

# UCT Computer Science Student Support 2022



**IT** | SCHOOL OF IT

*Hussein Suleman* <[hussein@cs.uct.ac.za](mailto:hussein@cs.uct.ac.za)>

*Head of Department, Department of Computer Science  
School of IT  
University of Cape Town*

*18 November 2022*

*Last edited: 18 November 2022*

*Slide count: 9*



# Student Advisors

---

- ❑ 1 Senior student advisor
- ❑ + 3 Student advisors
- ❑ Academic advice
- ❑ Referrals to other UCT services



# Senior Tutor

---

- ❑ Primary role: support students at risk
- ❑ Identification of students at risk (with student advisors)
- ❑ Personal contact with students at risk
  - Individual tutoring
  - Academic support
- ❑ Academic skills sessions for first year
  - Study skills, Exam preparation, Dealing with stress, anxiety, Time management
- ❑ *Thoughts:*
  - *A lot of work but difficult to assess impact*
  - *May be taken for granted now but absence may be noticed*



# The Hotseat

---

- ❑ At least 2 senior tutors
- ❑ Support for first year and possibly second year students
- ❑ Walk-in discussions on course content or assignments
- ❑ Every afternoon (M-F), approximately 2-4pm
  
- ❑ *Thoughts:*
  - *Very successful*
  - *Used much more in 2022*
    - ❑ *At first, queues of students, until we added on more sessions*



# Class Reps System

---

- ❑ Class reps voted in each course
- ❑ Regular communication with course convenors
- ❑ Course meetings with HoD (once per sem)
  - Discuss how courses are functioning
  - Resolve any specific problems
- ❑ General meetings with HoD (once per sem)
  - Discuss plans and directions of department/programmes
  - Provide feedback to department
- ❑ Individual interaction
  - Almost never necessary, but always welcome
- ❑ *Thoughts: Students and staff take this very seriously. 360-degree feedback*

# Mentor Programme

---

- ❑ V1: voluntary mentors and mentees
- ❑ V2: all first year CS majors required to participate
- ❑ V3: structured activities for mentorship
- ❑ V4: shifted to faculty level (but same structured model)
- ❑ Welcome social for all CS majors
  
- ❑ *Thoughts:*
  - *Structured system has been useful to some students.*
  - *Mentorship programmes are also very useful for mentors!*

# Bootcamps

---

- Organised by Senior Tutor or Lecturers in early courses
  - Revision happens naturally anyway in most courses
  
- *Thoughts:*
  - *Bootcamps are not always useful for learning.*
  - *Very useful to reduce student anxiety – those who attend are most anxious, not least prepared.*

# What we do not currently do

---

- ❑ Mental Health assistance
  - Agreement to refer students to professionals
  
- ❑ The Belonging Project
  - We tried – this is much harder than we thought



**Thank you**



**IT | SCHOOL OF IT**

**Questions, Comments, Discussion**