UNIVERSITIES SOUTH AFRICA

4th USAf Higher Education Conference



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Sustainability of Higher Education through Collaboration

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SUSTAINABILITY OF UNIVERSITIES THROUGH COLLABORATION

4th International USAf Conference

Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Academic | Prof Anthea Rhoda

Inspiring excellence, transforming lives through quality, impact, and care.

Collaboration

- Why?
- Who?
- How?





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A BROADER LENS

Sustainability is a portfolio of six capacities

Financial

predictable resources

Academic

relevant curricula & research

Human

Human capacity /critical mass

Digital

secure systems

Social

trust and inclusion

Ecological

climate readiness

Reflection: What capacity remains after the partnership or funding period ends?

Source: USAf (2026), 4th Higher Education Conference Concept Note. PwC South Africa (2025), Sustainability in higher education.

Collaborate for: Societal Impact

Engaged University

Integration of learning and teaching, research, Community engagement, working in partnerships with communities, government, industry, co-creating knowledge

Integrated **Participatory** Framework

4th Generation University

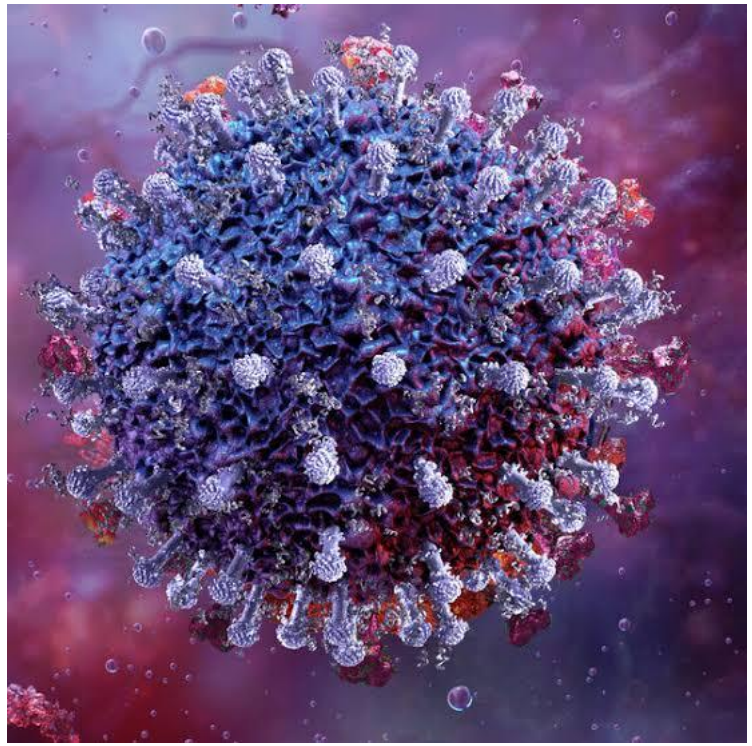
- *A **4th-generation university** is an institution that integrates learning, research, and stakeholder **collaboration** to drive regional innovation and solve major societal challenges*

4th Generation University

Source: Pellisier R: Engaged University, SARUA, 2026

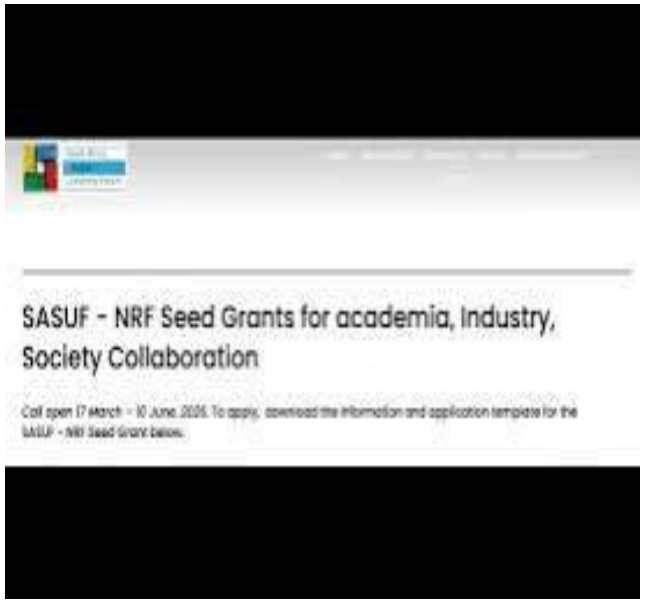
Collaborate in times of crisis / disruptions

