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Terms of reference for a two-year committee-led process to develop and implement Stellenbosch University's institutional response to the Khampepe Report

Committee Name:

Committee for the Institutional Response to the Commission's Recommendations (CIRCoRe)

1. Background

Stellenbosch University's (SU) current Vision 2040 document and associated processes illustrate its commitment to being a responsive future-focused Africa-centred institution. Our galvanising ethos is defined by our motto *Saam Vorentoe! Masiye Phambili! Forward Together!* The quest of Stellenbosch University is to be a transforming university. Transformation endeavours have had a chequered career at SU after the end of apartheid, particularly over the past two decades. Transformation activity has nonetheless gained traction and momentum on SU's campuses. The Institution is, however, still grappling with racism in various forms, as manifested in at least two incidents at the University in 2022. The first involved a verbal altercation between two final-year law students at the Law Faculty dance on 12 May 2022. The second incident occurred on 15 May 2022 in the Huis Marais residence when an intoxicated white first-year student entered the room of a black first-year student without permission and urinated on the latter's possessions.

Prof Wim de Villiers, SU's Rector and Vice-Chancellor, instituted a Commission of Inquiry into allegations of racism at SU in June 2022. Under the leadership of Emeritus Justice Sisi Khampepe, the Commission was mandated to consider institutionalised racism linked to, amongst others, these two incidents of alleged racism at the University.

Given SU's stance of zero tolerance towards racism, the Commission was also requested to investigate the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the campus culture. It was asked to consider whether the existing structures of the University and its policies, rules, and processes are sufficient to effectively address the lived experience of racism and other forms of discriminatory behaviour among students and staff. The Commission was also mandated to investigate transformation at the University. This task included the efficacy of its transformation apparatuses, the broader institutional culture, and the experiences of its students and staff members.

The Commission released its report on 25 October 2022 titled, *The Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of Racism at Stellenbosch University: Final Report* (hereinafter referred to as the Khampepe Report). We embarked on an inclusive process by inviting all university sectors to participate in shaping our response to the Report. Our institutional response is founded on stakeholder co-ownership. In this light, we seek to include all parties in the processes set up to develop the university's response. Our focus is on the analysis, findings and recommendations of the Khampepe Report, informed by an approach that continues to extend the university as a welcoming place for all its staff and students. Our ongoing work on institutional change embraces our diversity, informed by a commitment to academic and organisational excellence. All stakeholders, irrespective of academic discipline, race, language, religion, nationality, sexual preference and family background, must feel respected at the university and experience it as a welcoming place where they fully belong.

The Khampepe Report found that racism continues to be experienced by SU staff and students. These experiences occurred in the organisational domains of the University, such as faculties, classrooms, residences and responsibility centres. Experiences of personal racism among staff were also ubiquitous. The Report further found that SU still suffers from an exclusionary and discriminatory institutional culture that impacts its operations to the disadvantage of black staff and students.

The Commission called attention to the University as a disaffecting environment for black students and staff with an adverse residence culture and work environment characterised by a general lack of harmony. The Report explained that "black students do not wish to assimilate into the existing culture and are fighting to feel included, welcome and relevant at the University" (p.88). According to the Report, Black staff experience the University as unwelcoming and hostile. In this regard, the Report indicates that middle management struggled to facilitate transformation and that the University's institutional functional matrix and hierarchy were not optimally facilitating transformation. While transformation policies were abundant, core transformation–related structures were under-capacitated and functioning sub-optimally. The Report highlighted the need to streamline the University's organisational functioning to facilitate collaboration between structures implementing transformation-related responsibilities across all responsibility centres.

The Khampepe Report's[1] recommendations cover the following areas: structural improvement to various units of the University, including the Equality Unit and the Transformation Office; educational interventions, including training for students and staff and the introduction of a compulsory, core curriculum module; improving collaboration between key University players and bodies; the development and adoption of a Transformation Charter; clarifying student disciplinary procedures, addressing the student experience, improving the welcoming experience and residence education, and improving the University's implementation of its multilingual language policy[2]

The Rectorate has established a two-year committee process to develop and implement the University's response to the Report's findings and recommendations. SU is fully committed to an inclusive and transformed campus experience where racism and all other forms of discrimination are rejected. Transformation on campus has been based on structures, policies, practices and initiatives across the university that work via different modalities and operations in the various parts of our complex institution. Transformation at SU is based on a conceptual connection between transformative justice and excellence. The university intends to build on its recent history of intuitional transformation by fully embracing the spirit of the Khampepe Report and its recommendations. In this regard, SU is open to learning from the challenges, shortcomings, successes and possibilities of its many transformation-based initiatives across its campuses.

