

CONSTITUTION OF UNISA FORUM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS EDUCATION WHITE PAPER 3 - A PROGRAMME FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION (1997), MAINTAINS THAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH OPPORTUNITIES TO ENTER HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES AND TO SUCCEED IN THEM; WHEREAS UNISA POLICY ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IS EMPHATIC ON INCLUSIVITY FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN UNISA STRUCTURES; AND WHEREAS THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND OPTIONAL PROTOCOL LAYS GROUND FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES ABOUT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING THOSE DIRECTLY CONCERNING THEM;

THEREFORE UNISA STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES HEREIN ESTABLISH THE FORUM THAT WILL ACT AS A FORERUNNER ON ALL HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES;

THE FORUM WILL FOSTER AWARENESS OF DISABILITY ISSUES IN UNISA CAMPUSES AND WILL CREATE SUPPORTING MECHANISMS FOR ALL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

FURTHER ACKNOWLEDGE THAT ALL CHALLENGES FACING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES NEED COLLECTIVE AND WELL COORDINATED MEASURES TO OVERCOME THEM, THUS FOUNDING A NECESSITY TO WORK IN FULL COLLABORATION WITH UNISA STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC), ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ARCSWID) AND ALL RELEVANT STRUCTURES/STAKEHOLDERS WITHIN UNISA, IN THE PROVISION OF QUALITY AND EQUITABLE SERVICE TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR DIVERSIFIED INTERESTS.

1. NAME

THE NAME OF THE FORUM IS UNISA FORUM FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS "THE FORUM".

2. OBJECTIVES

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE FORUM WILL BE, AND NOT RESTRICTED TO, THE FOLLOWING –

- 2.1 GENERALLY AND EQUALLY REPRESENT ALL UNISA STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN ALL STRUCTURES, FORA, COMMITTEES, ETC, WHERE INTERESTS OF STUDENTS IN GENERAL, AND OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN PARTICULAR, WILL BE DEBATED AND DECIDED UPON;
- 2.2 COLLECT AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION INTENDED TO THE OPTIMAL BENEFICIAL EXHAUSTION BY STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES;
- 2.3 DEVELOP THE CAPACITY TO MAKE TIMELY AND MEANINGFUL RESPONSES TO ISSUES AND CONCERNS AFFECTING THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES;
- 2.4 CO-ORDINATE REGIONAL FORA;

- 2.5 ASSIST ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ARCSWiD), IN CONJUNCTION WITH REGIONAL FORA, IN COLLECTING DATA OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES;
- 2.6 PROMOTE EQUAL RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT UNISA;
- 2.7 PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES THAT AFFECT STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AT UNISA;
- 2.8 MONITOR AND ASSESS POLICIES DEVELOPED IN TERMS OF 2.7 ABOVE AND, MAKE NECESSARY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS;
- 2.9 REGULARLY ADVISE UNISA MANAGEMENT, AND ALL OTHER RELEVANT STRUCTURES/STAKEHOLDERS, ON ISSUES AFFECTING THEM;
- 2.10 IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ARCSWiD), RAISE AWARENESS ON DISABILITIES AND ISSUES ATTACHED THERETO;
- 2.11 FACILITATE AND MONITOR ELECTIONS IN REGIONAL FORA;
- 2.12 LIAISE WITH OTHER NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO SHARE AND DEBATE POSITIVE IMPROVEMENTS ON COMMON ISSUES AFFECTING THEM; AND
- 2.13 DEVELOP AND ESTABLISH MODELS THAT WILL HELP SERVE STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND UNISA IN THEIR PURSUIT OF EDUCATION (PROCEDURES, POLICIES, EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES, SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, SOCIAL INTEGRATION STRATEGIES ETC.).

3. AREA OF OPERATION

- 3.1 THE FORUM WILL OPERATE ON ALL UNISA CAMPUSES.
- 3.2 FOLLOWING THE PROVISIONS OF 2.10 AND 2.13 ABOVE, THE FORUM SHALL COLLABORATIVELY WORK, IN SALIENT ASPECTS OF COMMON INTERESTS ON DISABILITY ISSUES, WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS.

4. MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP TO THE FORUM WILL BE LIMITED TO ANY STUDENT, INCLUDING POST-GRADUATE, WHO HAS A DISABILITY, AND WHO REGISTERED WITH UNISA FOR AN ACADEMIC YEAR.

