

PASS STAFF FEEDBACK

SUMMARY OF THE PASS FORUM FEEDBACK TO THE IRTC

The PASS Forum representatives on the IRTC, with the help of the CMD, advertised a PASS Forum feedback meeting on Friday 17 May for a meeting on Tuesday 21 May. This was short notice and the attendance was low. However, a further communication inviting written feedback followed and staff made written submissions. The feedback looks at preliminary considerations, process and substantive issues.

PRELIMINARY ISSUES

1. Some members asked about the composition of the PASS Forum. The PASS Forum is comprised of p/c 10 and above but it is problematic that PASS staff as a whole is not invited to provide feedback. Arguably, it is the staff at the payclasses 2-9, who experience many of the issues raised in the report. Despite the union representation on the IRTC, there is a gap in terms of PASS staff representation.
2. The PASS Forum representatives previously raised the concern that the report named staff members who shared very sensitive information; and that this may have consequences for those staff. Some versions of the report removed the names but there was damage done already. For the PASS Forum inputs, the representatives undertake to preserve anonymity.

PROCESS CONCERNS

3. During the process of the IRTC Roadshows and conducting hearings, it seemed that there was a pre-determined outcome. The approach appeared inquisitorial, blaming and unwilling to engage with different opinions. The mood and tone set was that staff would have to defend a total negative portrayal of UCT. The starting point was not neutral and therefore some staff did not bother to participate in the process.
4. It would have been better for the IRTC commissioners to circulate a draft report to verify the accuracy of information.
5. It is not clear from the report how the inclusion of inputs were weighted or treated; or why the commissioners prioritised some inputs above others. Some departments or individuals who made substantive inputs feel that their inputs were not considered and this adds to the perception that the report is one-sided.
6. There is a sense from the report that the Commissioners prioritised anecdotal evidence above facts and that these anecdotes led to generalised findings. The lack of rigour affected the process and the outcomes of the report.
7. The current process of getting inputs from sectors is akin to damage control, as opposed to addressing the issues that led to the establishment of the IRTC.
8. It is likely that the IRTC report will negatively impact the climate survey that is currently underway. Some people still have the IRTC report in their minds while they respond to the survey or some may not want to participate because they do not trust the process.

SUBSTANTIVE CONCERNS

9. If we look at the IRTC process like a research process, then then it lacked rigorous methodology, an ethical approach and it is flawed by generalising its findings.
10. Many staff hoped that the IRTC process would promote reconciliation and offer pathways to overcome divisions, and for us to find each other. The report was a huge disappointment and caused further division and mistrust. For PASS staff, it feels like we have been rendered more invisible. We bore a lot of pressure

for several reasons during the protests; and there was a need for guidance and a way forward. This was therefore a missed opportunity.

11. There is a sense that the report, with its inaccuracies and one-sidedness has caused much damage and it is not clear how this could be undone. The report was circulated in the media as the “gospel truth” and attempts to correct inaccuracies this will be regarded as defensive.
12. There were incidences raised in the report, for example, racism. How will the executive address these incidences?
13. Certain statements in the report could have been more nuanced and not presented as absolutes. For example, the fact that racism exists is not disputed, given our context. But, it must be reported accurately so that it can be dealt with, rather than dismissed out of hand.
14. The report does not fairly represent what staff experienced and their narratives are missing.

Submissions by PASS Forum Members

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