In this light, the ***Committee for the Institutional Response to the Commission's Recommendations (CIRCoRe)*** will be set up to lead and coordinate the University's response to the Khampepe Report's recommendations. The CIRCoRe process will draw on the experiences and learnings of similar structures at the University. In particular, it will draw on the modus operandi of the Institutional Committee for Business Continuity (ICBC) that coordinated SU's operations during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Evidently, the institution has not gone far enough in establishing a transformed and inclusive campus culture where all its staff and students can learn, live, feel welcome, and be fully part of a diverse university community. In the words of the Rector, Prof Wim de Villiers, the Report represents a tipping point in the university's endeavours to counter racism in its operations. SU is committed to continuing the process of establishing an inclusive human rights culture in the university's administrative and support structures and its teaching and

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2 See part five of the Khampepe Report (pp. 172-184) for the recommendations.

learning, research and societal impact and engagement work. While responding to racism is a key concern, an intersectionality impetus informs SU's institutional response based on questions of class, gender, sexual orientation and other identifications that inform the experiences of students and staff at the university. Making the university a place for a transformative student experience and an employer of choice for all staff are hallmarks of the institutional response to the Report.

The Khampepe Report strengthens and encourages us to go forward together as staff, students, stakeholders, societal partners, and alumni. We believe that this Report can aid us in being a transforming university that makes further progress on our journey of comprehensive, profound and deep transformation and renewal and be an institution that contributes resolutely to the change and renewal of the society that we attempt to serve.

2. **SU's response to the Khampepe Report: an organisational transformation approach**

SU's response to the Report is founded on proactive engagement with and implementation of the Report's recommendations. The Report distinguishes between recommended structural improvements related to the University's organisational functioning and the policies and regulations governing these, on the one hand, and educational and other values-based interventions to promote institutional change, on the other hand. Some of these recommendations are viable for implementation in the short-term, while others would have a more medium and longer-term implementation duration. Such a phased approach aligns with SU's ongoing commitment to continuous processes of change deemed necessary to establish a transformed university as a national asset of the broader South African society.

Conceptually, our institutional response to organisational transformation is informed by in-depth engagement in adapting and changing values, beliefs, and attitudes. These changes would lay an essential basis for subsequent changes in the work patterns, structures and processes that make up the university's organisational culture. Significant shifts in organisational behaviour are difficult to accomplish unless accompanied by a willingness of staff and students to change in line with new organisational expectations. Reframing the organisation's functional values and purposes requires the deliberative and supportive construction of adaptive cultures of operation.

Judith Chapman (2002, p. 28), a transformation organisational theorist, explains that new organisational cultures and practices are "constructed through experiential learning and reworking of [older] cognitive structures. Such deep psychological engagement is exhibited as 'organisational citizenship' where participation becomes a platform for transcending current patterns". A commitment to creating an appropriate dialogical climate and the concerted use of levers and pulleys is fundamental to producing a hospitable and inclusive institution.

A phased implementation approach[3] will be followed that honours the complexity and depth of adjusting and transforming the university's processes to make it a welcoming, inclusive,

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[3] Chapman elaborates on a four-stage *reframing* model that focuses on the challenges that transformation presents for individuals and groups. Stage 1 revolves around the unsettling of current beliefs and values which underpin the old ways of being and doing. Stage 2 involves the generation of new information and perspectives. Stage 3 concentrates on generating new understandings and adapted frameworks taking shape. Finally, stage 4 involves implementation of new policies, decisions, practices. These stages are not always linear. They may be

and affirming institution for all its staff and students in service of society. Those who feel marginalised and excluded do not automatically feel at home once they enter the University. They do not automatically take ownership of their campus and cannot always take up their rightful place in residences, departments, and committees. This sense of institutional belonging and ownership must be intentionally fostered. Where a diversity of staff, students, ideas, and perspectives are not welcomed, the quality of core academic activities (i.e., research, learning and teaching as well as research-based and learning and teaching-oriented social impact) suffer. As such, there is no academic excellence without hospitality, co-ownership and a celebration of diverse people and ideas. As a South African university, SU remains on a journey from high levels of exclusion to inclusion. In this diversifying context, developing a more inclusive and anti-racist institutional culture is an ongoing and necessary imperative. It is fully part of excelling as an institution in the context of our country and continent.

