

UCT Alumni Association AGM held on 15 March 2017

Minutes of the UCT Alumni Association AGM

Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Register and Apologies
3. Approval of the Minutes held on 17 December 2016
4. Matters arising from the Minutes (including resolution to reconstitute the AAB)
5. Report of the Chair of the AAB
6. Motions

1. Welcome

The Chair, Ms Dianna Yach, welcomed everyone to the reconvened AGM of the Alumni Association.

She extended a special welcome to Lorna Houston, a member of the AAB, and congratulated her on her recent election as President of Convocation.

She paid tribute to the members of the Alumni Advisory Board and the Alumni Relations Team for their loyal and committed service during turbulent times and commented that despite staffing changes in the Alumni Office, the team continued to provide an excellent service to the AAB and Alumni Association.

She also thanked the Cape Town Alumni Chapter, chaired by Karen Daniels for their active and progressive contribution over the past months – particularly for ensuring diverse alumni voices are heard more widely.

She acknowledged that alumni were given shorter notice of the AGM than we would have liked. However, given the extraordinary circumstances last year, which meant that the AGM could not take place, coupled with the need to hold an AGM as soon as possible after the Convocation AGM, she stated that it was desirable for the AGM to be reconvened as soon as possible after the Convocation. This also fulfilled another constitutional mandate that there should be an AGM each year and this was impossible to do in 2016. The first announcement of the reconvened AGM for the Alumni Association was made at

the AGM of Convocation on 28 February 2017. Since then the alumni office sent out two separate reminders to alumni. (She also referred to Section 9.1 of the Alumni Association Constitution which permits the convention of a special meeting when circumstances require this.)

2. Register and apologies

Apologies were received from:

Neville Rubin

Yasmin von Schirnding

Eric Chisupa

Raymond Howard

Renfrew Christie

Debbie Budlender

“Ground rules” for an effective meeting

Before moving to the Agenda proper, the Chair reflected on some key values that she believed would assist in ensuring that the AGM ran smoothly:

1. That we relate to each other with mutual respect, dignity and civility in a spirit of collegiality
2. That none of these should be sacrificed for short term self interest
3. That we are able to disagree with each other whilst working to generate productive outcomes through dialogue, avoiding personalisation of arguments and not avoiding difficult conversations but rather bravely engaging and sometimes agreeing to disagree...
4. That we recognise that we are struggling with difficult questions and need everyone’s contribution in order to make progress...The future of UCT depends on honest collective endeavour – people with integrity working together for the common good

3. Approval of the Minutes

4. Matters arising from the Minutes

5. Chair’s Report

Outline:

- Report back on matters discussed at AAB meetings
- Internal stakeholder visits
- Alumni roadshows in 2016

- Cape Town alumni chapter
- YALE GALE visit
- Vision for the role of the Alumni Advisory Board
- Proposed amendments to the constitution of the Alumni Association

Report back on matters discussed at AAB meetings

Key topics:

1. Austerity measures
2. Use of private security on campus
3. Support for DAD's fundraising initiatives
4. Input into UCT's draft strategic plan
5. Election of Representative and Alternate to IRTC Steering Group

1. Austerity Measures:

- At the Board's request, Executive Director of Finance, Ashley Francis delivered a presentation at the June AAB meeting where he explained UCT's financial situation in national context. Subsequent to that presentation, UCT embarked on a process of offering voluntary separation and incentivised early retirement packages to staff, as an austerity measure.

2. Private security:

- UCT has established a task team on the use of private security on campus. The Vice-Chancellor delivered feedback and answered questions at the Board, about the circumstances under which various levels of security measures are implemented. The university has published detailed information on the use of private security, which can be found at <http://www.uct.ac.za/campus/communications/vcdesk/> and <http://www.uct.ac.za/campus/communications/announcements/>
- The AAB reiterated its view that whilst we may not agree with all the tactics of the student movement, responding with increased security and surveillance would be a regressive and unimaginative intervention in the life of UCT. Securitisation threatens the very nature of a public university where critical thinking and vigorous debate should be encouraged not stifled.

