NWU Community Engagement Activity
Annual Report 2023

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Table of Contents

Abbreviations and Acronyms

Abbreviation	Description
APP	Annual Performance Plan
IARSLCE	International association for research on Service-learning and Community Engagement
AUTHeR	Africa Unit for Transdisciplinary Health Research
BS	NWU Business School
CE	Community Engagement
CLAYSS	"Centro Latinoamericano de Aprendizaje y Servicio Solidario" (Latin American Centre for Service Learning)
CSI	Corporate Social Investment
DVC CE	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Community Engagement
DVC R&I	Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation
DVC T&L	Deputy Vice-Chancellor teaching and Learning
FEDU	Faculty of Education
FEMS	Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences
FENG	Faculty of Engineering
FHUM	Faculty of Humanities
FLAW	Faculty of Law
FNAS	Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences
FTHEO	Faculty of Theology
FHS	Faculty of Health Sciences
ISSL	The International Symposium on Service-Learning
NWU	North-West University
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MOUs	Memorandums of Understanding
O/V	Outreach/Volunteerism
R&I	Research and Innovation
SCI	Sustainability and Community Impact
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SL	Service learning
SOAR	Strength Opportunity Aspiration Results
SoP	Standard Operating Procedure
T&L	Teaching and Learning
WIL	Work Integrated Learning
WISL	Work Integrated and Service-learning Management System

Executive summary

NWU adjusted its strategy in 2023 to remain adaptable to evolving stakeholder needs, prioritizing societal impact, innovative teaching and research excellence, and community engagement. Throughout the year, the university demonstrated significant progress in integrating CE with teaching, learning, and research activities, with a total of 500 registered activities, compared to 406 in 2022. Notably, the Potchefstroom campus led in participation, followed by the Mahikeng and Vanderbijlpark campuses, also indicating increased cross-campus collaborations.

The Faculty of Economics and Management Sciences reported the highest number of activities. Although in general, the submission of monitoring and evaluation information fell below expectations, necessitating future training and refinement among some departments and faculties. Challenges such as under-registration, late registration, and confusion regarding terminologies persisted, alongside the absence of formal agreements with community partners, funding challenges and consistent ethical clearance procedures persists. Despite efforts by the SCI team to clarify CE terminologies and enhance understanding across faculties, continued focus in 2024 is warranted. A timeline to address this is provided in this report.

While progress has been evident, standardising performance evaluations related to CE participation remains a priority for future development. We implemented a robust evaluation process for the CE excellence awards, recognising 10 staff members for their contributions in 2022. Moreover, the university advanced its registration, monitoring, and evaluation of CE activities in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A more rigorous process of impact analysis is envisaged for 2024 facilitated by the acquisition of SenseMaker® software for data collection and analysis.

However, the challenge of effectively communicating the concept of "engaged scholarship" continues. Despite this challenge, the university's dedication to addressing global challenges and promoting sustainable development through research and outreach endeavours has resulted in notable advancements in its worldwide rankings due to the effort to link our outputs to the SDGs.

PART 1: Achievements for 2023

1.1 Introduction and reflection from the viewpoint of the new North-West University's (NWU's) strategy

In response to the rapid changes and complexities of our times, NWU recalibrated its strategy in 2023 to remain responsive to the evolving needs of all stakeholders. This adjustment has led to a revised vision and mission statement, where we aim to explore new horizons and opportunities for the betterment of society, emphasising our relevance and impact. We prioritise benefiting society through the dissemination of knowledge, excellence in innovative teaching, cutting-edge research, and active engagement with the community. To realise this vision, we adhere to critical guiding principles such as sustainability, transformation, digitisation, student-centricity, and valuing people—principles that are enshrined in our current Community Engagement (CE) policy.

Key to this is the continued demonstration of applying an ethic of care and empathy in our interactions with our people and even broader -community partners beyond the university campuses. We have among other put more emphasis on impact, growth, partnerships, and diversity. This is why in the six annual performance goals for 2024, goal 3 has a particular focus 'to integrate and align CE with teaching-learning and research and innovation to develop a culture of active citizenship'.

While we've embarked on a three-year journey to incorporate CE, achieving seamless integration hasn't been without its obstacles. In our last two reports, we presented an action plan and suggestions to help NWU establish a foundation for progressing towards a scholarship of engagement. This entailed aligning the annual performance plans of faculties and the Sustainability and Community Impact (SCI) support department, harmonising overlapping definitions, addressing reporting gaps, and refining the monitoring and evaluation process to measure the impact of activities. Given the focus on impact, it's crucial to have a shared understanding of what constitutes impact—whether positive, negative, intended, or unintended—and how it's documented. In this report, we track the progress made on previous recommendations, acknowledge achievements, and propose next steps to bolster the new strategy.

1.2 Achievements in 2023

- The SCI team was invited to conduct roadshows, colloquiums, and workshops with several faculties and schools to align and clarify the understanding of various terminologies used in CE. Feedback received during these sessions, as confirmed in this report, indicates that while some planned targets have been achieved, the consultation process is still progressing.

- There has been a noticeable shift in the understanding of the concept of "community," demonstrating the impact of the active change management process and the support provided by the SCI Department.

- Progress was made, with the assistance of Faculty leadership and Deputy-deans for CE, towards clarifying performance evaluations related to staff participation in CE. However, a standardised approach still needs to be developed and implemented with the support from People and Culture to guide promotions and career development as it relates to CE.

- A rigorous evaluation process was implemented for applications for CE excellence awards, resulting in recognition being given to academics in categories such as Scholarship of Engagement, Outreach, Engaged Teaching and Learning (T&L) (both novice and established), and Sharing of Expertise. Prize money was awarded to the winners.

- Significant strides have been achieved in registering, monitoring, and evaluating reports to establish connections between activities and their contributions towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- The purchase of SenseMaker® software was made to support data collection, monitoring, and evaluation, allowing for live datasets and dashboards to be utilised.

1.3 A unified approach to support engaged scholarship

"Engaged scholarship" serves as a broad term encompassing university/community collaborations aimed at effecting social change, constituting a fundamental aspect of the service mission of most universities worldwide (Pleasants, 2017). There is growing recognition that the global challenges we face necessitate the integration of academic knowledge with the experiential knowledge garnered from diverse communities and environments. These intricate and systemic challenges often cannot be effectively resolved or mitigated through isolated interventions or projects, which rely on a trial-and-error approach and prioritise singular disciplines or community needs over others.

What is required instead is a collective approach characterised by coordinated practices that address the multifaceted needs of all stakeholders. The ongoing challenge lies in identifying and aligning our roles within teaching, learning, research, and outreach endeavours. This includes considering what students learn through hands-on experiences, how we foster reciprocity within university/community partnerships, and how we effectively communicate and negotiate processes and outcomes to promote sustainable development supported by research evidence.

In 2015, the 193 member states of the United Nations established a framework to assess a country's progress toward achieving sustainable development by 2030. This framework, known as the 17 SDGs, aims to eradicate poverty and inequality while ensuring universal access to health, justice, and prosperity for all. The SDGs are interconnected, acknowledging that addressing issues such as poverty, hunger, and social justice requires comprehensive strategies that encompass improvements in health and education, environmental management, the reduction of inequality, and the stimulation of economic growth. To ensure that the university aligns its outputs with the goal of making a positive impact as a provider of higher education knowledge and as a facilitator of future leaders' development, we have embraced an approach that connects our CE initiatives with the objectives outlined in the SDGs. As part of this process, we encourage activity and project leaders, along with members of the academic community, to align their initiatives with specific targets outlined in the SDGs and to report this alignment into our database by incorporating relevant keywords in their publications, dissertations, and theses submitted by students.

In a draft report from Statistics South Africa (Kitchin, 2023), it is noted that the country can report on 81% of the social goals, 64% of the economic goals, 58% of the environmental goals, and 86% of the peace and security goals. This represents an increase in reporting rates since 2019 for all goals, except for environmental or climate change information. Upon reviewing this draft report and integrating information from our current report, it becomes evident that understanding the connections between the various SDGs and their specific sub-targets is crucial for comprehending and effectively managing our CE mandate. As we expand what we report on and refine how we quantify our contributions, the need for clarification regarding the types of contributions we make in this context will become even more relevant.

Reporting on our contributions in terms of the SDGs is also advantageous for improving the rating and ranking of the NWU internationally. Taking action to discover sustainable solutions is paramount in addressing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues. NWU stands out as one of Africa's leading higher education institutions in tackling these critical concerns.

In the latest Sustainability ranking by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), NWU secured a position among the top eight out of 43 institutions on the continent. Remarkably, it also ranks within the top six out of 12 South African universities and holds the 458th spot out of 1,403 qualified institutions globally.

To be eligible for the sustainability ranking, universities must meet criteria set by QS, including qualification for the QS World University Rankings and QS Rankings by Region or Subject.

NWU's performance in the rankings is particularly noteworthy, given that the number of featured institutions increased to 703 this year. Despite this surge, the university managed to enhance its position.

This marks the second year QS has assessed universities based on environmental and social sustainability indicators, with the rankings released on December 5th 2023.

PART 2: Critical reflection on data collected in 2023

2.1 Database Registrations

2.1.1 The process followed

An inclusive process that allowed all stakeholders to co-create the strategy was followed in 2022 and implemented in 2023 through an online survey hosted on the Teams platform.

Process followed

CE Planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting cycle

- Complete a CE project plan with a budget
- Register plan on a CE database
- Complete bi-annual M&E on CE database
- Based on M&E report if there is any change(s) to the CE project
- Amend the CE project if needed
- Report outcome of CE project (per project, per entity, per faculty)

Initially, the online registration survey had a time limit of 30 minutes for completing project registrations. However, this was later modified to allow unlimited time, enabling project/activity leaders to thoroughly populate all the necessary information related to their activities without feeling rushed or constrained by time limits. After completing a submission of the registration survey, the system allowed respondents to save a copy of their registration as evidence for the Annual Performance Plan (APP).
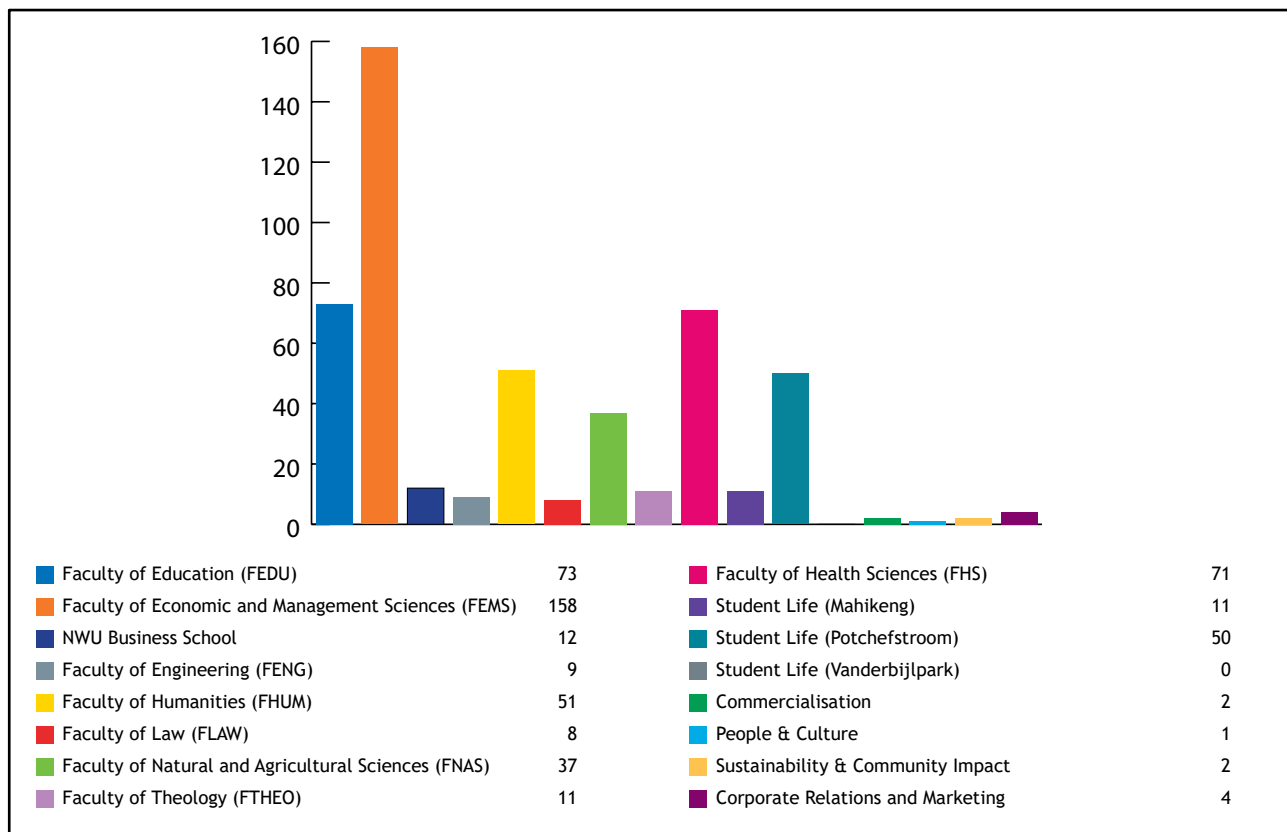
UNITS	CAMPUS						TOTAL
	MAHIKENG	POTCHEFSTROOM	VANDERBIJLPARK	CROSS CAMPUS			
				MC & PC	PC & VC	MC & PC & VC	
Faculty of Education (FEDU)	6	43	10	2	6	6	73
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (FEMS)	73	48	24	3	4	6	158
NWU Business School (BS)	0	10	1	1	0	0	12
Faculty of Engineering (FENG)	0	9	0	0	0	0	9
Faculty of Humanities (FHUM)	12	31	5	1	0	2	51
Faculty of Law (FLAW)	0	5	0	0	0	3	8
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (FNAS)	14	19	4	0	0	0	37
Faculty of Theology (FTHEO)	0	10	1	0	0	0	11
Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS)	6	59	2	3	0	1	71
Student Life (Mahikeng)	11	0	0	0	0	0	11
Student Life (Potchefstroom)	0	50	0	0	0	0	50
Student Life (Vanderbijlpark)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Commercialisation	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
People & Culture	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Sustainability & Community Impact	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Corporate Relations and Marketing	1	0	0	0	0	3	4
Total	124	287	47	10	10	22	500