- COVID – PANDEMIC
  - Shared protocols
  - Collective engagements

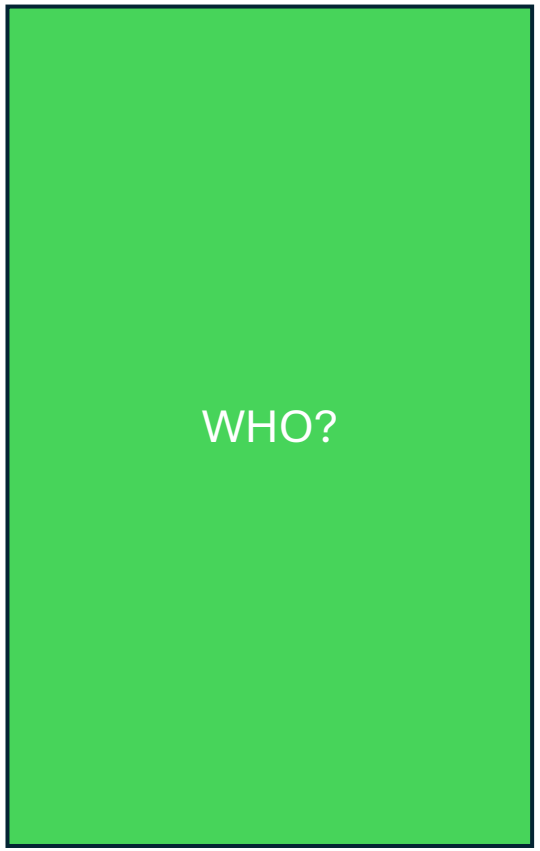


Collaborate to address global challenges

- Interdisciplinary
- Transdisciplinary
- Collaborative funding

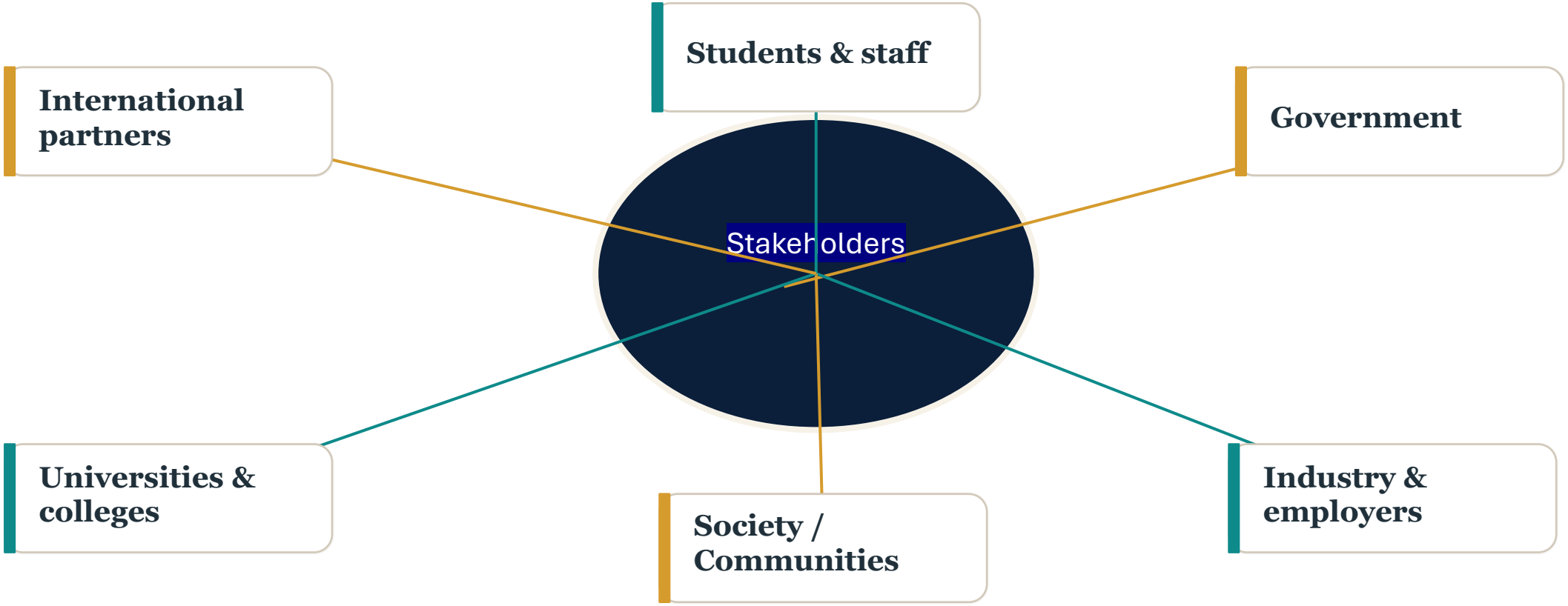


- Collaborators
  - Internal
  - Inter-institutional
  - Global
  - Inter-sectorial



MISSION-LED COLLABORATION

Move from individual agreements to a goal-orientated ecosystem



Source: USAf (2026), 4th Higher Education Conference Concept Note. United Nations, SDG 17.



