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GOVERNMENT NOTICE

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

No. 273

10 April 2013

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING**MINISTERIAL OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE ON TRANSFORMATION IN THE
SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES**

I, Bonginkosi Emmanuel Nzimande, MP, Minister of Higher Education and Training, in accordance with Treasury Regulation 20 [issued in terms of Public Financial Management Act, 1999 (Act No1 of 1999)] hereby establish a Ministerial Committee set out in the schedule hereto to oversee transformation projects in South African universities.



DR BE NZIMANDE, MP

MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING

DATE:

20/03/13

SCHEDULE

Establishment of an Oversight Committee on Transformation in the South African Universities

1. Background

The *White Paper 3: A Framework for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997)* (*White Paper*) seeks to guide programmes and processes aimed at transforming the post-apartheid education system. It requires that “all existing practices, institutions and values are viewed anew and re-thought in terms of their fitness for the new era”.

In 2008, the then Minister of Education, Ms Naledi Pandor, appointed a *Ministerial Committee on Transformation and Social Cohesion and Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education*, headed by Prof Crain Soudien, to “investigate discrimination in public higher education institutions, with a particular focus on racism and to make appropriate recommendations to combat discrimination and to promote social cohesion.” The Committee set out and had to report to the Minister on the following:

- An overview of the state of anti-discrimination in higher education;
- An indication of the most unacceptable forms of discrimination that are taking place within the system;
- The nature and extent of racism and racial discrimination in public higher education, and in particular university residence, and other forms of discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and disability;
- An insight into models of good, anti-discriminatory practices that were emerging within the system;
- An agenda for the areas of higher education most urgently in need of anti-discriminatory work, and steps that have to be taken by institutions to combat discrimination, including an assessment of good practice as well as shortcomings of existing interventions;

- An identification of the most critical areas for further investigation and research; and
- The Committee was to advise the Minister and the key constituencies in higher education on policies, strategies and interventions needed to combat discrimination and to promote institutional culture for staff and students, which are based on the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution.

The Committee's report (the 'Soudien Report') concluded that the state of transformation in higher education, in particular racism and sexism was pervasive and that the pace of redress was *painfully* slow. It noted serious disjunction between policy and real-life experiences of both students and staff, particular in learning, teaching, curriculum, languages, residence-life and governance.

Based on its conclusion, the Committee recommended as one of the key interventions, that "The Minister should consider establishing a permanent *Oversight Committee* to monitor the transformation of higher education"

2. Purpose of the Oversight Committee

The purpose of the Oversight Committee is to monitor progress on transformation in public universities and to advise the Minister on:

- policy to combat racism, sexism and other forms of unfair discrimination as elaborated on in the Soudien Report;
- policy to promote social cohesion and an institutional environment where every student and staff member can live, study, work and flourish free of any constraints resulting from unfair discrimination; and
- the role of universities in promoting the development of a free, fair and non-discriminatory society beyond the world of the academia.

It is recognised here that transformation is an imprecise concept, and that the understanding outlined here, focusing on the elimination of discrimination and promotion of social cohesion, is a rather restricted one. This is intentional as the full transformation of the university system cannot be tackled by this committee. Such transformation involves the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning; the elimination of weak administrative systems, especially at historically disadvantaged universities; the elimination of discriminatory practices based on gender, race, class and

historical imbalances; the provision of adequate infrastructure so that all universities can adequately meet their fundamental mandates of teaching, learning, research and community engagement in the context of social cohesion; the expansion and improvement of research throughout the system; the expansion of access to university education to many more students; and so on. Transformation in this broader sense must perforce be the aim of the entire system of governance and management at the national and institutional levels, and is beyond the scope of this Oversight Committee. The word 'transformation' as used in this document refers to the narrower meaning of the word.

3. Terms of reference of the Oversight Committee

The Oversight Committee must:

- Study and evaluate the transformation frameworks/charters and annual reports of all universities, including their transformation indicators and set targets. The Committee should use this exercise as a basis for the development of a transformation charter and benchmarks for the entire university sector;
- Determine the effectiveness and efficiency of institutional transformation frameworks/charters, policies and strategies;
- Produce an annual report on policies and practices impacting on transformation within universities, including both achievements and challenges;
- Suggest a reporting mechanism by institutions on the set institutional and national transformation targets and benchmarks;
- Identify best practices and challenges in the area of transformation policies and practices;
- Bring to the attention of the Minister any major problem areas or incidences affecting universities' transformation;
- Advise the Minister on policy and strategies for the promotion of transformation;
- Initiate enquiries and or public hearings on any of those matters or as requested by the Minister; and
- Advise the Minister on any other matter it may deem necessary, important and relevant for development and transformation of the sector.

In undertaking its work, the committee may commission various research undertakings within the confines of its budget and will take into account other research findings undertaken by independent parties to assist its functioning.

4. Composition of the Oversight Committee

Committee members will be persons with relevant knowledge and expertise. They will be appointed by the Minister for a period of not more than three years and may, individually, be reappointed for additional terms at the discretion of the Minister.

5. Appointment of the Oversight Committee

The appointment of the Committee is effective from the day of gazetting. Founding members of the Committee as appointed by the Minister are as follows:

1. Prof. Malegapuru Makgoba (Chairperson);
2. Dr Mvuyo Tom;
3. Ms Nazeema Mohamed;
4. Ms Zingiswa Losi;
5. Prof. Andre Keet;
6. Prof. Shirley Walters; and
7. Mr Joe Mpisi.

6. Reporting

- The Committee shall report to the Minister three months after its establishment and thereafter shall provide annual reports.
- The Committee, as a collective or through its Chair, will brief the Minister as necessary.

7. Point of Contact

The Committee's point of contact with the Minister will be via the Director-General or his/her designee.

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