

REPORT OF THE INSTITUTIONAL FORUM 2013

The Institutional Forum 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 Act and national policy on higher education.

The activities of the Forum consist of meetings where our responses and advice to Council are considered, and discussions are held between the Forum's Executive Committee and the Rector's Management Team. From time to time, the Forum makes use of three task groups which focus on diversity and equity, institutional planning, and institutional culture in order to expedite our business. Members serve voluntarily in the task groups of their choice. When necessary, the task groups are expanded to include ad hoc groups. These task groups have the competency to investigate thoroughly those matters that are assigned to them. They then report back to the Forum so that it can give well-considered advice to Council.

COMPOSITION

The Statute of the University stipulates the number of Institutional Forum members. The Forum comprises 32 members, with eight from each of the following four sectors: the governance sector, the staff sector, the student sector and the community sector. The composition of each group is also prescribed.

ACTIVITIES

The Forum carries out its allotted duties of advising the University Council on policy documents and commenting on the University management's implementation of the Act mentioned above. Further to this, the Forum has attempted over the past year not to focus so strictly on its legally prescribed duties and responsibilities alone, but also to attend to other specific matters, as determined from time to time, with the aim of offering Council proactive advice for their consideration and further investigation.

PROPOSED POLICIES

During 2013, the Institutional Forum advised primarily on new policies, by way of formal reports. University policies that were at issue were:

- the Policy on Conflict of Interests;
- the Policy for Placement in Residences, and in Listening, Learning and Living Houses, as well as Allocation to PSO Wards and Clusters (revision of the previous residential placement policy);
- the Framework Policy for Responsible Research Conduct at Stellenbosch University;
- the Policy on a Delegation Framework for Stellenbosch University; and
- the Policy in respect of the Indirect Cost Recovery Rate (ICRR) with regard to Third-stream Income at Stellenbosch University.

FORUM COMMENTARY ON POLICIES AND FORMAL REQUESTS

The Forum supports the overarching intention of the policies on placement of students in residences, conflict of interests, and research conduct. We however proposed certain amendments regarding the

Policy in respect of the Indirect Cost Recovery Rate with regard to Third-stream Income in order to ensure that non-academic projects (such as career guidance and broadening of access) that are of strategic importance and generate a third income stream are also included. Although the Forum sees the necessity of the Policy for a Delegation Framework, we are of the opinion that a two-yearly revision horizon is too short and therefore recommend that revision be done every three years.

FORUM COMMENTARY ON OTHER MATTERS

The Forum submitted commentary and requests for consideration to Council concerning various other matters.

The Forum requested Council to give attention to drafting a comprehensive wellness policy for staff. The Forum also requested that Council informs this body when amendments are made to the regulations of policy and management documents, and also to the vision and mission of the University.

In order to remove any uncertainty about the scope of our statutory duties in terms of article 31(1)(a)(iii) of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (as amended), the Forum decided it would enter into discussion with Council about the selection of candidates for senior management positions. This discussion is ongoing.

Lastly, the Forum decided to draw up a code of conduct that will be aligned with the code of conduct of the University Council.

Le Roux Burrows

Chair: Institutional Forum