SU's vision for the future is to be a forward-oriented, innovative, and inclusive university which contributes to the well-being of its students and society. It sees itself as a world-class university contributing substantially to Africa and the region in which the University is situated. SU is also intent on continuing to build bridges between the university and local communities in the broader Stellenbosch region and communities surrounding all of SU's other campuses. We continue with the task of partnering with them to secure improved living conditions and sustainable livelihoods.

The University has made significant strides in transforming itself from a racially and linguistically exclusive mould. Transformation inputs, outputs and accountability measures are necessary for optimising the University's change orientations. So are transformation policies, vision-building and mission statements and plans. The role of the SU Rectorate throughout the institution continues to be vital to leveraging the appropriate response. Such leadership is necessary and pivotal to galvanise the complex infrastructure of a university's transformation agenda.

The changes required for creating a new identity have needed a degree of soul-searching and humility, placing an onus on the broader University community to maintain an open, self-critical stance and a sense of care and responsibility. This responsibility is a strength that characterises the identity of SU. Building an inclusive university identity is a complex yet necessary endeavour involving all its stakeholders in deliberative dialogue and action to establish SU as an inclusive home for all.

3. A strategic joined-up response to the Khampepe Report

The Report affirms SU as a place for upholding students' human dignity and belonging. SU is set on continuing to create an institution where hitherto diminished students and staff can feel safe, valued, and validated and flourish together with all other students and staff on campus. Allied with our Transformation Plan of 2017 and 2018 Restitution Statement, our Response is tied to SU's aspiration to become a leading African research-intensive university. Our students and staff are engaged in producing new knowledge to move our society from an exclusive past to a socially just, sustainable, thriving, democratic future.

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cyclical, recursive, or interactive It is clear that when participants are comfortable with the new frames and understandings, will they be likely to implement new change-orientated practices. See Chapman, J. 2002. A framework for transformational change in organisations. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*. Vol 23, No. 1: pp. 16-25.

The Khampepe Report flagged 'institutional culture' as the key target for our transformation quest in all its respects and dimensions. Changing SU's institutional culture challenges us to develop a joined-up set of responses pursued in the institution concertedly via diverse, integrated and coordinated processes in and across all its campuses, faculties, and responsibility units.

Institutional culture is elusive and complex. And universities, like other complex institutions, often have many institutional cultures in their different spaces. We require our institutional change approaches to be fully attentive, ally-building, norms-generating, ethics and virtues-sharing, co-developing, and co-owning. We must build intersubjective communities and shared conversations. Genuine inclusive listening is the *sine qua non* of our response. As such, the response to the Khampepe Report must ensure broad buy-in. We will build on the productive dialogue that has been taking place in Faculties and Departments in response to the Khampepe Report. The CIRCoRE will encourage transformation-centred dialogue in all its campus environments. Framing or guiding questions would be provided to inform conversations in Faculties, Departments and Responsibility Centres. Receiving short reports from such sessions would galvanise, inform, and feed the committee processes. Thus, a fundamental principle is that the Committee's processes and substantive responses and proposals will be guided by the views of staff and students on the 'ground' where the institution's culture is experienced and where change processes would ensue. In other words, the CIRCoRe will be based on an inclusive, transparent, and shared ownership approach to transformational change in the institution.

CIRCoRe intends to employ a strategic approach to its work that would take account of the nature and unevenness of our various environments, different expectations of change processes, and varying degrees of willingness to participate in and bring about change. Developing shared understandings are critical to our strategic management approaches.

The choice of membership in the CIRCoRE and workstreams is critical. CIRCoRE persons must share transformational commitments. Members would be aligned with the transformation objectives on campus, have experience in change-related work in higher education, and ideally have done research and development work on transformation in higher education.

The CIRCoRe will hold all the parts of the process together. Reporting back to the Rectorate, Council, Senate, and the Institutional Forum would emphasise the interaction between processes for generating the response and the actual substantive proposals. Furthermore, regular communication on the committee's work should inform and allow the campus community to participate actively in CIRCoRe processes.

The committee process will be supported by external reference persons who will serve as advisors to the various dimensions of the intuitional response to the Khampepe Report. Such individuals would give the process external legitimacy, offer perspectives on our proposals, and offer research expertise. These external persons would thus serve as a reference and resource for our committee processes.

The CIRCoRE will consult with University-related external stakeholder groups such as alumni, local communities, higher education governance structures, and policy units to obtain guidance, advice and broad buy-in.

