends in higher education.



## 5 Appendices

### 5.1 Appendix A: Evaluation Matrix

Strategic Area and Priority	Strategic indicator(s)	Methodology and Data sources	Target group
<b>Strategic Area 1: Governance and strategic leadership and management</b> <b>Strategic Priority: Establish an overall institutional environment supporting good governance strategic leadership and management</b>	Strategic Indicator: By 2022, UMP has developed a functioning governance and management framework that facilitates effective and efficient decision-making to advance the vision of the institution and is in full compliance with all the relevant regulatory frameworks	1. Document review (Appendix -1) 2. Key informant interviews	MANCO/University Council
<b>Strategic Area 2: Research and Knowledge Generation</b> <b>Strategic Priority: Establish an institutional environment conducive to high impact scholarship, research and innovation</b>	Strategic Indicator: By 2022, UMP has established a prevailing research and innovation culture, is developing research excellence in selected niche areas, and has established functioning research support systems.	1. Document review (Appendix 1) 2. Key informant interviews 3. Secondary data analysis	DVC Research/Deans of facility/Heads of departments/Senior academic staff
<b>Strategic Area 3: Teaching and Learning</b> <b>Strategic Priority: Establish a set of high quality, relevant and</b>	Strategic Indicator: In 2022, UMP offers a context relevant PQM that includes undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications from diploma through to	1. Document review (Appendix 1) 2. Key informant interviews	Heads of Departments/Senior academic staff/Students

<p><b>responsive academic programmes which deliver the University's graduate attributes.</b></p>	<p>doctoral degrees, presented by using diverse modes of delivery. Many qualifications include experiential learning and exposure to trans-disciplinary thinking. A well-resourced Academic Development Unit, and a comprehensive suite of support programmes support academic staff who teach in world-class facilities using modern and appropriate pedagogies</p> <p>Students are supported by a comprehensive mentorship programme that facilitates the move from school to university and supports student access with success. Teaching and learning is embedded in all that we do and students thrive in a rich living and learning environment. Student success, by all measures, is above the national average and benchmarks.</p>	<p>3. Secondary data analysis</p>	
<p><b>Strategic Area 4: Planning and Institutional Support</b></p>	<p>Strategic Indicator: By 2022 UMP is supported by a functioning integrated planning framework and a comprehensive</p>	<p>1. Document review (Appendix - 1) 2. Key informant interviews</p>	<p>MANCO/Infrastructure department/Finance department</p>

<b>Strategic Priority: Establish iconic infrastructure, quality estate and other support services and effective systems and processes aligned with the institution's strategic direction and which contribute to an inspiring and conducive academic and working environment. Establish integrated institutional planning systems and institutional support systems and services advancing the institution's overall strategic and operational goals.</b>	set of effective and efficiently functioning support services.		
<b>Strategic Area 5 : Quality Student Experience</b>  <b>Strategic Priority : Provide a student centred support system for the holistic development of students</b>	Strategic Indicator: Students of the University of Mpumalanga will, by 2022, have access to services that are centred on the holistic development of each and every student. A quality learning and social experience by students through an engaged student practice will be enhanced through the provision of a variety of student centred services. By 2022, UMP alumni will be	1. Document review (Appendix - 1) 2. Key informant interviews 3. Secondary data analysis	Dean of Students/Administration/student body

	independent and socially relevant graduates that contribute meaningfully to society in their respective spaces.		
<b>Strategic Area 6 : Engagement and Partnerships</b> <b>Strategic Priority : To establish the pursuance of collaborative engagement and partnerships as a prevailing institutional practice</b>	Strategic Indicator: By 2022, UMP is widely recognised for its responsiveness to societal needs through collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships at local, regional, national and international levels. Engagement is integrated into the core activities of the institution.	1. Document review (Appendix - 1) 2. Key informant interviews	
<b>Strategic Area 7 : Finance</b> <b>Strategic Priority: To establish UMP's financial sustainability and sound financial management and control systems</b>	Strategic Priority: By 2022 UMP has established an acceptable level of 3rd stream income to supplement 1st and 2nd stream income, operates in terms of a comprehensive institutional financial planning system, allocates internal funds according to a rational input/output model, and consistently has unqualified annual financial audits.	1. Document review (Appendix - 1) 2. Key informant interviews 3. Secondary data analysis	MANCO/Finance department
<b>Strategic Area 8 : Human Resources</b>	Strategic Priority: By 2022, UMP has developed an institutional HR culture and policies and practices that are people	1. Document review (Appendix 1) 2. Key informant interviews	MANCO/HR department/Deans of students/Heads of Departments

