

# INSTITUTIONAL RULES FOR CONVOCATION GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

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## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The University's Convocation and Alumni structures are regulated by the provisions of the UP Statute as well as the Institutional Rules of the University. The Convocation of the University of Pretoria (UP) includes the Alumni as its largest constituency.
- 1.2 Defining the terms "Convocation" and "Alumni"
  - (a) "Convocation": In accordance with paragraph 45 of the Statute, the Convocation consists of all persons who immediately before the commencement of the Statute were members of the Convocation of the University; the Principal, the Vice-Principals, the Executive Directors, the Registrar, the Deans of faculties, the permanent academic employees of the University, professors emeriti, other retired academic employees and such other persons as the Council may determine; as well as all other persons who have obtained a qualification, as approved by Senate and Council, from the University.
  - (b) "Alumni": The term refers to all persons on whom the University has conferred degrees or to whom it has awarded accredited diplomas registered on the University's Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM); as well as all persons who commenced their studies at defunct institutions succeeded in title by the University of Pretoria (and are commonly referred to as pipeline students), who have successfully completed their studies at the University of Pretoria and on whom the University has conferred degrees or to whom the University has awarded accredited diplomas registered on the University's PQM.
- 1.3 Over time, a number of Alumni groups were established, with some being well organised and claiming to function independently from the University, and others struggling.

Historically, the TuksAlumni Board was vested with the authority to appoint a number of members of the Convocation to serve on the University Council. In recent years certain groups have attempted to consolidate their power to influence University decisions and policy. This gave rise to tension between the various Alumni groups. The elections for members of the Alumni Board and Council (specifically with regard to Convocation members

on Council) became largely politicised – to the point that formal UP policies and concomitant procedures were reviewed in the Equality Court.

Polarisation and a lack of inclusivity hampered the University's efforts to engender a sense of unity and solidarity among Alumni members. The knock-on effect was significant. It diminished the Alumni as a source of vital support – both financially and in terms of their knowledge base – for the University.

- 1.4 The Council of the University decided to take pro-active steps to resolve the situation by amending the Statute as well as the Institutional Rules governing the election/appointment of the Convocation members to serve on Council.
- 1.5 It was important to build on this development by changing the focus and basis of the interaction of Alumni and other members of the Convocation with the University. The University needs a credible Alumni structure that acts with uncompromising integrity – one that is strategically responsive.
- 1.6 To this end, the Council of the University approved the establishment of a new structure for the Convocation of UP, which would incorporate the Alumni (including the TuksAlumni Association) as an important stakeholder group, and is focused on serving the best interests of the University, on 27 November 2017.

## **2. VISION**

- 2.1 The Convocation and the Alumni of the University have a vested interest in the stature and success of the University, as this will ensure that their qualifications will retain their currency and will continue to be held in high esteem.
- 2.2 Given the stake that the Convocation and the Alumni have in the University, the University should draw on the matured networks and expertise of its Alumni to the benefit of the University and current cohort of students.
- 2.3 The Alumni should be encouraged to “pay it forward” by investing their knowledge and experience in their *alma mater* – thereby cultivating and nurturing a sense of cohesion, belonging and loyalty – not only among Alumni but also towards the University.
- 2.4 The Convocation and the Alumni must act in the best interests of the University and promote the stature and status of the University.

## **3. CONVOCATION GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES**

- 3.1 The Convocation structure will hold the following benefits:
  - (a) Centralisation of the coordination of the activities of Convocation substructures.
  - (b) Greater cohesion between the members of Convocation substructures as well as between those members and the University.
  - (c) Enhancement of the stature of the University.
  - (d) Encouraging the linkage between the world of work and the University to the benefit of all.

