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Student Representative Council
Stellenbosch University
STELLENBOSCH
7600

28 April 2015

re: MEMO FROM CONCERNED STUDENTS

Thank you for the memorandum that the Student Representative Council's chairperson handed to me on behalf of the *Concerned Students at Stellenbosch University* at the end of the Human Dignity march on Friday 6 March 2015. We have discussed it in the Rector's Management Team, and gladly interact with student leaders and student communities to develop constructive ways to change Stellenbosch University for the better.

In the memorandum the students note incidents of discrimination that occurred over the last few years and request that the prevalence of these issues should be addressed. In particular the University notes that the students assessed the situation and ask for certain measures that they believe will address the matters at hand. These measures include the formulation of a single stand-alone discrimination policy, the implementation of a discrimination office, the appointment of a discrimination officer and awareness amongst students where to report incidences of discrimination.

The University is of the same mind as the students in its endeavours to create a truly inclusive ethos on campus. This is illustrated, for example, by the joint participation in the march to Re-affirm Human Dignity and the memorandum that the management handed to students on Friday 6 March 2015. There are many other ongoing actions to promote inclusivity as highlighted in the attached document "Summarised Transformation actions at SU."

In the University's guiding document, *Institutional Intent and Strategy*, the highest priority is given to be *Inclusive, Innovative and Future focused*. Thereby the University, in close collaboration with the student community, is creating a future that is free of any racism and discrimination of any kind. The Council and Rector's Management believe that this should be achieved as part of the DNA of every organisational entity and all efforts of the University.

Whether the eradication of all forms of racism and discrimination can be the ambit or brief of only one specific Discrimination Office, guided by one comprehensive Discrimination Policy, we shall explore in consultation with staff and students as you have proposed. In the mean time, would you please have a look at the second attached document, which lists some of the existing anti-discrimination policies and regulations, that apply to SU staff and students. When incidents of discrimination, violence or any other forms of infringement on human dignity are

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identified, the University deliberately takes formal disciplinary measures against students and staff.

The University recognises that to be truly inclusive is a matter of continuous improvement. Inclusivity is indeed the antithesis of discrimination with the aim to malevolently exclude. In this regard we welcome the concern that the students show and we recognise the value of feedback and the insight and contributions from students and other role players.

The doors of all the various divisions and centres of the University dealing with student matters are open for consultation with students on matters of inclusivity and the eradication of racism. The Stellenbosch University Management, through the Division for Student Affairs, will also liaise with student representative organisations on how to establish an Open Transformation Forum. This forum could possibly create a space where SU students and staff meet regularly and discuss how to achieve further meaningful transformation at our University.

The Management Team of the Rector will continue its regular formal and informal discussions with the Student Representative Council and other student leaders and student communities. In this regard it was decided at our last meeting on Monday 20 April between the Management Team of the Rector and the Executive Committee of the Student Representative Council to have more substantive agendas and to look at more time for in-depth discussions at these meetings (at least hour and a half set aside per meeting).

The Management Team of the Rector would like to express their sincere appreciation to the role the Student Representative Council members are playing at present – for all the hard work and many initiatives that often take place behind the scenes.

We look forward to constructive engagement and dialogue, committed to a common cause of even greater inclusivity.

Yours sincerely

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

Prof Arnold Schoonwinkel
Vice-Rector (Learning & Teaching)