<b>Strategic Priority: To promote an enabling HR environment that enhances performance</b>	affirming and promote the realisation of human potential.		
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## 5.2 Appendix B: Academic programme and qualifications, and student enrolment (2015 - 2022)

Programme	# New studen ts	# Total Enrolm ent	# New studen ts	# Total Enrolm ent	# New studen ts	# Total Enrolm ent	# New studen ts	# Total Enrolm ent	# New studen ts	# Total Enrolm ent	# New studen ts	# Total Enrolm ent	# New studen ts	# Total Enrolm ent	# New studen ts	# Total Enrolm ent	# New studen ts	# Total Enrolm ent
	2014	2014	2015	2015	2016	2016	2017	2017	2018	2018	2019	2019	2020	2020	2021	2021	2022	2022
Higher Certificate in Information Communication Technology in User Support																	57	59
Diploma in Agriculture	1	610	126	520	219	504	227	556	210	650	264	746	164	724	178	731	206	737
Diploma in Nature Conservation					46	46	77	120	71	173	112	237	80	266	81	303	141	389
Diploma in Animal Production													43	45	51	95	69	169
Diploma in Hospitality Management	21	21	19	40	21	56	29	70	57	115	110	189	134	300	159	414	221	554
Diploma in Information Communication Technology in Applications Development			25	25	34	59	61	117	94	183	114	251	100	298	120	370	145	395
Bachelor of Development Studies					76	77	118	193	121	304	170	415	146	473	165	536	252	644
Bachelor of Agriculture in Agricultural Extension and Rural Resource Management	40	40	38	78	31	106	47	121	44	120	53	145	28	134	48	143	67	154
Bachelor of Science (General)											97	108	62	165	103	252	170	365
Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences													61	66	73	137	95	227
Bachelor of Commerce (General)									60	61	62	109	40	141	113	233	120	318
Bachelor of Administration													110	126	143	258	267	515
Bachelor of Arts (General)									97	104	207	317	224	555	253	763	305	907
Bachelor of Information Communication Technology																	96	103
Bachelor of Education in Foundation Phase Teaching	76	107	99	206	99	301	100	401	110	406	107	413	107	429	99	433	110	442
Bachelor of Science in Agriculture					54	54	111	154	140	276	162	423	72	440	91	454	98	451
Bachelor of Laws																	248	262

Advanced Diploma in Agriculture in Agricultural Extension					17	59	7	35	17	62	3	14	3	26	2	16	1	18
Advanced Diploma in Nature Conservation											1	9		10		11		13
Advanced Diploma in Agriculture in Post-Harvest Technology												17	1	19	2	28	1	21
Advanced Diploma in Agricultural Production Management											1	28		21	4	21	1	20
Advanced Diploma in Hospitality Management									2	9		7	3	15	5	22		14
Advanced Diploma in Information Technology in Applications Development														17		21		29
Postgraduate Diploma in Nature Conservation															4	4	4	4
Postgraduate Diploma in Information Communication Technology																	18	19
Postgraduate Diploma in Hospitality Management																	10	11
Bachelor of Honours in Development Studies											20	20	28	28	16	20	24	26
Bachelor of Honours in Agricultural Extension and Rural Resource Management											18	18	13	14	20	20	17	17
Bachelor of Arts Honours in Geography																	1	1
Bachelor of Arts Honours in English															4	6	7	7
Bachelor of Arts Honours in Sociology															3	3	14	14
Bachelor of Commerce Honours In Economics															5	6	12	13



