



6 June 2021

Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) application

A Sunday newspaper enquired about decisions taken by the Senate and regarding a PAIA application by a student organisation. SU responded as follows:

Comment

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, Stellenbosch University (SU) had two overarching priorities: the successful completion of the 2020 academic year; and to ensure SU's sustainability for the future. So far, SU is doing excellently. This is evident from, among other things, the fact that SU has awarded a record number of qualifications for the 2020 academic year. (See [link](#)). This is a remarkable achievement, given the circumstances in which everyone finds themselves, but especially for lecturers and students.

When contact teaching was suspended last year, SU switched at very short notice to emergency distance teaching, learning and assessment (known at SU as ERTLA – in other words the University moved from in-person teaching and learning to online learning which includes additional lecture material and required podcasts).

Given the continuing circumstances due to the pandemic and the uncertainty brought about by the lockdown regulations at the beginning of 2021, the University was obliged to continue online teaching at the start of the 2021 academic year in March, but combined it with more in-person teaching and learning where possible and permissible. This again necessitated a redesign of the modules to enable this new combination of delivery.

Due to the practical reality of time constraints to make multilingual learning materials available and the incredible pressure on lecturers to make adjustments to learning facilitation and assessment, a request for the specific deviation from the faculties' language implementation plans was made via the Committee for Learning and Teaching (a subcommittee of Senate on which all the Vice-Deans: Learning and Teaching are represented).

This request was also submitted to the Academic Planning Committee (ABC). The ABC referred it to Senate's Executive Committee where all the Deans are represented. They, in turn, recommended it to Senate. (Also see SU's statement issued on 23 March 2021).

The University's staff and students have admirably adapted to the new way of teaching and learning, despite the fact that teaching cannot take place in ideal circumstances. The outstanding results of the 2020 graduates speak of the special dedication of both staff and students during the pandemic.

Regarding the blocking out of parts of the minutes and names:

Certain information was blocked as it fell outside the scope of the PAIA application and was not required. Other information was blocked for reasons related to personal information. Following their lawyers' letter on 3 June, SU will liaise with StudentePlein.

END