We will embark on a coordinated and joined-up process to generate the institutional response to the Khampepe Report. Such an approach would emphasise the intersection between consultative processes and dialogue across campus. It would favour committee processes that intersect with these conversations so that it takes its cue from campus and broader stakeholder voices while drawing on requisite expertise to develop the institutional response.

4. The Committee for the Institutional Response to the Commission's Recommendations (CIRCoRe)

The intuitional response process will be coordinated from the University's centre by the Vice-Chancellor and Rectorate, guided by SU's Mission and Vision 2040 document and its overall transformation objectives. **The CIRCoRe** will be appointed to oversee the process. The CIRCoRe will be headed and chaired by the Rector and, in his absence, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel.

The CIRCoRe's remit is to lead, implement, oversee and monitor Stellenbosch University's response to the Khampepe Commission Report's recommendations. The CIRCoRe will be responsible for the overall goals and objectives, direction-setting, guidance, and the integrated coherence and monitoring of the process. Measuring progress via, for example, surveys and focus group discussions will be used to understand whether progress has been made towards attaining the process's objectives.

Members of CIRCoRE will consist of no more than 15 university persons. These would include members of the Rectorate, the University's Transformation portfolio, a senior official from corporate communications, two Institutional Transformation Committee members, two Senate members, one Student Representative Council member, and one member representing the Deans.

The CIRCoRe will regularly report to the Rectorate, Senate, the Institutional Forum, Council and other relevant structures. It will make recommendations to the Rectorate and other appropriate decision-making and implementation structures and committees. Decisions would be channelled to permanent structures such as the Transformation Office, Equality Unit, Human Resources, Student Affairs, Research and Innovation, and all SU Faculties.

An essential matter to be considered by the CIRCoRe process is the recommendation to develop and design a Transformation Charter via a campus-wide participative process.

A CIRCoRe coordinating office will manage the institutional response process for the two-year duration of the committee's work. A budget will be prepared and submitted to support the work of this office for the two-year period. Prof Aslam Fataar, Department of Education Policy Studies at SU, has been appointed as the CIRCoRe coordinator. Prof Andre Keet, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Engagement and Transformation at Nelson Mandela University, has been appointed as an external expert consultant to the process.

Members of the CIRCoRe:

5. The Workstreams

The CIRCoRe will set up five workstreams. A coordinator will lead each workstream. Each workstream will process the Khampepe Report's findings and recommendations for its specific remit and focus. The workstreams will be steered and coordinated by the CIRCoRe, to whom it will periodically report.

Workstreams may co-opt university persons with appropriate expertise as members. They may also consult external consultants and experts to assist with their work. Workstreams may be combined, amended or added depending on the CIRCoRe's identification of the need for adjusting the processes' structures to deliver on its objectives.

Each workstream will develop a set of proposals for implementation during the CIRCoRe's two-year process. They will identify short, medium and long-term initiatives and policy alignments, procedures and practices for implementation during the two-year period. The workstreams will each develop workable plans for implementation that will be monitored for coherence and overall alignment with the broader objectives of the institutional response process. The workstreams will meet according to a schedule and report to the CIRCoRe.

i) Workstream on student life/communities

This workstream will develop proposals for change processes to align the practices of all university environments responsible for facilitating student access and success at the University, especially for those groups who have hitherto felt discriminated against, marginalised, and ignored in the institution's student environments. The core focus of this workstream is to develop an integrated university-wide impetus and implementation process for creating an inclusive and dignified social and educational reception and experience for students. It will concentrate on developing the campus as a safe, welcoming, and affirming place that fosters the students' optimal growth that will facilitate their educational success. This workstream will seek to advance tangible options for effectively implementing the University's multilingual language policy in its residences and related student support environments.

Workstream Head: Prof Ronelle Carolissen

ii) Workstream on the compulsory core offering embedded in processes of Curriculum, Teaching and Learning Renewal

This workstream will give consideration to developing a compulsory offering for all first-year students for implementation by all the University's teaching programmes. The workstream will provide an educationally sound basis to inform the module's conceptualisation, design, and implementation dynamics. It will advance workable models with respect to the delivery of the module, which may include a combination of online and face-to-face pedagogical and assessment approaches. Attention will be paid to developing the lecturing capacity for teaching the module. The take-up of such a module within the disciplinary logic of specific programmes will also be considered. A starting point would be to develop insight and understanding of all the existing modules currently offered in Faculties and Departments based on a critical

humanities/citizenship orientation. Learning from these offerings will provide an essential basis for designing and implementing a compulsory module. The workstream will be part of ongoing curriculum, teaching and learning renewal processes.

