



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL™

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**INFORMAL REPORT ON THE MEETING OF THE INSTITUTIONAL FORUM
HELD AT 13H30 ON FRIDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 2013, IN THE VICE-
CHANCELLOR'S DINING-ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, WESTVILLE
CAMPUS**

Present

Dr S Reddy	(Health Sciences Academic Representative & Chair)
Dr S Hansraj	(CAES Academic Representative)
Ms C Musto	(Union Representative)
Dr P Naidoo	(Health Sciences Academic Representative)
Mr T Singarum	(Support Sector Representative)
Mr N Zuma	(Registrar's Representative)
Mr C Thomas	(Support Sector Representative)

Apologies

Dr L Lalendle	(Senate Representative)
Mr M Mdhuli	(CAES Support Representative & Deputy Chair)
Professor S Nadar	(Management Representative)
Ms C Terblanche	(CLMS Support Representative)
Professor D Tewari	(CLMS Academic Representative)
Ms Y Zwane	(Council Representative)

In attendance

Ms J Brady

1. OPENING AND WELCOME

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The Chair welcomed those members present and declared the meeting open. The attendance register was circulated and it was noted that a number of members had resigned from either the Committee or the University itself, and that there were many apologies for non-attendance.

2. **DISCUSSION**

The Chair expressed her disappointment at the poor attendance and said that it would not be possible to follow the normal meeting procedure as set out in the previously circulated agenda, due to the fact that the meeting was inquorate. Cognisance was taken of the fact that the September meeting also had to be cancelled as only five members had turned up at the venue.

The Chair further expressed concern that there had been very little response from members or from the wider University community to calls for agenda items. In response to the view that it seemed that the University generally was unaware of the existence and/or function of the Institutional Forum (IF), she informed the meeting of the measures that had been taken recently to try to make staff aware of the IF. Amongst these had been a motivation to address the Executive and Deans Forum about the IF and to request them to provide space on School Boards to “advertise” the Forum. This request had been turned down, mostly because it had been misunderstood that the request was for Institutional Forum matters to be discussed at School Boards.

Attention was drawn to the fact that matters such as requests for a University Women’s Day Lecture and an Academic Freedom Lecture, had been on the agenda for a very long time, without a satisfactory conclusion. The Chair said, in response to this view, that motivations had been sent to the relevant structures but decisions had been stalled for various reasons, including the resignations/retirement of key staff. After discussion, it was envisaged that matters might improve with the appointment of new staff in 2014.

The point was also made that perhaps the kinds of matters that were being discussed at the Forum were not of interest to the University community and an effort should be made to broach subjects that generated interest and debate.

It was proposed that, seeing that some people were in attendance, an informal discussion be held and a short report be circulated to members for noting.

The meeting identified the following topics for discussion:

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1. Filling of Vacant Senior Posts (with special regard to filling the post of DVC: College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science)
 2. Decision Flow at UKZN
 3. Conditions of Service

Discussion ensued as recorded below:

It was noted with serious concern that the post of DVC: College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science had been vacant for two years. The post was currently being filled on an acting and temporary basis and the opinion was expressed that the lack of a properly appointed DVC was not in the best of the interests of the College. It was further noted that the post had been advertised during the two year vacancy, and suitable persons had been identified and interviewed but unfortunately had subsequently refused the appointment.

Members present expressed their concern at the seeming lack of effort being made to fill the post and urged that the situation be rectified as soon as possible.

Another concern was that stringent selection requirements served to exclude Black South Africans, and especially females, from applying for senior positions at UKZN. For instance, one of the requirements for the position of DVC, was that one had had to be a full professor for at least five years, to be considered. This requirement automatically excluded a large number of otherwise suitable people.

It was also noted that UKZN academics had to provide a teaching portfolio when applying for promotion from associate professor to full professor whilst full professors from other universities who were applying for similar posts were not required to provide this. Thus this discrepancy disadvantaged UKZN academics who wished to apply for senior positions or promotions.

Cognisance was taken of the existence of the Academic Decision Flow document, directing the path of key academic matters at UKZN. However, the point was made that academics had not been consulted about certain decisions and policies that impacted on them.

A case in point in case was the recently distributed ICS User Policy which staff was required to adhere to. The point was made that all policies should serve at School Boards so that academics could give their input before serving at Senate, as it was important that the academic voice not be sidelined.

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Members present recommended that an audit be conducted of all policies in the University to determine whether they had served before academic structures before serving before Senate.

With regard to the upcoming December vacation period, concern was expressed that staff who attended work on 24 December would be given a half day’s leave, whilst staff who did not attend would have to apply for a full day’s leave. It was felt that this concession had created a mood of discontent amongst staff.

With regard to the Performance Management System, concern was expressed that only eligible staff who were on the 2012 conditions of service had received a performance bonus. It was felt that this was unfair as the performance management system had been instituted before 2012, so all eligible staff should have received a performance bonus.

3. CLOSURE

The Chair thanked the meeting for their valuable contribution and closed the meeting at 14h35.

4. DATES OF MEETINGS: 2014

- 03 March
- 17 June
- 09 September
- 25 November

Please note that all meetings will begin at 13h30 and will take place in the Council Chamber, Administration Building, Westville Campus, unless otherwise advised.

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