

DEDICATION - ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Rhodes University Declaration of Academic Freedom and Other Ethical Principles

As members of the academic community of Rhodes University, we are committed to safeguarding the principle of academic freedom and affirming our commitment to an ethical orientation to our work. The principles listed below are complex and their meanings must be debated. We simultaneously affirm our rights to academic freedom and uphold the firm view that this freedom is matched by an obligation to ethical conduct with regard to our students, colleagues and wider society. In the context of our history and the inequalities of the present, this includes a firm embrace of the transformative commitment to equality and justice as laid out in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa ('Constitution' hereafter) and, more fundamentally, as flowing from a proper understanding of the ethic that ought to guide academic life. Therefore, we declare our resolute commitment to promoting the following principles:

Freedom: As enshrined in the Constitution, academic freedom is a variety of human freedom, and it is a central condition for a thriving academic life. The proper instantiation of academic freedom requires the steadfast commitment to its survival by academics, students and administrators. Academic freedom includes the right to be critical of the state, the university, private power and our colleagues. Academic freedom is not compatible with the subordination of university life to a corporate or managerial logic that curtails the freedom of staff or students to pursue intellectual projects of their own choosing. Academic freedom does not extend to defamation, fraud and forms of speech prohibited by the Constitution or, more broadly, by the principle of human decency. It is a misuse of academic

freedom, moreover, to invoke it to oppose just change. Academic freedom, finally, is predicated on adequate state funding of the academic project.

Integrity: Academic integrity requires personal and collective vigilance in the face of pressures and incentives that may threaten the autonomy and quality of academic work. It requires a firm commitment to aligning one's work and conduct with the ethical principles that ought to guide academic life. Such alignment cannot properly be achieved without ongoing interrogation of the values that inform current academic work.

Equality: The University is resolutely committed to the democratic ideal of universal equality. This requires active opposition to all forms of unjust discrimination and a vigorous attempt to build a university in which all students and staff are made to feel welcome and enjoy the same rights to participate freely in all aspects of academic life.

Collegiality: Academics should endeavor to foster a collegial environment where all staff and students are given a fair and equal platform to participate in the academic project, including playing an active part in maintaining and fostering proper institutional processes aimed at promoting a collegial environment. Collegiality, properly understood, is compatible with vigorous debate, provided that they are conducted in an ethical spirit, avoiding slander or acts designed to silence dissenting voices.

Excellence: Academics and students should be committed to producing work that is of the highest caliber in all spheres of academic life. Commitment to excellence implies ongoing critical interrogation of established norms of excellence.

CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY

The University consists of the Chancellor, the Principal (who is also the Vice-Chancellor), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Affairs), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Development), the Council, the Senate, the Institutional Forum, the Convocation, the professors, lecturers and other teachers, the researchers and the students.

The Chancellor, elected by the Council, is the titular Head of the University and is empowered, in the name of the University, to confer all degrees. For this purpose a Congregation of the University is held at least once a year under his presidency.

The Principal and Vice-Chancellor is the chief academic and administrative officer of the University and is *ex officio* a member of the Council and the Chairperson of the Senate.

The Council, which elects its own Chairperson, is the governing body of the University, administers its affairs and property, and is empowered, in consultation with, or upon the recommendation of the Senate, to frame statutes and rules governing the general conduct and organization of the University and to make all appointments to the staff.

The Council consists of the following members:

The Principal, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Affairs), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Development), five members appointed by the Minister, four elected by the Senate, two representatives of the Makana Municipality, the president of the students' representative council and another student elected annually by the students' representative council, one person elected by the board of governors of the Rhodes University Foundation, one elected member of the academic staff, two elected members of the administrative support staff, six persons appointed by the Council and not more than four members coopted in terms of the Rhodes University Statute.

The Senate superintends discipline and instruction within the University. It consists of the Principal, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Affairs), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Development), the Registrar, the heads of all departments, the professors, the Librarian, two representatives appointed by the Council, six members appointed by the lecturers and five members elected by the students representative council. Certain other officers of the University may be especially appointed as members of Senate.

The University has six Faculties: Humanities, Science, Law, Education, Commerce and Pharmacy, for each of which there is a Board which acts as a committee of the Senate in respect of all matters affecting that Faculty. The Chairperson of the Board is the Dean of the Faculty.

Convocation, which elects its own President, consists of all graduates of the University together with the Principal, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Student Affairs), the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Development), Librarian, Registrar and all permanent full-time teaching staff of the University. Convocation is required to meet at least once a year, and may discuss and express its opinion on any matter relating to the University.

The Registrar of the University is the Secretary of Council, Senate and Convocation