UCT DSA STRATEGIC PLAN

Evolution of the DSA Strategy 2035

Period 2021-2023 and beyond

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INTRODUCTION

This report will cover the period 2021-2023, with these being the first three years of the DSA Strategy 2035.

The Department of Student Affairs (DSA) has developed a strategic plan to advance the University of Cape Town's (UCT) Vision 2030. Accordingly , the DSA strategy aims to *unleash human potential for a fair and just society*.

DSA hopes to achieve this by having the following systemic impact on the UCT environment by 2030: *a DSA culture, permeating the university community, that affirms the humanity of each individual – embodying kindness and compassion – that enables staff and students to flourish towards the liberation of the soul*.

DSA intends to provide transformative spiritual and emotional encounters for students, to empower them with the agility necessary for their well-being and academic success.

The strategic intention laid out by DSA in this regard is to invite the UCT community to grapple with 3Ps – these being the Humanising Pedagogy (which values humanity, humaneness and human dignity in all teaching and developmental practices), the Pedagogy of Discomfort (which recognises that material growth and development happen at the point of discomfort) and the Pneumatological Pedagogy (which acknowledges the unique human capacity for spiritual pursuit and the need of humans to seek meaning and purpose).

The DSA team will know that it has realised this strategic intention when the following values materialise in the lived experiences of UCT students, staff and institutional partners:

- *Healing:* restoring students' dignity.
- *Nurturing:* facilitating, humanising and caring for students' academic success, growth and potential.
- *Resilience:* elevating the capacity to recover from setbacks.
- *Counsel:* providing guidance to students for wise choices.

Based on this systemic impact, purpose, strategic intention and the values DSA hopes to embed in the UCT culture, the department developed the following motto to guide all of the work that it does:

Rekindle Dying Embers – *Rehabilitate and Radiate the Soul for Mutual Healing and Human Flourishing [3Rs]*.

The DSA strategic plan is therefore more than simply a formal way in which to execute the above principles – it is a humanising strategy that aims to foster collaborative engagement in the pursuit of student and staff well-being. By exploring the steps taken to develop a strategic plan annual review, we hope to give credit to the lengthy yet very valuable process that has brought us to this point. Many hours, meetings, discussions, and background reports and documents have been involved in this important process, and the DSA team is grateful to all who have contributed to this endeavour since 2021.

The evolution of the DSA strategy continues to unfold, and it is our wish that it remains an agile working document that supports the university, its staff and students for many years to come.

THE PROCESS FOLLOWED

This document – detailing the evolution of the DSA strategy from 2021-2023 – is the result of three annual strategic planning sessions, held as follows:

1. 9 to 11 November 2021 at Belmont Square Conference Centre.
2. 28 to 30 November 2022 at the UCT Graduate School of Business, Breakwater Campus.
3. 14 to 16 November 2023 at Belmont Square Conference Centre.

During these strategic conversations, the DSA's senior management team established key strategic areas and an organisational structure of responsibility to ensure the effective planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of its strategic goals and objectives. Towards the end of this three-year period, an Annual Performance Plan (APP) – with clear metrics and targets – was created for the 2024-2026 period, to foster mutual accountability within DSA, and to bring the strategic plan to life in an agile way.

This document therefore outlines the processes and systems identified during the above-mentioned conversations, as well as the strategic plan 2035 with its six associated key strategic areas (KSA).

STARTING POINT

The first strategic conversation, held in November 2021, kicked off the Journey to 2035. The starting point was to unpack the strengths of DSA, to determine the areas in which the department already excels. It then aligned these to student needs and laid out the opportunities that exist within the department in terms of meeting these needs according to its areas of strength.

An important additional layer was added to the discussion: to explore the areas of passion for the DSA team members. This would ensure motivation and a sense of purpose throughout the strategic process of planning and implementation that would follow. These exercises provided DSA with a strong foundation from which to develop its strategy.

DSA STRENGTHS

Below are the strengths pertaining to DSA that were unpacked during the first strategic brainstorming session.

COLLABORATION, TEAMWORK AND RELATIONSHIPS

- DSA staff are able to work across UCT's faculties and departments.
- Strong relationship-building with students and student leaders.
- Team members have a willingness to engage in difficult conversations with students to reach solutions.
- The range of diverse student organisations and associations are able to function in co-existence, irrespective of their ideological differences.
- The incorporation of IT, Human Resources and Finances with DSA is an advantage.

STUDENT-CENTRED APPROACH

- Team members understand students' needs.
- DSA is responsive to issues and a variety of UCT-community needs.
- The department is able to remove barriers, e.g. finding alternative accommodation for students during restricted campus-access periods due to the Covid pandemic.
- There is a good model of student-led sport.
- Healthy student leadership development (with an emphasis on co-creation).
- Strong emphasis on the human pedagogy, i.e. creating humanising experiences for students.
- Student well-being and care is focused on the holistic well-being of students (including their academic success).
- Decentralised support services are offered through the 'I care' application as well as online mental health services (data-driven praxis).
- There is a strong social support system that includes S.O.S and the travel-assist fund.

AGILE AND ADAPTABLE

- There is a good sense of social responsiveness and community engagement (applicable to the university community and outside communities).
- DSA uses valuable living-learning and co-curricular models.
- Productive communication in DSA teams translates to agility and purposeful action.
- The Mercury software system assists with residence placements.

GOOD STUDENT GOVERNANCE

- DSA's student governance structures have been well-developed.
- These structures are embedded with an inclusive and participative approach (e.g. student involvement in policy development).
- Free and fair elections are consistently held.

VALUABLE DSA STAFF

- Practitioners are dedicated and willing to go the extra mile, as demonstrated during the 2021 UCT fire.
- Staff show that 'it's not a job, but a calling'.
- They are able to deal with complexity.
- There is a team culture of mutual support and recognition.
- A lot of rich experiential knowledge is held by the diverse skills of DSA staff.
- Many DSA staff participate in professional organisations in South Africa.
- The Office of the Executive Director: Student Affairs focuses on the development of staff's potential and establishes progress in relation to strategic projects.
- Staff are innovative. They think outside the box (e.g. handling of Covid-pandemic restrictions).
- Staff are proactive. They use their knowledge of the sector and environment to plan ahead.

