

EU SUBMISSION

Comments from EU members on the IRTC report.

1st comment

Dear Yasmin

In my limited time this is all I can write.

I agree with what is in the attached document.

- Most staff were not comfortable to make representation to the IRTC.
- The SH&RL staff from PC5 to PC8 in reses and in the central office were at the coalface daily.
- This impacted their careers, health and families.
- The sections on Student Housing, Mental Health, Academic & PASS divide are not always accurate.
- The make up of the IRTC from the start had leanings towards the staff and student protestors views.
- I do not feel that my submissions counted and appearing in private left me feeling that the hearing was more about the pigment of my and others skin.
- There is little acknowledgement of the path SH&RL has travelled iro becoming representative or what has been accomplished before or during the protest period to ensure that graduates were supported.
- In reading the report in my judgment it is one sided, pro the staff and student protester cause, and is limited to what was presented.
- I do not find that it the report fairly represents what I and other staff experienced and our narratives are missing.
- There were warning signs before the combined protests (staff & student) started. Up to 3 years before and senior management were warned that Unions and students were working together towards a common cause. This was leaked by a staff member who was on the NEHAW Regional Executive long before matters became serious and the strategy was obvious. In SH&RL this was aided and abetted by some wardens and staff who in my opinion had their own political agendas.

The matters I wish to emphasis are:

1. Relationships /Trust broken

- In SH&RL we have embarked on a building of trust and relations between lower level staff, line management and unions.
- Lack of common understanding, goals & co-operation with the rest of SH&RL have long been raised and some wardens have a narrow view of the whole department and interrelatedness.
- Unfortunately the relationship between operational staff and senior management and some wardens has not been resolved.
- This revolves around senior managements inability to clearly indicate to academic wardens where the boundaries are and the powers which some members regard the College of Wardens having.
- In short the COW has operated as a union.
- This structure and some individuals are experienced as institutionalised bullying supported by line management.

- Line management are expected to clearly indicate that the wardens role is pastoral and supports student development.
- The management of wardens and whether the COW is an appropriate structure needs to be assessed by external parties. (ie. past practice is that senior management gave this group of staff licence)
- The Academic / PASS divide is very evident in SH&RL and it is clear that the Academic staff receive preference.

2. Bullying / In appropriate mental health comments

- +13 years ago this matter was raised with HR & DVC Nhlapo.
 - In past +4 years this formed part of DD submission & numerous e mails.
 - Despite raising this with IRTC, line management, HR, ER, DISCHO, OIC, etc this behaviour has not been addressed.
 - The harassment in November included a topic on mental health (my case) inappropriately included in a Wardens meeting.
 - Despite a warning by the ED DSA the agenda item proceeded and was discussed.
 - The VC and DVC Transformation were aware of this matter and the inappropriateness thereof.
 - Lines were crossed in this meeting, acknowledged in the meeting, however different feedback was provided by line management to myself.
 - ER was aware of the facts.
 - The discussion took place for 20 minutes out of a 90 minute meeting. Some had no background to the matter however offered opinions.
 - Not one person at the meeting asked "A colleague has a challenge, how can we assist?"
 - To date line and senior management has taken no action iro this and previous matters.
 - Subsequently earlier this year this matter was used by UAWU in a submission to CCMA and copied to UCT business partners.
 - This was again inappropriate. Line management, senior management and ER has not acknowledged that there is mischief / political agenda at play.
 - Managements behaviour is regarded as aiding, abetting and condoning the behaviour.
- UCT still has no bullying policy and the draft is not a priority.
 - An investigation into the behaviour within DSA / SH&RL which was agreed after a formal grievance lodged has not taken place. The current inclusivity survey doesn't cover this.
 - Note that matters have escalated since a meeting between line management, ER and HR.
 - Perhaps self reflection and mental health awareness should be mandatory for all wardens as they are employed to perform a task and not advance their own political beliefs.

3. Related Medical Cost not addressed

- I and other staff have paid for medical costs resulting from the protest period.
 - This should have been reported as IOD's as medical costs were incurred by staff as a result on circumstances at work.
 - This was raised with IRTC and line management.
 - There appears to be no interest in acknowledging this or settling the costs.
- UCT is expected to create a safe (physically & psychologically) working environment.
 - These costs should be recovered from the University.