5. OFFICE-BEARERS

THE FORUM SHALL COMPRISE -

- 5.1 THE CHAIRPERSON;
- 5.2 THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON;

- 5.3 FINANCE OFFICER;
- 5.4 SECRETARY;
- 5.5 EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFICER;
- 5.6 ADVOCACY OFFICER;
- 5.7 GENDER OFFICER;
- 5.8 MEDIA OFFICER; AND
- 5.9 SPORTS AND CULTURAL OFFICER

6. DUTIES OF OFFICE-BEARERS

6.1 THE CHAIRPERSON SHALL -

- 6.1.1 CONVENE AND CONDUCT MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE;
- 6.1.2 HANDLE THE DAY TO DAY AFFAIRS OF THE FORUM;
- 6.1.3 PRESIDE OVER ALL MEETINGS OF THE FORUM;
- 6.1.4 SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE FORUM'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE;
- 6.1.5 REPORT ANNUALLY TO THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC);
- 6.1.6 CO-SIGN FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE FORUM WITH THE FINANCE OFFICER;
- 6.1.7 LIAISE WITH THE ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ARCSWID);
- 6.1.8 MANAGE GENERAL AFFAIRS OF THE FORUM; AND
- 6.1.9 DIRECTLY LIAISE WITH REGIONAL FORA CHAIRPERSONS.

6.2 THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON -

- 6.2.1 ASSUMES, IN THE ABSENCE OF THE CHAIRPERSON, THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHAIRPERSON; AND
- 6.2.2 THE CHAIRPERSON, WHENEVER HE/SHE DEEMS NECESSARY, MAY DELEGATE HIS RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE CHAIRPERSON BEING AVAILABLE OR NOT.

6.3 FINANCE OFFICER

- 6.3.1 THE FINANCE OFFICER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE FORUM'S EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES;
- 6.3.2 THE FINANCE OFFICER SHALL KEEP UPDATED AND APPROPRIATE RECORDS OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENT;
- 6.3.3 THE FINANCE OFFICER SIGNS ALL FORUM'S FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS; AND
- 6.3.4 THE FINANCE OFFICER SHALL PERFORM THE DUTIES CUSTOMARY TO THE OFFICE AND SUCH ADDITIONAL DUTIES AS MAY BE DIRECTED BY THE FORUM.

6.4 SECRETARY

- 6.4.1 THE SECRETARY COURSES AND COMPILES MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FORUM AND THOSE OF GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE FORUM;
- 6.4.2 THE SECRETARY SHALL TAKE ATTENDANCE REGISTER OF THOSE PRESENT AT THE FORUM'S MEETINGS;
- 6.4.3 THE SECRETARY SHALL HANDLE AND MANAGE THE CORRESPONDENCES OF THE FORUM; AND
- 6.4.4 THE SECRETARY HANDLES ALL LOGISTICAL MATTERS OF THE FORUM.

6.5 EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFICER

- 6.5.1 THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFICER SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL EDUCATIONAL MATTERS OF THE FORUM;
- 6.5.2 THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFICER SHALL DISSEMINATE EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION TO STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES; AND
- 6.5.3 NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISION CONTEMPLATED IN 6.6.1 ABOVE, THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OFFICER MUST ASSIST THE ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES WITH ALL MATTERS RELATING TO EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

6.6 ADVOCACY OFFICER

THE ADVOCACY OFFICER OF THE FORUM SHALL –

- 6.6.1 ADVOCATE, INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY, FOR UNISA STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES;
- 6.6.2 ENSURE THAT PROJECTS RELATING TO ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS ARE IDENTIFIED;
- 6.6.3 BE A WATCHDOG OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES' RIGHTS AND INTERESTS;
- 6.6.4 REPORT TO ANY APPROPRIATE STRUCTURE OF UNISA, ANY MATTER TANTAMOUNT TO RIGHT/INTEREST INFRINGEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES; AND
- 6.6.5 IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, WORK TOWARDS IMPROVEMENTS ON CURRENT POLICIES OF UNISA;

6.7 GENDER OFFICER

- 6.7.1 GENDER OFFICER SHALL COORDINATE ALL GENDER ISSUES;
- 6.7.2 THE GENDER OFFICER WILL HEAD AND COORDINATE GENDER SUBCOMMITTEES ESTABLISHED IN TERMS OF SUBSECTION 11.1 BELOW; AND
- 6.7.3 THE GENDER OFFICER SHALL LIAISE WITH ALL OTHER GENDER STRUCTURES OF UNISA.