INNOVATIVE CHANGEMAKER

- Contemplating what UCT would be like without the critical role played by the Department of Student Affairs in the university environment.
- DSA has been a vital player in aspects of Afrikanisation and decolonisation, and disrupting the dominant culture by breaking boundaries.
- DSA creates a vital bridge between the academic context and social context (home) of students.
- The diversity in DSA's functional areas allows for an integrated structure between the four clusters of Housing, Financial Aid, Wellness and Student Development.
- Additional innovative approaches by the department include the following:
  - Student Housing and Residence Life review aimed at sustainability.
  - Staff wellness programme for housing staff.
  - Funding support for students, which includes:
    - a unique model and operational mechanisms,
    - the willingness to go the extra mile,
    - the Transformation Sport Fund.
  - Providing nutritious meals to students through catering services. (This service was extended during the Covid pandemic to meet the needs of students.)
  - Going-green programme.
  - 24/7 support to students in residences.
  - Crises intervention model for medical emergencies.
  - Transformative admissions to residences.

STUDENT NEEDS

In addition to looking at the department's strengths, the brainstorming session of this first strategic meeting fleshed out the needs of students. This was done in order to align the department's strengths with real needs, in a way that would benefit both staff and students. The identified needs are listed below.

RECEIVING AND DEVELOPING CARE AND COMPASSION

One of the student needs identified was that of students requiring services that provide them with a sense of being cared for, where they can find the appropriate emotional and spiritual support they need. This theme extends to students needing to develop their own ability to be caring and compassionate individuals.

Below are the needs that were identified in this regard:
- Counselling
- Social engagement
- Cultural and spiritual expression and awareness
- Liberation of the soul
- Emotional intelligence (EQ) in the form of:
    - Coping skills
    - Stress management
    - Self-management
    - Resourcefulness
    - Self-reliance
    - Confidence
    - Initiative
    - Physical and mental well-being (including mindfulness and self-reflection)
    - Sexuality awareness
    - Ethics, honesty and integrity
    - Care for others
- Intra-personal and interpersonal skills development in the following areas:
    - Compassion
    - Empathy
    - Generosity
    - Gratitude
    - Appreciation of diversity and inclusion (breaking down stigmas)
    - Responsibility
    - Sense of purpose
    - Sense of belonging
    - Understanding and regarding rules
    - One's voice being heard
    - Goal-setting, direction and purpose (creating meaningful lives)
    - Self-respect and respect for others (specifically staff)
    - Less self-entitlement
    - Teamwork

SEEKING ASSISTANCE

It was noted that many students reach out for assistance in the following areas:
- Financial assistance
- Nutritious food
- Academic support
- Career advice
- First-year students require orientation into higher education.
- There's a need for institutional leadership to give direction to those seeking assistance.

A NEED FOR ACCESS

Students require access to a variety of aspects related to student life as well as life in general, as listed below:
- Access to staff
- Access to libraries
- Access to transportation
- Access to tutors
- Access to learning material (e.g. textbooks, laptops and the printing of notes)
- Digital literacy
- A safe and secure environment
- Learning outside the classroom (to enable work-readiness)
- Primary healthcare
- Decolonised education
- Holistic and integrated support structures (wrap-around support)
- There is a need for facilities that are conducive to student development (e.g. sport facilities and accommodation that is fit for purpose).

OPPORTUNITIES

After investigating the DSA's strengths and exploring students' needs, the strategic session focused on the opportunities presenting themselves when viewing these strengths and needs simultaneously. The below 11 opportunities were identified and explored in order to begin the process of compiling the DSA strategy.

01 DSA could contribute to UCT Vision 2030 through co-creating and maintaining specific characteristics and values in students that would make them change agents in the transformation of our societies. In this regard, we embody social justice principles in praxis.

02 DSA could contribute towards change or reshape the environment and conditions in the broader UCT community to be more conducive to student life and development.

03 There could be an opportunity for continuous professional development, i.e. creating a community of learning, to replicate and co-create with students.

04 DSA could create a system for students and staff to form learning communities where they co-create knowledge and skills, with inclusive practices (in terms of processes and outcomes), and collective, active and reflective learning. **Important questions in this regard include the following:**

- How do we create tangible deliverables?
- How do we document development and growth?
- How do we replicate what we do?

05 DSA could clearly define its values and principles to continuously maintain its core mission.

06 DSA could reposition Financial Aid services by clarifying the specific role of Financial Aid in relation to NSFAS, and defining the role beyond NSFAS, while developing DSA's own mini-Feenix where it matches funding with student needs through an AI-driven approach.

07 DSA could develop a holistic and integrated support structure that assists students throughout their study journey (from entry to graduation). This would include a central platform with a centralised communication system (to raise awareness).

08 DSA could partner with the Department of Health to subsidise medication and enhance affordability for students.

09 DSA could use data and data analytics to enhance student development and resource management in a proactive and predictive manner.

10 DSA could be branded and profiled as a meaningfully resourceful unit at UCT.

11 DSA could develop recreational and extra-curricular sport activities (crazy and fun activities that are informal and social, such as Terrific Tuesdays).

PASSION AND PURPOSE

In order to determine the way forward, based on the strengths, needs and opportunities presented above, the department set to align these aspects with its own aspirations. DSA wants its staff members to find purpose in the work that they do, which can only be achieved if there is an element of passion and motivation. **The brainstorming exercise undertaken at the strategic session showed that the DSA team is deeply passionate about many diverse areas, as listed below:**

- Student development and the development of young people in general – to realise their full potential and become well-rounded individuals.
- Developing and nurturing skills.
- Student support that aids in student success.
- Holistic (and innovative) well-being, which includes mental health support.
- Creating safe spaces for students, both physically and emotionally.
- Ethical governance, which includes having an ethical (principled) framework for DSA, and gaining guidance and support regarding financial resources.
- Social justice.
- Co-creating with students in the context of a learning community (i.e. being intentional and reciprocal), in order to impact the future, while being comfortable with 'not knowing' and therefore discovering things together.
- Being part of a new educational paradigm that exists beyond knowledge, skills and attitudes, and includes characteristics of the soul.
- Creating a leadership academy to establish ethical governance.
- The liberation of the soul, i.e. creating an enabling environment where everyone is included and there is a sense of belonging for all.
- Developing an ethos that affirms the humanity of each person, from which care and compassion emerge.