4. Will UCT be a safe space (physically & psychologically) going forward ? Student / Staff Discipline / Restorative Justice

- Besides the harassment and uncomfortable space during the protest period I was assaulted in a non protest incident.
 - Neither line or senior management, including the VC Dr Max Price, took any action. (Details available on request)
 - This pattern has repeated itself during my 30 year career.
 - This was reported to 2x DVC's when there was discussion surrounding the cases opened against students.
 - To date I have received no feedback iro the cases and at least one perpetrator has ventured into what I regard as personal space leaving me feeling uncomfortable.
 - This individual had harassed me twice in a day and later forced +50 staff out of what should have been a secure space with a stick. No action was taken although he was employed by UCT on a contract on both occasions. (Subwarden & in DVC office)
 - Requesting staff to re-enter the work space after guarantees where no more than words placed by integrity with staff on the line.
- I have no faith in UCT senior management nor CPS being able to provide a safe (physical or psychological) space for staff during protests on campus.
 - Any agreement on paper isn't worth the paper it is written on as it is never adhered to.
 - UCT has a poor record is dealing with students who threaten staff and the disciplinary process is lenient. (Details available on request)
 - Furthermore the support offered staff is limited to ICAS.

In short I have been left disillusioned, trust has been broken, there is no restorative justice, reconciliation and the pattern is due to be repeated.

Despite this I feel that I have continued to do what I am employed to do and what I have chosen as a career to work in SH&RL.

2nd Comment

On the issue of racism. PASS staff are regularly subjected to racism by both the students as well as some academic staff - and I feel that this was exacerbated by the student protests which occurred in recent years. We are made to feel that we are mere pawns in the process of them obtaining their degree, and their subjects to be manipulated - at any cost. It is no secret that the treatment of PASS staff by academics (and even black academics) leaves much to be desired. It is despicable that an institution such as UCT does not apply its focus to the treatment of PASS staff, being in the high regard internationally that it is. Racism within this institution continues to be REAL, and an absolute THREAT to the organisational culture. But, as usual, are we as important as research contracts? No. Because UCT does not practice the overview that their staff is something to behold, to look after and nurture, there is NO placement progression plans, no real thought given to what happens AFTER the recruitment process. Even more shocking is that this Committee who drew up the ITRC report, has a mere 6 or 7 paragraphs on PASS staff and their findings. Why is that? I don't recall anyone asking me for information prior to this request by the union. The HR department (true to its ineffectuality) has never and will never commit itself to attend to staff development and staff advancement, progression planning. They can barely look after themselves as a department, and I have absolutely no faith in them after working at UCT for 10 years. I could say more, however I am not sure whether the bit I have said above will even be taken into consideration. We can only see what happens - and what changes may come.

3rd Comment

I think it contains a lot of valuable information, I'll treat it like a manual.

4th Comment

There is very little one can say about this report. The issues of bullying and poor treatment of PASS staff are sanctioned by this university. There is no commitment to improving the conditions of black PASS staff. This is evident as management watches the bullying and brushes off the reports of harassment and unfair labour practices. In the absence of a functioning HR department unfair labour practices abound in this institution. Racism has evolved into a system where black people are given the whip to beat their fellow backs. They do so with vigour and enthusiasm because of the prospects of promotion. Untrained managers are appointed into positions and their lack of understanding hinders performance resulting in staff being rated as poor performers. The loss of loyal staff to other institutions, death or disability is criminal and people must be held to account. There are several perpetrators in this institution who are protected because they are said to be efficient. At what cost to admin staff are these people categorised as efficient?

5th Comment

In the absence of an anti-bullying policy we will be on the receiving end of bully and slanderous attacks by academics and people in superficial positions of power and the student body. Unfair labour conditions and practices are ongoing and Unions and Management does absolutely nothing about the ongoing disregard for PASS staff. The absence of a fully functioning HR and Unions leaves us to deal with issues of "roll over" contracts, which ultimately hold on to white privilege. The salient attacks on staff based on class and race speaks to the recently published research by the University of Stellenbosch, and the silent approach by UCT only speaks to their commitment to hold onto this culture and or behaviour. Students are always "looked after" by the various concessions that are made for them continuously and PASS staff bear the brunt of the ongoing changes that falls outside of the university's policies. It is evident that students have more power in the running of the institutions as they have spaces where their voices are heard, unlike PASS staff we are the gears that keep this institution turning but are the most unlikely stakeholder who benefits from the rewards of this system and or have a space to impact on real change. Everything in this institution from parking allocation to how it is administered and how we are fined speaks to privilege and a lack of transformation. I also find that given the deadline to deal with the response to this report without interactive work-shopping and proper understanding again speaks to the lack of real change the institution wants to achieve. It comes across as box you ticked off by confirming consultation.

6th comment

There has to be some caution in giving general amnesty to students found guilty of damaging University property and generally breaking the laws of the establishment.