All three campuses of the NWU reported on CE activities. The data from this report was captured from 16 different business units. The different units reported a total of 500 CE activities during the 2023 registration period that closed on 15 January 2024. Student Life Vanderbijlpark is the only unit that did not register any CE project in 2023. Except for one, 499 registered CE activities had the required basic information.

The annual registration data indicates a significant improvement in the number of registered CE activities. SCI reported 376 registrations in the 2023 mid-term report, and by 15 January 2024, 500 activities were registered for the 2023 reporting period. The increase in registrations can be attributed to the deadline extension from 15 November 2023 to 15 January 2024 which provided various units an opportunity to capture active activities that were not registered. Three units reported the highest number of CE activities, with the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (FEMS) leading with 32%, Education (FEDU) accounting for 15%, and Health Sciences (FHS) representing 14% of the overall activities.

■ Faculty of Education (FEDU)	73	■ Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS)	71
■ Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (FEMS)	158	■ Student Life (Mahikeng)	11
■ NWU Business School	12	■ Student Life (Potchefstroom)	50
■ Faculty of Engineering (FENG)	9	■ Student Life (Vanderbijlpark)	0
■ Faculty of Humanities (FHUM)	51	■ Commercialisation	2
■ Faculty of Law (FLAW)	8	■ People & Culture	1
■ Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (FNAS)	37	■ Sustainability & Community Impact	2
■ Faculty of Theology (FTHEO)	11	■ Corporate Relations and Marketing	4

2.1.2 Campus Representation

Most registered activities were attributed to the Potchefstroom Campus, which comprised 57.4% of the total. Mahikeng Campus followed with 24.8%, while Vanderbijlpark Campus constituted 9.4%. Additionally, 8.4% of the activities were collaborative endeavours spanning multiple campuses, and others were implemented by units functioning across campuses.

A total of 42 activities were conducted collaboratively across multiple campuses and units, illustrating a cross-campus approach to implementation. The figure below outlines the distribution of these activities, highlighting the interconnected nature of the engagements between all three campuses.

Activity per campus

■ Mahikeng Campus	124
■ Potchefstroom Campus	287
■ Vanderbijlpark Campus	47
■ Cross Campus	42

Cross-Campus Activities

■ Mahikeng + Potchefstroom	10
■ Potchefstroom + Vanderbijlpark	10
■ Mahikeng + Potchefstroom + Vanderbijlpark	22
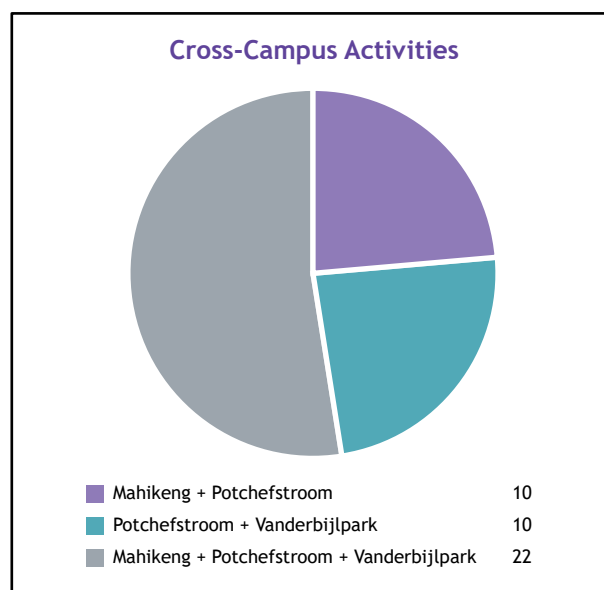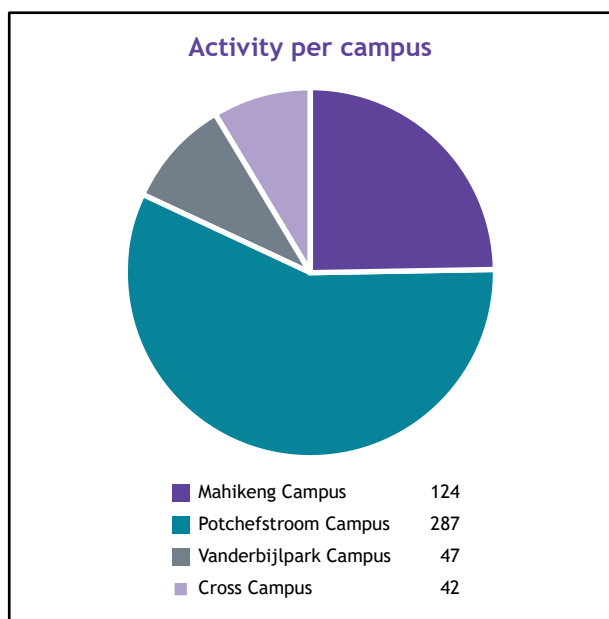
2.1.3   Engagement Activity Type

Out of 500 registered activities, 483 were categorised under the four defined types of engagement. However, 17 activities only partially completed registration surveys. 15 from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (FEMS), one from the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), and one from the Business School (BS), were not classified into any engagement category. This discrepancy necessitates a closer examination to ascertain whether the misclassification arose from a misunderstanding of the varied forms of CE, the use of inconsistent terminology, or simply human error.

Engaged T&L actitvities reported in 2023

TL-Related to existing module	36%
TL-Not related to existing module	64%

2.1.6   Outreach/Volunteerism (O/V)

Activity types reported in 2023

Engaged Research	58
Engaged Teaching & Learning	196
Outreach/Volunteerism	218
Engaged Scholarship	11

Types of outreach activties reported in 2023

|	
Discipline based outreach	112
Non discipline based outreach	106

2.1.4   Engaged Research (E-R)

E-R comprised 11.6% of registered activities. Of the 58 activities under the engaged research category, 19 reported having ethical clearance, and 39 were either in the process of obtaining it or the response was not applicable. This is a positive shift towards obtaining and reporting on ethical clearance for research and innovation activities and engaged research activities.

2.1.5   Engaged Teaching and Learning (E-T&L)

A total of 39.2% activities fell into the category of E-T&L. Of 196 activities registered, 70 (36%) were related to an existing module and 126 (64%) not. This data suggests that incorporating planned experiential learning into T&L can be strengthened. This may apply to certain T&L activities, but not across the board.
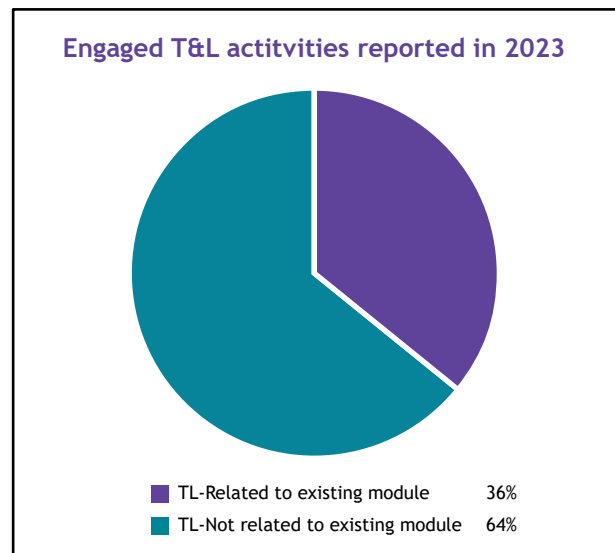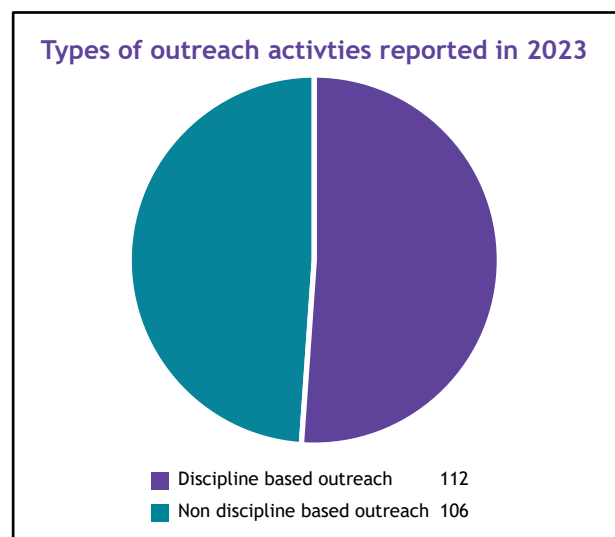
In this reporting cycle 43.6% of all activities were reported as outreach or volunteerism, there were 112 activities related to discipline-based outreach and 106 non-discipline-based activities. The percentage of Outreach/Volunteerism activities decreased from 49% to 43%. These projects often involve significant student involvement, either as part of Student Life engagements or as philanthropic endeavours in response to community needs or annual events like Mandela Day celebrations.

Our current CE strategy aims to create lasting value and impact by moving beyond one-time engagements toward initiatives with longer-term sustainability. While this shift represents progress, it also presents risks for both the NWU and the communities it serves, particularly in terms of the sustainability and actual impact of these activities.

The Word Cloud provided above indicates the types of activities from descriptions on the data base related to CE that the university supported in 2023. The larger the word, the more it was used to describe some activities. Notably, previous reports from our Vanderbijlpark campus's student life department included outreach activities, but no reports were received in the past year. This absence likely contributed to the decline in reported numbers.

2.1.7   Engaged scholarship (ES)

Of the total number of activities 2.2% were recorded as ES. Well-planned sustainable CE activities will increase over time. We are proud to report that the number of engaged scholarship activities increased from 1% reported in the mid-year report 2023 to 2.2%. This number might still be underestimated as the concept is being introduced and implemented over time.

Important note: When adding up the percentage of activities that was categorized in the above such as E-T&L, E-R, ES and outreach/volunteerism the numbers add up to 96.6 %, this equates to 483 activities. 17 Reported activities were not categorised into any of the categories provided, making up for the uncategorized 3.4%. The reason for this could be that current terminologies are not clear or overlaps occur that makes a selection difficult. This warrants further attention.

2.1.8   Research Location/Community

The information depicted in the word cloud indicates that most research activities and other CE initiatives are concentrated in the vicinity of our campuses, in Potchefstroom, Mahikeng, and Vanderbijlpark. Despite various units having ongoing activities across other provinces and countries, in comparison, communities nearer to NWU gain a great deal from university expertise.

