# STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY'S RESPONSE TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION'S FINAL REPORT OF 14 MARCH 2023

## I INTRODUCTION

- 1. On 14 March 2023 the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC or the Commission) released its final report (Final Report) following complaints from the Freedom Front Plus and Dr Leon Schreiber that residences in SU prevented first-year students from speaking Afrikaans during the 2021 welcoming week. The Final Report contains a section headed "Findings", a section containing a number of "Proposed Remedial Action(s)", and it concludes with a section headed "Recommendation".
- 2. In terms of section 18(4) of the South African Human Rights Commissions Act 40 of 2013 (the Act) and para 12(4) of the Commission's 2018 Complaints Handling Procedures<sup>4</sup>, the Rector "must within 60 days after becoming aware of such finding or recommendation respond in writing to the Commission, indicating whether [SU] intends taking steps to give effect to such finding or recommendation, if any such steps are required." SU therefore had until 13 May 2023 to respond to the Commission, indicating what steps, if any it intends to take.
- 3. This is that response (this Response). This Response does the following:
  - 3.1. **Part II** provides a contextual background of events;
  - 3.2. **Part III** contains SU's response to the Commission's factual findings;
  - 3.3. **Part IV** provides SU's response to the Commission's characterisation of certain residences' conduct as constituting a "policy";

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Paragraph 8 of the Final Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Paragraph 9 of the Final Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Paragraph 10 of the Final Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Complaints Handling Procedures of the South African Human Rights Commission (2018).

- 3.4. **Part V** provides SU's response to the Commission's proposed remedial action and recommendations.
- 4. In broad outline, SU's position is as follows:
  - 4.1. SU accepts that at least one, and possibly two, of its residences<sup>5</sup> acted in contravention of SU's 2016 language policy in telling students they must speak English during the welcome week in 2021.
  - 4.2. SU agrees with the SAHRC that the conduct of certain of its residences was inconsistent with SU's language policy.
  - 4.3. SU does not agree that the conduct of the residences should be described as a policy of the University.
  - 4.4. However, SU accepts as a general proposition that it is responsible for the conduct of its residences.
  - 4.5. SU has already voluntarily implemented and will, to the extent appropriate, continue to implement the SAHRC's remedial action.
  - 4.6. SU does not intend further to revise its language policy. It has recently done so and does not believe a further revision is necessary in the current policy review cycle.
  - 4.7. SU has placed the Commission's recommendation in this regard before its Council and the Council has asked its Language Committee to consider paragraph 7.2.5.

#### II BACKGROUND

5. In terms of section 15(1)(b) of the Act, the Commission initiated an Inquiry into the complaints, whereby the Commission collected information in the form of written and oral submissions from interested parties regarding the following allegations by the complainants<sup>6</sup>:

"a) SU, elected student leaders and administrators at certain SU residences, prohibited students from conversing or otherwise communicating in Afrikaans;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Currently, SU has 24 undergraduate residences in Stellenbosch and 4 junior residences at Tygerberg; 10 PSO's in Stellenbosch and 1 at Tygerberg; and 7 senior residences in Stellenbosch and 2 at Tygerberg.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Paragraph 3 of the Commission's Final Report.

b) the ban on the use of Afrikaans extended even to prohibiting its use in private, including certain residences, bedrooms, digital platforms such as WhatsApp and even on park benches in front of certain residences;

c) students reported being threatened with disciplinary action, or were subject to public bullying, if they used Afrikaans on campus or in their residences;

d) the abovementioned ban on Afrikaans was being enforced in the Minerva Women's Residence, Irene Women's Residence, Huis Francie van Zyl Women's Residence, Capri Student Organisation and Tygerberg Residence (referred to collectively hereinafter as "the Residences"), although it may have been broader reaching than this; and

e) numerous students complained to SU management about the above without the issue being addressed."

- 6. On 8 September 2022 the Commission released a provisional report (the Provisional Report) and SU was afforded an opportunity to provide a written response to the Provisional Report. In its written response of 9 November 2022 (the Written Response), SU, in summary, accepted certain of the conclusions in the Provisional Report:<sup>7</sup>
  - 6.1. It accepted that during the 2021 welcoming week, in at least one of its residences, new students were strongly discouraged from speaking any language but English, and particularly from speaking Afrikaans;
  - 6.2. It accepted the Commission's finding that whether or not students were threatened with disciplinary sanctions, this conduct inhibited some students from speaking their language of choice;
  - 6.3. It accepted that while this conduct did not only affect some Afrikaans students, it may have had a disproportionate effect on them;

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Written Response at para 3.

