

2016-08-24

## **Statement by the Institutional Forum of the University of the Free State (UFS)**

The Institutional Forum (IF) noted the recent incident concerning white students and a black security guard, as well as the incident of the discrepancy between the English and Afrikaans versions of the same test. We agree with the university management that both incidents are deplorable and should not occur at the UFS, given all the work put in since the Reitz incident. However, we respect management's prerogative to complete their due processes before making any definitive statements regarding the incidents. Statements by some role players – as if factual proof was already at hand – are not in the interest of the university as an important institution with a duty to report to society the responsible handling of all matters. Hence, as adviser to Council, we acknowledge the efforts of the UFS Council. We count the process of change in language policy as prime among these efforts. We also await, with interest, the findings and recommendations of the high-level investigation into the Shimla Park incident of February 2016. Furthermore, we are aware of the findings of substantial and significant progress with transformation at the UFS over the past 10 years, according to Council's institutional audit, led by Prof Barney Pityana and other highly respected higher-education analysts. All these genuine efforts at understanding our changing environment to effect real change, puts paid to the criticism typifying the UFS as a racist institution and management as protectors of racists. Broadly speaking, the IF is still reasonably satisfied with the pace of transformation at the UFS, however temporarily tainted the institution can become by incidents such as the latest two. We are satisfied that the Council and management of the UFS are genuinely interested in effecting deep systemic change through their various efforts.

**Released by Dr Willy Nel (Chairperson) on behalf of the Institutional Forum of the UFS**

## **Verklaring deur die Universiteit van die Vrystaat (UV) se Institusionele Forum**

Die Institusionele Forum (IF) het ag geslaan op die onlangse voorval waarby wit studente en 'n swart sekuriteitswag betrokke was, asook die voorval wat betref teenstrydigheid tussen die Engelse en Afrikaanse weergawes van dieselfde toets. Ons stem saam met die universiteitsbestuur dat albei voorvalle betreurenswaardig is en nie by die UV hoort nie, gegewe al die werk wat sedert die Reitz-voorval gedoen is. Ons respekteer egter bestuur se prerogatief om hulle behoorlike prosesse af te handel voordat ons enige beslissende uitsprake oor die voorvalle maak. Verklarings deur sommige betrokkenes – asof feitelike bewyse reeds beskikbaar is – is nie tot voordeel van die universiteit as 'n belangrike instelling wat 'n plig het om die verantwoordelike hantering van alle sake aan die samelewing te rapporteer nie. As raadgewer vir die Raad, gee ons dus erkenning aan die pogings van die UV-Raad. Ons beskou die proses om die taalbeleid te verander as die belangrikste van hierdie pogings. Ons wag ook met verwagting op die bevindinge van die hoëvlak-ondersoek na die Shimlapark-voorval in Februarie 2016. Volgens die Raad se institusionele audit onder leiding van prof Barney Pityana en ander hoogs gerespekteerde hoëronderwysontleders, is ons verder ook bewus van die bevindinge rakende aansienlike en beduidende vordering in transformasie by die UV oor die afgelope 10 jaar. Al hierdie opregte pogings om ons veranderende omgewing te verstaan en sodoende ware verandering teweeg te bring, weerspreek die kritiek wat die UV as 'n rassistiese instelling en die bestuur as beskermers van rassiste tipeer. Oor die algemeen gesproke, is die IF nog redelik tevrede met die pas van transformasie by die UV, ten spyte van die feit dat voorvalle soos die jongste twee die instelling tydelik kan skaad. Ons is tevrede dat die Raad en bestuur van die UV opreg daarin geïnteresseerd is om diep sistemiese verandering deur middel van verskeie pogings teweeg te bring.

**Vrygestel deur dr Willy Nel (Voorsitter) namens die UV se Institusionele Forum**