

Media Response to Mr Prega Govender – News 24

DATE: 17 February 2026

Dear Mr Govender

Your media enquiry sent to the university on Monday, 16 February 2026 has reference.

At the outset, we must express our disappointment with your refusal to grant us enough time to process your query and respond adequately to your questions. We believe that such a concession would have been beneficial to both yourself and your readers as it would have provided sufficient clarity on the issues you raised.

Considering that your article reported on the integrated report of the university of two years ago (2024), it is difficult to fathom how a day's wait could have jeopardised its publishing.

However, the fact that you ignored our pleas and continued to publish the article without our comment disclosed your real intentions and has confirmed our long-held view that you hold a serious vendetta against Unisa and, in particular, the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Puleng LenkaBula.

The reasons for this attitude towards Unisa and Professor LenkaBula are known only to yourself; the same applies to your colleague, Mr Abram Mashego. The fact that some of the information presented at the ensuing Madlanga Commission and Parliamentary Ad Hoc Committee investigating allegations of police corruption points to journalists being 'weaponised,' begs the question: *"Whose weapon are you exactly?"*

We point out the following to show your unethical and persecutorial reporting:

The heading of the article

The dissonance between your article's heading and the body is very glaring and difficult to ignore. Whilst your heading suggests that the story is about the increase of (Artificial Intelligence) AI misuse at Unisa, the body of the article refers to commentary and input on the topic from other institutions and academics. All of these, in fact, affirm that this problem is a worldwide phenomenon. It is clear to us that the misleading heading was intentionally used in order to cast aspersions on the integrity of Unisa. It is also a classical example of what is referred to as 'click baiting.'

The question of the Vice-Chancellor's bonus

True to form, your dislike of the Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Puleng LenkaBula is something you consistently fail to hide. This is shown by your persistent attempts to insert her name into every negative story, even where it is neither relevant nor warranted.

We do not know how things work in your organisation, Media24, but in all normal organisations, matters pertaining to performance and remuneration are governed by institutional policies and guidelines. In the case of Unisa, performance contracts are entered into at the beginning of each year, with set targets, and are reviewed mid-year and at the end of the year. A satisfactory performance up to an agreed-upon threshold is often rewarded with a performance bonus, subject to the overall institutional performance for that particular year. It is linked to performance management across the entirety of the performance scorecard and not a single incident. This has been the practice for many years and did not start with Professor LenkaBula. Furthermore, it is a benefit extended to the entire staff of the university. It is thus unfathomable how you have arrived at singling her out of the entire university management and staff on this matter; and using one incident as a basis on which she should not have qualified for a performance bonus.

Perhaps a word of advice: It is intellectually dangerous and short-sighted to be selective in reading any report and drawing inferences and conclusions based on limited knowledge. You might need to revisit the 2024 integrated report and, for your own sake, read the Chairman's Report and the Vice-Chancellor's Report properly, as well as the Governance Report, Annual Financial Statements and the Senate Report, all of which elucidate the excellent performance of the university against the relevant performance indicators and targets.

Needless to say, this report provides an honest assessment by the university, including areas where challenges have been experienced as well as the mitigating plans in the year ahead (2025). Nothing was swept under the carpet; and the next report will provide an update on the steps taken, progress made, challenges still persisting (if any) as well as interventions to tackle these challenges. Our aim is to keep improving in order to serve our students better.

Institutional and College Performances

Although we are of the strong view that your questions around the broader performance of the institution, including the colleges, were just a red herring to distract us from your real intentions (which is to attack the Principal and Vice-Chancellor), we feel obliged to advise you to revisit the integrated report and read it in its totality. You will find that the college reports in particular outline not only the successes of 2024, but also the challenges as well as plans to address these in the year ahead.

Your selective reading of the report (and your subsequent article) assists neither yourself nor your readership. In fact, from where we are sitting, it is perched just at the edge of gutter journalism. However, it is not too late to do the right and honourable thing.

- Ends-

Issued by:

Unisa Media Affairs
Department of Institutional Advancement