

ANNUAL REPORT 2006

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 the 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

The activities of the IF in 2006 can be divided into two parts. The first was the normal duties of advising the University Council and commenting on Management's implementation of the

Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997. The other was incisive discussions during a planning session (and thereafter) on what the role of the IF should be. These discussions were concerned particularly with whether the IF should remain strictly within its legally prescribed duties and responsibilities, or whether there should be more concentrated involvement in specific issues such as community interaction. Until a satisfactory answer has been found, these two aspects will remain on the agenda.

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

The University's Policy on Senior Appointments

On the basis of comments in the self-evaluation report, as well as a previous report to Council (4/2005), the IF again requested that the University Council should consider revising the policy.

The University's Policy on the Exploitation of Intellectual Property

The IF considered the proposed amendments to the policy and came to the conclusion that, with the inclusion of two small amendments that were proposed, the policy could make a considerable contribution to the regulation and protection of the intellectual processes on the campus.

The University's Rules regarding the Procedure for the Appointment of a Rector and of Vice-Rectors

The rules were discussed in great detail and a number of amendments were proposed, the majority of which were accepted by Council. These amended rules succeed in eliminating obscurities in the previous version.

Possible reappointment of the Vice-Rector (Teaching) and of the Rector

In accordance with the University's Rules regarding the Procedure for the Appointment of a Rector and of Vice-Rectors, the IF advised Council on the suitability for appointment of both these people.

The University's Learning and Teaching Policy

The IF considered this policy thoroughly and found that it was well thought through and well formulated. However, what concerned the IF was the extent to which current and future

students were aware of the content and implications of all the policies and rules that affect them. This matter is receiving further attention.

In conclusion

During 2006, the IF continued to build on the notion that it should be known as a forum where matters can be discussed thoroughly. To achieve this goal, it continued to carry out self-examination of its role on campus. As a consequence of the planning session there is continuous reflection on the role of the IF so that the necessary changes in its modus operandi can be made, if necessary. Attention is also being paid to the 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 debate and discussion.

The IF is satisfied that it made a meaningful contribution to the activities of the University during 2006.

Le Roux Burrows

Chairperson