The data also suggest that:

1. A substantial number of CE activities collaborated with schools, learners, health districts, teachers, business etc.

2. Community meant more than a geographical location, and included various sectors, classification of groups etc. (e.g., Students, Student residences, Agricultural sector)

Strategic observations
Community collaborators

- Out of 414 responses, only 205 activities (41%) mentioned community collaborators, which is a requirement that should ideally be met before beginning any community involvement initiative (this will help determine the needs of the community).

Identified community needs

- Among the activities, 440 (88%) were specifically designed to address identified community needs, while 9% (43) were not directly aligned with these needs. Additionally, 3% (17) of the activities did not provide complete data in response to the remaining questions.

- This data suggests the need for various units to engage communities and conduct thorough

needs analysis which will inform interventions and the type of engagement activity required.

- The pattern identified in the data highlights an area for growth. Emphasising the necessity for our various units to deepen their engagement with communities through comprehensive needs analyses. These analyses will not only refine our understanding of the communities we serve but also ensure that our interventions are precisely tailored to address real issues.

- Adopting a comprehensive project development approach centred on engaged scholarship, which prioritizes mutual benefit and shared resources, is crucial for ensuring the ethical and sustainable execution of CE activities that make a tangible impact. While opportunities for training on conducting needs assessments have been recognized, it's essential to acknowledge that this process is ongoing and requires continuous improvement and refinement.

2.1.9   CE-Registrations Beyond 2023

Continuation of activities beyond 2023 reveals that 33% of these initiatives are scheduled to persist into 2024 and beyond. To facilitate seamless reporting for activity implementers, the data of these ongoing activities will be transferred from SCI to SenseMaker®, ensuring ease and efficiency in the reporting process.

- 67% of registered CE activities were completed.
- 33% of them will continue beyond 2023.

Further analysis breaks the completed activities down into the following sections:

- 150 = Volunteerism
- 146 = Engaged T&L
- 31 = Engaged Research
- 9 = Engaged Scholarship

2.2   Monitoring Process

2.2.1   Alignment of monitoring and evaluation surveys completed for different units.

Units	Registered	Activities ending 2023	Continuing Activities	% Ongoing activities
Faculty of Education (FEDU)	73	40	33	45%
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (FEMS)	158	126	32	20%
NWU Business School	12	10	2	17%
Faculty of Engineering (FENG)	9	2	7	78%
Faculty of Humanities (FHUM)	51	46	5	10%
Faculty of Law (FLAW)	8	6	2	25%
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (FNAS)	37	16	21	57%
Faculty of Theology (FTHEO)	11	0	11	100%
Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS)	71	38	33	46%
Student Life (Mahikeng)	11	11	0	0%
Student Life (Potchefstroom)	50	34	16	32%
Student Life (Vanderbijlpark)	0	0	0	0%
Commercialisation	2	2	0	0%
People & Culture	1	1	0	0%
Sustainability & Community Impact	2	1	1	50%
Corporate Relations & Marketing	4	3	1	25%
Total	**500**	**336**	**164**	**33%**

CE monitoring is a process of observing and checking the progress or quality of work over some time, keeping it under systematic review. Monitoring should not be a once-off activity but should be aligned with the activity's planning and outputs should be monitored for the entire duration of the activity.

Continual monitoring is essential to assess the impact of CE activities, evaluate the university's contribution to societal development, facilitate the co-creation of new knowledge, and manage any unintended or unplanned impacts, as outlined in the CE Policy (2021). Despite efforts by the SCI Department to support this process through multiple reminders sent to activity leaders across various platforms and extensions of monitoring deadlines, the response rate has been disappointing.

Here's a breakdown of the monitoring process:

- Initially, the CE Monitoring was scheduled to close on December 15, 2023, with only 34 activities monitored by that date.

- In response to the low participation, the closing date was extended to January 15, 2024, resulting in a doubling of monitored activities to 67, yet still falling short.

- A final extension until February 9, 2024, was granted to allow activity leaders more time to update the database. This led to an increase in monitored activities to 100, representing only 20% of the total 500 registered activities.

This data highlights that monitoring CE activities within the NWU remains a significant challenge, with low prioritization from some stakeholders. This poses a potential risk that necessitates active management and further efforts to improve participation and compliance with monitoring procedures.

Monitoring and evaluation data of activities completed for 2023

Units	Registered	Monitored	% of Monitoring	Evaluated	% of Evaluation
Faculty of Education (FEDU)	73	29	40%	23	32%
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (FEMS)	158	33	21%	28	18%
NWU Business School	12	0	0%	1	8%
Faculty of Engineering (FENG)	9	0	0%	0	0%
Faculty of Humanities (FHUM)	51	4	8%	3	6%
Faculty of Law (FLAW)	8	0	0%	0	0%
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (FNAS)	37	19	51%	2	5%
Faculty of Theology (FTHEO)	11	0	0%	0	0%
Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS)	71	15	21%	10	14%
Student Life (Mahikeng)	11	0	0%	0	0%
Student Life (Potchefstroom)	50	0	0%	0	0%
Student Life (Vanderbijlpark)	0	0	0%	0	0%
Commercialisation	2	0	0%	0	0%
People & Culture	1	0	0%	0	0%
Sustainability & Community Impact	2	0	0%	0	0%
Corporate Relations & Marketing	4	0	0%	0	0%
Total	**500**	**100**	**20%**	**67**	**13%**

The analysis of monitoring and evaluation surveys reveals critical insights into the engagement and oversight across NWU's units, leading us to a focused examination of how these practices are reflected across individual campuses.
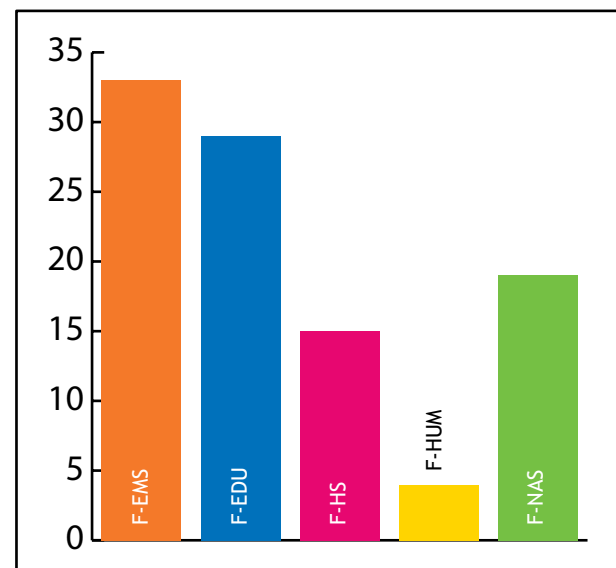
2.2.2 Monitoring Surveys Completed per Campus

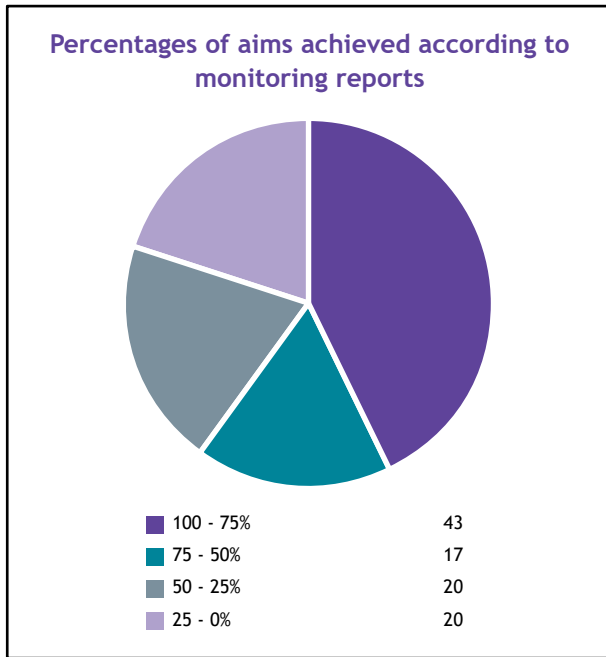The following figure shows the monitoring surveys completed per campus.
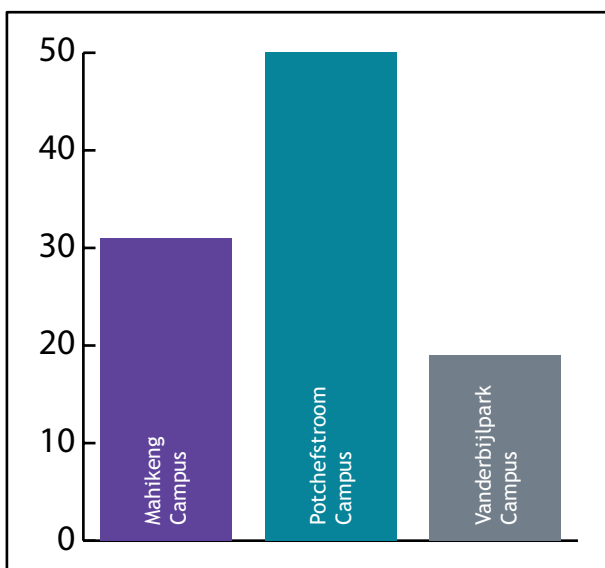
2.2.3 Monitoring Surveys Completed per Faculty

Not all faculties and units completed monitoring surveys. Of the 16 units only 5 units participated in the monitoring data collection process.
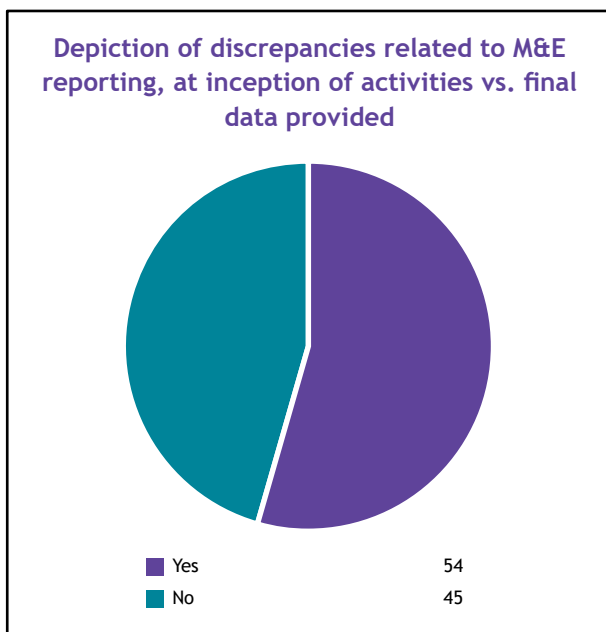
2.2.4 Progress regarding the aim and objectives reached

The monitoring data showed that most activities progressed well in terms of reaching their aims and objectives. Even though this data may be subjective, it provides the activity leader with the opportunity to reflect on the progress made.

Percentages of aims achieved according to monitoring reports

100 - 75%	43
75 - 50%	17
50 - 25%	20
25 - 0%	20

2.2.5 Objectives reached

Depiction of discrepancies related to M&E reporting, at inception of activities vs. final data provided

Yes	54
No	45

Out of 100 activities monitored, 1 indicated that it is incomplete. This contradicts the data of the previous question.

Monitoring and/or evaluation that occurred up to this point was indicated as 54% monitoring or evaluating and 45% of activities implemented without monitoring or evaluating.

Critical discussion

- While 54% of activities have undergone monitoring, there is a notable portion, specifically 45%, that reported no such activities. This discrepancy may partly be due to operational challenges encountered by the faculties in tracking and compiling their activity data, which impacted the overall monitoring figures for 2023.

- A small percentage of activities were not included in the monitoring data due to scheduling for 2024, or due to being improperly registered within the current database. Additionally, early registrations for 2024, before the cutoff date, may have contributed to the current year's data.

- There is evidence of some misunderstanding among activities leaders regarding monitoring questions, as indicated by the provision of details on impact monitoring despite answering 'No' to having conducted any monitoring. Furthermore, a marginal 1% of activities provided incomplete responses, and the nature of some once-off engagement activities made it inherently challenging to implement monitoring practices.