- 6.4. It agreed with the Commission's conclusion that, while the effect was to prevent students speaking Afrikaans, this was never <u>intended</u> to be a "ban on Afrikaans", but was intended to promote inclusivity through the use of the more common language of English;
- 6.5. It agreed with the Commission's finding that this conduct is <u>not</u> evidence of a "plan to systematically eradicate Afrikaans from SU", and that there was no evidence such a plan existed, even between the residences and Private Student Organisation ("**PSO**") involved;
- 6.6. It accepted that this conduct was contrary to its own 2016 Language Policy, was therefore unlawful, and limited certain students' rights.
- 7. The Written Response, however, also reflected the following concerns about the Provisional Report<sup>8</sup>:
  - 7.1. In its Provisional Report the Commission had concluded that a practice preventing the use of Afrikaans was in place in four residences and one Student PSO for the 2021 Welcoming Week. SU does not accept this. To the best of its knowledge, there was only one residence Minerva where the particular "English-only" instruction was manifestly in place for the 2021 Welcoming Week. There was either no, or inconclusive evidence, for the other residences and PSO the Provisional Report mentioned, or the evidence related to different conduct at different times.
  - 7.2. The Commission's characterisation of this practice as a "policy" of the SU, was not justified. It created the misleading impression that SU management endorsed or supported the practice, when the Commission itself accepted that was not the case. The Commission was urged more accurately to describe the conduct of the residence(s) as practices contrary to SU's policies, and not as one of SU's policies.
  - 7.3. The Provisional Report failed to mention the steps SU had taken to respond to complaints about the practice. SU central management corrected the residence's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Written Response at para 5.

conduct as soon as it became aware that students were being prevented from speaking Afrikaans. SU also took decisive steps to prevent any recurrence.

- 7.4. The Provisional Report reflected a misunderstanding of SU's concern with inclusivity. SU understands inclusivity to mean equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised. SU does not see inclusivity as involving the use of one language to the exclusion of other languages. It understands inclusivity as requiring sensitive action to include all language speakers in an institution. That requires respect for multilingualism, not the imposition of monolingualism.
- 7.5. The Provisional Report included certain "directives" requiring SU to take certain action, but the Commission does not have the power to direct SU to take any action. The Commission's powers are limited to making findings and recommendations. As stated in the Written Response, if the Commission believes that directive action is required to prevent the limitation of rights, it has the power to approach a court for binding orders. It cannot issue binding orders itself.
- 7.6. Moreover, some of the specific directives the Commission proposed in the Provisional Report were not justified in the circumstances.
- 8. The Final Report makes some changes that appear to respond to SU's Written Response. *Inter alios*, the Commission removed any reference to binding "directives". However, on other issues, the Commission appears not to have been receptive to SU's Written Response.
- 9. The Commission's ultimate finding in its Final Report is that SU -

through the residence policies, unfairly violated the human rights of the affected students to a) freedom of expression;

- b) language and culture;
- c) equality and to not be discriminated against on the basis of language; and
- d) human dignity. 9

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Final Report para 8.1.

- 10. Importantly, the Commission correctly concluded that SU's Language Policy prohibited residences from outlawing the use of Afrikaans, but found that certain residences adopted their own "policies" that prevented students speaking Afrikaans during Welcoming Week. It emphasized "that the residence policies were indeed in violation of the 2016 Language Policy". <sup>10</sup>
- 11. However, the Commission concluded that SU was responsible for the residences' conduct, even though it violated its Language Policy. 11 SU accepts this finding. As an organisation, SU never permitted or tolerated these violations of rights. It immediately addressed it when it became aware of the conduct. But the residences are part of SU and SU is ultimately responsible for their conduct, as more fully described in paragraph 20 below.

