

Memorandum

Annual Integrated Report 2020: Request for information

To Responsibility Centre Heads

09 December 2020

Dear Colleagues

Our 2020 reporting year will go down in history as an extraordinary one. The answer to one question remains paramount: How did the University manage to sustain its business in a year fraught with challenges associated with the COVID-19 lockdown? Therefore, our Annual Integrated Report 2020 will reflect the extent to which we have been able to continue our business of teaching and learning, research, staff wellness and relationship building at this unprecedented time.

Improvements on our journey towards integrated reporting:

Over the past seven years, we have come ever closer to the ideals of integrated reporting as defined by the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC). The IIRC's eight interlinked content elements still serve as our guiding framework for integrated reporting (see the enclosed **content plan** for more information). This year, we will finally address the last content element, "**Basis of presentation**", which deals with our selection of information for the report. We are taking a major step towards repositioning our annual integrated report as a fully integrated compliance report. This will require the following improvements:

- The separate performance reports of the responsibility centres will be integrated into one report and presented according to the University's core strategic themes. This is in line with the performance reporting requirements of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (*Government Gazette* No. 37726, "Regulations for Reporting by Public Higher Education Institutions", 9 June 2014, p. 16). This will have certain implications for our work plan – please see "**Request for information**" below.
- The deans' reports will no longer be included in the annual integrated report, as they serve more of a marketing function. Institutional highlights will be included in the annual review, a new publication specifically aimed at a wide range of stakeholders other than the DHET.
- Our annual integrated report will now serve exclusively as an integrated compliance report with a sharper focus on the DHET's gazetted requirements.

- Following a resolution by Council, the University also adheres to the principles of the *King IV Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa, 2016*, with its renewed focus on ethical leadership and good governance. Therefore, our Annual Integrated Report 2020 will reflect the application of these principles under the content element “Governance”.

As required by the DHET, the final version of the Annual Integrated Report 2020 must be delivered to the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation by **30 June 2021**. To meet this deadline, the editors of the report have compiled a detailed timeline and content plan, outlining the approval process and the information required from each responsible entity. I kindly request your assistance in making available the requested information by the deadlines indicated below.

Request for information:

The reporting improvements outlined above require a new work plan.

The information needed to draft the performance report already exists in the form of the Rector’s four reports to Council in the year in review. Therefore, the editors will be following an entirely new approach, this time using the Rector’s reports to compile one, integrated performance report according to the University’s strategic themes and in line with the IIRC’s principles. However, as not all copywriters are familiar with the relevant environments, they will need guidance to identify the most pertinent issues covered in the Rector’s reports. For this reason, responsible entities are this year requested to provide a bulleted list of priorities regarding their performance according to the core strategic themes. These priority lists will then be used to extract the most salient, high-level information for drafting the performance report.

Of note is, the editors will submit a first draft of the integrated performance report to the environment heads by 20 January 2021, who will be requested to finalise and approve the report by 29 January 2021 (i.e. within a week and a half). The text will then be edited to ensure that we deliver a high-quality performance report.

The governance element of the report will be compiled in a different way, as the information is not readily available (see the enclosed content plan).

Deadlines for performance and governance information respectively:

- **18 December 2020:** Performance information to be provided **by responsibility centre (RC) heads** in the form of a bulleted list of the environment’s 2020 highlights to Mattie van der Merwe (mattievdmerwe@gmail.com) and Lize Vorster (lizevorster@gmail.com). The highlights should be listed by core strategic theme. **Please note:** The editor will be guided by these lists to extract information from the Rector’s (and the respective RCs’) reports to Council.
- **18 December 2020:** Governance information on Council committees and King IV application to be supplied **by the Registrar’s Division** according to the content plan. The text of the previous governance report will be supplied as a guideline.

- Statistics requested separately from the Information Governance Division will be added to the report as the data becomes available.

Your cooperation with meeting these deadlines will be appreciated. Receiving the information by the dates indicated will afford the editors the time needed to compile the report while you are taking a well-deserved break after this strenuous year.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Wim de Villiers', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Prof Wim de Villiers
Rector and Vice-Chancellor