



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Academics Union held Monday 4 September 2023, 12h30 to 13h55 in the New Lecture Theatre, University Avenue south.

Present: Rene Albertus, Ala Alhourani, Waheeda Amien, Sherry Bremner, Stefan Britz, Sindiswa Busuku, Marianne Camerer, Tendani Chimboza, Sheila Clow, Melissa Densmore, Elmarie Edwardes, David Erwin, Nico Fischer, Freedom Gumede, Stuart Hendry, Peter Hodgkinson, Chun-Sung Huang, Catherine Hutchings, Niyi Isafiade, Philip Janney, Michelle Kahn, Claudia Kalil, Irvin Kinnes, Andrew Lilley, Cecil Madell, Patrick Marais, Mandy Mason, Mark Massyn, Frank Matose, Kelley Moulton, Shaheen Mowla, Camalita Naicker, Nicoli Natrass, Reema Nunlall-Hiralul, Saul Nurick, Nomfundo Ramalekana, Fiona Ross, Rebekka Sandmeier, Willem Schonken, Fatima Seedat, Jeremy Seekings, Riashna Sithaldeen, Hussein Suleman, Elona Tosca, Thomas van Heerden, Louie van Schalkwyk, Robyn Verrinder and Johanna von Holdt

Apologies: Feroza Amien, Markus Arnold, Susan Bourne, Helen Buchanan, Collet Dandara, Carryn de Moor, Jacques de Wet, Kathryn Ewing, Roshan Galvaan, Louise Gammage, Tim Gebbie, Sean Gossel, Michal Harty, Leon Holtzhausen, Annette Hübschle, Emma Kalk, Maria Keet, Vicki Lambert, Theresa Lorenzo, Liani Maasdorp, Mandisa Mbali, Judith McKenzie, Alison Meadows, Natasha Muna, Lyndal Pottier, Samson Chimphango, Rose-Ann Reynolds, Moagabo Ragoasha, Thomas Scriba, Corrine Shaw, Bernhard Weiss, Jennifer Whittal and Harald Winkler

In Attendance

Shirifa Hellaby (Academics Union Organizer)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Andrew Lilley, President of the Academics Union, extended a warm welcome to those members attending the meeting. He reported that Kelley Moulton, an Academics Union Executive member, had made an interesting point regarding the absence of many members at the meeting. He stressed the importance of face-to-face interactions for the annual general meetings (AGM) but suggested that hybrid meetings could be considered in the future.

Andrew requested members' thoughts around hybrid meetings.

In response to the enquiry by Andrew, a member indicated that the Union should push for face-to-face meetings.

Andrew proposed that the Academics Union (AU) would encourage more members to attend face-to-face meetings.

He informed those present that the meeting had reached a quorum and reminded them that a registry was available outside the venue for signing, as it was a requirement by the Department of Employment and Labour. He also encouraged attendees to stay after the meeting for refreshments and discussions.

2. Confirmation of the 2022 AGM Minutes

The minutes of the 2022 AGM were proposed for acceptance by Thomas van Heerden and seconded by Waheeda Amien. The minutes were duly accepted by the meeting without further comment or correction.

3. AU President's Report

Andrew informed members that prior to this meeting, many Union meetings had been held online. He explained that in October 2022, nobody could have foreseen the extraordinary events that occurred earlier this year. At that time, the Union was in uncharted territory and deeply concerned about the University. Andrew mentioned that his assumption of the position of AU President after his sabbatical was a baptism of fire and one of the most challenging periods in his career at the University of Cape Town (UCT). He added that the Union had even taken legal action and nearly went on strike, an unprecedented event in his time at the University. Andrew pointed out that despite this crisis, it had brought people closer together, increased membership, and demonstrated the power of unity within the Union.

Andrew added that after he, Waheeda Amien (Co Vice-President of the Academics Union) and other members of the AU Executive had engaged with other Universities who requested advice regarding academic associations, he was thankful for the fact that UCT has such an established AU, and grateful for the power it has acquired in forging strong relationships in the academic collective and University management. He noted the experiences of other Universities where they do not have associations or academic union groupings and consequently have no avenue to contest or to improve their lives as academics.

Andrew informed the meeting that while there are still significant challenges, he considers that the University is in a better position that it was at the last AGM, where uncertainty was front and centre on the agenda.

a.) An update

Andrew informed the meeting that post salary negotiations, the AU Executive signed a substantive agreement with Management for 2023, which resulted in the 6% salary increase and this is thanks to Kelley Moulton and the bargaining team.

The finalization of the academic pay policy has been made available on the AU website for viewing. He added that also included in this agreement is a commitment to non-salary agreements and the formation of various task teams, on which some members serve with set outcomes about issues like academic conditions of service, student financial aid and loadshedding.

