



## 2021-2022 Annual report

### 1. Who or what is UVPERSU?

#### 1.1 UVPERSU as union

UVPERSU's logo says it all: ***Achieve together.*** UVPERSU is unique in that it is the majority and representative union in the workplace and can look unrestrained after the interests of its members. UVPERSU is a registered union, but not affiliated with any federation of unions. UVPERSU is multi-cultural and non-racial and has a diverse group of members. UVPERSU has concluded a collective agreement with the UFS Council. UVPERSU and NEHAWU are the only recognised unions on the UFS campus and following discussions with the UFS Management, agreed on a minimum number of members for other unions before the UFS will recognise such union/s.

#### **UVPERSU's vision**

To be the most influential and leading union in higher education.

#### **UVPERSU's mission**

As a professional and non-political union, UVPERSU strives to serve the interests of members, collectively and within the framework of existing labour legislation and promote positive attitudes towards the preservation and growth of the University as an institution.

#### **UVPERSU's motto**

"We listen to truly hear, we care through action and so we add value to the working environment."

#### **UVPERSU's values**

Accountability, respect, integrity, equity, equality, and devotion.

## **1.2 UVPERSU's Management Committee (MC) 2020-2023**

Dr H Potgieter (Chairperson) (UVPERSU Executive)

In alphabetical order:

Mr D Alexander (Co-opted)

Ms L Coetzee (Co-opted)

Ms R Johnson (Vice-chair) (UVPERSU Executive)

Ms A Lombard (CEO) (UVPERSU Executive)

Dr G Magaiza (Vice-chair) (Qwaqwa chair) (UVPERSU Executive)

Dr SZ Matebesi (Co-opted)

Ms J Pretorius (Treasurer) (UVPERSU Executive)

Mr TT Theletsane

Ms GM Tsolo

Mr F van der Watt

Ms A van der Westhuizen

Dr AJ van Niekerk

## **1.3 UVPERSU support personnel**

Ms S Crous (Office manager, recruitment)

Ms A Tjamela (Maintenance and venues)

## **2. UVPERSU in a new online/hybrid working environment**

In March 2020, in the wink of an eye, our lives on the three campuses of the UFS changed drastically, due to a deadly and highly contagious virus, which attacked almost the whole world and is still spreading and causing death, havoc and major economic downfalls. Due to national lockdowns, most staff members started to work from home. Suddenly, we had to adapt to a “new normal” and we had to learn new and exciting technology to communicate. UVPERSU was and still is there for members and we are constantly in contact with the rectorate, and we are part of strategic planning to combat the spread of the virus at the UFS.

UVPERSU will always strive to stay relevant in a changing environment and to stay relevant, careful strategic planning is now very necessary. Salary negotiations are part of serious strategic planning. UVPERSU acts as watch dog over important employment aspects in a modern workplace. Networking is also important and liaison with members and non-members is high on the agenda. Regular surveys are conducted to get mandates for certain outcomes during negotiations.

## **3. UVPERSU's role on the UFS campuses**

Ms Anita Lombard is the full-time chief executive officer, assisted by a management committee under the chairmanship of Dr Henk Potgieter. Ms Sarien Crous oversees administration and recruitment. Ms Adelina Tjamela oversees the venues.

UVPERSU, as majority union, has a collective agreement with the UFS Council and imposes agency fees on non-members according to labour legislation.

UVPERSU has a co-operation agreement with NEHAWU to negotiate as a mutual forum for salary adjustments. UVPERSU and NEHAWU are the only recognised unions on the UFS campuses.

UVPERSU is thus fully recognised as an important role player on all three UFS campuses.

Important UVPERSU priorities are to prevent unfair discrimination, to protect jobs and ensure job security and to ensure a healthy and a safe workplace.

#### **4. UVPERSU representation on UFS committees**

UVPERSU is officially represented on university committees, sub-committees, task groups, as well as on the Institutional Forum, the Executive Management of the University, Transformation Committees (ITP), Institutional Multi-stakeholder group, the rector's senior leadership group and the Executive of Senate. UVPERSU always acts pro-actively in the interest of members and fulfils our watchdog function in accordance with labour legislation.

UVPERSU is also represented on the Health Care Committee, disability and group insurance committee, the Skills Development Committee, the Central Equity Committee, several other committees and all shortlist meetings and interviews. UVPERSU was also involved in the development of a new policy framework.

Ms Lombard is currently the vice chair of the Institutional Forum.

UVPERSU constantly engages with stakeholders with regard to social justice. UVPERSU will also be involved in activities of the Naming Committee.

UVPERSU was also part of engagement with the Council for Higher Education.

#### **5. Salary negotiations and service benefits**

UVPERSU and NEHAWU participate as the Mutual Forum in the annual salary negotiations with the UFS Council Team. It remains one of the most important tasks of the unions. All changes in conditions of service are negotiated in the Joint Bargaining Forum, which consists of the two unions and a UFS Council Team.

#### **6. Liaising with Human Resources, including Employment Relations Management**

Regular collaboration and liaison take place between UVPERSU and the said divisions. In this way, UVPERSU ensures that members' interests are continuously catered for in accordance with the UFS vision and goals. UVPERSU is also part of the Employment Relations Forum.