Bachelor of Arts Honours in Psychology																	11	13
Bachelor of Arts Honours in Industrial Psychology																	20	20
Bachelor of Arts Honours in siSwati																	5	5
Bachelor of Science Honours in Entomology																	2	3
Bachelor of Science Honours in Geography																	8	8
Bachelor of Science Honours in Ecology																	7	7
Masters of Development Studies													1	10		19		17
Masters of Education in Early Childhood Education													10	20	8	26	2	33
Masters of Agriculture in Agricultural Extension													1	10	1	24		20
Masters of Science in Agriculture												1	8	11	15	27	10	27
Masters of Science															6	7	10	24
Masters of Arts																		2
Masters of Commerce																		3
Doctor of Philosophy in Agriculture																	1	7
Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies																	1	5
Doctor of Philosophy																		5
<b>TOTAL:</b>	138	778	307	869	597	1262	777	1767	1023	2463	1501	3467	1439	4363	1772	5403	2854	7117

### 5.3 Appendix C: Reviewed Documents

UMP Strategic Plans 2015 – 2022
Annual Performance Plans (2015 – 2021)
Midterm review
UMP Harmonisation Framework
UMP Multi Campus Management Model
UMP ICT Strategic Plan
Secondary Data – staff and students
Mid Term Review report

### 5.4 Appendix D: Key Informant Tool

#### **Evaluation of the 2015/6 = 2022 University of Mpumalanga Strategic Plan**

My name is ..... and I will be supporting the University of Mpumalanga Province on the evaluation of its 2015 – 2022 Strategic Plan. As part of the evaluation, I am conducting a series of key informant interviews and you were identified as one of the key informants.

The evaluation is meant to help the university to understanding if the Strategic Plan was implemented as initially defined and as planned, to document what worked well, key achievement as well as identify any challenges encountered, and lessons learnt on the implementation of the plan. The evaluation is also meant to provide useful information and inputs that can be used to inform the new Strategic Plan for the university.

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me and agreeing to participant in this interview. The interview should last an hour or so. I will be taking notes, but I would also want to kindly ask your permission to record the interview.

**Key Informant Name:**

**Key Informant position/portfolio:**

**Duration in (in years) this portfolio:**

**Date and time of interview:**

Of all the 8 strategic objectives of the 2015/2022 plan, indicate whether each of the strategic goal(s) was/were achieved, partially achieved, and not achieved at all. Can you please give explanations for your answers?

Strategic Area and Priority	Strategic indicator(s)	Indicate if each of the strategic objectives was achieved/partially achieved/not achieved	What facilitated this to be achieved/not achieved and/or what were the impediments for not achieving these	What could have been done better/differently	How did the COVID-19 outbreak in 2020 impacted the achievement or non-achievement of this strategic goal
<b>Strategic Area 1:</b> <b>Governance and strategic leadership and management</b>  <b>Strategic Priority:</b> <b>Establish an overall institutional environment supporting good governance strategic leadership and management</b>	<b>Strategic Indicator:</b> By 2022, UMP has developed a functioning governance and management framework that facilitates effective and efficient decision-making to advance the vision of the institution and is in full compliance with all the relevant regulatory frameworks		-		
<b>Strategic Area 2:</b> <b>Research and Knowledge Generation</b>  <b>Strategic Priority:</b> <b>Establish an institutional environment conducive to high impact scholarship, research and innovation</b>	<b>Strategic Indicator:</b> By 2022, UMP has established a prevailing research and innovation culture, is developing research excellence in selected niche areas, and has established functioning research support systems.		-		
<b>Strategic Area 3:</b> <b>Teaching and Learning</b>  <b>Strategic Priority:</b> <b>Establish a set of high quality, relevant and responsive academic programmes which deliver the</b>	<b>Strategic Indicator:</b> In 2022, UMP offers a context relevant PQM that includes undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications from diploma through to doctoral degrees, presented by using diverse modes of			-	

