



UNIVERSITY OF TM
KWAZULU-NATAL

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE INSTITUTIONAL FORUM (IF), HELD AT
13H30 ON MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2015, IN ROOM M111, 1ST FLOOR, "M"
BLOCK, WESTVILLE CAMPUS**

PRESENT

Dr S Hansraj (IF Chair and Academic Representative, CAES)
Mrs F Bulman (Convocation Representative)
Professor K Kirkman (Support Staff Representative, CAES)
Mr A Marimuthu (Union Representative)
Dr A Matthews (Academic Representative, CAES)
Dr F Ruffin (Academic Representative, CLMS)
Mr T Singarum (Support Sector Representative)

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr SS Mokoena (Registrar)
Ms JS Brady (Committee Officer)

APOLOGIES

Professor G Kamwendo (Senate Representative)
Professor C Potgieter (Management Representative)
Dr Mala Singh (Council Representative)
Ms D Stone (Deputy Chair and Support Staff Representative)
Professor G Kamwendo (Management Representative)
Mr C Thomas (Humanities Representative, Support Staff)
Mrs A Williamson (Management Representative)
Professor H Wissink (Senate Representative)
Mr A Young (Convocation Representative)

1. OPENING AND WELCOME

23 November 2015

The Chair welcomed members and declared the meeting open. He further extended a special welcome to Mr S Mokoena, the newly appointed Registrar, who was attending his first IF meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The attendance register was circulated for signature and apologies as tendered were NOTED.

3. DECLARATION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of conflict of interest.

4. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA

The agenda was confirmed with the following additions:

9.1 #Feesmustfall Campaign

9.2 IF Response to allegations of Racism allegations against the Vice-Chancellor – expressed in the Sunday Times of 22 November 2015

5. MINUTES OF MEETINGS FOR CONFIRMATION

5.1 30 March 2015. The minutes were confirmed as circulated. (Appendix A of the agenda)

Moved: Mrs Fiona Bulman

Seconded: Mr Tony Singarum

5.2 26 May 2015. The minutes were confirmed as circulated. (Appendix B of the agenda)

Moved: Mrs Fiona Bulman

Seconded: Mr A Marimuthu

5.3 3. 7 September 2015. The minutes were confirmed as circulated. (Appendix C of the agenda)

Moved: Dr Alan Matthews

Seconded: Mr Tony Singarum

6. COMMITTEE CHARTER, STATUTE AND MEMBERSHIP

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The Committee Charter, Statute and Membership, attached to the agenda as Appendix D, were NOTED.

7. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

7.1 Publicising the IF

Dr Hansraj informed the Committee that he had liaised with Corporate Relations to ensure that the IF website was finalised. It had been populated with some information and he requested members to add more relevant information as time went on.

The Committee supported Mr Singarum's vote of thanks to the Chair for the efforts he had made to get a website for the IF.

7.2 Proposal for the Review of Principles and Process for Closure of Disciplines

Ambit: 1(a) the implementation of the Act and the national policy on higher education;

It was noted that the above proposal had been brought to the attention of the previous IF meeting through the efforts of Dr Matthews.

This matter queried the process that had been followed in closing the disciplines of Afrikaans, German and Italian. After intense and prolonged discussion, the Committee remained unclear about what process had been followed, if any legitimate process at all.

It was agreed that Dr Matthews would find out from Professor Alant what process had been followed from initiating the idea, to the actual closure of these disciplines.

Action: Dr Matthews

7.3 Proposal for the Revision of Senate Norms For Research Productivity and Postgraduate Supervision

IF Ambit: 1(e) fostering of an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for teaching, research and

It was noted that this is an ongoing matter, and it was proposed that an IF Task Team should be appointed to look at Senate Norms for Research Productivity and Postgraduate Supervision.

It was further noted that a Task Team headed by Professor J Blackledge (DVC: Research) had been appointed to investigate the matter and it was

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envisaged that the results of these investigations be submitted to IF once they became available.

The point was made that the above matter had a serious effect on staff morale, and what was reflected in the media, so it was important that it be resolved speedily and satisfactorily for the benefit of all involved.

Attention was drawn to the fact that some academics had left the employ of the University because of what were perceived to be unfair demands on their time and productivity.

The IF drew attention to the fact that revisions to decisions made at Senate and other decision-making structures at the University, were often not reflected on the submissions document which hampered the way in which decisions were followed through. It was agreed that this matter be brought to the attention of the Registrar so that it could be rectified.

Action: Mr S Mokoena

It was agreed that Dr Hansraj would write to the Chair of Council to make him aware of the negative effect of the current research and productivity policy at UKZN and report back to the next meeting.