3. Fundraising support:

- Sidney van Heerden, Director, Distinguishing UCT Campaign, presented an outline of the Distinguishing UCT campaign – to grow the university's endowment from R500 million to one billion rand. Growing the endowment to that level will underwrite the university's ability to pursue its three goals of advancing excellence, investing in talent and realising transformation. The Board reiterated its commitment to working to encourage alumni to support DAD's efforts, by offering their time, talent or treasure to the university

4. Strategic plan:

- Previous strategic plan covered the term up to end of 2014. Council has just signed off on the new strategic plan, after several rounds of consultation with various stakeholders, including the alumni advisory board. Decolonisation and Transformation are at the very centre of the new plan.
- **Key inputs by the Board to the new plan:**
- Plan needed to be clearer on transformation, place a greater focus on staff (particularly PASS staff), and be more inclusive of international students, staff and alumni. Questions around how monitoring and evaluation would take place. Culture of impunity around racial/sexual harassment incidents. Board felt there should be greater commitment to the use of African languages in teaching and learning if UCT is to call itself an African university. Greater focus on fundraising was called for.
- The strategic plan is now being circulated to faculties and departments, for integration into their work.
- **Multi Stakeholder Steering Group to oversee the Institutional Reconciliation and Transformation Commission (IRTC)** Special meeting held on 12 January to elect a representative and alternate to represent alumni on the IRTC Steering Group –
- **Live stream important alumni association events:**

Suggestion that all important alumni events are live streamed providing an opportunity for alumni who are abroad to participate in the alumni association

Internal stakeholder engagements:

- **Faculty Deans and Executive Directors of Departments**
How can the Alumni Advisory Board assist the faculties/departments with achieving their objectives?
- **Staff, students, alumni, people involved in mediation and peace building on campus**
Examples of outcomes from those meetings: attendance at faculty events; collaboration with Communications and Marketing Department for official statements, understanding faculty fundraising needs, collaborating more closely with faculty alumni relations officers
- Meetings in Durban, Port Elizabeth, East London and Cape Town
 - Vice-Chancellor conducted JHB meeting
 - Cape Town Chapter co-hosted the Cape Town meeting
- Purpose: facilitate a 2 way dialogue with alumni
- Offer updates, information on UCT's particular challenges in context of the protest movement
- Diverse audiences in each city
- Key points from alumni:
 1. Is the University doing enough to increase the "throughput" rate through sufficient academic support for students?
 2. Is the University doing enough to lobby government to improve secondary school education, and to assist with ameliorating the crisis in funding student fees?
 3. Why were those student protesters who committed unlawful acts not disciplined more swiftly/harshly?
 4. Why did the University decide to grant amnesty/clemency to some students?
 5. What is the status of the Institutional Reconciliation and Transformation Commission?

6. Is there a code of conduct, or charter of rights and responsibilities for students and staff?

- Formed as a result of last year's roadshows on transformation

2016 activities

- Hosting of events: collaboration with Development and Alumni Department, Faculty of Engineering
- Held Annual General Meeting, updating alumni on their activities over the past year and receiving feedback from alumni
- Held committee re-election

- Model/pilot for how the Board would like to interface with chapters going forward
- Discuss the advantage of having a representative from the Chapter on the Board. Idea is that Chapters address their queries/concerns to the Board, board takes this forward with UCT management on behalf of the chapter. Will be able to roll out an expanded version of this model through the proposed amendment to the structure of the Board.
- Alumni volunteer counterparts from Yale visited Cape Town for a symposium

Key outcomes:

- Sharing of best practices, forming relationships
- Realising similarity of challenges/issues faced at both UCT and Yale:
 - Fostering inclusivity amongst diverse alumni body
 - Engaging with alumni who have a negative or apathetic stance toward their *alma mater*
 - Navigating transformation
 - Remaining connected with each other and the institution
- At first sight it Yale and UCT may appear to be radically different but we realized that there are many challenging issues that we share in common.
- Clarifying matters of concern for alumni

- Conduit for engagement between alumni and the University on UCT developments, leadership decisions and actions
- Support UCT’s strategic agenda while also serving as its “conscience”
- Advisory not executive role

Reconstitution of the Alumni Advisory Board:

Refer to the Constitution of the Alumni Association which states that the key role of the Board is to help to drive UCT’s agenda forward and serve as the university’s voice and conscience. The AAB is not just a PR tool for the university; rather it has an important role in clarifying matters of concern for alumni and being a conduit for reporting back on leadership decisions and actions.

- Participate in group comprised of chairs of Alumni Advisory Boards, convened by Minister of Higher Education
- Issue public statements on critical issues
- Support for chapters and affinity groups