## III THE COMMISSION'S FACTUAL FINDINGS

- 12. Respectfully, SU considers that in its Final Report the Commission made certain factual errors. These errors do not affect the SAHRC's core finding, or SU's acceptance of that finding. But it is important for SU to be clear about the correct factual position and for the Commission to be apprised of SU's position on them.
- 13. The Commission did not identify the evidence of specific students, on the basis that it would not be fair to reveal their identities. 12 This made it very difficult for SU in its Written Response to respond to certain allegations, because it did not know who made them, or even which residence they concerned. That problem persists in the Commission's Final Report.
- 14. Furthermore, it is not possible to determine whether all the Commission's factual conclusions are supported by the evidence before it because SU does not have access to that evidence. The Commission states that it "received submissions from" various bodies, including affected students, residence heads and House Committee members. Without knowing what those "submissions" say, SU could not, and cannot, know whether all the factual conclusions the Commission reached were justified.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Final Report para 7.5.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Final Report para 8.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Final Report, second para numbered 4.2.1.

- 15. However, SU can identify three factual errors in the Provisional Report, errors which SU brought to the Commission's attention in its Written Response, but which were not corrected in the Final Report.
- 16. <u>First</u>, the Commission refers to Minerva Women's Residence, Irene Women's Residence, Huis Francie van Zyl Women's Residence, Capri Student Organisation and Tygerberg Residence collectively as "the Residences". Whenever it refers to the "policy" to prevent Afrikaans, it refers to "the Residences". Yet, the Final Report also acknowledges that "save for the case of Minerva and Irene Residences, the relevant facts regarding the other Residences were disputed". <sup>13</sup> But, instead of determining on the evidence before it which residences prevented students speaking Afrikaans and which did not, the Commission decided to "not make an actual finding in this regard." It did so on the basis that "the principles set out in this report, and the proposed remedial steps, are applicable whether or not these exclusionary policies occurred in one residence or more". <sup>14</sup>
- 17. In adopting this approach, it is respectfully submitted that the Commission committed at least two factual errors:
  - 17.1. First, while the events at Minerva were common cause, SU explained in its Written Response that it was unable to verify whether the practice had also occurred in Irene and disputed that such practices had occurred at any of its other 30 residences. The Commission may itself have had evidence different from that which SU had collated in its investigations although its failure to specify what events occurred at which residences makes it impossible to determine; but treating as common cause that the policy existed at more than one residence is misleading.
  - 17.2. Second, SU pointed out in its Written Response that there is no "*Tygerberg Residence*". <sup>15</sup> Yet, in its Final Report the Commission failed to address this obvious

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Final Report para 4.3.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Final Report para 4.3.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> SU Written Response para 11.

error, and continued to imply that the events could have occurred at a residence that does not exist. 16

- 18. Allied to this last-mentioned point, SU also disagrees with the Commission's view that the number of residences which implemented an English-only policy does not matter. It surely matters whether it occurred at one residence, or four residences, or more residences. That necessarily affects the determination of whether these were isolated incidents, or represent a more wide-spread pattern of behaviour. The nature and extent of the violation(s) must also be relevant to the finding and any remedies the Commission suggests. If it was an isolated incident at one or two of SU's more than thirty residences, the finding and recommendations would logically be different than if it occurred at multiple, or the majority, of all SU's residences.
- 19. <u>Second</u>, there are errors of omission. The Final Report fails to include reference to highly relevant facts, all of which were conveyed to the Commission by SU in its Written Response. For example, the Final Report does not identify:
  - 19.1. The fact that SU's residences accommodate over 8 000 students, and that these events occurred (at most) at 2 out of SU's 30<sup>17</sup> residences.
  - 19.2. The many and extensive steps that SU took to address the complaints once it was made aware of them. In both its Provisional Report and in its Final Report the Commission mentions only once, and then only in passing, that SU has "taken steps to address the incidents". The Commission nowhere records or gives recognition to how extensive these steps were. As SU pointed out in its Written Response, inter alia, SU:
    - 19.2.1. As soon as it became aware of the complaints, made it clear that the practice was inconsistent with the 2016 language policy, engaging with student leaders and residence heads in this regard;

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> Final Report para 6.4.6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> For the current number of residences, refer to footnote 5 above.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Final Report para 3d).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Written Response paras 34-44.