## **7. Liaison with the UFS management by conducting regular meetings**

The UVPERSU Management Committee meets quarterly with the management of the University and any member of UVPERSU may submit matters for discussion to the chief executive officer.

## **8. Protection of Personal Information Act**

UVPERSU has put measures in place to comply and Ms Lombard is working with a Johannesburg lawyer to make sure that UVPERSU will comply with the POPI Act. Compliance policies must be in place and Ms Lombard was registered with the Information Regulator as UVPERSU's compliance officer.

## **9. Settling of disputes**

UVPERSU constantly strives towards settling disputes peacefully and to the advantage of all parties involved (win-win situation). UVPERSU succeeds in settling most of all problems, disciplinary cases, and grievances to the advantage of our members. Several corrective counselling issues are handled from time to time and in the past year several grievances and disciplinary hearings were handled successfully.

The office deals with enquiries from members about a large variety of matters daily. Approximately 40 to 60 calls (WhatsApp, Skype, and telephone calls) and hundreds of e-mails are handled per month. UVPERSU is committed to confidentiality in dealing with members' problems and complaints. Labour-related enquiries are also handled by Ms Lombard and in the case of disciplinary issues, members' interests are protected in a rational manner. In cases where UVPERSU cannot provide the necessary expertise, external consultants are consulted.

## **10. Communication**

Good and effective communication and engagement with members with regards to the UFS goals and other important UFS matters, have been identified as priorities by the UVPERSU MC. The UVPERSU office communicates with members by means of the UVPERSU website, Facebook and Quick Mail. UVPERSU's communication is invaluable and positive feedback is constantly received.

## **11. Community Service – contributions on campus**

UVPERSU, in collaboration with the UFS Wellness Division, from time to time assist staff members in need. Every year refreshments are donated to Protection Services staff members who work during the festive season in December. This year, in winter, biscuits will be supplied to Protection Services UVPERSU members, to enjoy with their tea or coffee.

## **12. Study Bursaries**

In 2001, the Executive Management of the UFS approved that UVPERSU awards study bursaries. The reaction to invitations to apply for these book bursaries is overwhelming. A bursary committee considers every application and makes the awards. Several bursaries were awarded over the years.

## **13. Liaison with other unions**

A good relationship is maintained in the workplace and a formal co-operation agreement regarding salary negotiations and workplace benefits was concluded with NEHAWU.

## **14. Membership numbers**

The number of members is growing steadily. UVPERSU is proud of the diverse composition of its members. UVPERSU is still, with a considerable margin, the majority union at the UFS. As majority union, UVPERSU also enjoys various privileges under labour legislation. Membership numbers are influenced by staff members going on pension and leaving the service of the UFS.

Be sure to play your part to assist Ms Crous in recruiting new members!

## **15. Finances**

Under the capable supervision of the treasurer, Ms Janine Pretorius, we can report that UVPERSU is financially sound. Ms Pretorius is assisted by a financial sub-committee consisting of Dr Henk Potgieter, Ms Janine Pretorius, Dr Grey Magaiza, Ms Riana Johnson, Mr Tello Theletsane and Ms Anita Lombard. This committee meets regularly to discuss UVPERSU's finances and budgets.

## **16. Attendance of online courses and webinars**

Courses are attended regularly to stay abreast with matters pertaining to the workplace, as well as to improve skills and Ms Lombard also regularly attends courses and webinars in Labour Law.

In 2020, Ms Lombard attended an international online conference of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), hosted by a world-class Indian University. She is also a member of the ACU HR Community.

As part of the 2021 Social Justice Week, the Gender, Sexual Equity and Anti-Discrimination Office (GEADO) of the Unit for Institutional Change and Social Justice hosted a national virtual discussion with Unions on two critical issues in relation to the Charter for Care and Ethical Conduct. UVPERSU was represented by its CEO, Ms Anita Lombard, who presented a slide show on UVPERSU's role in social justice.

## **17. An expression of thanks**

You, the members, are UVPERSU and we thank you for your support, cooperation, and loyalty. The Union and MC can only be as strong as your support and nothing more. We have no other choice than to be involved and it is everyone's social duty to participate and make contributions. We also thank you for the regular letters of support and gratitude - it makes our task worthwhile. You should guard the privilege to be involved with UVPERSU, with all you have, to ensure that you do not ever have to fulfil your duty without empowerment and remember:

***"We achieve together".***

## **18. Conclusion**

It is clear from the above points that UVPERSU's sufficient and effective engagement with all parties on the three UFS campuses, contributes to UVPERSU's strive and success to reach our goals.

**DR HENK POTGIETER  
CHAIRPERSON**



***We listen to truly hear, we care through action and so we add value to the working environment. We achieve together!***

***Re mamedisisa hore re utlwe kannete, re tsotella ka diketso, mme ka mokgwa o jwalo re eketsa bohlokwa tikolohong ya tshebetso. Re fihlella mmoho!***

Talk to us on **Skype** or **MS Teams** anytime or send an email to [lombarda@ufs.ac.za](mailto:lombarda@ufs.ac.za)

Please "like" our page on Facebook or visit our website, [www.ufs.ac.za/uvpersu](http://www.ufs.ac.za/uvpersu)

