



## BAC FACT CHECK: Whose lie is it?

### From Max Price, UCT Vice Chancellor

Senate did not at any point discuss or vote upon any candidates other than the candidate put forward by the selection committee, Associate Professor Lange. There was no vote on, let alone two-thirds support for, any other candidate.

The University of Cape Town (UCT) follows an especially rigorous process in the selection of candidates to senior leadership posts within the institution. The selection of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning at UCT is a case in point. Fairness, rigour, transparency and transformation are largely guaranteed by the composition of the selection committee, which represents many stakeholders with different perspectives.

In making its decision on whether Associate Professor Lange and any others met the criteria, the selection committee agreed that only one candidate – namely, Associate Professor Lange – met sufficient criteria to be appointed. For clarification, below I quote the published criteria, and those who review Associate Professor Lange's CV will immediately see that she meets the vast majority, if not all, of the criteria...Note that there is no specified requirement that the applicant should be eligible for a full professorship at UCT. So the BAC claim that for this reason she did not meet the criteria is false. In fact Associate Professor Lange met all the criteria.

### The Facts

Senate did not deliberate on the black candidate in question, Professor Elelwani Ramugondo, who was deemed 'unappointable' by the selection committee. **What is not mentioned here is that the Senate rejected the decision of the selection committee to appoint Associate Professor Lis Lange.**

There were many inconsistencies in the recruitment process, some of which include:

- No livestreaming of the candidate presentations as is customary
- The re-composition of the selection committee that replaced 4 black members with 4 white members.
- The same constituencies represented in the selection committee, ratified the process as part of the Institutional Forum. It appears in effect, that constituencies are allowed to serve as both player and referee

Although Max Price states that there is no requirement that the applicant should be eligible for full professorship at UCT, the Chair of Council – Mr Sipho Pityana - in a letter to Professor Ramugondo in December 2017, states that one of the reasons for her 'unappointability' was due to the fact that she was not yet Full Professor – an attribute that would have made her acceptable among her peers. At the time Associate Professor Ramugondo was already awarded full professorship. Furthermore, Professor Ramugondo fulfilled the criteria listed for the position. Lis Lange, on the other hand, was awarded associate professorship by a committee of UCT subsequent to her appointment.



On the question of Senate support: The committee's choice of appointee was presented to Senate on 24 November 2017. After debate, Senate members took a vote and the majority agreed with the committee's recommendation. However, Senate's rules call for a two-thirds majority on such a decision and this was not achieved, as 38% voted against the proposal and 11% abstained.

On the specific question of transformation – an issue raised by dissenters in Senate – the selection committee was satisfied that Associate Professor Lange's longstanding involvement with, and leadership experience in, the area of transformation in higher education was a key strength.

Finally, I trust it will be clear from the above that the allegation of racism, justified by the claim that the selection committee and Council supported an unqualified white woman against a qualified black South Africa candidate, is false and insulting to both the bodies. The [Council](#) overwhelmingly supported the decision.

It is disappointing that a public, misleading statement has been made in an attempt to delegitimise an entirely legitimate appointment, behind the anonymous banner of the BAC.

The Senate rejected the decision of the committee. According to Senate rules, a 2/3 majority is required for a vote in favour of a candidate.

The issue of transformation raised by BAC is that it is the onus of the selection committee to demonstrate that the gap between an equity candidate and non-equity candidates is so large that it legitimizes the appointment of the latter. This was not done in this case.

Finally, the recent establishment of the Institutional Transformation and Reconciliation Commission (IRTC) at UCT is an acknowledgement by the University that it needs to confront the institutional racism that exists at all levels of the institution.

BAC is not and has never been an anonymous body. BAC is a fully formed organization with a constitution and a recognition agreement with UCT. Max Price, on numerous occasions even in his official and executive capacity, invited and discussed with BAC and its official representatives to provide advice and guidance on a range of issues pertaining to UCT. BAC is also factored into other UCT committee meetings such as IRTC.