Andrew explained that some of this work is still at play while others have met their outcomes and a report on all these task teams will be required at the end of 2023. He clarified that while the AU does not anticipate an immediate solution around loadshedding, for instance, Management is at least present to be engaged and the AU is trying as a collective to solve these kinds of problems and to be a part of that solution.

b.) Expectations by members of the Union

Andrew informed the meeting that the AU Executive is aware that the academic community is not always in agreement with everything the Union does. He explained that the AU Executive endeavours to do the best they can. He added that the AU Executive receives many emails from its members who expect the Union to take a position on something as a collective. However, the AU Executive believes strongly that

it should not take a position on everything, as it appreciates that while staff share common goals, they may have different perspectives on life.

Within the AU Executive they attempt to keep that executive as representative as a wide group within the University community as possible so that healthy engagement can take place on all issues and decisions can be made without having to consult membership on everything.

Andrew explained that the AU Executive relies on its members for their continued input and will reply to all emails where possible. He added that in some instances where the issues are critical, the AU Executive will consult its members through special meetings or POLLS.

Andrew encourages members to be actively engaged in taking votes or attending meetings. He added that the AU Executive remains focused on the Union mandate, which is to protect the interests of academic staff in respect to academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

c.) Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education presentation

Andrew reported that recently the institution was invited by the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee to provide a perspective and recommendations on governance issues at UCT.

This invitation and request were given to the University on various fronts—from UCT Management, the Institutional Forum, and Unions as a collective. Andrew explained that he is raising this because for some reason, the AU did not appear as a union representative on the agenda sent by parliament the day before the meeting and consequently was prevented from attending. He noted that while he does not think that the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee has the power to do anything, the inference of interference is there in that government wants to know what happened at UCT during the early part of this year.

He explained that the AU was the first to submit its recommendations to the Union grouping and he, as AU President, was vigorously involved in the collective discussions on how this would be presented. The AU was very clear that a consensus point of view was not possible as a Union grouping and thus the single Power Point presentation, which was required, was tabled as a combination of views.

Andrew explained that as there appeared to be no central coordinator for this presentation, the expectation was for all the committee members to represent their Unions at parliament. It was at the final hour that the Registrar was involved, and only after the agenda and order of events was circulated that he discovered the AU was not included.

Andrew enquired from the Registrar why this occurred, and this was noted by the last-mentioned but as of yet, a reason for the AU exclusion to parliament has not been forthcoming.

d.) Participation in University structures

Andrew informed the meeting that the AU is represented on key University structures and sometimes represented in their role as the Union, while other AU members are represented in their personal capacity.

The AU is represented on the following University committees: the Institutional Forum (IF), the Transformation Committee, the Academic Freedom Committee, the Nominations Committee, the Staff Development Committee, etc.

Andrew thanked those members—some who are present in this meeting who represent the Union on those committees, and they do this for no additional remuneration at the expense of their time, which the Union recognizes is constrained. The AU values the commitment of those members for attending and reporting back on the work of those committees. He informed the meeting that there are a few vacancies

on committees and when they come up the AU Executive will make contact and draw from its membership to represent the Union.

The reports from the committees are available on the AU Vula site for members' information.

e.) Financial sustainability

Andrew explained that the Pay Policy outlines how academic salaries are to be determined, considering the market benchmarks, inflation, sustainability, and additional payments and provides a structured negotiation process with room for flexibility.

He added that the AU Executive also made available a document entitled the 2024 Planning and Budgeting Context and Guiding Principles one produced by the University Management.

Andrew indicated that we all have to acknowledge that we are in a financially stressed time at present and there are various reasons for this. He added that the University is at the realization that funding from government is unreliable. There are several fallouts connecting to this and also loadshedding that have contributed to UCT's current financial woes.

He explained that the above document is an important one and not geared to reporting on numbers but discusses the financial challenges facing the University and focusses on factors around the declining state subsidy. This document also emphasises the importance of protecting the academic mission while addressing financial issues and the guiding principles for the 2024 budget including inflation rates, fee income assumptions, cost control measures and highlights the need for cautious budget allocations to safeguard the teaching, learning and research activities.

f.) Membership

Andrew informed the meeting that from a membership point of view the number of people there are in the Union is important because it provides the AU with the platform for bargaining. If the numbers fall below a certain threshold the Union loses that bargaining power. He explained that it is important to keep membership up and for the current numbers, there is a fairly good distribution across the various ranks where Professors are sitting at above 54%; Associate Professors and senior lecturers at 62%, however, the Union continues to face lower membership among the lecturer rank.

Andrew appeals to members to encourage their colleagues especially the lecturer group to join the Union. He explained that the Union values those who come into the University and for them to become a part of the AU going forward.

g.) Membership fees

Andrew informed the meeting that membership will remain the same at 0.1% of members' Cost of Employment (CoE).

4. Election of the new AU Executive Committee

Andrew informed the meeting that the following members will be stepping down from the AU Executive, namely Kelley Moulton, Sahal Yacoob and Maureen Tanner. He indicated that the AU is always looking for new members to serve on the AU Executive and enquired if any of those present who wish to serve, they should contact Shirifa.