<p><b>University's graduate attributes.</b></p>	<p>delivery. Many qualifications include experiential learning and exposure to trans-disciplinary thinking. A well-resourced Academic Development Unit, and a comprehensive suite of support programmes support academic staff who teach in world-class facilities using modern and appropriate pedagogies</p> <p>Students are supported by a comprehensive mentorship programme that facilitates the move from school to university and supports student access with success. Teaching and learning is embedded in all that we do and students thrive in a rich living and learning environment. Student success, by all measures, is above the national average and benchmarks.</p>				
<p><b>Strategic Area 4: Planning and Institutional Support</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Priority: Establish iconic infrastructure, quality estate and other support services and</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic Indicator:</b> By 2022 UMP is supported by a functioning integrated planning framework and a comprehensive set of effective and</p>		-		

<p><b>effective systems and processes aligned with the institution's strategic direction and which contribute to an inspiring and conducive academic and working environment. Establish integrated institutional planning systems and institutional support systems and services advancing the institution's overall strategic and operational goals.</b></p>	<p>efficiently functioning support services.</p>				
<p><b>Strategic Area 5: Quality Student Experience</b></p> <p><b>Strategic Priority: Provide a student-centred support system for the holistic development of students</b></p>	<p><b>Strategic Indicator:</b></p> <p>Students of the University of Mpumalanga will, by 2022, have access to services that are centred on the holistic development of each student. A quality learning and social experience by students through an engaged student practice will be enhanced through the provision of a variety of student-centred services. By 2022, UMP alumni will be independent and socially relevant graduates that contribute meaningfully to society in their respective spaces.</p>		-		

<b>Strategic Area 6:</b> <b>Engagement and Partnerships</b>  <b>Strategic Priority: To establish the pursuance of collaborative engagement and partnerships as a prevailing institutional practice</b>	<b>Strategic Indicator:</b>  By 2022, UMP is widely recognised for its responsiveness to societal needs through collaborative and mutually beneficial partnerships at local, regional, national and international levels. Engagement is integrated into the core activities of the institution.				
<b>Strategic Area 7:</b> <b>Finance</b>  <b>Strategic Priority: To establish UMP's financial sustainability and sound financial management and control systems</b>	<b>Strategic Priority: By</b> 2022 UMP has established an acceptable level of 3 <sup>rd</sup> stream income to supplement 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> stream income, operates in terms of a comprehensive institutional financial planning system, allocates internal funds according to a rational input/output model, and consistently has unqualified annual financial audits.		-		
<b>Strategic Area 8:</b> <b>Human Resources</b>  <b>Strategic Priority: To promote an enabling HR environment that enhances performance</b>	<b>Strategic Priority: By</b> 2022, UMP has developed an institutional HR culture and policies and practices that are people affirming and promote the realisation of human potential.				

## 5.5 Appendix E: List of Key Informants

Member	Mode of interview
Chairperson of council	Zoom/Teams
Chair: Strategy	Zoom/Teams
Chair: Audit, Risk and ICT committee	Zoom/Teams
Chair: HRC	Zoom/Teams
Vice Chancellor	Face to Face
DVC: Academic	Face to Face
Dean of students	Face to Face
ED HR	Face to Face
D: Research Management	Face to Face
Registrar	Face to Face
Dean: Faculty of Agriculture	Face to Face
Dean: Faculty of Education	Zoom/Teams
Dean: Faculty Economic and Management Sciences	Face to Face
Chief Information Officer	Face to face
Campus Director: Siyabuswa Campus	Zoom/Teams
Director: Student Housing	Zoom/Teams
Director: Marketing	Zoom/Teams
Director: Stakeholder Liaison and Communications	Face to Face
D: Revenue and Expenditure	Zoom/Teams
1. HoS Agriculture and Natural Sciences	Face to Face
2. Programme Leader : Faculty Education	Face to Face
4. Director Research Management	Face to Face
8. Head of School: Biological & Environmental Sciences	Zoom/Teams
10. Head of School Computing and Mathematical Sciences	Zoom/Teams
2. HR representative	Zoom/Teams
3. ICT representative	Zoom/Teams
NEHAWU rep	Zoom/Teams

NTEU	Zoom/Teams
SRC President	Zoom/Teams