LONG-TERM VISION

By creating and implementing a strategy that takes all of the above into account, DSA aims to produce systemic change within the UCT environment, its student communities and higher education systems too. In this regard, the below results were envisioned for the next 10-15 years.

RESPECTFUL CULTURE

There will be a culture in DSA where it is safe for staff to have the courage to communicate honestly and authentically. Staff will work things out together, while making sure that everyone is heard and seen. There will be an ethos of recognition, inclusivity and non-judgement, where critical and constructive engagement can happen.

COLLABORATIVE IDENTITY

DSA team members will collaborate and integrate their services, forming a sense of belonging, collective identity and a strong brand for the department.

AGILE AND RESPONSIVE ENVIRONMENT

The culture will be responsive and relevant to students' needs (as determined through using data, data analytics and technology). The overall university system will be flexible, allowing students to branch out into different fields of interest. The DSA work environment will be flexible, giving staff the ability to work from home and from the office.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

There will be a financially stable system for DSA, which stops the 'leakages' and reallocates surplus funds to strategic projects.

WELL-DEVELOPED WORKFORCE

The DSA team – with its highly effective managers – will add value to the student experience. There will be clear role clarification and the allocation of accountability and responsibility will be integrated into the system. The organisational culture will pull people up and colleagues will not be trampled on for others to get to the top.

LEARNING TO THRIVE

There will be an ingrained appreciation of 'knowledge as well-being' (as opposed to viewing knowledge as a commodity), with a departmental drive to create humanising encounters. Staff and students will share multiple wisdoms with one another, building communities of learning while co-creating knowledge.

DEVELOPING KEY STRETEGIC AREAS

Following the 2021 strategic session, three key strategic areas (KSA) were drafted to embody a culture of kindness and compassion, enabling staff and students to **'liberate the soul for well-being and flourishing'**, as stated in the DSA motto. *[This motto became a work in progress over subsequent years, and was later redefined. The final motto appears in the introduction to this document.]*

The three KSAs were to be tracked over a five-year period (2022-2026) to determine the changes experienced by students and staff. *[Two years later, KSA 2 would be redefined, and another three KSAs would be added for the 2024-2026 period, as explained further on in this document.]*

These initial three KSAs would be measured in terms of individuals:

- knowledge and awareness (what we know)
- skills, action, behaviour and practices (what we do); and
- attitudes, motivations and beliefs (what we value).

[This mode of measurement was subsequently redefined for the 2024-2026 KSAs.]

The three KSAs developed in 2021 are detailed below.

KSA 1

Grow a Culture of Ethical
Self-Organisation

*"Illusion Will Never Satisfy You. Only The Truth of
Who You Are-If Realised-Will Set You Free."
-Eckhart Tolle*

KSA 1: GROW A CULTURE OF ETHICAL SELF-ORGANISATION

Background to the development of KSA 1:
DSA exists to serve students. However, the department faced challenges in 2021. It was described as 'a tough, disintegrated, contentious and selfish' environment to work in, with many seeing their work as 'just a job'. There was a level of distrust among colleagues who were working in silos. Many were seen to hold a sense of entitlement or to be 'milking' the system at the expense of students, while various staff members were unaware of certain policies and lacked an understanding of governance.

KSA 1 THEREFORE AIMED TO ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING:

WHAT WE KNOW

- Governance (responsiveness and policies of UCT) is important.
- Ownership is integral.
- Ethics underpins everyday work.
- Everyone should understand and know why they are here.
- Resilience, accountability and honesty are expected.
- People should relate to each other with respect, empathy, humility, kindness and patience and compassion.
- Trust should be cultivated.
- Staff have personal values (what each person stands for).
- Social contracts allow us to know one another's truths.
- We all have a mission.

WHAT WE DO

- Put in a good day's work.
- Serve students with intent and purpose.
- We should have more appreciation/upliftment of our staff.
- We lead by example.
- We are educated by the next person's job to see how we fit into the puzzle.
- Focus on outputs rather than micro-manage.
- Embrace/buy into the mission.
- We must improve communication.
- Train and develop all staff.

WHAT WE VALUE

- See individuals for who they are.
- Value people's diversity.
- Respect, humility, kindness, patience and compassion.
- Trust, honesty and truthfulness.

RESULT

KSA 1 priority project for the following 12 months (until end 2022):
Create an Ethics Charter
This project required the following steps:
1. Hold a webinar seminar to develop a strategy.
2. Launch of the strategy.
3. Celebration of the implementation of the strategy.

KSA 2

Academy for
Leadership Development

"In time, we shall be in a position to bestow on South Africa the greatest possible gift – a more human face". – Steven Biko

KSA 2: UCT LEAD

Background to the development of KSA 2:
KSA 2 would be built around the creation of a UCT Leadership Academy, and would include the following steps:

1. Directors identify key aspects (staff) – link to strategic planning.
2. Map activities that exist (students) – link to strategic planning.
3. Hold a strategic session.
4. Appoint a board of directors for oversight.
5. Invite students to the planning workshop.
6. Develop leadership themes.
7. Create marketing and communication strategy and material.
8. Implementation of all of the above.
9. Monitoring and evaluation.
10. Reporting and recommendations.