Name	Position	Faculty	Years/ months serving on AU	Standing for Re-election
Andrew Lilley	President	Humanities	8	Yes
Waheeda Amien	Co Vice-President	Law	2 years	Yes
Tim Gebbie	Co Vice-President	Science	5	Yes
Nico Fischer	Treasurer	EBE	8	Yes
Kelley Moulton	Elected	Law	9	No
Shaheen Mowla	Elected	Health Sciences	5	Yes
Maureen Tanner	Elected	Commerce	5	No
Sahal Yacoob	Elected	Science	4	No
Elona Toska	Elected	Humanities	1 year and 3 months	Yes
Camalita Naicker	Elected	Humanities	11 months	Yes
Rene Albertus	Elected	GSB		Yes

The meeting unanimously accepted those nominated as office-bearers and those standing for re-election.

Andrew expressed his thanks to Kelley Moulton for the inordinate amount of work she has done for the Union. The meeting acknowledged Kelley's contribution with applause.

Andrew explained that Kelley has been an inspiration and an incredible leader during tough times. He added that Kelley would still be available for consultation and admitted that seeing her shift from this, is scary for him.

5. Treasurer's Report

a. Draft 2022 audited financial statement.

A copy of the draft 2022 audited financial statement produced by Nolands (Mowbray branch) was made available to members via email. Nico Fischer (Treasurer of the Academics Union) provided an overview.

Income and expenditure Summary for 2022:

- The expenditure remained largely stable.
- Membership income increased by 7.5%
- The Union had a surplus of R732 884,00 at the end of 2022.
- The Union currently has R4 183 90,00 in its investment account and R2 954 370 in its operating account.
- The Union is in the process of reallocating funds from the one operating account to the investment one to create additional revenue.
- As Andrew already indicated, the membership fees will remain as it is.
- Although the Union funds are stable, it still requires membership fees because it is uncertain how long it would receive a subsidy from the University.
- In 2021 membership fees were R623 166 and R669 843 in 2022.
- The University subsidy was R434 528 in 2021 and R458 124 in 2022.
- If the University subsidy falls away, the Union will be hampered in what it does, including its administrative services, which is done by Shirifa. The surplus and investment accounts will support the Union in this event.
- Due to the stress of the Covid pandemic and the Executive challenges, the Union took measures to be more conservative in its spending to ensure it can continue operating.
- The main expenses were salaries and the audit fees.
- Consulting and professional fees were carried over from the 2022 budget cycle to 2023 budgeting cycle and expenses here was R330 000.

Questions or comments raised by members on the audit report are:

- (I.) To explain more about the investment income.
- (II.) Queried whether the total investment income is R4m, and the investment interest is only R180 000, which seems very low.
- (III.) Enquired why the Union is receiving such a low interest rate.
- (IV.) Enquired whether UCT has any say with any Union Executive decisions to expend funds and why does UCT control the Union funds.

Nico provided the following responses to the above questions:

- 1) The Union has an investment account which generates interest.
- 2) Agreed that the investment interest is very low.
- 3) All the Union funds are within the University's accounts. The Union does not have a separate bank account and operates fully within the University's funding mechanism. This provides the Union with security and structure, so it does not have to deal directly with the banking sector.

In response to the concern raised by the member about the low investment interest, Elona Toska (Academics Union Executive member) proposed that the Union finds a better arrangement because the University has two investment portfolios.

In response to the question whether UCT controls the Union funds, Kelley Moulton explained it is mainly the infrastructure and in the same way individual academics obtains funds, this cannot be placed in their personal bank account but has to come under the financial environment of the University and this works the same with membership fees. Kelley added that the University has no oversight or sign off on the Union's expenses.

Hussein Suleman proposed to accept the auditor's report, and this was seconded by David Erwin.

Future Budget outlook

Nico reported the following:

- Membership numbers and fees have remained stable in 2023.
- The Union received the subsidy from the University.
- The cost for salaries remains similar, as well as that of the auditor's fees.
- In order to upgrade its systems and office equipment, a new laptop was required.
- With more face-to-face meetings, food & entertainment costs will increase.
- The costs of legal and professional fees are high, but this is a roll-over from 2022.

In response to the high legal costs, a member enquired why the Union does not recruit more lawyers, Kelley provided the following explanations:

- i. The AU Executive discussed this.
- ii. They used some great legal minds—some of whom are present in this meeting.
- iii. Members in the Law Faculty were very involved and if they had not been, the costs would have been exorbitant, and they did this by doing first drafts which they sent to the lawyers.
- iv. Ultimately it is valuable having an external legal opinion and, in her view, as the AU President who oversaw that expenditure, they did not rush into it, and this is what the membership fees are for.
- v. It is for this reason they use legal advice when there is a healthy surplus because it is those moments when the Union need the money unencumbered to be able to activate this and it does add up quickly.
- vi. They were fortunate to be introduced to one of the top legal minds in that field who did a conservative estimate for the Union costs.
- vii. In the end, the Union used its connections and only paid 50% of what it could have spent otherwise, to make this a good expenditure.
- viii. Acknowledged that the costs were high, but this included the various iterations which included salary negotiations and advice on grievances where some of the cases in the last year were complicated.

