

ANNUAL REPORT 2005

THE INSTITUTIONAL FORUM

The Institutional Forum (IF) is an advisory body that, in terms of the Higher Education Act (Section 31(1) of Act 101 of 1997), advises the University Council on policy matters, including the execution of the provisions of the abovementioned act and national policy on higher education.

The activities of the IF are channelled primarily through its three task groups – the task group on Diversity and Equity, on Institutional Planning and on Institutional Culture. The task groups are complemented by ad hoc groups when necessary. The mandate of the task groups is to investigate as incisively as possible those matters assigned to them. They then report back to the IF and advise it so that well-considered advice can be given to Council.

Composition

The Institutional Forum consists of 28 members, seven from each of four sectors, which are comprised as follows:

Governance sector: Two members of Council elected by Council, three members of Senate elected by Senate, one member of Management appointed by Management, and the Registrar or a person appointed by the Registrar.

Staff sector: Two members elected from their own ranks by the permanent non-professorial academic staff, one member appointed from their own ranks by the academic support services, two members elected from their own ranks by recognised trade unions, and two members elected from their own ranks by the administrative support services.

Student sector: Two members of the Students' Representative Council elected by the Students' Representative Council, two members of the Head Students' Committee appointed by the Head Students' Committee, one member appointed by the student societies, and two members of the Academic Affairs Council appointed by the Academic Affairs Council.

Community sector: Two members of the Convocation appointed by the President of the Convocation, and five people appointed from their own ranks by the representative bodies of civil society.

Activities

General

In the first half of 2005, the activities of the IF were focused on the institutional self-evaluation and audit. The few remaining stumbling blocks, particularly regarding liaison with the University Management, were sorted out. It is expected that the IF will focus more on its position as a forum in 2006, and as such advise the University Council and comment on Management's implementation of the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997.

In the year under review, the IF advised the University Council in the form of formal reports on the following aspects:

The University's final self-evaluation report

The IF was pleased to be able to contribute to such an important document. Extensive comment was offered and a few amendments were suggested. This contribution was noted by Council and passed on to the drafters of the report.

Reappointment of the Vice-Chancellor

On the basis of comment in the self-evaluation report, the IF requested that, if necessary, the regulations governing the appointment of a vice-chancellor and vice-rectors be reviewed. In response to this, the IF was requested to voice its opinion on procedural aspects and the capacity for reappointment of the incumbent Vice-Chancellor. This request was fulfilled.

In conclusion

During 2005, the IF built on the notion that it should not be employed for obtaining automatic approval, shorn of all criticism, but rather as a forum where matters can be discussed thoroughly. To achieve this goal, a self-examination of the Institutional Forum's role on campus was carried out during August, at the end of the terms of office of most IF members. It was decided to reappraise the role of the IF in the first half of 2006 and, where required, make the necessary changes to the functioning and composition of the IF.

In general, the IF participates actively in discussions on all matters affecting Stellenbosch University, and it maintains an open invitation to anyone to bring any matter concerning policy, culture or planning at the University to its attention for discussion.

The IF is satisfied that it made a meaningful contribution to the activities of the University during 2005.

Le Roux Burrows

Chairperson