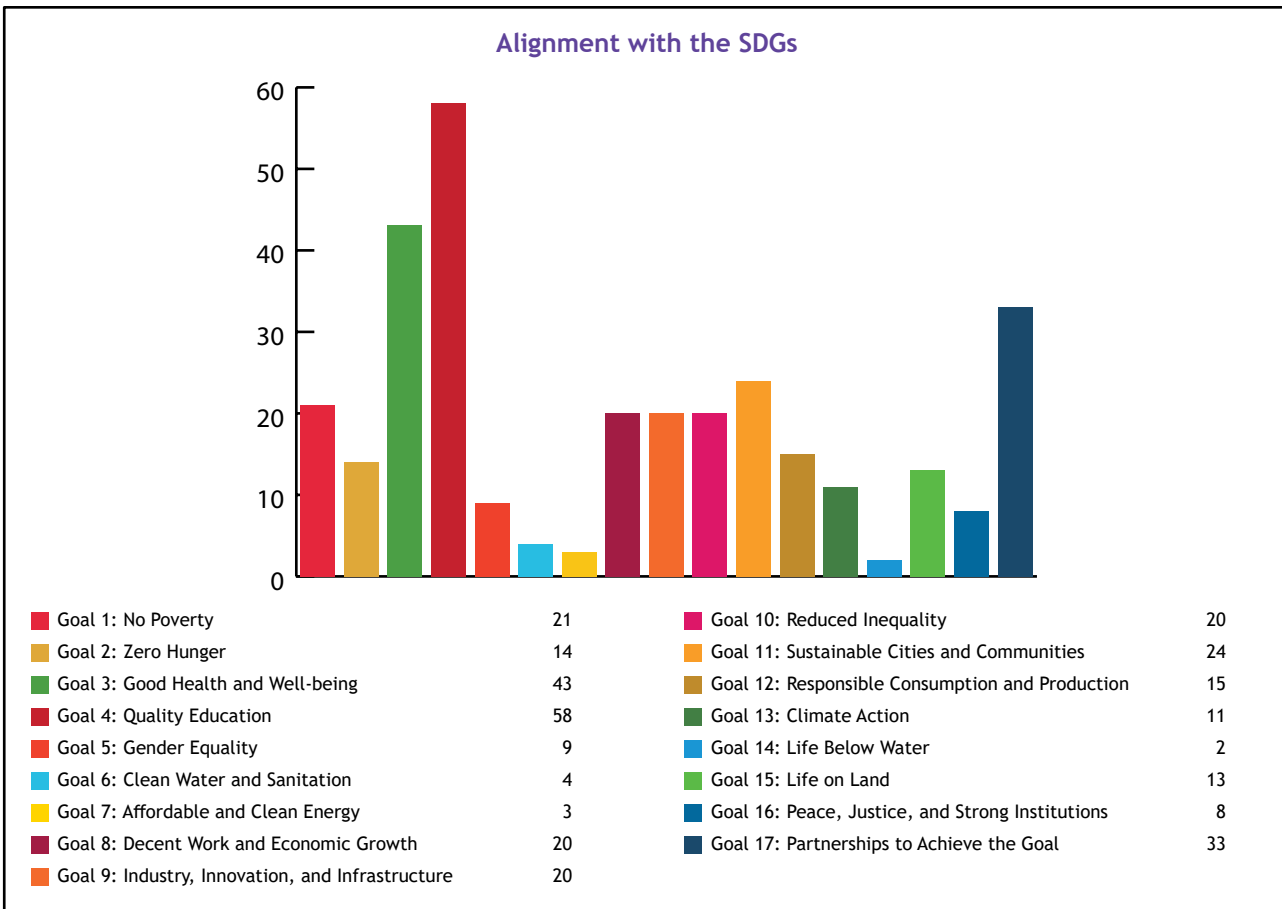### 2.2.6 Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

- There is a substantial emphasis on Quality Education (SDG 4), with the highest number of activities aligned at registration and consistently maintaining its prominence through the monitoring phases, which indicates a strong institutional commitment to educational initiatives, which aligns with our mandate.

- There is a discernible shift in the alignment with certain SDGs, such as SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and SDG 17 (Partnerships to Achieve the Goals), from the registration phase to the evaluation phase, suggesting that activities may evolve to better meet these goals or that there is a refinement in how activities are reported and aligned with SDGs over time.

- Across all phases—registration, monitoring, and evaluation—certain SDGs like Gender Equality (SDG 5) and Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)

consistently show lower alignment, indicating potential areas for increased focus or improved activity initiation to address these global priorities.

- The percentages indicate that the monitoring and evaluation phases can affect the perceived

alignment with SDGs. This impact highlights the importance of these phases in not only tracking activity progress, but also in potentially reshaping activity goals to align more closely with the SDGs as an activity develops.

Alignment with the SDGs

Goal 1: No Poverty	21	Goal 10: Reduced Inequality	20
Goal 2: Zero Hunger	14	Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	24
Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being	43	Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	15
Goal 4: Quality Education	58	Goal 13: Climate Action	11
Goal 5: Gender Equality	9	Goal 14: Life Below Water	2
Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	4	Goal 15: Life on Land	13
Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	3	Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	8
Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	20	Goal 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goal	33
Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	20		

2.2.7 Impact (intended/unintended) achieved

70% of activities claimed to have made an impact. The critical discussion below summarises the information provided on proof of impact made.

Impact achieved

|	
■ Yes	70
■ No	28
■ No response	2
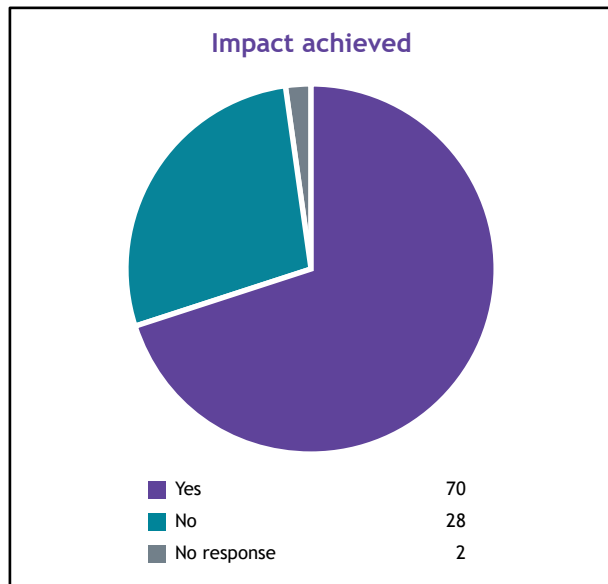
Critical discussion

- A substantial majority, accounting for 70% of monitored activities, have indicated that their initiatives have had an impact. This demonstrates a positive trend in our activity outcomes and suggests that most of our endeavours are successfully meeting their intended goals.

- Despite these successes, 28% of activities have not yet reported an impact. This could be due to various factors such as the activity lifecycle stage or challenges in impact measurement. It's important to note that within this cohort, there are instances where activities have articulated their impact but paradoxically responded 'No' to having made an impact, which could point to a need for clearer communication or understanding of the impact assessment process and how impact is define in a particular context.

- A minor 2% of activity leaders have not provided any information on their activity impact. This lack of reporting requires attention to ensure accountability and comprehensive impact assessment across all activities.

- The nature of some activities, particularly those that are once-off events, presents inherent challenges in monitoring and impact assessment,

indicating a need for tailored evaluation strategies for different types of activities.

- There are reports of impact from some activities where no formal monitoring processes have been documented. This discrepancy suggests that while positive outcomes are being observed, the processes for monitoring and evaluating these outcomes need to be more systematically integrated and reported.

2.2.8 Proof of monitoring and/or evaluation

Of the activities monitored 45% provided proof of monitoring and/or evaluation of activities. Examples of M&E included attendance registers, marks of students for WIL& SL, photographs. The critical discussion below summarises the detailed information provided on the proof included as data.

Distribution of proof of M&E submitted

■ Yes	45
■ No	49
■ No response	6
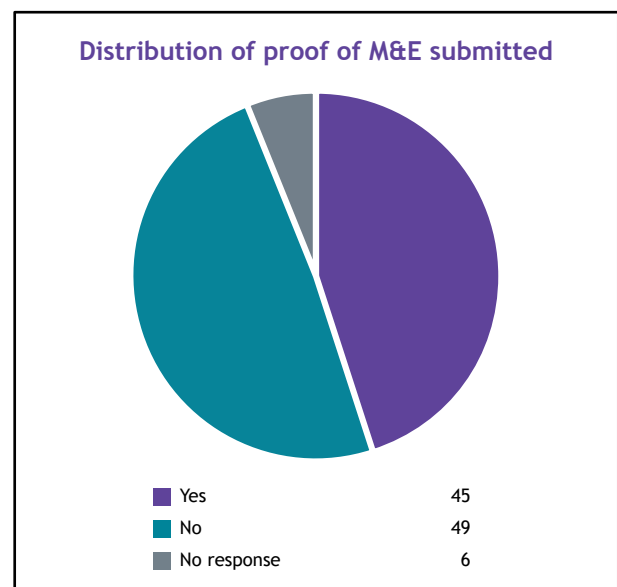
Critical discussion

- Nearly half of the activities, representing 45%, have provided proof of monitoring, affirming that a significant portion of our initiatives are not only being monitored, but also documented in a manner that substantiates their progress and outcomes.

- Conversely, an equal proportion of 49% reported having no proof to corroborate their monitoring activities, despite offering narrative descriptions of their processes. This suggests a potential gap in understanding or adherence to the established protocols for evidence-based reporting among some activity leaders. As part of the envisaged

utilisation of the SenseMaker® technology, we are optimistic that this challenge could be reduced or eliminated.
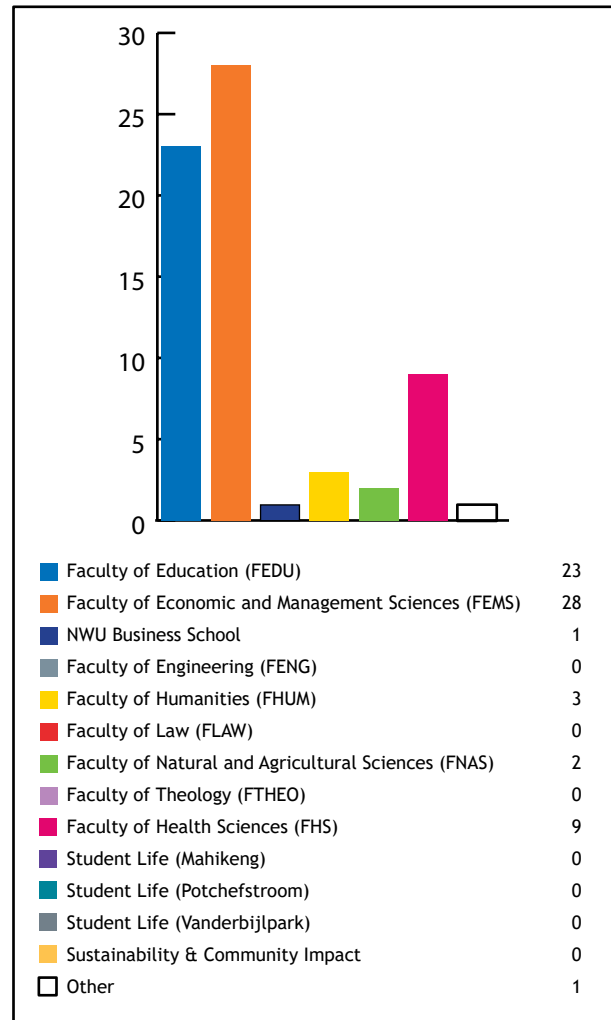
- A small segment, accounting for 6%, did not furnish any response regarding proof of monitoring. The lack of responses could be attributed to a range of factors, including activities that are newly registered, in their nascent stages, or those that are structured as once-off events, where conventional monitoring protocols may not be immediately applicable or have not yet been instituted.

2.3   Evaluation Process

Referring to the rigorous process the SCI Department undertook to collect monitoring and evaluating data as discussed previously, it is alarming that only 67 (13.4%) activities completed the evaluation survey. To compare the data please refer to the summary table provided in the monitoring section.

2.3.1   Activities evaluation per Campus

Mahikeng	13
Potchefstroom	37
Vanderbijlpark	17

The distribution of activity evaluations across the three campuses is as follows:

- Mahikeng: 13 activities
  Mahikeng: 19.40% of reported evaluations
- Potchefstroom: 37 activities
  Potchefstroom: 55.22%
- Vanderbijlpark: 17 activities
  Vanderbijlpark: 25.37%

- Potchefstroom had the highest number of activities evaluated, constituting more than half of the total evaluations.