RESULT

KSA 2 priority project for the following 12 months (until end 2022):
Leadership Academy

This project required the following steps:
1. Launch of the academy.
2. Develop a strategy/plan for the leadership academy.
3. Establish leadership themes (students and staff). *[Ethics to be included as a theme.]*

KSA 3

Develop a System of
Integrated, Responsive and Agile Support

"Dance above the surface of the world. Let your thoughts lift you into creativity that is not hampered by other people's opinion." - Red Haircrow

KSA 3: DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF INTEGRATED, RESPONSIVE AND AGILE SUPPORT

Background to the development of KSA 3:
In order to develop and action a new way of delivering support, DSA would need to measure the following:

WHAT WE KNOW

- Journey mapping: student and organisation (service delivery).
- System capabilities.
- Determine the type of service (user experience) required.
- Investigate students' service expectations.
- Understand the variations of access, e.g. disability, data/connectivity, devices.
- System platforms: what are the options, are they user-friendly, and how is data collected?
- Information should be provided at the right time.

WHAT WE DO

- We have skills and competencies.
- We help students with digital literacies.
- We support staff with skills assessment to identify skills gaps and training required.
- We work with change management.
- We have a service excellence charter.
- We monitor trends through data analytics.
- We have service level agreements.

WHAT WE VALUE

- Service excellence.
- Delivering service at the right time, along the value chain.
- Efficiency, i.e. working smarter, not harder.
- Collaboration.

RESULT

KSA 3 priority project for the following 12 months (until end 2022):
DSA Charter for ethics and service delivery (poster and document)

This project required the following steps:
1. Develop a communication strategy (communicating kindly and compassionately).
2. Organise DSA social-cohesion events.
3. Create a journey-mapping report.

After the 12-month period of establishing and monitoring the three above-mentioned KSAs, they were further developed (and more were added) and integrated into a KSA scorecard in November 2023. This would allow the KSA goals to progress from 2024-2026, as explained below.

BEYOND 2023 – INTO THE FUTURE

The annual DSA strategy review session held in November 2023 was focused on optimally repositioning DSA for the future. After receiving feedback on the previous year from project leads and cluster heads of each KSA, and rounding off the 2021-2023 DSA strategy cycle, the session allowed the department to look forward.

The execution of strategic decisions and the establishment of mutual accountability were determined to be key actions in the coming months and years. In this regard, the team refined its three already existing KSAs and developed another three, with succinctly defined outcomes, KPIs and measurements attached to each one.

The strategy would be accompanied by an annual performance plan (APP) scorecard with specific annual targets and metrics for each output area.

TANGIBLE RESULTS

All six KSAs will be tracked over a three-year period, from 2024-2026, according to the outcomes listed in the next section of this document. It was important in the formulation of these measures that no more than three outcomes were developed for each KSA, with these being tangible results that could leverage change. Such outcomes could include any of the following:

Products: Tangible items created or delivered, e.g. documents, reports, educational materials, marketing material, publications, guidelines, infographics.

Services: Specific activities or services provided to beneficiaries. These could refer to service-delivery processes and other forms of assistance.

Events: Workshops, webinars, discussions, training events, colloquiums, seminars, conferences and dialogues.

Process measures: Monitoring-and-evaluation frameworks, assessment criteria and reports.

OUTLINING KSA 1-6

In developing the six KSAs and their related outcomes, the DSA team kept the ultimate impact it wishes to have on the UCT environment in mind, i.e. *a culture that affirms the humanity of each individual – embodying kindness and compassion – that enables staff and students to flourish towards the liberation of the soul.*

What follows are the six KSAs with their related explanation, outcomes (or aim) and associated outputs to achieve this, as well as the key performance indicator (KPI) and measurement approach to track levels of success.

KSA 1: GROW A CULTURE OF ETHICAL SELF-ORGANISATION

DSA identified ethics as a particular area of investment. To this end, it will prioritise establishing an ethical culture within all DSA functional areas and student communities. It will also position itself as a thought leader in the field of ethics in the higher education sector.

OUTCOME

Knowledge about the Ethics Charter is increased through the following outputs:

1. Infographic about the Ethics Charter (in the three official languages used by UCT) to be created, submitted and adopted by February 2024.
2. Training course titled 'Ethics Champions' to be created, with 20 Ethics Champions trained by June 2024.
3. Staff socialisation engagements around the Ethics Charter to be arranged, with 75% of staff to complete such engagements by 2026 (measured by attendance registers).

KPI

The percentage of DSA staff who have knowledge about the Ethics Charter is increased from current levels to 75% by 2026.

MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOME

A questionnaire is administered each year in November.

KSA 2: ESTABLISH AN ACADEMY FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

DSA is passionate about the development of ethical and transformative leaders. It will, therefore, prioritise the establishment of a leadership academy that will create communities of co-creation and care for UCT and other higher education institutions in Afrika.

OUTCOME

Visibility of UCT LEAD (the name of the leadership academy) is established through the following outputs:

1. Marketing strategy to be submitted and approved by June 2024.
2. UCT LEAD reference pack to be created, approved and published by June 2025. This is to include a manual, prospectus, terms of reference for the advisory committee and steering committee, a memorandum of understanding, pamphlets and templates.

3. Knowledge-sharing outputs and publications, where…
    - the number of scholarly publications is increased from zero to three by 2026 (one per annum),
    - the number of webinars and discussions is increased from zero to 12 by 2026 (four per annum), and
    - the number of workshops is increased from zero to three by 2026 (one per annum).

Effective operations are established for UCT LEAD through the following outputs:

1. A systematic process for the alignment and registration of UCT LEAD co-curricular learning experiences is set out in a process document.
2. Learning experiences are aligned with the UCT LEAD process, with all of the UCT divisions attending process-document workshops by November 2024 (as measured by an attendance register); and 100% of the UCT LEAD co-curricular programmes are aligned with the newly defined process by November 2026 (as measured by a registration log).
3. UCT LEAD management structure is established, with regular meetings held. The Advisory Committee is to be established by June 2024, and two meetings are to be held per year. Four meetings of the Steering Committee are to be held per annum, and 10 UCT LEAD Collective meetings must be held every year.

KPI

The percentage of academic staff, support staff and UCT students who are aware of UCT LEAD is increased from current levels to the following percentages by 2026:

- academic staff: 25%
- support staff: 30%
- students: 45%

The percentage of UCT LEAD staff, student participants and partners who experience UCT LEAD's operations as effective is increased from current levels to 80% satisfaction by 2026.

MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOME

A questionnaire is administered each year in November to determine how much visibility of UCT LEAD has been established; and questionnaires are continuously administered at specific events to determine whether effective operations have been established.

KSA 3: DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF INTEGRATED, RESPONSIVE AND AGILE SUPPORT

A high priority is placed on developing holistic and integrated support structures across all functional areas in DSA. This is important to eliminate any silo operations and fragmentation within the department. Also, in moving forward, establishing a deep understanding of students will be crucial to ensure that these integrated support structures remain agile and responsive to their diverse needs.

OUTCOME

DSA staff satisfaction and sense of belonging is increased through the following outputs:

1. DSA communication strategy is created, submitted and approved by July 2024, and is fully implemented by November 2026.

2. DSA organises and presents 23 Courageous Conversations by November 2026.
3. Six DSA staff assemblies are held by November 2026, i.e. two per annum, with 60% of DSA staff attending these assemblies by 2026, i.e. 20% increase per annum (as measured by attendance registers).

KPI

The percentage of DSA staff who indicate high levels of job satisfaction and belonging is increased from current levels to 60% by 2026.

MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOME

A questionnaire is administered each year in November.

KSA 4: TRANSFORM THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH SOCIAL COHESION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

DSA's mission is to create humanising lived experiences for everyone in the UCT community. It will, therefore, intentionally invest in removing all systemic barriers that hinder students from accessing developmental opportunities and necessary support. It will also prioritise interconnectedness, belonging and care for students and staff in all their diversity.

OUTCOME

Knowledge concerning transformation is increased through the following outputs:

1. Transformation policy workshops – these are to increase from current levels to 12 by 2026, i.e. four per year; and the number of DSA staff who complete these workshops is to increase to 360 by 2026 (120 staff per annum, as measured by attendance registers).
2. TDI workshops – these are to increase from current levels to 12 by 2026 (four per year); and the number of DSA staff who complete these workshops is to increase to 360 by 2026, i.e. 120 staff per annum, as measured by attendance registers.
3. Employment equity workshops – these are to increase from current levels to 12 by 2026, i.e. four per year; and the number of DSA staff who complete these workshops is to increase to 360 by 2026 (120 staff per annum, as measured by attendance registers).

KPI

The percentage of DSA staff trained in predetermined transformation programmes is increased from current levels to 75% by 2026.

MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOME

Attendance registers are documented for each programme.

KSA 5: CREATE HUMANISING STUDENT EXPERIENCES

DSA aims to be truly student-centred in order to remain responsive to the diverse needs of UCT students. This means that the department – with all of its functional areas – will aim to provide targeted and differentiated support to students. With this in mind, DSA will prioritise (amongst other initiatives and interventions) its food sovereignty project to address hunger and malnutrition among students.

OUTCOME

Awareness about food insecurity, malnutrition and food-sovereignty initiatives is increased through the following outputs:

1. Marketing material concerning food sovereignty is developed and used during marketing campaigns. The number of marketing campaigns should add up to 12 by November 2026. The material developed will include posters, social media posts, email, SMS, etc.
2. A launch event for the food sovereignty strategy will be held by September 2024, after the strategy has been created and approved (by June 2024). Annual workshops are to be held to review this strategy, and reports for the implementation of the food sovereignty strategy are to be submitted annually, by October.
3. A Food Sovereignty Colloquium is to be held by September 2024.

KPI

The percentage of the UCT community (staff and students) who are aware of students' food insecurity and malnutrition, and are aware of the food sovereignty initiatives, is increased from 20% to 60% by 2026.

MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOME

A questionnaire is administered each year in November.

KSA 6: ADVANCE HEALTH-PROMOTING PRACTICES

DSA places high value on the well-being of UCT's students and staff. It will, therefore, invest in creating systems that advance health-promoting practices in the social and academic contexts of the student experience.

OUTCOME

Students' use of the health-promoting software application/platform is increased through the following outputs:

1. An upgraded software application or electronic platform for health-promoting practices is launched and fully operational by November 2024, and the percentage of students who access this is increased to 30% by 2026.
2. A marketing strategy document is submitted and approved by June 2024, and this strategy is completely implemented by 2026.

KPI

The percentage of the registered student population accessing the health-promoting software application/platform is increased to 30% by 2026, i.e. an increase of 10% per annum.

MEASUREMENT

Analytics of the software application/platform will be used to measure the number of students accessing this tool.

IMPACT (LONG TERM): A DSA-CULTURE, PERMEATING THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY, THAT AFFIRMS THE HUMANITY OF EACH INDIVIDUAL - EMBODYING KINDNESS AND COMPASSION - THAT ENABLES STAFF AND STUDENTS TO FLOURISH TOWARDS THE LIBERATION OF THE SOUL.

KSA 1:	KSA 2:	KSA 3:	KSA 4:	KSA 5:	KSA 6:
GROW A CULTURE OF ETHICAL SELF-ORGNISATION	ESTABLISH AN ACADEMY FOR LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT	DEVELOP A SYSTEM OF INTEGRATED, RESPONSIVE AND AGILE SUPPORT	TRANSFORM THE ENVIRONMENT THROUGH SOCIAL COHESION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	CREATE HUMANISING STUDENT EXPERIENCES	ADVANCE HEALTH-PROMOTING PRACTICES
OUTCOME 1.1: Knowledge about the Ethics Charter increased	**OUTCOME 2.1:** Visibility established **OUTCOME 2.2:** Effective operations established	**OUTCOME 3.1:** DSA staff satisfaction and sense of belonging increased	**OUTCOME 4.1:** Knowledge concerning transformation increased	**OUTCOME 5.1:** Awareness about food insecurity and malnutrition, as well as awareness of food sovereignty initiatives increased	**OUTCOME 6.1:** Students' use of the health-promoting software application/platform

Table: *Alignment of impact, KSAs and outcomes.*

ACCOUNTABILITY

In addition to developing the above KSAs, outcomes, KPIs and measurements for the DSA strategy, the November 2023 strategic session helped the team create a system of accountability. Using Bain's RAPID framework (with the acronym standing for recommend, agree, perform, input and decide), they defined clear roles of responsibility within the DSA's senior leadership structure for each KSA area. This will uphold the agility and close collaboration between multi-level managerial and leadership roles.