- 19.2.2. Secondly, dealt with all the individual complaints it received, details of which are set out in SU's report to the Commission of 11 June 2021;
- 19.2.3. Thirdly, referred complaints mentioned in the media and received from the Commission to Deloitte for an independent forensic investigation of what had occurred. The Commission was provided with a summary of Deloitte's conclusions and recommendations on 10 December 2021 in SU's supplementary report to the Commission;
- 19.2.4. Fourthly, after receipt of the Deloitte report, SU implemented the recommendations in the Deloitte report. It advised the Commission of this in its Written Response.<sup>20</sup>
- 19.2.5. Fifthly, SU conducted a further internal investigation in September 2021 involving an analysis of the Deloitte report and its associated documents, and made 2 further recommendations to ensure inclusivity. It also advised the Commission of this in its Written Response.<sup>21</sup>
- 20. Third, the Commission claims that SU "has not at any stage during this investigation given any indication that it is willing to accept direct responsibility". <sup>22</sup> This is not correct. In its Written Response to the Commission's Provisional Report, SU repeatedly acknowledged that it accepted that it is responsible for the conduct of its Residences, including when they breach the University's own policies. <sup>23</sup> This error in the Final Report paints a distorted picture of SU as seeking to avoid responsibility. SU also pointed out in its Written Response that SU would have been separately responsible as an institution if it had failed to act to (a) rectify any breach of its policy; or (b) prevent future breaches of its policies. But it is not

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Written Response paras 2 and 43, read with Annexure "SU5".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Written Response paras 44.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Final Report para 6.4.11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> See, for example, SU Written Response paras 5.3, 22, 26, 27, 46 48, 49 and 50.

separately responsible, because it acted entirely appropriately to address the breaches of its policy and took reasonable steps to prevent their recurrence and continues to do so

21. In its Final Report the Commission also referred to allegations that similar practices occurred in the 2023 welcoming period, and that it has received further complaints about these incidents. It relied on this to question the effectiveness of the steps SU took to deal with the 2021 incidents. Apart from the fact that these allegations have not been tested or proved, it was procedurally unfair for the Commission to rely on them, as SU was never afforded an opportunity by the Commission to respond to these 2023 complaints, nor was it made aware that the Commission intended referring to or considering them in addressing the 2021 complaint.

## IV A POLICY, OR CONDUCT IN CONTRAVENTION OF A POLICY?

- 22. A central theme of both the Provisional Report and the Final Report is the Commission's characterisation of the Residences' conduct as *a policy*. Indeed, in both its Provisional Report and its Final Report<sup>24</sup> the Commission is at pains to explain why, in its view, the Residences' conduct must be described as a "policy" and cannot be described simply as a "practice".
- 23. In SU's respectful view it is wrong to characterize conduct that <u>violated</u> SU's Language Policy as a "policy", still less as a Policy of the University. Even if SU residences or any other part of the University could issue policies which they cannot it simply cannot be correct that any conduct or practice (whether described as a rule or provision of any description) can constitute policy ascribed to the University; more so if that conduct or practice is contrary to an existing University Policy one of only two policies prescribed by the Higher Education Act.
- 24. This is not simply a pedantic dispute about nomenclature. "*Policy*" is a term loaded with potential statutory implications. <sup>25</sup> This was pointed out to the Commission by SU in its

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> Para 6.2.8 of both the Provisional Report and the Final Report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> For example, "discrimination" is defined in the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act, No. 4 of 2000 as including "a policy" which directly or indirectly imposes burdens, obligations or disadvantages on any person on one or more of the grounds prohibited in the Statute, which includes language.

Written Response.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, when coupled with the way in which the Final Report describes "the policy" as having been applied at "the Residences", many readers of the Final Report will be left with the inaccurate impression that "the policy" was extensively implemented by SU at many of its residences.

25. However, to reiterate: SU accepts that it is responsible for its residences' conduct, even though that conduct did not constitute a "policy".

## V PROPOSED REMEDIAL ACTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## **The Proposed Remedial Action**

- 26. There are three parts in the "**Proposed Remedial Action**" section of the Commission's Final Report which, although employing slightly different language, echo certain paragraphs of the section headed "Directives" in the Provisional Report:
  - 26.1. SU "should, through the office of the Rector and Vice-Chancellor, issue a written public apology to any students who were negatively affected by the residence policies."<sup>27</sup> The Commission goes on to specify what the apology should contain.
  - 26.2. SU "through the office of the Rector and Vice-Chancellor, should within 14 days, write to all residence leadership, directing them expressly to not implement English-only or similar language policies and should provide the Commission with a copy of this correspondence."<sup>28</sup>
  - 26.3. SU "should, within 60 days hereof, provide training of residence leadership (residence leadership, including heads, HK, residence mentors and monitors) in respect of the correct interpretation and application of the 2021 Language Policy with specific reference to para 7.2.5."<sup>29</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> Written Response paras 24 and 29.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> Final Report para 9.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>28</sup> Final Report para 9.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>29</sup> Final Report para 9.3.