- Vanderbijlpark had the second-highest number of evaluations.
- Mahikeng had the fewest activities evaluated, less than a quarter of the total evaluations.
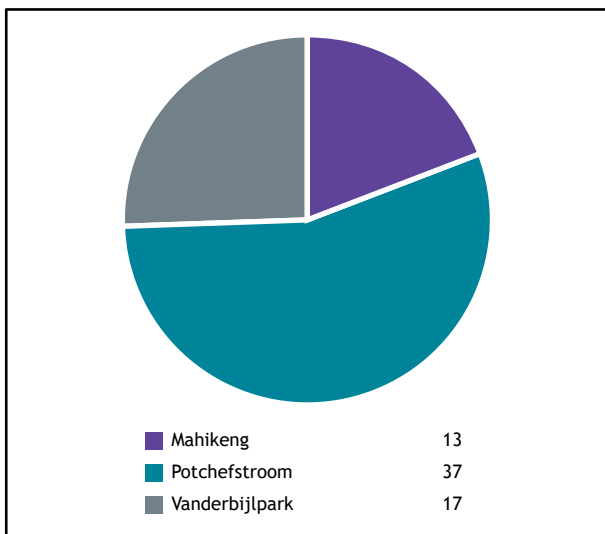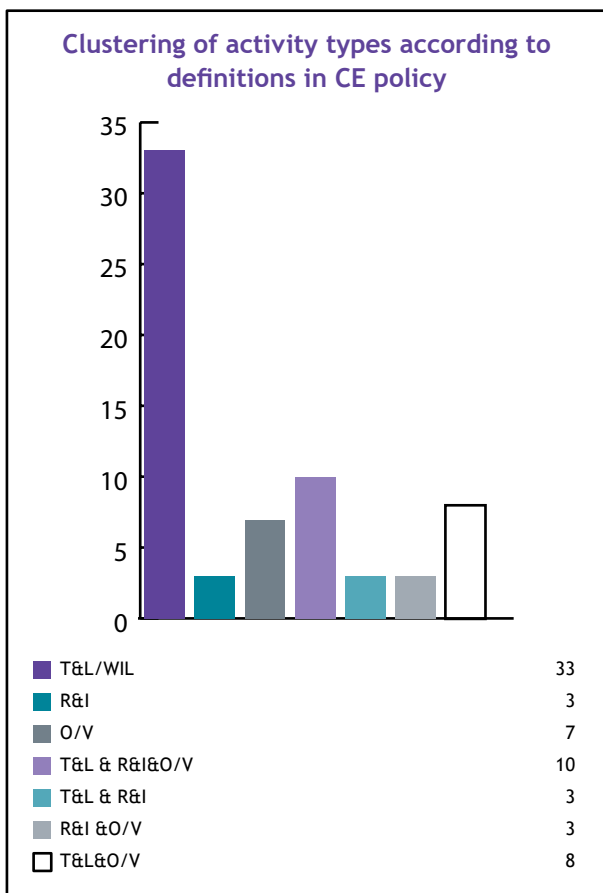
2.3.2   Activity evaluation per Faculty

■ Faculty of Education (FEDU)	23
■ Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences (FEMS)	28
■ NWU Business School	1
■ Faculty of Engineering (FENG)	0
■ Faculty of Humanities (FHUM)	3
■ Faculty of Law (FLAW)	0
■ Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences (FNAS)	2
■ Faculty of Theology (FTHEO)	0
■ Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS)	9
■ Student Life (Mahikeng)	0
■ Student Life (Potchefstroom)	0
■ Student Life (Vanderbijlpark)	0
■ Sustainability & Community Impact	0
☐ Other	1

* The 'Other' category in the chart is specified as an activity from the School of Nursing Sciences, titled "Collaboration between Nursing, Social Work, and Education", which is multi-disciplinary.

From the data, it's clear that the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences had the highest number of activities submitted for evaluation, closely followed by the Faculty of Education. However, it's important to note, that while the evaluation surveys were completed, this does not necessarily mean that all submitted activities underwent a thorough evaluation process. The faculties of Engineering, Law, Theology, and Student Life departments on various campuses, as well as SCI, had no activities evaluated. While activities are ongoing and therefor many activity leaders do not submit an ongoing evaluation, and this could have influenced the

number of submissions recorded. This information suggests that the focus of activities evaluations was concentrated within the university's faculties and could inform future resource allocation and support for CE activities across the different faculties.

2.3.3 Clustering of activities

Most of the activities completing evaluation surveys were classified under T&L/ WIL, with 33 responses indicating this cluster. This was followed by the category T&L + Research with 10 responses.

Clustering of activity types according to definitions in CE policy

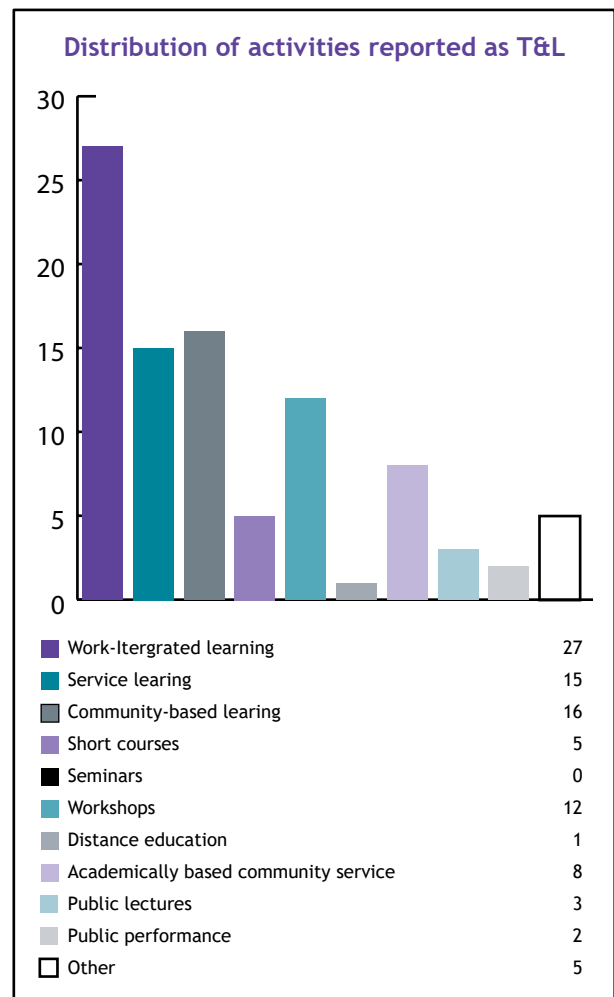|	
■ T&L/WIL	33
■ R&I	3
■ O/V	7
■ T&L & R&I&O/V	10
■ T&L & R&I	3
■ R&I &O/V	3
□ T&L&O/V	8

This data suggests that many activities are focused on T&L, specifically with a work integration component, which implies that these activities are intricately linked to curriculum and classroom experiences. The data also shows that while there is some integration between T&L, and other areas like research and outreach, pure research, and innovation, as well as pure outreach/ volunteerism, are less commonly represented as the primary cluster for activities. This clustering could reflect the institution's current priorities or the nature of the activities that were evaluated. It also highlights potential areas for growth in interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral engagements

and even a need to involve community partners in the planning of activities and activities to ensure a stronger link to CE.

2.3.4 Teaching and Learning (T&L)

To increase the understanding of the concept of T&L the evaluation survey solicited the clustering of the activities.

Distribution of activities reported as T&L

■ Work-Itergrated learning	27
■ Service learing	15
■ Community-based learing	16
■ Short courses	5
■ Seminars	0
■ Workshops	12
■ Distance education	1
■ Academically based community service	8
■ Public lectures	3
■ Public performance	2
□ Other	5

- Work-integrated learning (WIL) is the most common activity within the T&L cluster, suggesting a strong emphasis on practical, hands-on experiences integrated with academic learning.

- Service learning (SL) and community-based learning are also significant components of the T&L activities, indicating a focus on educational experiences that also benefit the community.

- Workshops are common, suggesting a preference for interactive, skill-building sessions.

- Academically based CE is present but less common,

which might indicate a specific integration of academic work with community service.

- Distance education reports are notably underrepresented in our T&L activities, which may reflect a current institutional emphasis on in-person engagement. To address this and potentially expand our educational reach, a recommendation has been made to explore and integrate best practices for e-service learning, as demonstrated by other South African universities.

- The category "Other" suggests that there are a variety of activities that do not fall neatly into the predefined categories, indicating a diversity in the types of T&L activities being conducted.

- In comparison to the definitions outlined in the CE policy, it appears that many of the activities detailed in the aforementioned analysis align more closely with the concept of "sharing of expertise." Consequently, traditional methods of measuring impact may prove challenging due to the nature of expertise sharing, which often involves qualitative and nuanced outcomes that are not easily quantifiable.
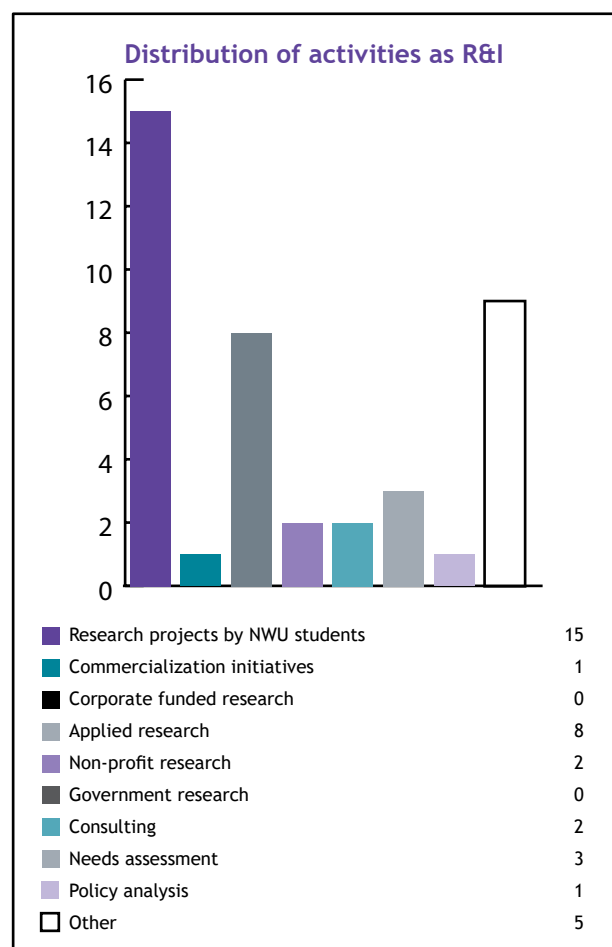
2.3.5 Research and Innovation (R&I)

To increase the understanding of the concept of Research and Innovation the evaluation survey requested the clustering of the R&I related activities. Notably, very few innovation activities were recorded as innovation only.

- The prominence of student-led research activities, particularly among postgraduate students, within the R&I activities signifies the university's commitment to fostering a research culture. Considering this, it is recommended that postgraduate research endeavours explicitly record which SDGs they address. This can be achieved by incorporating relevant SDGs into the keywords of their dissertations, theses, and publications, thereby enhancing the visibility of the university's contribution to these global objectives and fostering a culture of purpose-driven research.

- Applied research also has a notable count, indicating a practical research approach that has direct applications.

- There is a high number of activities categorised as "Other," which may include a range of research and innovation activities not captured
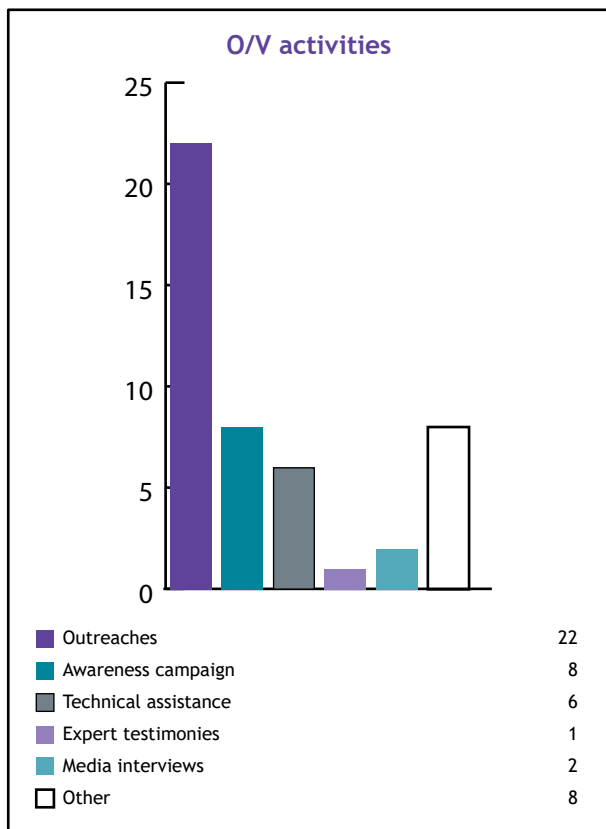
by the predefined categories, indicating the diversity in research efforts.