The following staff responsibilities were therefore determined:

RECOMMEND

Staff participating in the DSA annual strategic planning sessions will recommend decisions or actions such as KSAs, outputs, outcomes and impact.

AGREE

The Departmental Management Committee and Senior Management Team will formally agree to decisions made in the 'recommend' phase.

PERFORM

Project leads, together with their cross-functional KSA project teams, as well as DSA clusters, with their functional areas, will all perform and execute decisions made.

INPUT

Senior experts invited by the DSA to provide strategic input and feedback will offer their input to recommendations.

DECIDE

The project manager as well as Executive Director: Student Affairs will sign off decisions, with the ultimate accountability resting on them.

REPORTING

KSA project leads will submit quarterly reports to the project manager, according to prescribed templates. Such documentation will be hosted and shared on the DSA Microsoft shared folder, and the reports will enable the project manager and executive director to compile annual reports related to the DSA's strategic plan.

This falls under the management system that was developed for establishing processes for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. DSA will use the evidence-based approach of Participatory Action Research (PAR) as the basis for its monitoring-and-evaluation framework.

The four-step PAR cycle (plan, act, observe and reflect) will be implemented on two levels. On a macro level, the PAR cycle will span five years, from 2022-2026. Journeying towards 2035, this macro-level application is important to ensure that DSA achieves long-term systemic impact. This five-year period will also be subdivided into annual micro-level cycles, each with their own planning, implementation, observation and reflection cycle. This micro-level application of PAR is important to ensure that DSA achieves its short, medium-term and long-term objectives.

In this way, the DSA strategic plan will comprise five cycles of annual planning, acting, observing and reflecting, which collectively form an overarching five-year cycle of the same four steps, as set out in the below diagram.
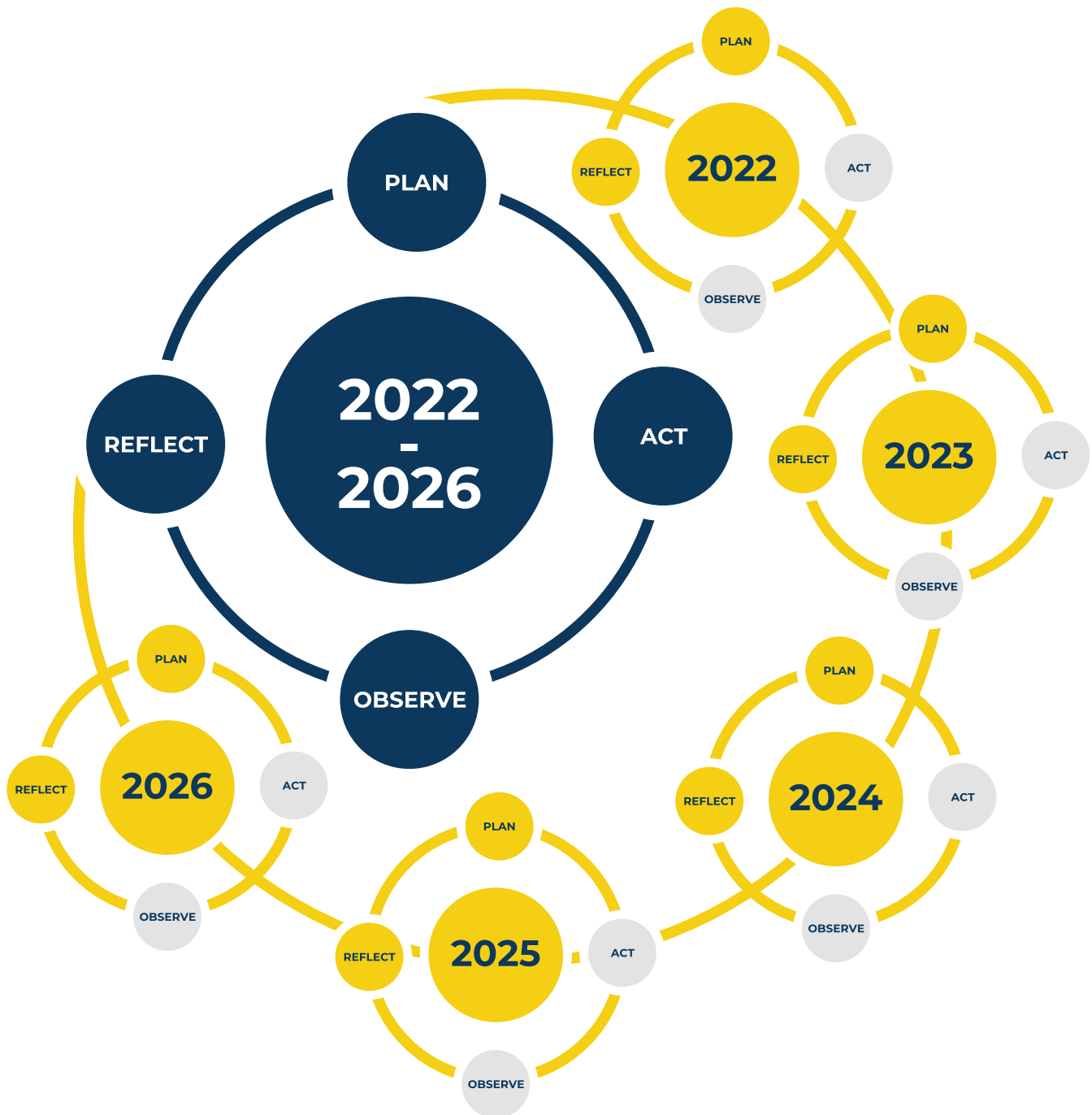
Figure: *Implementation of the Participatory Action Research (PAR) cycle*

THE FOUR PAR CYCLE STAGES WILL ENCOMPASS THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS, ON BOTH THE MICRO AND MACRO LEVEL:

PLAN

Each planning phase will result in a strategic document – an overarching strategic framework for the DSA, as well as different annual versions of the DSA strategic plan, which allow it to remain agile and responsive to changes in the environment.

