

Dear Unisan

**FALSE ALLEGATIONS PERTAINING TO THE RENOVATIONS AT CLOGHEREEN, THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE OF THE PRINCIPAL AND VICE-CHANCELLOR OF UNISA**

This communication aims at appraising the university community on the media inquiry by The Sunday Times newspaper from Mr Prega Govender (on Wednesday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2021) regarding the official UNISA Principal and Vice Chancellors' residence.

The university residence referred to as Cloghreen has historically been the official domicilium of all Principals and Vice Chancellors historical and present. These were Professors Theodoor Van Wyk, Cas Van Vuuren, Marinus Wiechers, Antony Melck, Barney N Pityana and Mandla Makhanya.

It is, however, regrettable that the current Principal and Vice Chancellor, Professor Puleng LenkaBula, has not been able to take occupation of the residency due to the delayed renovations and the unavailability of the hand over report by operations and facility portfolio.

The media enquiry relates to allegations and/or questions about the renovations of the official residence based on an alleged report titled "Consolidated progress report on the renovation of Cloghreen", that the Journalist Mr Govender claims to have in his possession, which the Principal and Vice Chancellor is not privy to. This is despite her numerous requests for the report from the then Acting Vice Principal Operations and Facilities, Prof. Steward Mothata.

In the interest of transparency and to ensure that an unadulterated set of facts is communicated, the university has resolved to take the University community in its confidence by sharing the facts pertaining to these processes.

The facts are as follows:

1. Professor LenkaBula assumed her duties as the new Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Unisa on 01 January 2021. In line with the historical trajectories, customs and practices of the University of South Africa, all Principals and Vice Chancellors are accommodated by the University of South Africa. This also forms part of their employment contract and conditions of service.
2. When Prof LenkaBula commenced her duties on the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2021, she was informed that the accommodation was not yet available since the previous Vice Chancellor was still in occupation who only vacated the premises at the end of April 2021.
3. However, when he vacated Cloghreen, Professor LenkaBula could not take immediate occupation as she was informed by the Portfolio, Operations and Facilities Management that the



property had gradually dilapidated and required renovations, some of which needed Heritage Council Approval.

4. It is standard practice for the Portfolio: Operations and Facilities to advise the Principal and Vice Chancellor (the intended occupier) on the processes that will be undertaken. All processes related to the renovations are entirely run by the portfolio Operations and Facilities and under the management and control of the Vice Principal.
5. The Principal and Vice Chancellor was at no point involved in the operational processes on Cloghreen renovations.
6. She only engaged with the Operational and Facilities personnel through the Supervisor: Property and Asset Management and the Director: University Estates when she was consulted to enquire about her inputs on the attendant aesthetics.
7. It is very important to state that at no stage did the Vice Chancellor demand or request any overseas items. She was in fact not involved in procurement processes and/ or the project.
8. Between May and August 2021, the Vice Chancellor, concerned about the continued delays, insisted on undertaking a site inspection with some members of staff from her office and Protection Services to check on the renovations progress.
9. During these site inspections, Professor LenkaBula expressed her disquiet about the slow pace of the renovations. She also expressed displeasure about the high costs entailed in the quotations of the interior and household items.
10. She instructed the then Acting Vice Principal Operations and Facilities Prof Steward Mothata, to intervene and ensure that all quotations should be stopped and reviewed. She reiterated that she was not at all going to tolerate any superfluous spending in her name.
11. Upon the handover of the house and keys on the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2021, she conducted an inspection of the house and was convinced that the renovations done did not warrant the exorbitant amounts incurred and required formal investigations.
12. In the absence of a formal handover report by the Portfolio Manager, the Vice Chancellor instructed the then Acting Vice Principal, Operations and Facilities, to submit a handover report on the Cloghreen Project entailing the narrative and financials. To this date, the Vice Chancellor has not received the said report.



13. When the report was not forthcoming, she then instructed the Head of Legal Services to follow up on the report. The Head of Legal Services, Dr (Adv) Vuyo Peach on numerous occasions during October and November 2021 requested a report on the renovations of the residence from the Acting Vice Principal, Operations and Facilities and no response nor the report was received.
14. To date, the report has not been submitted to either the Head of Legal Services, or the Principal and Vice-Chancellor as requested.
15. The Management and Principal and Vice-Chancellor are perplexed to learn of the existence of an alleged “report” on the renovations which they have not received.
16. The Management and the Vice Chancellor are disappointed, if not shocked; to learn with dismay that a formal report which was requested, had not been submitted despite several requests.
17. Despite the numerous attempts by the Vice Chancellor and the Head of Legal Services for the portfolio to submit the hand over report for Cloghereen, the management and the Vice Chancellor were taken aback to learn that the alleged report was given to Sunday Times’ journalist (Mr Prega Govender). In his communication to the University, Govender confirmed that he is in possession of the alleged report.

The university assures you, as critical stakeholders, that a formal investigation on the Cloghreen renovations is underway. The University will act on any of its employees found to have violated the university policies, misrepresented, or falsified information or unlawfully shared personal and institutional information to unauthorised people over University information.

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