

Student Affairs

Your success matters to us at Student Affairs!

by Dr Matete Madiba



The Department of Student Affairs (DSA) offers a range of services to enhance student success, leadership, welfare and wellness. Our services have a proactive and programme-based approach.

DSA consists of five units, namely **Student Counselling, Student Health Services, Student Governance, Student Development** and the **Disability Unit**.

Coming to university for the first time is very exciting, but it can also be intimidating and even challenging. It is a time of transition and growth; it is a time where you will acquire a range of additional skills; it is a time in which additional demands will be placed on you.

If you make use of the programmes and services we offer at DSA, you will not only be empowered, you will flourish at university and your journey as a student will be exciting and meaningful. Seize every opportunity you are given!

The STARS Mentorship programme

The STARS programme assists first year students to adapt to university life socially and emotionally. A mentee (first year student) is matched with a mentor (senior student of the same faculty and, where possible, the same programme) who can provide support and give guidance to the mentee on all levels of student life. **Your success matters to us very much!**

Student Health Services Unit

We want our students to be healthy and safe. Make proactive lifestyle choices to preserve your health and vitality. We will support you every step of the way!

All registered students at UP have access to the services offered by Student Health, including HIV testing, in collaboration with the Centre for Sexualities, AIDS and Gender (CSA&G).

Student Health Services include *free and basic primary health care services* on the Hatfield Campus every weekday,

and on a rotational basis on our other UP campuses. Clinics are staffed by a professional nurse and a sessional doctor on specific days. The following professionals are available:

- Medical doctors
- Professional nurses
- Dieticians
- Optometrists
- HIV peer counsellors (or Befrienders, who are specially trained CSA&G volunteers)

Remember to bring your student card along when you visit the clinic.



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The Disability Unit

It is important to the University of Pretoria that students with disabilities are enabled to participate fully in student activities and become contributing members of society when they graduate.

At UP students with disabilities are not marginalised – they are highly engaged in student life and socially integrated from day one. They are also equipped with knowledge, skills and opportunities to contribute towards a society that safeguards environmental, social and economic wellbeing. They have meaningful access to teaching and learning activities, as well as access to co-curricular activities.

First year students with disabilities are assisted with their adjustment to the university environment through the use of adaptive technology, career planning, study skills, mentoring

and leadership development. They participate in sports like blind cricket, wheel chair rugby and a range of cultural activities.

They are also assisted with curriculum design, co-curricular activities and adaptation to information and communication technologies. At UP we expose all students with disabilities, to **Universal Design for Learning** environments and activities.

Learning opportunities outside the classroom are as important as those inside. Students with disabilities are given opportunities to build leadership skills, enhance their communication skills, develop critical thinking skills, and prepare to be work-ready.

An APP that will enable students with visual disabilities to navigate safely on campus, is currently under development by the Department of Computer Science together with the Disability Unit and private industry.

At the University of Pretoria we have **tactile paving**, which increases

mobility and orientation of students with disabilities.

The Disability Unit engages with many companies to increase the **employability** of graduates with disabilities and they maintain a network of contacts with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in South Africa, including Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges.

There is an **online tool that maps accessibility at HEIs** for students with disabilities. The aim is to improve access to students with disabilities.

The Disability Unit annually presents and assists learners at the **Gauteng Hope School – Mandeville Disability Career Expo** in conjunction with Wits University. Learners with disabilities from many schools across Gauteng attend this event.

At UP we also hold an interactive **Disability Sensitivity Workshop**, designed to train and sensitise lecturers and support staff.

Student Counselling Unit

Life throws all sorts of things that make our life stories complex and challenging. You do not have to suffer in silence. Reach out to those who can offer support. You need a healthy frame of mind in order to succeed in your studies.

At some point during their studies students may find it difficult to be far from home while they are expected to function independently and make good decisions about their academics, lifestyle, money and relationships. Some find it difficult to share accommodation; some find it difficult to relate to people from different backgrounds who may hold very different viewpoints; others experience academic pressure; some have difficulties learning effectively. University can be rather daunting and overwhelming.

Student Counselling services is a unit that offers psychological services that include counselling by counseling psychologists, educational and clinical psychologists. These services are confidential and free of charge

to registered University of Pretoria students.

These sessions will help you adjust to university life and may help you with relationship problems or mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression.

Should you experience trauma, a significant loss or family problems, you are encouraged to consult the competent staff in this unit.

They will help you thrive and regain optimal psychological wellness again so that you can be your Best Self!



Student Governance Unit

Your leadership growth matters to us. Make sure you participate in student governance structures to graduate with an enhanced leadership profile.

The Student Governance Unit is responsible for coordinating and supporting the activities of the Student Representative Council (SRC), which manages student matters and represents students on the University's decision-making committees and forums.

The SRC also coordinates organised student life activities and communicates student needs and interests to University Management.

There are more than 120 student societies you can participate in!

The SRC has a Help Desk, where students are assisted with the admission and registration processes.

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Student Nutrition and Progress Programme (SNAPP)

This is all about eradicating hunger on campus. The UP Student Nutrition and Progress Programme (SNAPP), also known as the UP Feeding Scheme, supports students who are financially needy.

Through SNAPP needy students are given a meal allowance or food parcels. Hunger is one obstacle we need to remove to ensure that students are not compromised in terms of attaining academic success.

Student Development Unit

In this Unit the focus is on leadership development, coaching and mentorship of students. We organise and coordinate student life through various student committees and programmes. Active participation in some of the organised student life offerings is very important and students are encouraged to become involved. **You can participate in:**

SRC sub-committees:

- STUKU (Student Culture Committee)
- TuksRAG
- SSC (Student Sport Committee)

Faculty houses:

Every faculty has a faculty house. There is a focus on maintaining a high academic standard, but there are also countless opportunities for socialising and fun.

Day houses:

Students who are not in UP residences, participate in RAG, sport, cultural and social events through the following day houses:

- Dregeana
- Vividus Ladies
- Luminous and
- Docendo

Don't miss out – join the house of your choice! Register online: www.up.ac.za/day-houses. There is an annual joining fee involved.

Perdeby:

Perdeby is the official student newspaper and is distributed free of charge every Monday afternoon during the university term. Become a member of the team!

www.perdeby.co.za



'The DSA has offered me the greatest privilege, namely to learn and develop as a student leader. The highest service I have learned is to help first year students throughout STARS mentorship.' – Calvin Kuhuni



'The most important reason why faculty houses are needed on campus is because they play the role of mediator between management and students. Personally, I think referring to faculty houses as the fun and supportive friend every student is looking for, is an understatement. They are much more than that! They strive to enhance student culture and foster a sense of community within the faculty.' – Remofilwe Dikoma



'Faculty houses are the major link between students of a faculty, and the faculty itself. A faculty house understands the dynamics of the various degrees in that faculty and therefore ensures coherency which facilitates success. Faculty houses seriously seek to shake off the shackles of mediocrity.' – David Kabwa