6.8 MEDIA OFFICER

THE MEDIA OFFICER –

- 6.8.1 MANAGES ALL MEDIA-RELATED MATTERS OF THE FORUM;
- 6.8.2 THE MEDIA OFFICER SHALL COMMUNICATE, ON ALL MATTERS OF THE FORUM, WITH THE MEDIA; AND
- 6.8.3 THE MEDIA OFFICER SHALL HANDLE ALL MEDIA-RELATED QUERIES.

6.9 SPORTS AND CULTURE

- 6.9.1 THE SPORTS AND CULTURAL OFFICER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL RECREATIONAL, CULTURAL AND OTHER SPORTING EVENTS OF THE FORUM;
- 6.9.2 THE SPORTS AND CULTURAL OFFICER BECOMES CHAIRPERSON OF SPORTS AND CULTURAL SUBCOMMITTEES ESTABLISHED IN TERMS OF SUBSECTION 11.1 BELOW;

6.9.3 THE SPORTS AND CULTURAL OFFICER SHALL PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN IDENTIFYING SPORTS OF AND FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES;

6.9.4 THE SPORTS AND CULTURAL OFFICER SHALL LIAISE WITH, AND WHERE NECESSARY, AFFILIATE TO, ON BEHALF OF THE FORUM, ALL BODIES OF AND FOR SPORTS AND RECREATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES; AND

6.9.5 THE SPORTS AND CULTURAL OFFICER SHALL FACILITATE, COORDINATE AND MONITOR THE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN LOCAL, PROVINCIAL, NATIONAL AND WHERE NECESSARY, INTERNATIONAL SPORTING EVENTS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

7. ELECTIONS OF OFFICE-BEARERS

7.1 THE ELECTIONS OF OFFICE-BEARERS ARE HELD ONES IN EVERY TWO (2) YEARS;

7.2 THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC) OF UNISA WILL FACILITATE THE ELECTIONS OF THE FORUM;

7.3 A CANDIDATE CONTESTING IN THE ELECTIONS WILL REQUIRE AT LEAST 50+1 % OF VOTES CAST FOR THAT PARTICULAR POSITION TO SERVE IN THE FORUM;

7.4 ALL POSITIONS IN THE ELECTIONS WILL BE CONTESTED FOR AND VOTED ON SEPARATELY;

7.5 ONLY LEGITIMATE MEMBERS / STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA MAY CAST THEIR VOTE;

7.6 THE FORUM, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC), WILL DETERMINE A MORE APPROPRIATE MANNER OF VOTING;

7.7 ALL REGIONS SHALL BE REPRESENTED IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FORUM;

7.8 REPRESENTATION OF REGIONS IN THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SHOULD NOT EXCEED TWO (2) MEMBERS; AND

7.9 IN LIEU OF THE PROVISION OF 7.2 ABOVE, THE ELECTIONS OF THE FORUM WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER THE ELECTIONS OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC).

8. DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

THE DUTIES AND RIGHTS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ARE, BUT NOT RESTRICTED TO, THE FOLLOWING:

8.1 THE COMMITTEE MUST CO-ORDINATE ALL AFFAIRS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES;

8.2 THE COMMITTEE FACILITATES AND MONITORS THE INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ON CAMPUSES;

8.3 THE COMMITTEE SHOULD ADVISE UNISA STRUCTURES ON ISSUES REGARDING DISABILITY;

- 8.4 THE COMMITTEE REPRESENTS ALL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES;
- 8.5 THE COMMITTEE RUNS THE AFFAIRS OF THE FORUM; AND
- 8.6 THE COMMITTEE HAS A RIGHT TO CO-OPT EX OFFICIO MEMBER/S;

9. THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- 9.1 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FORUM COMPRISES ALL NINE (9) MEMBERS LISTED UNDER SECTION 5 ABOVE;
- 9.2 THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FORUM IS THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE;

9.3 IN THE EVENT WHERE THE MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE RESIGNS, OR A VACANCY IS CREATED BY ANY MEANS BEYOND HUMAN CONTROL, OR RESULTING FROM ANY REASON AFFECTING THAT PARTICULAR MEMBER, THE COMMITTEE SHALL CO-OPT A MEMBER TO FILL IN THE VACANCY; AND

9.4 VACANCY FILLED IN TERMS OF 9.3 ABOVE, SHALL NOT COMPROMISE REPRESENTIVITY AS CONTEMPLATED IN 7.8 ABOVE.

10. MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

10.1 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETS AT LEAST FOUR (4) TIMES PER YEAR;

10.2 NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISION IN 10.1 ABOVE, THE QUORUM OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MAY CONVENE A SPECIAL MEETING INTENDED FOR SPECIFIC MATTERS REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE;

