

Position clarification of COO and DVCs to the submission to the Chair of Council on 31 March 2002.

6 April 2020

In view of the feedback from the Registrar to the DVCs and COO, dated 2 April 2020, we have added the following addendum to our response to provide clarity on the position we are taking as members of the Executive. We have noted that the submission dated 31 March will be considered the final submission, but request that this addendum be considered, given its aim. In this respect we would like to make three points:

First, we want to make explicit our unequivocal support for the Vice-Chancellor. We believe that it is our responsibility to perform our duties in a way that supports the office of the vice-chancellor and that we function at all times in the interest of the university. We are furthermore fully supportive of the process of deep and rapid transformation that commenced in June 2018. We remain committed to these principles.

Second, we have decided to develop this response as the three DVCs and COO in view of the fact that the VC has made use of her individual right to reply and in doing so has already responded to the content of the report. We believe that the full executive team should respond to the report, but that it must be as part of a process delineated by Council once Council has received and engaged with the Ombud report. It is for this reason that we as DVCs and COO developed a submission that speaks to the need for process.

Three, we reiterate our stance that it is premature to respond to the Ombud report. It is our view that the current Ombud report deviates from previous reports in a significant way, which warrants the need for Council to provide direction on how it wants to deal with it, including the actual status of the Ombud report as it currently exists. Our view is based on the following:

- The Ombud is appointed by and reports directly to Council. Council is therefore the only body that make a decision on whether to accept the report or whether it warrants a further process.
- We acknowledge that in previous years, the Ombud has provided the VC with an early copy of the report and the VC responded to the report as part of the discussion at Council. However, for the first time in her report, the Ombud in her message speaks very directly to her working and personal relationship with the VC. She also refers to her relationship with the executive. In previous years her message referred to the university. It is our position that the nature of the statements and allegations made in the message warrant scrutiny by Council and a decision on how it wants to deal with the report.
- We note that the full Council has not yet received the report. It is our position that good governance requires that Council views the report and decide on a way forward with respect to the report. We can therefore only respond once Council has taken a position on the report and directs us to respond to the report as it stands or to specific parts of it, if it chooses to do so.

Loretta Feris

Lis Lange

Sue Harrison

Reno Morar

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