Nico explained that this year was a complicated year from the Union perspective, and he would hesitate to ask a colleague to be the one who writes a strongly worded letter to the executive. This would put this person in an awkward position, and it is preferable for the Union to obtain letters from professional lawyers without association to UCT.

6. Salary Negotiations

Kelley Moulton (Chair of the Academics Union Bargaining Committee) gave the following feedback:

- a) The AU has begun its salary negotiations season and she hopes it would be a short one.
- b) UCT Management is committed to doing things in a different way than they have previously.
- c) Management set an agenda which began on 1st August, and they met their original deadline of sending the documentation that was required.
- d) The documentation compared UCT academics at the 75th percentile and also looked at UCT's market comparators.
- e) These two are very important benchmarks that inform what the AU would negotiate for.
- f) Two ranks are at the 75th percentile and two ranks are below.
- g) This means if the AU asks for a CPI +1 % salary increase, they would be able to move the two groups that are below the 75th percentile onto the last-mentioned.
- h) This tracks with CPI.
- i) The AU has not received an official offer from the University and in part this could be because they have not finished settling the 2023 negotiations with the other Unions.

- j) The University gave all staff the 6% salary increase they negotiated with the AU and are continuing to settle issues both in the Coalition and the Employees Union space, which has been long, protracted and delayed by CCMA cases.
- k) The fact that the negotiations are unsettled with the other Unions would be problematic for the University's ability to budget properly.
- l) Is aware that the University is committed for the first time this year in a long while to negotiate and agree to salaries before they put the budget to Council to vote. This is a positive move.
- m) They attended a finance presentation, which is in part where the document the AU circulated to members comes from and is the same one presented at the Deaneries and organized labour.
- n) What this document and the finance presentation states is that the University is in big financial trouble, which is due to the big hole in NSFAS funding, especially in the residences.
- o) At present, there are 8000 students in residence of which 5000 students are entirely funded by NSFAS and as of 2024, the University will only receive R45 000 per student against a residence cost of R90 000 per student.
- p) This means that for 5000 beds, the University will receive 50% of what it requires for residences. This is a huge hole—hundreds of millions of rands shortfall.
- q) The University is actively engaging in strategizing how to resolve this problem.
- r) They attended a few presentations where finance looked at how they could reduce staff costs in the residences if they removed security, for instance and all other different iterations.
- s) From what she has seen, all of these are bad choices—and this will shape the way the University will start 2024 where student protests in her view are guaranteed if things remain as they are.
- t) Part of the problem is that the R45 000 is a blanket amount so if a student is situated in a much cheaper town, where this amount covers the residence fees, it is fine, but not at UCT.
- u) The University has petitioned NSFAS to obtain an exemption from the R45 000 cap...they also petitioned the past year but was not successful.
- v) She is sceptical that the University would be successful going forward.
- w) Considers the NSFAS issue a struggle the University Management should have and not the AU.
- x) Views this issue is an important structuring feature.
- y) There are other important matters under enrolment—this does not mean that there were fewer students in classes, but that the students are taking less of a course load.
- z) The reason for the above (point y) is that there are many hangovers from 2021 where students took reduced loads.
- aa) Due to the above, the fee income for the University is down from where it should be.
- bb) The third structuring feature is that the University is also collecting far less of the fee accounts that are being sent out. Considers this report as astounding because since the University billed for fees on the first day of the year, it is down from what was collected in 2022.
- cc) Explained that the University is recouping less with the jumps in student debt and debts being handed over and the collections coming from that space.
- dd) Due to the above issues, the University is in a cash-poor position.
- ee) She is aware that Finance is working on the above concerns and the Union is waiting on feedback on what is transpiring in this space.
- ff) One of the issues Finance points out in their presentation is that the staffing line item is one of the largest increases over time.
- gg) The Union requested Finance to delineate the staffing numbers into Professional and Support Staff (PASS), academic and senior management.
- hh) The above information (point gg) the Union received in the last week.
- ii) The AU Bargaining Committee intends to put this information into a report and circulate to members.
- jj) The AU Bargaining Committee posed a number of questions to Management which includes how much money is under the Interim Vice-Chancellor's strategic control because as was discussed before, these are large sums.
- kk) The AU Bargaining Committee are receiving the above information intermittently.
- ll) The AU Bargaining Committee will meet within the next week and is expecting to be called to a meeting where Management will present their offer.