Workstream Head: Prof Lis Lange

iii) Workstream on Institutional Culture

This workstream will concentrate on the crucial and challenging issue of aligning the University's institutional culture with a democratic human rights ethos. Referring to institutional 'ways of being,' Sarah Ahmed[4], an institutional culture expert, suggests that when things become institutionalised, they become part of the background, as a given and part of its naturalised functioning. Race became part of the institutional life of SU, impacting its 'modes of being', traditions, and everyday operations. SU functioned as a race-based system at personal, cultural, and structural levels. It reproduced its institutional culture amid the ordering of relationships and processes inside the University and the invention and dissemination of traditions and practical 'ways of doing' in its sports and recreational environments, classrooms, and residences. This workstream will endeavour to offer the institution ways of understanding the extant institutional culture of SU and how to shift and change this culture over time. One such initiative is the compulsory training of staff to build transformation competencies. The workstream will offer concrete short, medium, and long-term implementation strategies and practices to align the University's environments with a culture of human rights, inclusion, and non-discrimination.

Workstream Head: Prof Kopano Ratele

iv) Workstream on Race, Human Categorisation, and Science

This workstream will focus on the question of race and human categorisation at SU. The Khampepe Report highlighted the role of race in the University's historical development. This workstream will seek to problematise SU's role in promoting race science and using race as a primary ordering category of scholarly practices. We believe the University should become a key site for developing a critique of race in science, research, and related institutional practices and processes. The workstream will provide insight into how race seeped into the University's teaching and learning, research, and social impact operations. It will help SU re-imagine how it continues to re-orientate and re-structure its work within a democratic society in transition. Consideration would be given to instituting campus-wide mechanisms dedicated to transforming research and science, which would develop the scholarship and scholarly infrastructure to promote, coordinate and deepen processes related to a transformed understanding of science and research. The workstream will facilitate scholarly insight and awareness of the role of human categorisation in the Scientific

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[4] See Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life.* Durham and London, Duke University Press.

processes of the University, including its research, teaching, and societal work. Such a task will add value to debates and policies about the use of human categories in Science and Research in the higher education sector more generally. Training staff and students on Science, race and human categorisation will be given consideration. This workstream will feed into the relevant university research committees, processes, and structures to align all its science and knowledge activity to the requirements of the country's Constitution.

Workstream Head: Prof Dion Forster

v) Workstream on simplifying and aligning university structures, policies and regulations with Transformation

This workstream will concentrate on change, adaptation and possible functional alignment of organisational structures. This workstream would include considerations about revising and adapting accompanying policies and regulations to facilitate the recommended changes made by the CIRCoRe. The simplification and strengthening of transformation via institutional alignment with the transformation structures would be a key consideration. Improved alignment amongst current transformation structures and policies would be advanced. Such a task would involve aligning the work of the University's responsibility centres with its transformation objectives, systems and outcomes.

Workstream Head: Dr Leslie van Rooi

6. Conclusion

The work of the CIRCoRe would start immediately. The CIRCoRe coordinator will determine a workable schedule and proposed deliverables as soon as possible. The members of the CIRCoRe would be appointed and meet to kick-start the process. It would play a leading vision-building, agenda-setting and monitoring role. The coordinating office would be set up to coordinate the process. The workstreams would be set up and asked to meet to determine their work remit, schedules and the development of their implementation plans. Each workstream would develop short, medium and long-term implementation activities and targets. Academic and professional expertise external to the University would be consulted to support the CIRCoRe and workstreams. Communication, consultation, monitoring and accountability will be essential to the CIRCoRe's work.

Rectorate Committee Process

CIRCoRe

Stellenbosch
UNIVERSITY
IYUNIVESITHI
UNIVERSITEIT

Substantive Campuswide Participation

Coordinating Office

Consultation with local communities, stakeholders, external partners, Higher Education community, external expertise

Workstreams

Reporting to Rectorate
for implementation in all the University's operations:
Faculties, Student Life, Responsibility Centres, etc.

Stellenbosch
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CIRCoRE

FIVE WORKSTREAMS

STUDENT LIFE/COMMUNITIES

CORE CURRICULUM OFFERING

INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE

RACE, HUMAN CATEGORISATION, SCIENCE

SIMPLIFYING STRUCTURES, POLICIES, REGULATIONS / ALIGN WITH INSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIVES

IMPLEMENTATION