- Commercialisation initiatives, policy analysis, and consulting are present but have exceptionally low counts, which may reflect specific areas of focus or potential areas for growth.

- The absence of corporate and government-funded research in our data could signify untapped potential in these sectors. Recognising this as a possible funding opportunity, it is advisable to actively pursue these avenues with the aid of NWU's fundraising team and focussed stakeholder engagements. The established connections of the fundraising team, with Corporate Social Investment (CSI) managers in various industries could be instrumental in securing support for future research activities, thereby diversifying our funding portfolio and enhancing the scope and impact of our research endeavours.

- Needs assessments, while not as prevalent as student research, are still present, showing some commitment to understanding and addressing community needs through research.

Distribution of activities as R&I	
Research projects by NWU students	15
Commercialization initiatives	1
Corporate funded research	0
Applied research	8
Non-profit research	2
Government research	0
Consulting	2
Needs assessment	3
Policy analysis	1
Other	5

2.3.6   Outreach/Volunteerism (O/V)

To increase the understanding of the concept of Outreach/Volunteerism the evaluation survey requested the detailed clustering of the activities.
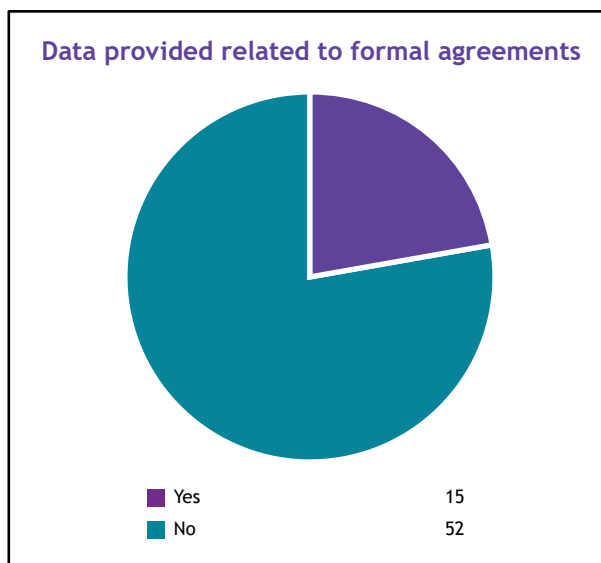
O/V activities

■ Outreaches	22
■ Awareness campaign	8
■ Technical assistance	6
■ Expert testimonies	1
■ Media interviews	2
□ Other	8

- The activities indicated as 'other' did not include any descriptive information and could not be categorised.

- Outreach activities are the most frequent, with 22 instances. This suggests a strong commitment to engaging with the broader community beyond the university and the ethic of care.

- Awareness campaigns are also relatively common, which implies that the university places importance on informing and educating the public on various issues.

- Technical assistance is provided at a moderate frequency, indicating some level of expertise-sharing with external parties.

- The limited engagement observed in expert testimonies and media interviews suggests either sporadic participation in public discourse on specialized topics or instances where such engagements were not documented in the database. To gain a more holistic understanding

of the visibility and influence of our experts, it would be beneficial to correlate this data with insights from the Corporate and Marketing Relations team, which annually identifies and recognizes NWU's experts. By establishing this correlation, we can develop strategies to enhance the presence of our experts in media and public forums. This approach will amplify the university's voice in societal conversations and strengthen our position as thought leaders in various fields.

- The data suggests that outreach and volunteerism are active components of the university's engagement, with a diverse array of activities that cover a range of topics and serve various community needs. The presence of a considerable number of activities in the "Other" category indicates flexibility and responsiveness to various outreach opportunities or needs that arise outside of standard programs.

2.3.7   Formal agreements with external and community collaborators

The evaluation survey data indicated that 22% of activities evaluated had formal agreements such as memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with external and community collaborators. The data indicated that 78% of activities implemented were without signed agreements. On the question of the existence of formal agreements respondents provided the following:

Data provided related to formal agreements

|	
■ Yes	15
■ No	52

This information suggests that while there is some level of formalisation in collaborations, a significant majority of activities are conducted on a more informal basis. This could have implications for the

sustainability and accountability of these activities and might be an area to explore for potential improvement. Formal agreements can often provide a clearer structure and defined expectations for all parties involved in an activity.

2.3.8   CE Activity Funding

The evaluation survey data indicated that 43% of evaluated activities were funded and 57% of evaluated activities were implemented without funding.

Activities indicating funding

■ Yes	29
■ No	38
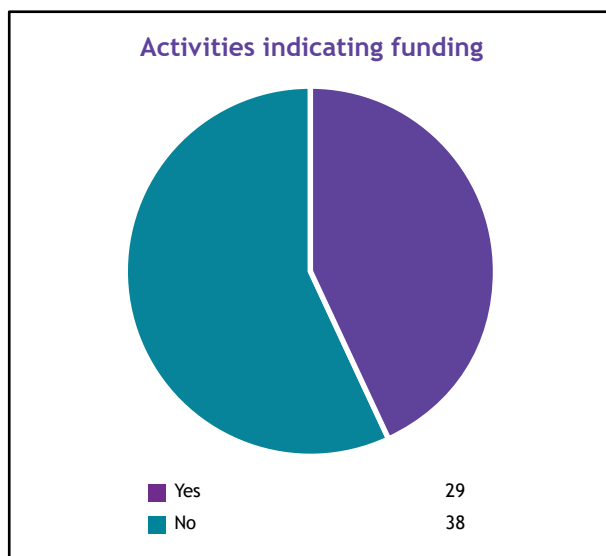
- While 43% of our activities receiving financial backing demonstrates the university's ability to secure and manage funds effectively, the noteworthy 57% of unfunded activities reflect the resourcefulness and commitment of our activity leaders who persist in their efforts despite financial constraints. This financial landscape presents an opportunity to delve deeper into the specifics of our expenditures, as reported in our integrated ratings and rankings reports.

- A closer examination of whether these funds originate directly from NWU would underscore our self-reliance and leadership in CE, potentially paving the way for co-funding initiatives.

- Furthermore, this financial dynamic might also suggest a tendency among activity leaders to rely heavily on donations, which correlates with the substantial focus on outreach activities. Enhancing our leaders' capacity to diversify funding sources could further solidify our community initiatives' sustainability.

2.3.9   Active monitoring as an indicator of a process followed to record impact

The evaluation survey collected data on monitoring the progress of activities. The following chart represents the data, to the question related to if activities were being monitored or not.

Confirmation of monitoring

■ Yes	53
■ No	14
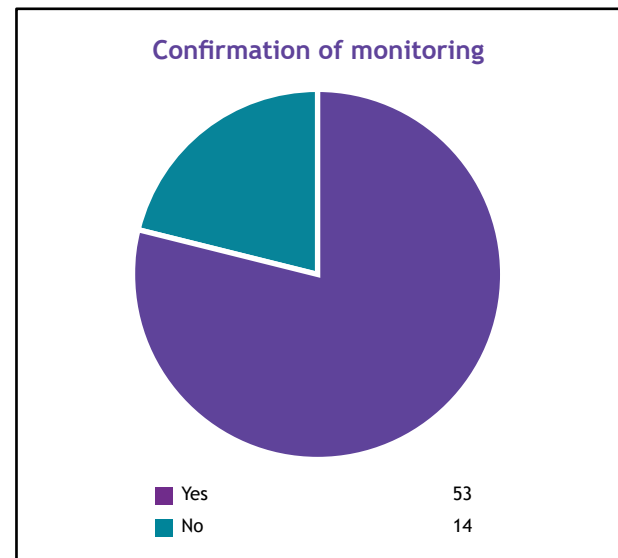
- 79% (53 activity leaders) indicated that they are responsible for monitoring their activity.
- 21% (14 activity leaders) reported not monitoring their activities.

This data suggests that most activity leaders take an active role in monitoring the progress of their activities, which is a positive sign in terms of project management and oversight. Monitoring is a key part of the activity management cycle, ensuring that activities are on track to meet their objectives, timelines, and budgets.

**Fundamental governance and management issues to consider include**

- **Accountability:** Without regular monitoring, it can be challenging to ensure that the activity is progressing as planned and to hold team members accountable.

- **Risk Management:** Monitoring is crucial for identifying potential risks and issues early on so that corrective actions can be taken. Lack of monitoring may lead to unnoticed issues that could jeopardize the success of the activity.

- **Quality Control:** Continuous monitoring is also

essential for maintaining the quality of the project's outputs and outcomes.

- **Reporting and Evaluation:** For activities that are funded, especially by external entities, regular monitoring may be a requirement. Failure to do so could impact reporting to funders and may affect future funding.

- **Learning and Improvement:** Monitoring provides data that can be used for learning and improvement, not only for the current activity but also for future initiatives.

Given these considerations, it might be beneficial to investigate why some activity leaders are not monitoring their activities and to provide additional support or resources to ensure that all activities are adequately monitored. This could include training on project management best practices, providing monitoring tools and templates, or assigning monitoring responsibilities to specific roles within the activity team.

2.3.10 Measuring the impact of activities

Confirmation of impact measurement

■ Yes	43
■ No	24
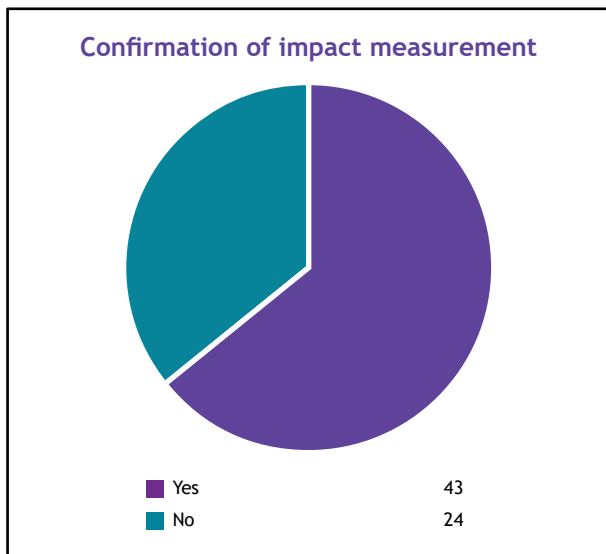
The evaluation survey collected data on measuring the impact of activities implemented. The following chart represents the data on whether activities were being monitored in terms of impact.

- The data showcasing that 64% of our activities engage in impact measurement is indicative of the university's strong dedication to an evidence-based approach, aligning our efforts with our core objectives. Nevertheless, the lack of such measurement in 36% of the activities highlights a critical area for development.

- This gap signifies not only the need for a broader application of impact assessments but also points to a deeper issue: the varied interpretations and understandings of 'impact' within the university. It is imperative to distinguish between different types of impacts—be they immediate, long-term, direct, or indirect—and to particularly focus on the sustainability of positive impacts, which aligns with our overarching goals. Addressing this gap will enhance our ability to communicate the true value of our work to stakeholders and guide informed strategic planning for sustained future impact.

2.3.11 Types of outputs planned for activities

To gain a comprehensive understanding of the immediate impact and reach of activities, it is crucial to consider the types of planned outputs resulting from the implemented activities. These planned outputs serve as indicators of how information about the activities is disseminated. By examining the types of outputs generated, such as reports, publications, presentations, or media coverage, we can assess the extent to which information about the activities is shared and disseminated to relevant stakeholders and the wider community.