- mm) The AU salary demand, which requires the input by members is for Western Cape CPI +1% as a starting point. Realistically, where the settlement could be is for CPI. And not being able to change that differential but recognizing that it is only 1% off in the benchmark in some of the categories.
- nn) The Union receives an envelope of money, and they determine how to distribute this, and they could see how to get some of the ranks slightly closer. But the AU Bargaining Committee will see how this plays out if and when it happens.
- oo) Is cautiously optimistic that the Union and Management will not be miles apart.
- pp) Considers there was a huge learning from Management with the AU almost going on strike last year and hopes this impetus will take things forward but acknowledges that the external factors are important.
- qq) Management has requested non-salary demands but the strategy of the AU Bargaining Committee has been to use these as a way to give and take in both spaces.
- rr) The AU Bargaining Committee has a few strategic issues they wish to go forward on rather than the plethora of issues like parking and Discovery health—ones that are never resolved.
- ss) The Union has discussed the following non-salary demands:
 - The full implementation of the SFARS policy—as one outstanding issue.
 - Issues around the leave policy that also need to be resolved, particularly around retrenchments and the inconsistencies across policies.
 - The main non-salary demand is to request a review of the administrative inefficiencies. An example of an administrative inefficiency is where staff have to complete their details on each form.
- tt) The last-mentioned demand could make a difference in the lives of academics and a request for the University to start building a system that facilitates matters for staff.
- uu) Wants to recognize the new recruits to the AU Bargaining committee, namely Sean Gossel from the GSB, Vimal Ranchhod from the School of Economics and Faadhil Adams from Commercial Law.
- vv) Expressed her pleasure in getting new people to serve on this committee and getting involved.

Questions and discussions

- i.) A comment and enquiry from a member:

Thanked Kelley for the report and all that this represents. Indicated that this is a huge step forward managing to get financial disclosure which has been problematic over the last few years. Stated that she fully supports the issue around the insufficiencies of the admin systems. Reported a concern about the amount of time that is wasted, and postgraduate students are still not registered by April, May or June and they are still working on this. If this issue is dealt with, it would be such a win in terms of working satisfaction.

Indicated that as far as the bargaining position is concerned, wished to verify if it is Western Cape CPI +1 %. Stated that Kelley is asking members for a mandate under a belief that academics will not get that 1%.

Proposed if it would be appropriate for the AU to start at +1% or +1 ½ % and Management negotiates the Union down to + ½ % which is better than they are negotiating down from 1 to nothing. Enquired what the value is of setting a mandate there if the Union feels it will not get it anyway. Understands that members should provide Kelley with a range but considers that it would be more strategic to have a little bit more flexibility to go a bit higher.

Response from Kelley:

Views this point as a good one. Indicated that there are too few members in the meeting to obtain a mandate so this should be put on a POLL. Kelley proposes that the AU Bargaining Committee provides several figures, namely +2, + 1, ½ and +1 %, etc and see what members vote on. Explained that she has a sense that Management wants to settle salary negotiations as quickly as possible and as she is exhausted fighting with them, her inclination is to be as reasonable as possible but also with some wiggle room. She emphasized

that the University is in deep financial trouble where the numbers she has seen are concerning. Explained that a +1% for academic salaries varies between R200 and R500 a month after tax.

Kelley stressed not that this amount does not count, but when members consider what goes into that “fight” for the R200 for instance, this might be the year for the Union to step back from being too aggressive in disputing to show the AU is also committed to the sustainability of the institution long term. She thinks this should come with important considerations from Management around strategic spend. Reported that Management is already being much more transparent than they were in previous years, which is a consequence of the AU pushing so hard this last year. Ultimately these are strategic decisions the Union must make as a collective. Once the AU Bargaining Committee has a better sense of what the number is from Management, they would bring this to members.

ii.) A comment from a member:

Thanked Kelley for all the hard work she has undertaken. Indicated that he wished to mention two things. The first is to request the actual number what Western Cape CPI is and secondly, the point she made earlier about the +1 % being just an extra R200. Indicated that although only R200, this +1% percent is what goes into members’ retirement fund, compounded to whatever the duration is left of the member’s service going to age 65. He added that it might be a tiny number but compounded going forward has a major impact. Linking this to a kind of a philosophical point where the University wants to be the employer of choice especially in South Africa and part of being an employer of choice is to ensure when their academic staff retire, assuming they completed it properly, that they enjoy the same quality of life they had while they were working. Requests that this should also be taken into consideration and understands the Union has to be reasonable when negotiating in the current financial climate.

Response from Kelley: She concurs and acknowledges the point the member made.

iii.) A comment from a member:

In response to the administrative inefficiencies, reported that the first for him would be People Soft. He explained that in his department there was a disturbing rumour around People Soft. He explained that when the University decided on this system, they were given two choices, the full proper People Soft which they declined for financial reasons and the one they ended up buying is the People Soft light, which is the data-based back end. Explained what they see looks like the data-based back end for which none of their administrators are or should even be qualified to interact with. Requests that the AU enquires from Management what happened here.

Response from Kelley:

Kelley indicated that the Union would be happy to enquire about People Soft. She reported that Harambee is a project which is running alongside People Soft and is an innovation in the office of the Registrar. She explained that from her understanding, Harambee was set up to deal with the issues around People Soft. Explained that she foresees a task team being established that has AU members who are knowledgeable around this on it, to push issues from the Union side.

