



### UCT Soft-funded Academic and Research Staff (SFARS) Steering Committee

#### MISSION STATEMENT AND DEFINING CRITERIA

October 2009

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has a large number of Soft-funded Academic and Research Staff (SFARS) who either raise their own salaries or who are part of a team/group/unit that collectively raises the funds to pay their salaries. SFARS staff members face challenges that are unique due to the nature of their position as well as the nature of their non-recurrent funding, which does not form part of the General Operations Budget (GOB) of the University. Additionally these needs are not being addressed by any collective body. In April 2009 a SFARS steering committee was established with representatives from various faculties and units with varying numbers of SFARS staff. This paper presents the current criteria by which SFARS staff are defined, as well as the mission statement of the SFARS steering committee.

#### **SFARS Defining Criteria:**

In order to understand *who* SFARS are at UCT, the following criteria are used.

SFARS are paid by soft funding, that is by non-GOB and non-recurrent funds, either raised directly for their own salaries or through a pooled fund with other researchers and academics (who are SFARS or GOB staff). A proportion of SFARS bear the burden of raising funds for their salaries and securing salary income for other SFARS, as well as financially contributing to GOB staff (directly and through subsidy income). Their job descriptions are currently defined within the following categories:

- 1) Staff on academic conditions of service, fulfilling the requirements of the Rate-for-Job system of Academic staff (i.e., Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor, Professor), and engaged in all of the four aspects of teaching/supervising, research, administration and management and social responsiveness activities.
- 2) Staff on research conditions of service, fulfilling the requirements of the Rate-for-Job system of Research Officers (i.e., Research Officer, Senior Research Officer, Principal Research Officer, Chief Research Officer), and engaged in teaching/supervising, research, leadership roles at UCT and involved in social responsiveness activities.

- 3) Staff on PASS conditions of service, falling under PASS pay classes, and engaged in active research, as well as teaching/supervising, and leadership roles at UCT and involved in social responsiveness activities.
- 4) T2 contract staff who fall under either point 1 or 2 conditions of service, but whose performance is not formally assessed and who do not have access to some of the benefits available to category 1 or 2 staff.

**SFARS Steering Committee Mission Statement:**

*Our mission is to promote the wellbeing of SFARS staff at UCT through ensuring job equity, job security and formal integration into University structures.*

The Steering Committee of SFARS at UCT seeks to represent, address and collectively motivate for the unique needs of UCT SFARS in order to promote equity of employment conditions, equity of career paths, security of positions and the integration into university structures at UCT. The Steering Committee works in collaboration with UCT's Academics Union (AU) on over-lapping issues for SFARS staff. The Steering Committee also addresses SFARS issues that fall outside of the AU which are of concern to SFARS (e.g., PASS academic/research staff).

**Activities of the SFARS Steering Committee:**

The Steering Committee enacts its mission statement through the following activities:

- 1) Monthly meetings with SFARS members (members represent various faculties, units, departments and centres);
- 2) Communicating with SFARS who do not regularly attend meetings through the Vula site for SFARS on the AU website;
- 3) Engages with the AU through SFARS representation on the AU Executive Committee;
- 4) Engages with other university structures relevant to SFARS;
- 5) Development and presentation of position papers (e.g., career pathing, compensation for teaching/supervising, funding mechanisms) and
- 6) Profiling SFARS at UCT.

**Summary of Current Key Issues for SFARS (details in separate position papers):**

- Security of funds for salaries
- Contribution of SFARS to operational aspects of departments such as teaching and supervision without re-imburement
- Equity of internal UCT funding distribution, including aspects such as funds raised by SFARS through publication subsidies and fee income/subsidies, and the return to SFARS of at least part of these subsidies

- improvement of career promotion planning, performance management and mentoring
- Commitment from the University to improve job security
- Limited recognition of contribution to UCT
- Job equity status low compared to GOB funded academic staff
- PASS and T2 SFARS need to be reclassified under the academic/research Rate For Job system

**Key recommendations:**

- **The SFARS steering committee calls on UCT to recognize SFARS as an independent staff group (or category)** which is defined by the nature of their funding source and to reflect this in the Human Resources staff database and on applications for new staff members.
- It is the view of the SFARS Committee that **all SFARS falling into categories 3 and 4 above should be transferred to categories 1 or 2 with immediate effect.**