## The Recommendation

27. Finally, in a different section of the Final Report entitled "Recommendation" the Commission "recommend[ed] that SU consider rephrasing of section 7.2.5 of the 2021 Language Policy so that it reads as follows [emphasis added]:

"In student communities, language is used in such a way that ensures that, where reasonably practicable and provided that the fundamental human rights of those affected are not unreasonably and unjustifiably limited, everybody is included and able to participate." <sup>30</sup>

## SU'S position regarding the proposed remedial action and recommendations

- 28. Even though, as highlighted earlier, SU disagrees with certain findings and certain parts of the proposed remedial action and recommendations of the Commission, SU has decided not to take the Final Report on judicial review.
- 29. SU prefers instead to respond to the Commission as it has done here. SU is of the view that this response is clear and adequate, but would be happy to meet should the Commission wish to do so.
- 30. SU has already decided that it will at least partly act in accordance with the three "Remedial Actions" proposed in the Final Report. The essence of the "remedial actions" have already been implemented: "
  - 30.1. SU issued a public statement on 19 April 2023<sup>31</sup> in which it reiterated its previous statements that conduct of the nature set out in the Final Report is wrong and should never have happened; and unequivocally apologised to all students in Minerva and Irene who were affected by the residence practices during welcoming week in 2021 and who felt that their human rights and dignity were affected by not being able to speak Afrikaans in a social context. A copy of that statement is annexed.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>30</sup> Final Report para 10.5.

<sup>31</sup> https://www.sun.ac.za/english/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=9876

https://www.sun.ac.za/afrikaans/Lists/news/DispForm.aspx?ID=9794

- 30.2. SU recorded that it had already instructed all residences in 2021 and 2022 not to implement English-only language policies, and that it would continue to provide the necessary training, including that no language, including Afrikaans, should be prohibited. This message was reinforced on 15 February 2023 at a session with student leaders, entitled RC: Learning and Teaching/SU Language Policy Presentation to Student Leaders; and that
- 30.3. SU has already trained residence leadership on the correct application of its Language Policy, including paragraph 7.2.5, 32. In April and May 2023, the SU Language Centre ran a series of workshops together with the Centre for Student Communities entitled 'Building communities through multilingualism' during April and May 2023. Twenty sessions of two to three hours each were facilitated to give all SU residence heads, house committee members and mentors an opportunity to attend a session with the Language Centre. Over 700 participants attended in total, out of a possible 1 077. It is important to note that the monitors (mentioned in the report) are only active during the Welcoming week and they were therefore not included in the workshops. These workshops will be repeated once the new leadership is elected in September/October and a refresher workshop will also be presented during the Welcoming week. The report of these workshops is serving at the Language Committee on Monday 15 May 2023.
- 30.4. SU will continue to provide training to advance compliance, but it needs to be pointed out that during the recent workshops SU also focused more broadly on multilingualism and the multilingual mindset. This is much more than just "compliance". The workshops aimed at creating a safe space for the campus community to reframe conversations about language and discover the richness of their own language journeys and those of others. It further aimed to enable participants to explore how a multilingual mindset ties in with the values of integrity, respect and tolerance to build the inclusive, diverse, transformed and socially cohesive community SU aspires, and to find support, partners and new inspiration in their multilingual journey.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>32</sup> The 2016 Language Policy has been replaced by the 2021 Language Policy. Paragraph 7.2.5 of the 2021 Language Policy is identical to paragraph 7.2.5 of the 2016 Language Policy.

31. Regarding the "Recommendation" that SU revise paragraph 7.2.5 of its Language Policy, SU has previously indicated in its Written Response to the Provisional Report that it had already gone through an extensive revision of its Language Policy and did not see any need to again revise that provision. That remains SU's position. SU will continue to promote proper understanding of the provision. However, as undertaken in its Written Response, SU has placed the Commission's proposal before its Council. Council has asked its Language Committee to consider paragraph 7.2.5 of its Language Policy. The Language Committee will attend to it within the near future.