The member who raised the issue on People Soft remarked that from a design perspective, Harambee has already been botched and it will not accomplish what they set out to do.

iv.) A concern raised by a member:

Indicated that she concurs with the previous member and wants to add information. She explained that she was employed as a lecturer and suddenly she had to do registration.

The member highlighted some of the following problems with the system:

- The registration system in the process involves many people and requires a lot of back and forth.
- The people involved in it, do not know what they are supposed to do.
- At the beginning of the year, they are all told when a student sends a request, if you are a lecturer, it must be reviewed. The person then has to click review, sign it, and write their name. It then moves to the next cart.
- Whoever it was assigned to, need to decide whether they believe what the lecturer said or not.
- If they believe it, they move on whether the lecturer reviewed what course the student applied for or not.
- This is where the problem is, and one cannot believe in the system.
- It is supposed to be based on the handbook, but there is no communication between the handbook, the system and the people who are working on it.
- The custodians of the system change all the time.
- There is no support at course level or at faculty level, even at support level.
- The system crashes all the time and makes the life of the lecturer and student difficult.
- She has had students added on to a course in the third week of lectures and this requires her to produce new material and do new tests.
- Request that this system is either scrapped or they relieve the academics from the task of registration and hand it over to administrators because the work is time-consuming and also affects her availability to students.

Kelley acknowledges that the above points are well made.

v.) A concern raised by a member:

He indicated that he wished to belabour the point about governance given the handling of NSFAS related issues. In his view, the source of the University's financial difficulties and constraints is to be attributed to the state itself.

In response to the above statement, Kelley informed the member that the problems are caused by the state and also by the policies of the University in the way it cross subsidises.

In reply to Kelley's statement, the member asserted that internal policies can be dealt with but considers that the source of the major problems are caused by the state, and here they are demanding the Union's availability through the parliamentary sitting. He proposed that the Union uses the opportunity to articulate the fact that it is the state that is throwing Universities under the bus in the first place. And when this meeting with parliament occurs, request that this issue is articulated strongly by the AU otherwise the Universities will be in financial trouble permanently.

A response from Andrew:

Andrew explained that this was clearly articulated in both the presentations from the Institutional Forum and the Unions. He indicated that whether this gets heard and a response from government is another question. Andrew assured the member that this was in the forefront around issues of governance that the University is struggling with as a result of the changing landscape with government funding, and this has huge implications on its ability to govern.

vi.) A comment by a member:

The member indicated that she wished to raise the issue around the administration and People Soft. She stated that it adds so much additional labour to academics—whether it is stress, labour, and fatigue. She explained that when trying to work on new projects, people are limited to what they can bring into the University to improve efficiencies because they have to work on this. The member is aware that the next phase of Harambee is meant to take off and enquired whether the Union had some real reporting of what

Harambee achieved so far. She indicated that as academics have to take on a large proportion of additional labour, they have a right to know.

A response from Kelley:

Kelley reported that Harambee had an event which she attended. She added that academics were invited to this event but unfortunately very few were present. Indicated that this is a problem too. This event was both to map out what Harambee had achieved and to look at the opportunities which have not been explored yet and what the main pain points were within the system.

Kelley considers that they are taking this seriously and propose that an update on Harambee is added on the agenda of the next consultative forum for academic staff matters (CFASM). Included in this update request would be what it achieved and what its next roll out phase would be.

vii.) A concern raised by a member:

The member raised the issue about the people who do the administration and indicated that many are not qualified for what they are supposed to do. She requests that the University appoint people who have some form of qualification and not anyone who requires a job, as this would make a difference in the general administration of the University. She reported that in the Faculty she is in, when the administrators do not get through their work sometimes, they appoint an additional person. In her view, the more you appoint, the less work the others do.

A response from Kelley:

Kelley reported that there will be a review of positions but is not sure whether this focusses on academic staff as well. She explained that there is a general drive especially within Properties & Services (P&S) towards increased efficiency where they will use people better instead of having additional positions. She explained that members would have heard from their Faculties that there is no money for new positions.

Kelley informed the meeting that the Union has to be careful about telling Management how they need to manage the University because at the end of the day, it is the job of the academic to manage its classroom and its own work environment and for Management to manage the administrators.

Kelley informed the meeting that she had previously reported that Management is proposing putting all Unions in one single bargaining unit, but the AU declined it, and the University Management is now turning their attention to having all the PASS staff Unions into one single bargaining unit. Kelley reported that she had heard that the University wants the AU to come into some of those negotiations around issues of salary increases, salary percentages, Discovery Health, and parking - concerns that are cross-cutting.

The AU has maintained that its conditions of service are different than that of PASS Unions and that there is not sufficient commonality other than limited issues for instance opening a discussion on staff tuition for everyone, for which the AU could be invited and would attend.

viii.) A question by a member:

The member enquired that given the financial situation of the University that within the next five years they might reduce the number of academic staff.