ACT

The DSA strategic plan will be implemented on two levels. Firstly, all functional areas (grouped together in clusters) will implement the DSA strategic plan in their respective operations. Secondly, the DSA will create cross-functional project teams for each KSA.

OBSERVE

There will be continuous monitoring of the implementation of the DSA strategic plan via quarterly reports submitted by all KSA teams and functional areas. These will foster a culture of mutual accountability and the collective achievement of strategic goals and objectives.

REFLECT

DSA will evaluate the effectiveness of its strategic planning and the implementation thereof, in order to determine its relevance and impact within a changing environment. Annual evaluation reports on outputs, outcomes and impact will eventually result in a five-year evaluation report, which will help in preparing for an external review in 2026.

The levels of reporting, as well as the frequency, focus and teams responsible for these monitoring-and-evaluation reports are set out in the diagram below.

REFLECT

SELF-REFLECTION REPORT
Frequency: Once every five years
Responsibility: Special working group appointed and managed by the Executive Director: Student Affairs
Focus: Strategic evaluation of the integrated implentation of the DSA Strategic Plan, especially in light of UCT Vision 2030 and other institutional and sectoral imperatives

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

ANNUAL REPORTS
Frequency: Once per year
Responsibility: DSA Project Coordinator and designated working group
Focus: Integrated and comparative evaluation of the rollout of the DSA Strategic Plan

MONITORING

QUARTERLY REPORTS
Frequency: Once per year
Responsibility: DSA Project Coordinator and designated working group
Focus: Integrated and comparative evaluation of the rollout of the DSA Strategic Plan

Figure: *Levels of reporting in the monitoring and evaluation of the DSA strategic plan.*

A large part of this monitoring-and-evaluation structure will be based on the Logic Framework described by Knowlton and Phillips (2009), which aids in establishing the interconnection between project activities, outputs, outcomes and impact by using inferential thinking associated with 'if-then' statements. The table below explains this in more detail.
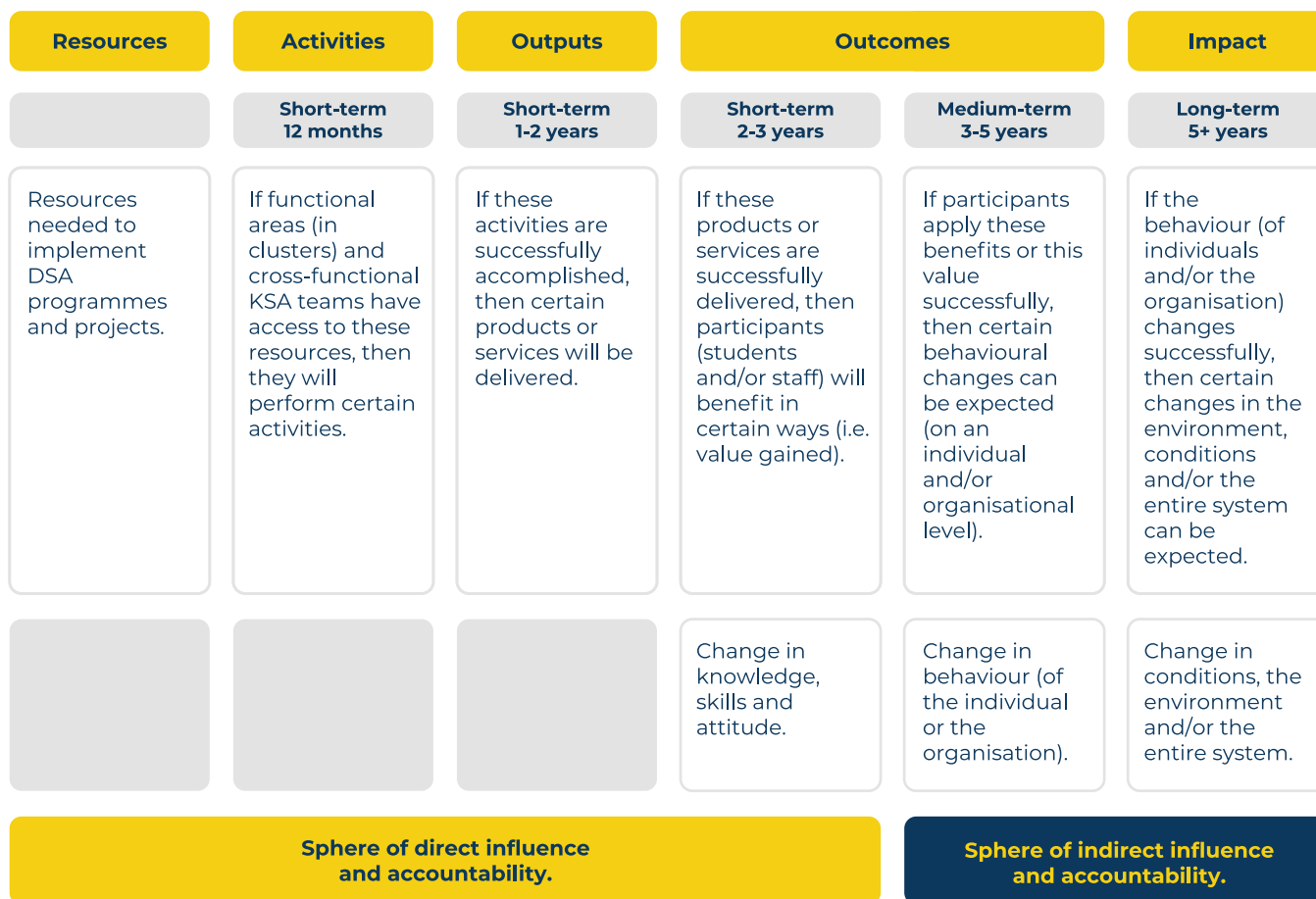
Resources	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes		Impact
	Short-term 12 months	Short-term 1-2 years	Short-term 2-3 years	Medium-term 3-5 years	Long-term 5+ years
Resources needed to implement DSA programmes and projects.	If functional areas (in clusters) and cross-functional KSA teams have access to these resources, then they will perform certain activities.	If these activities are successfully accomplished, then certain products or services will be delivered.	If these products or services are successfully delivered, then participants (students and/or staff) will benefit in certain ways (i.e. value gained).	If participants apply these benefits or this value successfully, then certain behavioural changes can be expected (on an individual and/or organisational level).	If the behaviour (of individuals and/or the organisation) changes successfully, then certain changes in the environment, conditions and/or the entire system can be expected.
			Change in knowledge, skills and attitude.	Change in behaviour (of the individual or the organisation).	Change in conditions, the environment and/or the entire system.

