

MEDIA RELEASE

Approved for public release

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Statement by Unisa in response to the statement by the EFFSC on the appointment of the Principal and Vice Chancellor and the outcomes of the recent National and Regional SRC Elections

The University of South Africa (Unisa) has noted with grave concern a statement purportedly authored by the Secretary of the EFFSC Umtata Branch, making serious allegations about the university's processes on the appointment of a new Principal and Vice Chancellor and the 2021 National and Regional SRC elections.

The University is also concerned that this statement makes spurious and malicious allegations against both the university's processes on the appointment of the Principal and Vice Chancellor and the election of National and Regional student representatives. This statement from the EFFSC also casts aspersions on the integrity of Council members and university officials mandated to oversee these two processes; without providing a shred of substance and evidence.

This statement is riddled with conjecture, malice, distortion of facts, suggestion and innuendo; and is dismissed with the contempt it deserves. It is an attempt to incite the university to engage on these issues in the court of public opinion, where there is no burden for those making the allegations to provide any proof. The university will not engage with any stakeholder in this manner.

For the record, the university's process for the appointment of the Principal and Vice Chancellor was above board, followed a fair and lawful process and went through all the relevant institutional structures as required by the Institutional Statute.

An opportunity existed for any participant or interested party to lodge an objection to the process followed prior to its finalisation. No such objection was raised by any party; hence the ratification and confirmation of the appointment by the full Council that sat on 05 November 2020.

The appointment of the new Principal and Vice Chancellor was celebrated widely and publicly across the country, including by revered academics and leaders of society as well as various national structures, including the EFFSC; as well as international academic institutions and epistemic communities who know the new Vice Chancellor's work.



Similarly, the National and Regional SRC elections were overseen and observed by an independent electoral body, from the campaign stage right up to the casting of votes and elections of office bearers at national and regional congresses.

Any objections and/or disputes to the outcomes of any of these SRC processes are dealt with in terms of applicable policy and rules; and are addressed internally by the university.

The university encourages any stakeholder who has evidence of unlawful conduct by any member of Council, staff or student of the university pertaining to these two processes; to report this through relevant university channels so that these can be attended to correctly.

It is the university's considered view that the peddling of unsubstantiated allegations in the media and public domain do not only make it difficult for the university to make any meaningful intervention; but also cause great damage to the Unisa brand and the reputations of officials overseeing the processes to which they are assigned.

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