7.4 Enhancement of Academic Democracy at UKZN

IF Ambit: 1(e) fostering of an institutional culture which promotes tolerance and respect for fundamental human rights and creates an appropriate environment for teaching, research and learning;

It was noted that there was currently no clear route for academics to place matters for discussion on the Senate agenda, without going through the CAABs or any other academic decision-making bodies.

It was noted that the previous three submissions (ie Items 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4) seemed to reflect a lack of communication, consultation and opportunities for participation at UKZN. There seemed to be a top down approach in communication which has contributed to student protests and calls for transformation and a backlash against a member of the Executive which has received widespread publicity in the media.

It was agreed that the wider University be informed that the IF was concerned about opportunities for more democratic inclusion and involvement in the decision making processes at the University and would be giving the matter serious attention in future. This matter should also be drawn to the attention of the Chair of Council.

Dr S Hansraj

7.5 Proposal for an Institutional Forum Representative on Council

Ambit: 1(a) the implementation of the Act and the national policy on higher education;

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This proposal has been made to Chair of Council and a response is awaited after the meeting scheduled for 7 December 2015.

8. MATTERS FOR INFORMATION/NOTING

8.1 Report from the IF Chair

8.1 Feedback on the post of Executive Director: Strategy Coordination, Physical Planning and Governance

Dr Hansraj reported that the process to appoint an Executive Director: Strategy Coordination, Physical Planning and Governance had been fair and transparent. There had been a request from Council to appoint an African Female in this post but searches had failed to find a suitable candidate. After a long and arduous process an offer was made to an African male candidate, and it was envisaged that he would take up his position in 2016.

8.2 Welcome to the new Chair of Council, Dr Ayanda Ntsaluba

Dr Hansraj informed the Committee that he had written to the newly appointed Chair of Council to welcome him on behalf of the IF.

8.3 IF Involvement in Task Teams

8.3.1 Retirement Age Task Team

Dr Hansraj reported that he had appeared before the Retirement Age Subcommittee to give IF response to the revision of the retirement age. The IF was in favour of increasing the retirement age from 60 years to 65 years for both academic and professional staff.

8.3.2 Task Team on Equity and Transformation Policies

Dr Ruffin reported that she had reviewed the latest Equity Policy and the Transformation Charter. Mrs Bulman offered to join the Review Task Team. It was noted that the Equity Policy had been due for review during 2009. It was agreed to invite the Registrar, and an HR representative to join the Review Task Team.

Action: Dr Ruffin/Chair

8.3.3 Senior Appointments Policy and Procedures

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It was agreed to report on the matter once the review of the policies and procedures was complete.

8.3.4 Research Productivity and Teaching Assessment

Item 7.3 of these minutes refers.

9. GENERAL

9.1 #Feesmustfall

Attention was drawn to the recent #Feesmustfall campaign being conducted by students across tertiary institution campuses. The point was made that whilst there is recognition of the right to protest against inequalities and perceived injustices, students should be aware of using protest as the first means of drawing attention to matters. Concern was expressed at the destruction of University property and the intimidation of staff and students during protest action.

Mrs Bulman expressed concern at the actions of the security company employed on the PMB campus who were photographed seemingly encouraging students to protest. It was noted that the contract of the security company in question had been terminated.

It was noted that there were no student representatives at the meeting, mainly because the new student representatives had not been deployed.

9.2 IF Response to allegations of Racism allegations against the Vice-Chancellor – expressed in the Sunday Times of 22 November 2015

The Chair noted that the process to appoint a new Vice-Chancellor at UKZN had been lengthy and rigorous and that the current incumbent had been unanimously supported for appointment.

It was further noted that each allegation of racism made against the VC should have been documented and reported as per the University's Racism Policy. The Chair noted that he had not found the VC to be racist during his dealings with him. This view was upheld by Dr Matthews.

The point was made that a letter on which the report was based appeared to have been leaked to the Sunday Times and concern was expressed about this. The report also made allegations of incompetence against the

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VC. The Chair of Council would be addressing the complaints with complainants and the VC during the next two weeks. Concern was raised that due process had not been followed by the signatories to the aforementioned the letter, that the VC's and the University's image and reputation were being unfairly tarnished by members of the Executive whose foremost loyalty should be to the University.

After lengthy and intensive discussion it was agreed that the Chair would address a statement to the Chair of Council, encapsulating the IF's views, and the fact that no reports of racism or incompetence have been received by the IF.

10. MEETING DATES - 2016

- 6 April
- 22 June
- 05 September
- 21 November

Members will be advised of the venue/s closer to the meeting dates.

CHAIRPERSON.....DATE.....