10.3 THE QUORUM OF EXECUTIVE MEETINGS WILL BE 50+1 OF ITS MEMBERS;

10.4 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SHALL, WHENEVER A MATTER REQUIRES, VOTE ON A DECISION THEREUPON;

10.5 THE CHAIRPERSON, IN EVENT OF A TIE DURING VOTING AS CONTEMPLATED IN 10.4 ABOVE ON A MATTER, SHALL HAVE A CASTING VOTE; AND

10.6 IN THE EVENT WHERE THE MEETING WAS POSTPONED FOR NOT FORMING A QUORUM, THE SUBSEQUENT MEETING SHALL, IRRESPECTIVE OF A QUORUM, CONTINUE AS NORMAL AND DECISIONS TAKEN THEREBY SHALL BE BINDING ON ALL MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

11. GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE FORUM

11.1 THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SHALL CONVENE GENERAL MEETINGS OF THE FORUM;

11.2 GENERAL MEETINGS SHALL BE HELD AT LEAST ONES PER YEAR; AND

11.3 NOTWITHSTANDING THE PROVISION OF 11.2 ABOVE, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MAY, WHEN A NEED ARISES, CONVENE AN EXTRA GENERAL MEETING OF THE FORUM.

12. SUBCOMMITTEES

12.1 THE FORUM MAY, WHEN IT DEEMS IT NECESSARY, APPOINT A SUBCOMMITTEE TO CARRY OUT PROJECTS OR TASKS IN ADDITION TO ITS RESPONSIBILITIES;

12.2 EXCEPT WHERE PROVIDED FOR IN SUBSECTIONS 6.7.2 AND 6.9.2 ABOVE, THE SUBCOMMITTEE/IES APPOINTED IN TERMS OF SUBSECTION

12.1 ABOVE SHALL BE ASSIGNED A CHAIRPERSON FROM MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FORUM;

12.3 THE FORUM MAY, IF A NEED ARISES, APPOINT AN AD HOC COMMITTEE TO DEAL WITH SPECIFIC MATTERS;

12.4 IN PURSUANT TO SUBSECTIONS 12.1 AND 12.3 ABOVE, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SHALL DEVELOP TERMS OF REFERENCE SPECIFYING RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEES APPOINTED IN RESPECT THEREOF; AND

12.5 COMMITTEES APPOINTED IN TERMS OF 12.1 AND 12.3 ABOVE, SHALL REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FORUM ON ALL TASKS AND ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THEM.

13. RATIFICATION

THIS CONSTITUTION SHALL BE RATIFIED BY A TWO-THIRDS (2/3) MAJORITY OF MEMBERS PRESENT DURING ITS PRESENTATION.

14. AMENDMENTS

14.1 AMENDMENTS TO THIS CONSTITUTION SHALL REQUIRE APPROVAL OF TWO-THIRDS (2/3) MAJORITY OF THE ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP OF THE FORUM; AND

14.2 NOTICE MUST BE MADE TO ALL MEMBERS OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AT LEAST THIRTY (30) DAYS BEFORE THE ACTUAL MEETING TAKES PLACE.

15. DISSOLUTION

15.1 IN CONSULTATION WITH ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ARCSWID) AND THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC), THE FORUM MAY BE DISSOLVED BY A GENERAL MEETING CONVENED SPECIALLY FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF THE FORUM;

15.2 THE FORUM SHALL BE DISSOLVED BY A TWO-THIRDS (2/3) MAJORITY OF MEMBERS PRESENT IN THE GENERAL MEETING CONVENED IN TERMS OF SUBSECTION 15.1 ABOVE;

15.3 GROUNDS FOR THE DISSOLUTION OF THE FORUM SHALL BE COMMUNICATED TO THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC) AND THE DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ARCSWID) FOR THOROUGH INVESTIGATIONS;

15.4 IF GROUNDS FOR DISSOLUTION ARE SATISFACTORY TO THE DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ARCSWID), THE DIRECTOR MUST RECOMMEND THE PURPORTED DISSOLUTION TO THE DEAN OF STUDENT AFFAIRS FOR APPROVAL;

15.5 THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC), IN CONSULTATION WITH ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (ARCSWID), IN THE TIME OF THE FORUM BEING DISSOLVED, SHALL RUN THE AFFAIRS OF THE FORUM; AND

15.6 THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (SRC), IN CONJUNCTION WITH ADVOCACY AND RESOURCE CENTRE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES, SHALL FACILITATE THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FORUM.