Prof. Wim de Villiers

Stellenbosch University: Rector and Vice Chancellor

12 May 2023

Prof Deresh Ramjugernath

Stellenbosch University: Deputy Vice-Chancellor

(Learning and Teaching)

12 May 2023

**ANNEXURE** 

Feedback - SAHRC Report on Language

Author: Corporate Communication and Marketing / Korporatiewe Kommunikasie en Bemarking

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At its meeting on Monday 17 April 2023, the Council of Stellenbosch University (SU) noted and agreed that while there are aspects of the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) Report on language in SU residences during the welcoming period in 2021 that it might want to respond to more fully to and possibly even challenge, it doesn't intend to delay until the date set by the SAHRC (13 May)

to implement the essence of the SAHRC remedial action and recommendation.

SU reiterated its previous statements that the conduct of the nature set out in the SAHRC Report, which limited the speaking of Afrikaans at residences, is wrong and should never have happened. As the SAHRC indicated, the University's Language Policy would not have allowed any student to be prohibited from speaking their language of choice in social circumstances. SU is currently taking Senior Counsel's advice on aspects of the SAHRC Report after which it will respond fully to the Report, but we welcome the SAHRC finding that there is not a "blatant and concentrated ban on Afrikaans inspired and motivated by a concerted effort from [SU] and certain individuals in management to eradicate Afrikaans from SU."

SU unequivocally apologises to all students in Minerva and Irene who were affected by the residence practices during welcoming week in 2021 and who felt that their human rights and dignity were affected by not being able to speak Afrikaans in a social context.

Although we have extensive training in place on the application of the language policy for student leaders, and we have reinforced that training already this year, we will continue to do so. At the same time, we are confirming our commitment to a multilingual, multicultural university which respects human rights and dignity and where all our stakeholders feel welcome, a move supported by SU Senate in its motion.

Terugvoer - SAMRK-verslag oor taal

Outeur: Corporate Communication and Marketing / Korporatiewe Kommunikasie en Bemarking

Gepubliseer: 19/04/2023

By sy vergadering van Maandag 17 April 2023 het die Raad van die Universiteit Stellenbosch (US) kennis geneem van en saamgestem dat daar aspekte in die verslag van die Suid-Afrikaanse Menseregtekommissie (SAMRK) oor taal in US-koshuise gedurende die verwelkomingstydperk in 2021 is waarop die Universiteit moontlik vollediger sal wil reageer en moontlik selfs wil betwis. Die Universiteit beoog egter nie om die inwerkingstelling van die kern van die SAMRK se regstellende optrede en aanbeveling tot die datum wat die Kommissie bepaal het (13 Mei 2023) te vertraag nie.

Die US herhaal ook sy vorige verklarings dat die soort optrede wat in die SAMRK se verslag uiteengesit is en wat die gebruik van Afrikaans in koshuise beperk het, verkeerd is en nooit moes plaasgevind het nie. Soos die SAMRK aangedui het, sou die Universiteit se Taalbeleid nie toegelaat het dat enige student verhoed word om om die taal van hulle keuse in koshuise te praat nie. Die US win tans regsadvies in oor aspekte van die SAMRK-verslag, waarna dit volledig op die verslag sal kommentaar lewer. Die Universiteit verwelkom egter die SAMRK se bevinding dat daar nie "n flagrante en gekonsentreerde verbod op Afrikaans was wat deur 'n gesamentlike poging van die US en sekere individue in die bestuur aangevuur en gemotiveer is om Afrikaans by die US uit te roei nie".

Die US vra alle studente in die koshuise Minerva en Irene wat deur praktyke gedurende die verwelkomingsweek in 2021 geraak is en wat gevoel het hulle menseregte en waardigheid is aangetas deur nie Afrikaans in 'n sosiale konteks te kon praat nie, onomwonde om verskoning.

Hoewel die Universiteit omvattende opleiding vir studenteleiers oor die toepassing van die Taalbeleid ingestel het en hierdie opleiding vanjaar versterk is, sal die Universiteit voortgaan met hierdie opleiding. Ons bevestig terselfdertyd ons verbintenis tot 'n meertalige, multikulturele universiteit wat menseregte en waardigheid respekteer en waar al ons belanghebbers welkom voel. Die US Senaat ondersteun hierdie stap.

Einde