A response from Kelley:

Kelley views this as a good question and indicated that she does not know the answer to that. She explained that the staffing lining item in the projected budgets she has seen remains stable rather than growing. She informed the meeting that management is cutting somewhere. Reiterated that there is the efficiency project in P&S and once the AU Bargaining committee has a look at the numbers of people in each of the groups

this will help them to understand things. Explained that the response by the P&S people is that their salaries are not the heavy line items. For every one academic, there is a big plus on the budget as opposed to those in the lower pay classes. She added that it was made strategically clear for this year that there would be no more new posts.

In response to the explanation by Kelley, the member suggested that in light of the above for the AU to rather be sensible and not ask for the 1 ½ % but request a more modest demand and keep everyone than making a larger demand and then at some stage being forced to shed positions.

A response from Kelley:

She informed the meeting that this is one of the things the AU has to discuss but this largely depends on the numbers from Management. Kelley proposed that this might be a discussion that can be postponed if the Union is happy with the numbers. She explained that compared to the graphs from previous years, it has only been in the last year that the University has gone into deficit because they were able to bank more money than they had budgeted for. She indicated that the University would not have survived Covid-19 if it did not have that surplus in the bank and been able to withstand that shock. Kelley explained that the University is in a massive hole for at least the next three years unless they pinch somewhere. One of the big priorities from the perspective of the University is maintenance. She reported that there is a R520m backlog in maintenance. These are not new things but entities to repair to bring things up to standard.

Kelley indicated that there are areas where money legitimately has to be spent and when staff received their salary increases this year, P&S was the one area where maintenance and new projects received no money. Members have to consider those strategic choices and a lot of areas should be balanced. Kelley indicated that hopefully this year there would be a better balancing of those competing priorities. She added that it is essential for the Union to see what transpires because she does not want to commit the AU to a strategic decision and then the money that is supposedly being saved from academics is actually going into areas that staff would not like to see it being spent.

ix.) A comment by a member:

The member enquired whether everyone saw that UCT has the University of the Future Project (UoF) which fits into this where a large proportion of money is being spent and calling for the renovation of heritage buildings, new projects, and brand-new infrastructure. She enquired how these fits in there, and what is the space for the Union to engage in here. Views herself as one of those old school people who views the workplace and labour conditions matters a lot. She raised a concern that there is not one decent space to eat on the campus, no decent place for people to socialize, the UCT Club is in disarray and expressed dismay that this University does not have a club or space. Indicated that it is embarrassing when you invite a speaker and there is nowhere to take them and nothing is being done about it, in comparison to the WITS University where they have ample spaces for socialization.

The member considers that social investments are important, and students and staff would be attracted to be at UCT if there was more of a social, lively environment, spaces where they could be an academic community, but this is not present here. Explained that she comes from a small University where this was part of building an intellectual academic culture, for students as well as for staff. She views UCT as a cold space in that regard, because on the one hand, they are telling us there is no money to hire people to do repairs and then on the other hand, there is an announcement about the UoF and does not understand how this balances out and at some point, this should be thought about.

A response by Kelley:

Concurs with the member's views and reported that the UoF is going around to all Faculty Boards and the same above member's point was also raised by a staff member at the Law Faculty Board. This staff member

in Law pointed out that it is great to invest in future planning and should be looking forward and queried how they balance these two things, which the UoF did not have an easy answer for.

Kelley informed the meeting that the AU is represented on the UoF Steering Committee, which is herself, but this will change in the next year, as she will step down from this committee. She explained that on the one hand, the UoF is a good space to free think what we would like to see, but at the same time, there are small group activities that does not seem to be helpful. She added that the committee is also trying to find its feet as a place that allows people to be both as creative without those confines—where they do want to free think towards, which is important but the balance of that has been difficult.

Kelley reported that this project received a lot of money, namely R12m the previous year and if one thinks about this as a percentage of each one of academic salaries it is 1+ %. She added that she does not know the source of this money whether it is a donation or bequest specifically for those activities, which is a question the AU need to ask. Kelley stated that one does not want to do all that work and then run up against the R520m deficit in maintenance and think about how one balances these two things.

x.) A concern raised by a member:

The member stated that the Chair of the UoF committee indicated that it is the biggest committee on campus. She raised a concern that the University is expending a lot of its human resources on this Committee. She enquired how the University is justifying this spend in relation to the fact that there are non-functional venues, where there are basic demands from people where toilets are not working. Students in the Faculty Board meetings reported that that they come onto campus and cannot get water and have to bring their own.

A response by Kelley:

Kelley stated that the above question is a good one and propose that all members raise this in their Faculty boards because these questions are received from the AU, but dealt with in a cursory fashion, and then they move on.

xi.) A query by a member: The member enquired if Kelley knows if P&S particularly the vendors and contractors have ever been audited.

A response by Kelley:

Kelley stated that this is a long-standing issue and has also recently come up in the Law Faculty and is often on the PASS non-salary demands because they see where money gets spent in ways that are senseless. She informed the meeting that one of her colleagues recently got charged R60 000 for painting their office by P&S but later this amount was eventually reduced to R3000. Kelley indicated that the University is paying an extraordinary amount on the so-called list of vendors, and she is not sure when last they were audited.

