

Good afternoon,

Please find below questions for the attention of Mr Cyril Gamede, Chairperson of University of Zululand Council:

Mr Gamede, in your capacity as Chairperson of Council, you also sat as chair on the Selection Committee for the appointment of the new Unizulu Vice Chancellor in 2015.

With this in mind, I would appreciate your comments for publication purposes relating to the questions below.

Background: I have been approached by various sources who claim that the current Vice Chancellor, Professor Xoliswa Mtose, was not the most suitable candidate for the position, and wish to clarify certain details of the appointment process. **This is strongly refuted. Professor Mtose was put through a rigorous selection process. She received overwhelming support from Council, who conducted voting by closed ballot as per University Policy. She was considered to be the most suitable candidate for the position.**

1. Can you confirm that you were chairperson of the selection committee in your capacity as Unizulu Council Chair and that you were appointed as such by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Blade Nzimande? **The Minister of Higher Education and Training do not appoint Chairpersons to Institutions. I was duly elected into the position in accordance with the University of Zululand Statute. The process pertaining to the Selection Committee is governed by the Policy on the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor. The policy dictates the process and the composition of the selection panel.**
2. Can you confirm that at the outset of the selection process, Professor Mtose declared that she was not interested in taking up the position of Vice Chancellor permanently, thus allowing her presence on the selection panel? **As indicated above, the Policy on the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor dictates the process to be followed. Professor Mtose was initially a member of the Selection Panel when the University first commenced the process. After the selection panel recommended that none of the applicants were found to be suitable for appointment, Council recommended that a process of Head Hunting be initiated. The University approached a Head Hunting firm to assist. Ms Nomusa Mbatha nominated Professor Mtose during a Human Resources Committee of Council meeting, which committee recommended that the acting Vice-Chancellor should be included in the Head Hunting process. Professor Mtose was approached to establish whether he would accepted the nomination. She agreed and Professor Mtose was then removed as selection panel member. She was replaced in accordance with the Policy on the Appointment of Vice-Chancellor and the process commenced afresh.**
3. Can you confirm at what stage Professor Mtose withdrew/was excused from the selection process when it became evident that her interest in the position had changed? **At no stage did Professor Mtose indicate that she was interested in the position. She did not apply for the position at all. When a suitable candidate could not be found, Council recommended that Prof Mtose should be approached to establish whether she would be interested in the position.**
4. The Zululand Observer understands that four candidates, including recently appointed Vice Chancellor of the Durban University of Technology Professor Thandwa Mthembu, met the minimum requirements but were disqualified as they 'did not satisfactorily meet all the set

selection criteria'. What specific criteria did the candidates, specifically Professor Mthembu, fall short of meeting, resulting in their disqualification? **The selection panel recommends a position to Council based on selection criteria. The selection panel recommended no candidate to Council based on the selection criteria. Council then decides on the recommendation and can accept/reject the recommendation. Council accepted the recommendation that no candidate was found to be suitable and approved the head hunting process.**

5. Furthermore, minutes of a selection panel meeting read 'the Panel unanimously agreed that none of the applicants were suitable for the Vice Chancellor position'. Was it indeed unanimous or only by majority vote? **It was indeed unanimous as per the minutes. No one objected.**
6. Can you confirm that an external expert on higher education walked out of a selection panel meeting as she believed the process was flawed and did not wish to be associated with the appointment? **As per the Policy on the appointment of Vice-Chancellor, two external experts form part of the selection panel of which one should be present to constitute a quorum. Two external experts attended the first meeting however the particular expert you are referring to left the first meeting early when the recommendation was made to Council. This particular expert then attended the second round where the minutes was tabled. This particular expert did not object to the minutes when they were approved, which (as explicitly referred to in your reference in 5 above) recommended to Council unanimously that none of the candidates were found suitable for the position. The meeting continued and when the new head hunted candidates were discussed, she suddenly objected to the recommendation. The chairperson informed this expert that the objection would be noted, however she had two previous opportunities to object, but she did not use these. She did not object in the first process and also did not object during adoption of the minutes. She decided to withdraw from the process and according to the Policy on the Appointment of the Vice-Chancellor was replaced with another external expert.**
7. The Zululand Observer understands that Professor Johnathan Blackledge was the only other candidate shortlisted after a head-hunting process. What was the deciding factor in Professor Mtose being selected ahead of Professor Blackledge? **Selection takes place via secret ballot at Council. The vast majority of the selection panel members voted in favour of Prof Mtose which vote was conducted via closed ballot. The recommendation was then submitted to Council, who also voted via closed ballot. Prof Mtose received the vast majority of support by both selection panel as well as Council who (as previously mentioned) conducted voting via closed ballot. The process is transparent. Professor Mtose was selected by Council because she was considered to be the best candidate.**
8. **No question is included here**
9. In July, the now former President of Convocation addressed a letter to yourself and Pearl Maposhe, detailing some concerns regarding the appointment of the VC as well as the 'degrees for sale' scam. He requested a meeting with yourself and Ms Maposhe. Did this meeting take place and if not, why? **The President of the Convocation was a selection panel member as well as a Council member. He was granted numerous opportunities to express his concern which he did. He openly indicated that he did not like Professor Mtose and that he did not perceive her as the best candidate. His opinion is his own. The process is transparent as indicated above. One person does not dictate the process. Processes were duly followed and the vast majority of Council voted in favour of Professor Mtose.**

10. Why was Mr Makhathini served with what was described as 'intimidating' correspondence from Unizulu lawyers after this letter to you? **The Code of Conduct of Council prohibits Council members from disseminating information to anyone without consent from the Chairperson of Council and the Vice-Chancellor. Mr Makhathini used a "back-office" student record which was illegally obtained and transmitted it to me and other Council members without consent. He did not comprehend the content off the document and soon after the same document was leaked to the media which in itself is a contravention of the POPI Act.**

11. Can you confirm or deny allegations that outside influence from the Minister of Higher Education and Training Blade Nzimande played a role in the appointment of Professor Mtose as Unizulu Vice Chancellor? **This is absolutely denied. The Minister plays no role in the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor.**

Due to the extensive nature of the questions, I believe one week would be sufficient for you to consider and reply to the queries as set out above – therefore Tuesday 25 October

Thank you for your attention.

Please would you be so kind as to confirm receipt of this email and do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.