- 3.2 The UP Convocation Structure will consist of the following:
- (a) The Convocation Advisory Board
  - (b) Alumni Associations, comprising Regions (Local, National and International Alumni Branches), Clubs and Special Interest Groups, including Profession-based Alumni Associations.
- 3.3 Membership of any Convocation governance structure is voluntary without any remuneration attached.
- 3.4 The abovementioned structures will be supported by an internal management mechanism, namely the Alumni Relations Office, which forms part of the Department of University Relations (DUR) and reports to the Director of University Relations who, in turn, reports to the Vice-Chancellor and Principal or a delegated member of the Executive.
- 3.5 The Alumni Relations Office (DUR) is the functional and management unit responsible for Alumni support. The responsible official is a UP employee and takes functional management responsibility for ensuring good communication with the various Convocation structures, that all the activities of the various structures are approved where required and that the necessary support is provided as set out in the relevant Charters.
- 3.6 The Alumni Relations Office will be responsible for, *inter alia*, the following:
- (a) Providing guidance with regard to planning of activities (although a measure of uniformity is preferable, allowance must be made for the variety of disciplines and interests involved and such guidance should not be prescriptive in nature).
  - (b) Coordinating the annual plans of Convocation structures.
  - (c) Coordinating the annual budget allocation and financial reporting in line with UP policies.
  - (d) In conjunction with the Convocation Advisory Board, oversee the activities of substructures and ensure regular reporting on activities.
  - (e) Providing support with regard to information carried on the central database located at the Alumni Office.

#### **4. PRESIDENT OF THE CONVOCATION**

- 4.1 Paragraph 46 of the Statute of the University of Pretoria provides as follows with regard to the position of the President of the Convocation: "There shall be a President of the Convocation who shall be elected by the Convocation from among its number for a period of five years: Provided that the retiring President shall be eligible for re-election."
- 4.2 The election of the President of the Convocation takes place in accordance with the procedure provided for in the relevant Institutional Rules.
- 4.3 The President of the Convocation will serve as the Chairperson of the Convocation Advisory Board (*ex officio*).

## **5. MEETING PROCEDURES**

- 5.1 The Registrar has oversight of the roll of Convocation members. The Alumni Office of DUR will maintain and update the roll, and it is incumbent upon every member of the Convocation to notify the Alumni Office of any change in his or her contact details.
- 5.2 Subject to the provisions of subparagraph 5.3, the President, or in his or her absence the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, will preside at meetings of the Convocation, but in the event of both being absent, the members present will elect a Chairperson for the particular meeting from their own ranks.
- 5.3 The President or if the office of President is vacant or if he or she fails to do so, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal, through the Office of the Registrar will convene an Annual General Meeting of the Convocation in Pretoria at least once annually.
- 5.4 An extraordinary meeting of the Convocation may be convened by the President in consultation with the Vice-Chancellor and Principal at any time through the Office of the Registrar, at the written request of at least 200 members: Provided that the object of the meeting must be stated in such request and that no business other than that stated in the notice will be transacted at the meeting.
- 5.5 At least two weeks before the date fixed for a meeting the Registrar will give notice on multiple electronic platforms of the time, date and place of the meeting and of the business to be transacted.
- 5.6 One hundred (100) members of the Convocation will constitute a quorum for any meeting of the Convocation. Either the President of the Convocation or the Vice-Chancellor and Principal or their duly appointed representatives and at least ninety nine (99) other members of the Convocation must be present for a quorum to be constituted. If a meeting is not quorate, the meeting will be postponed for 30 minutes, after which the meeting may continue if there are fifty (50) members present.

## **6. ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS**

- 6.1 Institutional Rules for the election of the President of the Convocation (R 67/18)
- 6.2 Charter of the Convocation Advisory Board (R 68/18)
- 6.3 Charter of the Members' Committee (R 69/18)
- 6.4 Charter of the Alumni Associations (R 70/18)
- 6.5 Institutional Rules for the election/appointment of Council members by the Convocation of the University of Pretoria (R 71/18)
- 6.6 Terms of Reference for the Alumni Relations Office (R 72/18)

## 7. REVIEW OF INSTITUTIONAL RULES

These rules shall be reviewed every four (4) years or otherwise whenever deemed necessary during the intervening period.

## 8. DOCUMENT METADATA

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