HOW?

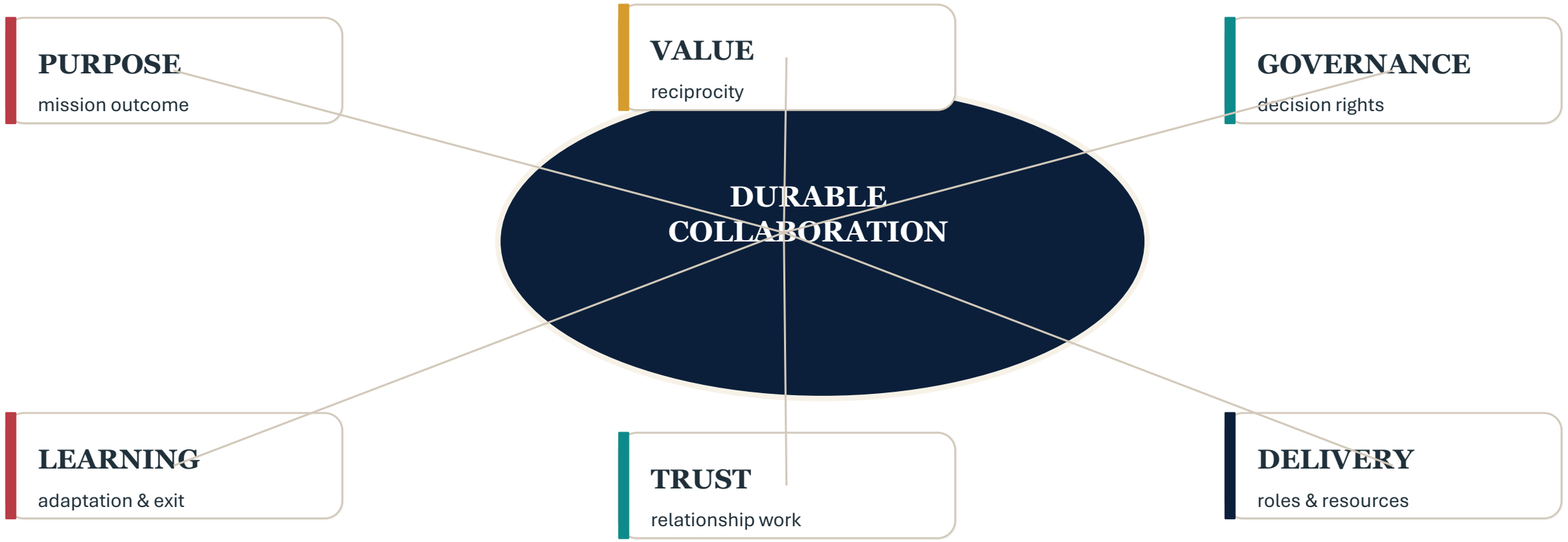
NETWORKS/FORUMS

PURPOSEFUL / FOCUS / GOAL

GOVERNANCE ASPECTS

RECIPROCITY

THE PARTNERSHIP OPERATING SYSTEM



A memorandum records intent. An operating system produces results.

Source: UNESCO (2026), Transforming higher education, doi:10.54675/SNJW1822. OECD (2019), University-Industry Collaboration, doi:10.1787/e9c1e648-en.

A sustainable university can continue to deliver its public purpose under changing conditions.



Collaboration connects these capacities rather than sitting outside the academic goal/intent.

Source: UNESCO (2026), Transforming higher education, doi:10.54675/SNJW1822. USAf (2026), Panel Briefing Notes: Sustainability of Higher Education through Collaboration.

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LET'S CO-CREATE THROUGH COLLABORATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY



Collaborate around a common purpose. Govern for reciprocity. Measure the capacity left behind.

Source: UNESCO (2026), Transforming higher education, doi:10.54675/SNJW1822. USAf (2026), Panel Briefing Notes: Sustainability of Higher Education through Collaboration.

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