Sphere of direct influence and accountability.	Sphere of indirect influence and accountability.

Table: *Logic framework explained, as applicable to DSA.*

INTO THE FUTURE

As a living, breathing document that guides the efforts of the Department of Student Affairs, the DSA strategic plan – with its aptly defined KSAs – will guide the department's actions from 2024 until 2026, after which period it will again be evaluated to determine the way forward for the following three years.

It is our wish that this be a useful document that acknowledges the work behind the scenes and the dedication required to successfully pursue every KSA. The process taken since 2021 (to come to this point of having a strong strategic plan to motivate DSA endeavours) has been worth the time spent to refine every intention, plan and action towards outcomes the DSA aims to achieve. By documenting the path to get here, this document will allow future DSA teams to mitigate challenges in developing strategic plans, and will assist in guiding further discussions around this strategy.

Throughout the journey, the well-being of staff and students has been a pivotal consideration that has anchored intentions around this strategy. May that spirit – and the humanising pedagogy from which it springs – always be the goal towards which DSA strives.

REFERENCES

Knowlton LW, Phillips CC. 2009. *The Logic Model Guidebook: Better Strategies for Great Results.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

APPENDIX A

MAPPING THE DSA STRATEGIC PLAN'S SIX KSAS AGAINST UCT VISION 130

UCT	KSA 1	KSA 2	KSA 3	KSA 4	KSA 5	KSA 6
WHAT THE DREAM LOOKS LIKE						
Attract students with exceptional potential from our country, our continent and our world		X		X	X	X
Offer a transformative and socially engaged undergraduate and postgraduate education		X		X	X	X
Provide both contact education and digitally mediated education		X				
UCT will expand its capacity to offer continuous education and micro-credentials		X				
Produce research that answers the complex problems of today and tomorrow	X	X		X	X	X
MAKING IT REAL						
Holistic, innovative, future-oriented education at undergraduate and postgraduate level	X	X		X		
Thought leadership on social justice		X		X	X	X
Be an employer of choice because UCT develops and fosters an organisational ethos that supports new ways of thinking, being and doing	X			X	X	X
Uses existing physical infrastructure in an innovative manner	X	X	X		X	X

TEACHING AND LEARNING	KSA 1	KSA 2	KSA 3	KSA 4	KSA 5	KSA 6
WHAT THE DREAM LOOKS LIKE						
Offer innovative curricula at the cutting edge of disciplines and professions	X	X				
Offer a socially engaged curriculum	X	X		X		
Offer the type of learning environment that facilitates students' engagement with their own learning		X				

	KSA 1	KSA 2	KSA 3	KSA 4	KSA 5	KSA 6
Offer democratically appropriate, digitally enabled education at undergraduate, postgraduate and continuous-education levels		X				
Continually renew and transform our pedagogies	X	X		X		

MAKING IT REAL

	KSA 1	KSA 2	KSA 3	KSA 4	KSA 5	KSA 6
Developing graduate attributes targeted at the self, the community and the world	X	X		X	X	X
Infusing environmental education, design thinking and interdisciplinary education in UCT studies		X				
Providing a problem-based education that takes place both at the university and in the workplace	X	X		X		
To support student success and excellence, we will offer well-developed student- and academic-support systems		X	X		X	X

RESEARCH	KSA 1	KSA 2	KSA 3	KSA 4	KSA 5	KSA 6

WHAT THE DREAM LOOKS LIKE

	KSA 1	KSA 2	KSA 3	KSA 4	KSA 5	KSA 6
Enhance quality of life in South Africa and on the rest of the continent (through research)						
Move with ease between research focused on the building of new fundamental knowledge for the present and the future and its targeted application for impact						
Focus on solving complex problems and realising new opportunities within the social and natural worlds by working collaboratively and democratically, and using inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary approaches	X	X		X		
Attract top academics						

MAKING IT REAL

	KSA 1	KSA 2	KSA 3	KSA 4	KSA 5	KSA 6
Actively focus on critical areas of impact in Afrika		X		X		
Extend our Afrika-focused knowledge to a broader global reach. We will also bring an Afrikan perspective to concepts brought in from the global stage [...] and extend these for Afrika's impact and benefit while ensuring local relevance and thought leadership		X		X		

Recruitment of staff with a high level of expertise in key research areas						
Intensify UCT's global interface with other universities and research centres by leveraging our participation in international and Afrikan partnerships						
Expand our orientation to embrace local knowledge and expertise and to position it effectively on the global knowledge stage		X				
Forge strong social partnerships with local communities, civil society, business and local and national governments to shape UCT's research agenda						
Build the technical and cultural infrastructure to develop strong collaborations						
Development of inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary research projects and postgraduate programmes, grounded on strong disciplines		X		X		
Development of the next generation of researchers, scholars and beneficial leaders for the country and the rest of the Afrikan continent						
Provide an integrated, responsive and well-governed infrastructure and enterprise to support research						
Increase UCT's ability to communicate research results and research impact publicly						
Offer intense training for supervisors						
Further postgraduate education and support early-career researchers through a strong researcher-development academy						

NOTES

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