Types of CE outputs as evidence of impact

■ SL/WIL:	38
■ R&I:	24
■ Other:	24
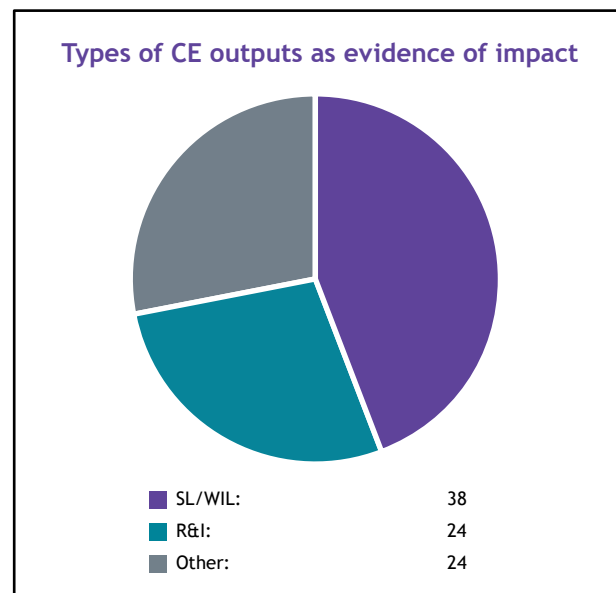
- The significant engagement in SL and WIL underscores a focus on practical student education, yet it's crucial to differentiate these from true CE. Unlike WIL, which centres on students applying technical knowledge in workplace settings, SL should incorporate service to external partners and necessitates reflection

to capture its full value, a process that currently lacks clear measurement indicators within our evaluation framework. This is an indication of a student-centred approach, but also offers the opportunity to expend on our community service support through student training.

- For indicators categorised as 'other,' there exists a deficiency in the available alternative options within the selection list, where respondents are prompted to provide answers. However, no provision for expansion or clarification is made. Consequently, utilising this option becomes nonsensical and requires rectification. In the future, respondents should be provided with the opportunity to elucidate the context of the intended impact they aim to achieve, either through clearer alternatives or an option for uploading additional information.

- While innovation within the CE context is to be encouraged, there is a pressing need for vigilance to ensure the intellec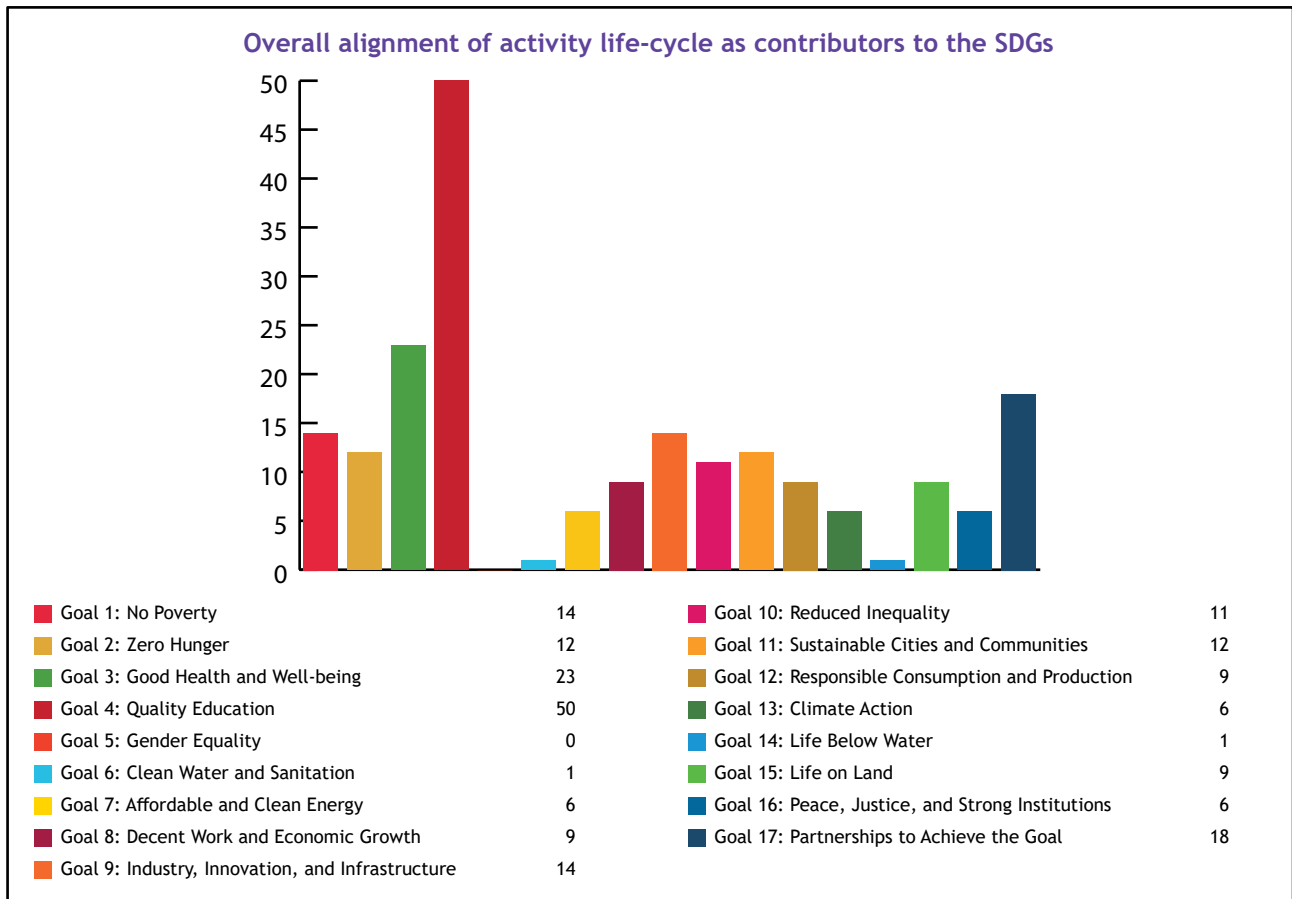tual property and contributions of community partners are respected and protected. The current risk of appropriating ideas from these communities without proper agreements highlights the urgent necessity for formalized MOUs to safeguard against such ethical breaches and to foster a relationship of trust and reciprocity. The data reported in the current reporting cycle is not sufficient to determine any specific trends in this context, although in previous years, notable innovative inventions were recognised as part of the CE excellence awards.

2.3.12 Alignment with Sustainable Development Goals

The data illustrates the extent to which the university's initiatives are in sync with the SDGs set by the United Nations, showcasing a pronounced dedication to SDG 4 (Quality Education) and reflecting the institution's commitment to advancing educational objectives. Additionally, the university's activities display significant engagement with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 1 (No Poverty), and SDG 17 (Partnerships

Overall changes during the activity life cycle as related to the SDGs

Sustainable Development Goals	Registration		Monitoring		Evaluation		OVERALL SDG	OVERALL SDG %
	#	%	#	%	#	%		
Goal 1: No poverty	13	2%	21	7%	14	7%	48	**4%**
Goal 2: Zero hunger	12	2%	14	4%	12	6%	38	**3%**
Goal 3: Good health and well-being	108	19%	43	14%	23	11%	174	**16%**
Goal 4: Quality education	168	30%	58	18%	50	25%	276	**25%**
Goal 5: Gender equality	9	2%	9	3%	0	0%	18	**2%**
Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation	5	1%	4	1%	1	0%	10	**1%**
Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy	6	1%	3	1%	6	3%	15	**1%**
Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth	28	5%	20	6%	9	4%	57	**5%**
Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	43	8%	20	6%	14	7%	77	**7%**
Goal 10: Reduced inequality	27	5%	20	6%	11	5%	58	**5%**
Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities	23	4%	24	8%	12	6%	59	**5%**
Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production	14	2%	15	5%	9	4%	38	**3%**
Goal 13: Climate action	8	1%	11	3%	6	3%	25	**2%**
Goal 14: Life below water	3	1%	2	1%	1	0%	6	**1%**
Goal 15: Life on land	8	1%	13	4%	9	4%	30	**3%**
Goal 16: Peace, justice, and strong institutions	17	3%	8	3%	6	3%	31	**3%**
Goal 17: Partnerships to achieve the goals	77	14%	33	10%	18	9%	128	**12%**

Overall alignment of activity life-cycle as contributors to the SDGs

■ Goal 1: No Poverty	14	■ Goal 10: Reduced Inequality	11
■ Goal 2: Zero Hunger	12	■ Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	12
■ Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being	23	■ Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	9
■ Goal 4: Quality Education	50	■ Goal 13: Climate Action	6
■ Goal 5: Gender Equality	0	■ Goal 14: Life Below Water	1
■ Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	1	■ Goal 15: Life on Land	9
■ Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy	6	■ Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	6
■ Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	9	■ Goal 17: Partnerships to Achieve the Goal	18
■ Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	14		

for the Goals), highlighting a broad spectrum of contributions towards global challenges. There is engagement with SDG 5 (Gender Equality), with nine activities dedicated to this area, indicating an active, though potentially underrepresented, effort to address gender equality through the university's activity portfolio.

In the context of this data, it is important to acknowledge that while activities are aligned with various SDGs, currently no evidence is presented to link these SDG activity alignments to the official SDG indicators and sub-indicators. This linkage is crucial for a robust and verifiable claim of impact, as the official indicators provide a standardized framework for measuring and reporting progress towards these global goals. Without such evidence, it can be challenging to assess the activity actual contributions to the SDGs or to compare them with other initiatives. Therefore, future evaluations should consider incorporating these indicators to enhance the transparency, accountability, and efficacy of the university's engagements with the SDGs.

The observed fluctuations and variations in the alignment with SDGs at different stages of the activity lifecycle, registration, monitoring, and evaluation,

can likely be attributed to a combination of factors stemming from the procedural nuances in how these stages are documented and assessed. Initially, during the activity registration phase, there might be a pronounced emphasis on certain goals, such as SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), driven by initial activity objectives and aspirations. However, as the activity progresses, the recollection of these initially prioritised goals may not always be accurate or consistent when revisited during the monitoring phase, leading project leaders to inadvertently select differing SDGs that may not align with their initial registrations. This discrepancy could be a result of using separate processes or distinct surveys at each stage, which do not facilitate a seamless recall or tracking of previously selected goals.

Furthermore, the dynamic nature of CE activities means they may evolve or pivot in response to emerging challenges, opportunities, or insights gained during implementation. Such shifts could naturally lead to a change in focus or realignment of goals, contributing to the noted increases and fluctuations across various SDGs. These changes, while reflective of the activity's adaptive management and responsiveness to community needs, underscore the necessity for a more integrated and flexible approach

in capturing and tracking the alignment with SDGs throughout the activity duration. This integration would not only provide clarity and consistency in how activities contribute to the SDGs but also offer valuable insights into the strategic evolution of these initiatives in meeting their broader objectives and impacts.

2.3.13 Rewarding excellence in CE

Recognizing achievements through awards and incentives plays a pivotal role in garnering support for the change management process of integrating CE into our daily business operations. Ten community engagement champions were recognized across four distinct categories. Prof Sithandiwe Mazibuko-Mbeje, affiliated with the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, was honoured with the Sharing of Expertise Award, designated for seasoned academic staff.

In the domain of Engaged Teaching and Learning, Prof Elma Marais and Prof Carolina Botha, both associated with the Faculty of Education, were lauded among established academic staff, while Dr Lerato E Mdaka, from the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, received the same accolade among novice academic staff.

Dr Vicki Koen, alongside her outreach team from the Faculty of Health Sciences, clinched the Outreach Award, with the team comprising Prof Johan Potgieter, Mianda Erasmus, and Dr Christiaan Bekker.

Further recognition was bestowed upon Dr Christi Niesing and her team from the Faculty of Health Sciences, which included Prof Petra Bester, for their exemplary contributions in the domain of the Scholarship of Engagement.

PART 3: STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD

3.1   SOAR Analysis

The Strength Opportunity Aspiration Results (SOAR) analysis presents a strength-focused strategic framework that guides the NWU in identifying and leveraging its inherent strengths and opportunities to achieve its aspirational goals and desired results, particularly within the context of CE. This approach emphasizes a positive focus, highlighting what the university does well and how it can build upon these successes to further its impact on society and contributions to the SDGs. By exploring the university's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and measurable results, the SOAR analysis facilitates a comprehensive understanding of NWU's current position and its trajectory toward future achievements in CE. This analytical process not only supports strategic planning and decision-making but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement and innovation across all facets of the university's operations and initiatives.