7th comment

The plight of the poor students who simply cannot afford tertiary education should always be a concern for the University and they should be given special dispensation. As far as I am aware, this is a UCT policy already.

8th Comment

Some of the protesting students however where not all poor neither were they disadvantaged. When the then Eskom chairman, Brain Molefe's son was one of the chief protagonists' in the protests, it does beg the question, was this only about the plight of the poor and disadvantaged or was there a different agenda behind the scenes?

9th comment

A student walked into this department and set the fire alarm off, setting off a chain reaction by shutting down the plant room unit which is a protection against fire, but there are consequences.

Our departmental Vehicle which was petrol bombed seems to have gone under the radar and whoever was responsible for that has got away scot free. That incident could have been a lot worse but the fire services managed to get the blaze under control fairly quickly.

10th comment

There were many other incidents of intimidation of staff and students by protesting students, who, it has to be said were a minority.

11th comment

If the accused students are given amnesty, what message is being sent to future students who are still at school at this stage?

There has to be a fitting punishment for their crimes – be it fines or community service but they should never be allowed to study at this university as a minimum punishment.

12th comment

For what it's worth.

13th comment

Exhausting

14th Comment

I have not been able to read the entire document, as it is too lengthy so can only comment on what I read. Firstly, my view is that restitution and reconciliation should occur but those students who have committed serious crimes like arson, rape, murder, etc. should be held accountable and undergo the full force of the law. What kind of example will that be for others? Besides, these students are technically adults and like any adult who commits acts of violence should account for their actions. In response to point 7.4 in the report on the university managements response was inadequate and inappropriate and failed to take account of students' experiences of racism, structural violence, discrimination or psychological abuse. I strongly disagree with this. Can one entirely blame the University management for hiring security guards or calling for the SAPS to assist? The University is not only a place of learning, but also an employer and its role as an employer is to ensure that there are processes in place to safeguard the staff in its employ. If staff are injured, the University as an employer can be held responsible if injury was caused due to their negligence, as their staff, if injured, can seek compensation for medical expenses, lost wages and pain and suffering. Those students who wilfully caused damage and injuries during the 2015-2017 protests should be held accountable—and the victims, namely staff and other students who had suffered, should be the ones who should seek compensation from them for any pain or suffering. UCT Management was slow in bringing in the SAPS and private security firms—but their help was required only after the safety of the staff, students and buildings were at risk. Yes. The behaviour of some of these SAP and security firms need further investigation, but then this can be attributed too with their general training within South Africa in general. The University is a place of study where students remain for between 3 or 4 years, then leave. Other students who go on to study further remain longer. Values, behaviour patterns, etc. is something that should be taught at home—not in schools or Universities. Students cannot put the blame on this on the University. Once a student graduates from University and enter the job market, can he/she blame a misdemeanour on his/her past experience or lack of facilities? One should be accountable and not blame it on the effects of apartheid, etc. I realise that in many poorer households, there might be only one parent—who might not have the time, education, energy, etc. to educate their children in values, principles, etc but I strongly feel that the University personnel, whether a PASS, academic or Management should not be held accountable for the student's home experiences. The majority of the students who were involved in the 2015 to 2017 protests did not experience

apartheid full on, as I did. I was born in the late 60s in a very poor community in the Western Cape during the height of apartheid, attended a poor Coloured school where we only had one PC for 600 pupils; I had to work-part time to contribute towards my studies; help my Mom make and sell food to make ends meet; was satisfied with the little we had; had to work extremely hard and all of this made me a stronger individual. Yes. Although I was never a student leader, I did participate in student protests, but then, we were orderly—at most, tyres were burnt; not buildings and fellow pupils were not harassed or beaten. Adversity, whether it is racism, poverty, etc. does not kill you. However, some of the students today are not eager to work hard but expect and demand the best—this is from listening to the conversations some of the cleaning staff my colleagues relate about their children—how demanding they are; not willing to assist at home; reluctant to do their assignments; only want to sit on Facebook, etc. Some of the students at this University will use the race card; the after-effects of apartheid and even accuse their lecturers of racism, sexual harassment, etc. if they do not pass a course. This is something I have personally seen and heard about. In response to the point of the fact that the number of African South Africans has increased significantly but that the number is still low compared to other racial categories. From being employed at the University for over 22 years now and from conversations with postgraduate students, it is clear that many African South Africans would prefer to be employed within industry and not academia. They feel that the salaries for academics remain low compared to that of industry. This is one of the reasons the numbers of African South Africans at Universities will continue to remain low. Some enter academia with high hopes, but many leave not only because the salaries remain low, but also because of the problems created by students as I described above.