Kelley proposed that the request for P&S to be audited is something to include on the agenda again and considers that there is a lot of price gauging, and she has personally seen quotations for moving offices in her building, which she views as unreasonable.

xii.) A query by a member: The member enquired if the AU could use its funds to appoint an investigator.

A response by Kelley:

Kelley stated that this is an interesting idea. She reported that in the year the University offered staff a zero percent increase, the AU enquired if it could have its own external auditor, and this prompted things to move along swiftly. Kelley indicated that this is something the Union could request. She informed the meeting that Mughtar Parker, the ED of P&S, who has not been long in this role, is an auditor by training and in the

conversations, she has had with him, views that he has a clear picture of what is wrong and aware of the kind of issues on what can be rolled back and what are on the priority list. She indicated that the staffing bill is high up on the priority bill.

xiii.) A query by a member:

The member enquired what powers the Union has on staff morale. She presented an example of the person who repainted their office might have wanted inspiration and perhaps the white walls were too white for them and wanted to re-personalize it. She enquired why this should be so costly because the staff member might be re-designing the space to inspire them. She indicated that the current initiatives the University have are very enrolment and reputation focussed and do not focus on the employees and enquired what the initiatives there are.

A response by Kelley:

Indicated that this is a good question and considers that a space for academics is critically important, for example, having the UCT Club re-invigorated as a place that is welcoming where staff wish to go to is something the Union could think about putting on the agenda.

Kelley informed the meeting that the AU does address the issue of the wider social and mental wellbeing of academics and their workload. She indicated that the Union has done periodic surveys which members have filled out over time. She reported that the Union is planning for another iteration of that sometime this year, as a previous one was done in late 2021. Kelley explained that this would be an important opportunity to feed those results to Management and state that this is a snapshot of people's wellbeing and are we managing, what do we want to see, do we feel if we connected here, do we feel we have a place, do we feel there is a social fabric, etc.

Kelley informed the meeting that the problem for the Union is that this is Management's job to manage and resolve that problem and her personal view is that Human Resources (HR) at the moment is practically devoid of any skill at looking how to breathe back life into the University as a workplace. Indicated that HR have become functionaries with more of an audit mind sense than of thinking creatively. Reported that when they requested suggestions from the AU, she suggested that they look at what other organizations have done to breathe life back into their spaces or people's energies. The AU continues to put pressure on them, but doing the survey will give the Union concrete data to take back to Management and inform them there is still a problem, as they are still thinking they are the employer of choice and staff are doing fine.

xiv.) An enquiry from a member:

Regarding the social space enquired why the AU is not doing this as it can also generate income. He enquired what is preventing the AU from taking this project onboard, opening a space for a coffee shop or restaurant.

A response from Kelley:

She informed the member that his idea is a nice one but indicated that the members on the AU have a real job. Kelley indicated that this is not the Union's role to run a social space but its role to hold the University responsible for doing that. She explained that a concern she has is one that has worried her for many years, is when the University fails, the Union steps into the breach. She added when administrative systems and social spaces have failed, groups of people have stepped into the space. Kelley appeals for the AU to be really careful because running a café, as lovely as the idea might be, is a skill no one in this meeting have.

In answer to the above response by Kelley the member suggested that the AU hires experienced people to run the coffee shop. He expressed the view that it is the responsibility of the AU to facilitate and build this community of workers at UCT and perhaps it is not a concern of the University. The member enquired what the mandate of the AU is if it is not to value those who work at the University.

Responses by Andrew and Kelley:

Andrew indicated that it is an important point. He explained that the University has particular protocols with regard to vendors and this is an issue and a stumbling point. Andrew informed the meeting that this is an issue they could take to Management to open up a space so they would allow other vendors to come in. He explained that just getting a vendor in to provide basic food for students is a task and explained that the University has its own protocols with regard to appointment of vendors.

Kelley indicated that the AU Executive has had discussions about starting small and this is one reason the Union decided to have this meeting only in person to start getting members back into a room together as colleagues, to talk and socialize.

xv.) A proposal from a member: Propose that the AU appoints a social chair whose role would be to organize social events where they invite members either every quarter or twice a year and would be separate from what the University runs.

A response from Kelley: Concurs with the above proposal and suggest that the AU starts small, consider what they can do to get people back into a more social space and one which they can build on.

xvi.) A member indicated that due to the maintenance being held up, include as a demand for a forensic audit to be done of P&S before a new Vice-Chancellor is appointed. By doing this, the AU could then set an agenda for what happens in maintenance and P&S.

The above request was seconded by a member.

Closure

Kelley informed the meeting that members would receive communications from her to update them on the salary process and the AU Bargaining committee will put up a poll for non-salary items so they can choose a smaller group of demands.

Waheeda appealed to those members who have dispute resolution skills to assist the AU Grievance Committee and get in touch with Shirifa about that.

Andrew thanked Kelley and everyone for attending the meeting and for their involvement and engagement with the Union.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 13h55