STRENGTHS

- The initiation of a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process marks a significant advancement in NWU's approach to CE activities. For the first time, this process allows for a reflective assessment of activity impacts, highlighting NWU's commitment to continuous improvement and accountability in its CE initiatives.

- A notable strength in NWU's activities is the integrated approach to T&L, where a significant number of activities focused on WIL and SL. This approach not only enhances the educational experience for students but also contributes positively to the community, embodying the true spirit of CE by fostering a mutually beneficial relationship.

- The distribution of activity evaluations across the three campuses, with Potchefstroom leading, reflects a decentralized strength in CE activities. This geographical diversity in engagement initiatives offers a wide array of local impact opportunities and underscores the university's capability to address diverse community needs across different regions.

- The rigorous process followed in assessing the submissions for the 2023 CE Awards allowed for an audit trail. Prize money was availed for the first time in this category to encourage further development of activities with impact. The awards ceremony coincides with the Vice-Chancellors Awards.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Enhancing the understanding and application of the M&E framework among all activity leaders represents a key opportunity. Training and support in this area could improve the quality and consistency of data collected, leading to more accurate assessments of activity impacts and more informed decision-making for future CE efforts.

- Strengthening and expanding partnerships is essential for increasing the scope and depth of our CE activities. By building formal trust relationships and fostering collaborations, we can augment the quantity of our initiatives and solidify our commitment to sustainable community development.

- The low representation of distance education in CE activities presents an opportunity to leverage digital platforms for expanding the reach and inclusivity of NWU's programs. By adopting best practices for e-service learning, NWU can address broader educational needs and adapt to evolving learning environments.

- The exploration of formalised partnerships and funding opportunities, particularly in corporate and government sectors, opens avenues for co-funding and enhanced resource allocation. This strategic move could significantly amplify the university's capacity to undertake more ambitious activities and drive substantial social impact.

ASPIRATIONS

- NWU aspires to refine its project evaluation process, aiming for a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of community impact. This includes making distinctions between

various types of impacts and ensuring that activities contribute to the sustainability of positive outcomes in the communities they serve.

- The university is committed to broadening its focus to include underrepresented SDGs in its project portfolio, particularly Gender Equality (SDG 5). By doing so, NWU aspires to ensure a balanced and holistic approach to addressing global challenges through its CE activities.

- NWU seeks to establish itself as a leader in ethical CE, ensuring that all activities, especially those involving innovation and research, respect and protect the intellectual property and contributions of community partners. Formal agreements, like MOUs, will play a crucial role in safeguarding these ethical considerations.

- To in future recognise the contribution of community partners in the co-creation of new knowledge and practice.

RESULTS

- Achieving a higher rate of activity registration, monitoring, and evaluation. Completion is a primary goal, aiming to encompass a more significant percentage of NWU's CE portfolio. This result will enable a more accurate representation of the university's impact and areas for growth.

- An anticipated result is the increased visibility and acknowledgment of NWU's contributions to the SDGs, particularly through postgraduate research activities. Incorporating SDG alignment in the keywords of dissertations, theses, and publications will enhance the university's profile as a contributor to global goals.

- Strengthening NWU's public engagement and expert visibility through more consistent contributions to expert testimonies and media interviews is a key result. This effort will amplify the university's influence in public discourse and societal conversations, showcasing its expertise and research outcomes to a broader audience.

3.2 The way forward for 2024

3.2.1. Terminology alignment

- Collect SenseMaker® data from various stakeholder groups to inform different terminologies like community, activity versus project, impact, and ethical practices.

- Workshops with Deputy Deans to refine the terminology, SOPs, policies, and processes.

- Policy review and alignment.

- Process of alignment of CE activity registration, monitoring, and evaluation role clarification of different stakeholders.

- Addressing lessons learned on question flow, avoiding repetition, and providing clarity is essential. For instance, when indicators are marked as 'other,' it's crucial to fill the gap in alternative options. This lack of clarity confuses respondents and hampers effective response articulation. Future versions should offer clearer alternatives or allow respondents to explain their intended impact. These enhancements can streamline the questionnaire, reducing redundancy and confusion.

- Develop a standardized process for ethical engagement with different stakeholders supported by the office of the Registrar.

3.2.2 Change management for SenseMaker® technology adoption.

- Interns assigned to each unit for CE activity registration, monitoring, and evaluation.
- One unified database with registered activities for performance appraisals and promotion applications.
- Development of indicators for impact measurement in Engaged Scholarship CE Activities to enable measurement of intended and unintended long-term impact of activities.

3.2.3 Adapted Timeline for 2024 outputs

TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICE	ACTION	OUTPUT	OUTCOMES	COMPLETED
2022 First Quarter	• DVC CE	Planning	Strategy for CE and Sustainability Policy draft		Yes
2022 Second Quarter	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	CE activity registration	754 activities registered on the database		Yes
	• DVC CE SCI Department and AUTHeR • Director - AUTHeR • Academic staff - AUTHeR • Administrative staff - AUTHeR	Analysis of database	NWU CE Report 2021-2022	Aligned Goal 3 APP and strategic direction for NWU CE	Yes
2022 Third Quarter	• DVC CE SCI Department and AUTHeR • CE representatives: support and academic staff	CE Activity evaluation	Survey developed by AUTHeR		Yes
	• DVC CE SCI Department and AUTHeR • Academic staff - AUTHeR	Engage with different stakeholder groups to refine CE reporting process	Refined NWU CE reporting process	SCI office structure and processes to support CE activities	Yes
	• Senior Management Committee	Present new reporting CE process	Approval of new CE reporting process		Yes
2022 Fourth Quarter	• DVC CE SCI Department and AUTHeR • Academic staff - AUTHeR	Workshop for final co-creation of system for 2023	Co-creation by all relevant stakeholders	Approved CE Activity process	Yes
	• DVC CE SCI Department and AUTHeR • Director - AUTHeR • Academic staff - AUTHeR	• Write annual CE report for 2022. • Provide SOP for Project management by 10 December	Annual CE Activity Report 2022	SoP for CE Activity Management	Yes
2023 First Quarter	• DVC CE SCI Department • Executive Director People and Culture	• Implement adapted Goal 3 in APP system. • CE activity registration deadline: March 2023	Alignment of processes between People and Culture and all units involved with CE activities.	Standardised aligned process	**Yes – needs refinement in 2024**

TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICE	ACTION	OUTPUT	OUTCOMES	COMPLETED
	• DVC CE SCI Department	Refine CE and Environmental Sustainability Policies and present them to management and academics for use and implementation	CE and Environmental Sustainability Policy	Policies to guide implementation	**To be done in 2024**
	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	• Roadshows with faculty management CE representatives to assist with the implementation, schools, research entities and support departments. • Include CE and Environmental Sustainability awareness/ training of all new staff members	Training for implementation of process	Standardised aligned process	**Partially completed,** emphasis on CE rather than environmental sustainability, **work in progress**
2023 Second quarter	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE Representatives - Academic staff • CE Representatives - Administrative staff	Develop formal CE platforms for NWU for R-I, T-L/WIL activities	Community forums and formal training platforms	Reciprocal relationships	Had one meeting per campus, ongoing
	• DVC CE SCI Department • Executive Director People and Culture • Student Life • Office of the Registrar	Explore the system to provide proof of student CE activities	Indicators of proof for student CE activities	A draft system for 'Badging'	**In process** supporting Executive director Student Life's office.:
	• DVC CE SCI Department • Executive Director Financial Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Identify CE cost-driving indicators and current strategies implemented for the management of financial implications of CE activities	An in-depth understanding of current strategies to develop an aligned strategy for project planning, costing, financial management and reporting of CE activities	Refine cost drivers in collaboration with key stakeholders	**Ongoing**
	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Monitoring of CE activities aligned with APP mid-year performance review	Proof of evidence of monitoring	Monitoring of CE activities	**2023 year-end report**

TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICE	ACTION	OUTPUT	OUTCOMES	COMPLETED
2023 Third Quarter	• DVC CE SCI Department • Office of the Registrar (Legal Services Department - agreements) • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Streamline the process of establishing MoU's, MoA's, Service Level Agreements and Full Value contracts with Office of the Registrar (Legal Services Department - agreements) to support CE activities formalization	A clear process to follow to formalize agreements		**2023 year-end report-ongoing**
2023 Fourth Quarter	• DVC CE SCI Department, DVC T-L, DVC R-I • WISL office, Research Support Office	Align processes in support functions to align with engaged scholarship training	Alignment between SCI Office, Research Support Office and WISL	Optimal student support	Oversight and line authority in DVC T&L. **Ongoing**
	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Evaluation of CE activities aligned with APP mid-year performance review	Proof of evidence of evaluation of CE activities	Evaluation of CE activities	**See 2023 year-end report,** requires intervention and awareness training-new staff, policy refinement and change management
2024 First Quarter	• DVC CE SCI Department, DVC T&L, DVC R&I • Registrar • DVC Planning • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Develop a system to provide proof of student CE activities	Proof of CE attributes obtained by students	Improved employability of students. Continuous support and input provided as required. Additionally contribute to student entrepreneurship development and internship deployment for work experience	
	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	CE activity registrations aligned with APP performance agreement process end of March	Proof of evidence of activity planning	Activity plan for CE activities on going linked to APP and faculty plans – refined reporting support and training	

TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICE	ACTION	OUTPUT	OUTCOMES	COMPLETED
	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	New call for 2023 awards submissions to faculty committees by	Workshops on CE awards process, new CE awards nominations submitted to faculty committees to faculty committees or management structures in support units- **end of July.** University selection committee/ task team appointed by **August.** Faculty submissions referred to DVC task team by **15 Aug.**	Recommendations from selection committee to be received by **end of September.** Awards event end of **November.**	
	• DVC CE SCI Department, DVC T&L, DVC R&I • Executive Director Finance Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Refine process to cost and budget of CE activities	Sound financial management of CE Activities	Ability to budget, cost and manage CE activities- Ongoing – collaborative efforts with budgeting support and planning	
	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Hold stakeholder meetings to cement partnerships, identify needs and plan activities, collaborations, MOUs	1x stakeholder meeting per campus Update data base of partnerships	Data base of partnerships MOU's ongoing aligned with reporting cycles	
2024 Second Quarter	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Evaluation of CE activity process	Identification of gaps in the process	A refined CE activity process Meta-analysis of 2023 reporting, improved report contents, using technology to understand status quo and recommendations for improvements	
	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Monitoring of CE activities aligned with APP mid-year performance review	Proof of evidence of monitoring	Monitoring of CE activities, Site visits, training workshops, and change, management	

TIMELINE	RESPONSIBLE OFFICE	ACTION	OUTPUT	OUTCOMES	COMPLETED
2024 Third Quarter	• DVC SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Continuous support to enable change management and process adoption of new data base and refinement	Adoption of the system by entire NWU	Active database, reporting, monitoring, and evaluation of all NWU CE Activities Monitoring and support to refine the use of SenseMaker®. Upgrade SOPs and complete quality manual.	
	• DVC SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff • Faculty boards and ethics structures	Clear ethics processes identified and described in SoPs for CE activities	SoPs with definitions to ensure ethical clearance adherence	Documentation availed freely and training	
2024 Fourth Quarter	• DVC CE SCI Department • Registrar • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Ranking of NWU in terms of CE and engaged scholarship	International benchmarking of NWU	Engaged Scholarship: Ongoing, expose leadership and decision makers to best practice, attend international conferences in SL (CLAYSS, ISSL) and IARSLCE, reports	
	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	CE Excellence awards completed	Winners selected and announced end of November-Event	NWU Excellence Awards function, recognition, and marketing/ awareness	
	• DVC CE SCI Department • CE representatives: support and academic staff	Evaluation of CE activities aligned with APP mid-year performance review	Proof of evidence of evaluation of CE activities	Evaluation of CE activities: Functional reporting cycles with updated reports by year-end captured on new system	

3.3 Main deliverables planned for the Sustainable Community Impact Department for 2024

Three main outcomes are purposed to support the improvement of the critical areas identified in this report, these are-

3.3.1. Alignment between CE processing and compliance to SOPs by the larger NWU including processes for ethical CE activities.

3.3.2. Focused CE Activity Process alignment:

- Refinement of terminology in the policies,
- Support and drive change management to ensure equitable inclusion of CE in performance evaluation and promotions with all relevant stakeholder,
- Standardised CE Awards process with adherence to due dates.
- Change management process to technology adoption.

Acknowledgements

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