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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | | |
|------------|--|----|
| CHAPTER 1 | The Mission of the National University of Namibia | 1 |
| CHAPTER 2 | Organization and Governance of the University | 4 |
| CHAPTER 3 | The Academic Programme | 7 |
| CHAPTER 4 | Research Programme | 10 |
| CHAPTER 5 | The Staffing of the University | 14 |
| CHAPTER 6 | Students | 25 |
| CHAPTER 7 | Physical Facilities | 29 |
| CHAPTER 8 | Institutional Planning | 31 |
| CHAPTER 9 | Finance and Budgeting | 42 |
| CHAPTER 10 | Fundraising | 43 |
| CHAPTER 11 | Outreach and Extension Services | 44 |

THE MISSION OF THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

The concept, character and curriculum of the National University of Namibia is designed to reflect the intellectual, cultural and spiritual values of its people. These values have necessarily been informed by many years of struggle for democracy, justice and equality.

It is therefore fitting that the University of Namibia, reflecting these values, is an autonomous institution dedicated to the promotion of academic freedom and freedom of enquiry.

In accordance with this commitment to democracy, justice and equality, the University Council - the highest authority in the structure of the University is composed of a wide spectrum of people representing the most important segments of the society.

Working closely with the Senate - the principal academic authority of the University - the Council and its offices - the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Deans and Lecturers of the University - will ensure that the National University of Namibia is reflective of all the principles of academic excellence. The academic staff, the students and the University administrators are all devoted to the achievement of the kind of quality education necessary to serve the interests of a developing Namibian nation.

To advance this goal the National University of Namibia (UN) seeks to establish working relationships with all groups who have common interests with the University. In particular, the University will consult with all those who will receive and employ the professionals, technicians and personnel trained by the University. To achieve this objective the University will work with all the ministries of the Government of Namibia, and in particular, with the Ministry of Education and Culture. The University will establish mechanisms to consult and confer with industry, commerce and trade, so that the training offered at the University may be relevant to their needs.

The University focuses on the teaching of science and technology, public administration, agriculture and rural development and of course, on the teaching of the English language. We will have to train young Namibians, as well as the older generation which has been denied education by the colonial system. To ensure that all who aspire to higher education have every opportunity to pursue their goals, we sponsor bridging and access courses with a view to upgrading the skills of prospective students

The University therefore operates a flexible organizational structure focused around the core campus in Windhoek where all four years of University education are available and where the national reference library (The Queen Elizabeth II Library) is located.

To reach the people in the rural areas the University pursues an active policy of distance teaching. We also promote applied research extension work and community service and encourage staff to apply their findings to the concrete situation within Namibia.

There is an additional campus in the centre of Windhoek which caters for the students pursuing politechnical studies as well as those doing part-time studies in various disciplines. University Centres will be established in all major population centres and satellite campuses, in various geographical regions of the country, will be opened as and when the numbers justify the cost.

The principal objectives of the National University of Namibia is as follows:

1. To encourage and promote learning throughout Namibia.
2. To provide facilities appropriate to a university of the highest quality for education that is responsive to the needs of Namibia, and make these facilities available to such persons as are likely to benefit from them.

3. To produce well trained people in relevant academic and professional disciplines.
4. To provide opportunities for scholars to pursue the development of their highest intellectual potential
5. To serve as the repository for the preservation development and articulation of Namibian values and culture.
6. To undertake basic and applied research that would contribute to the social economic cultural and political development of Namibia.
7. To enhance the critical capacity of the academic community and of the society at large.
8. To serve communities, both urban and rural, and to provide extension services throughout the country.

ORGANISATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE UNIVERSITY

The basic principle of governance related to the operation of the University of Namibia, is the principle of academic freedom. This is a fundamental characteristic of Namibian society entrenched in Article 21 of the Constitution. The Government of Namibia has repeatedly stressed its total commitment to the principle of academic freedom. It is therefore up to the University to implement it. In implementing this freedom we focus attention on both rights and obligations of the University community. These rights guarantee the University all the basic conditions necessary for the pursuit of excellence. In the words of the Report on Higher education, this enables "teachers to teach, learners to learn and researchers to investigate and publish without external interference". (p. 76).

Such freedoms are closely linked with obligations. The principal obligation of the University community is to ensure that the knowledge gained from the exercise of these freedoms is disseminated to the community at large so as to contribute to its more general development. This will be achieved by a commitment to extension services in rural and urban communities alike.

An essential adjunct to the exercise of academic freedom is the establishment of institutional autonomy. Here again the Government has repeatedly and publicly undertaken to respect the autonomy of the National University of Namibia. It is the responsibility of the University to establish and institutionalize its autonomy. We have every intention of exercising the self government of the University as guaranteed in the Namibian Constitution and supported by the Government of Namibia. It is the view of the University as stated by the Report on Higher Education that "self government provides the most favourable environment for teaching, learning and research. In other words, institutional autonomy enables the fruits of academic freedom to flourish". (p. 77). Even so, the University has a responsibility to maintain close links with the Government of the day. This is assured by the fact that the first Chancellor of University will be H.E. the President of the Republic of Namibia.

The exercise of self-government carries with it the obligation to preserve openness in University governance. The National University of Namibia is fully committed to this principle which is the foundation of trust and intellectual honesty.

To ensure the existence of openness and trust in the governance of the University, the highest governing body of the University, - the Council - is designed to be representative of the broadest possible cross section of the population. Thus those represented on the Council include - scholars - both local and international, the church, trade unions, business interest, women and students.

The Council views itself as having major obligations to both the national and international community. To the nation, the Council seeks to ensure that the broader educational needs of Namibia are met within the context of a University where standards are compatible with international norms. To the international community the University seeks to add to the world body of knowledge - the basis of educational activity that reflects itself in the research activities and publications of the University.

The Senate which is responsible to the Council for the academic conduct of the University is chaired by the Vice Chancellor and includes all the Professors of the University as well as the Deans of all Faculties and student representatives. The principal mandate is to safeguard the academic character and standards of the University as well as to appoint and promote teachers of proper ability and competence in an open and transparently fair manner.

Consistent with the democratic principles adhered to by the entire University establishment, the Faculties of the University are run by Academic Boards consisting of all members of academic staff. Deans are elected by all the members of each Faculty. In the same manner, Heads of Department are elected. However care is taken to ensure that the leaders of Departments and Faculties are senior academics who are in a position to represent the views of their colleagues. Their terms of office are rotated on a two yearly basis.

The Vice Chancellor who is the academic and administrative head of the university is assisted in his functions by three Pro Vice Chancellors - one for Academic Affairs, one for Administrative Affairs and the third for the Polytechnic. The Bursar, the Registrar and the Librarian make up the rest of the top administrative staff in the University. All of these officials are appointed by the Council after consideration of a report of a Joint Committee of Council and Senate.

The Queen Elizabeth II Library which is scheduled to occupy a central place on the campus, as well as in the intellectual life of the University, will be the National Reference Library and be a critical factor in the research responsibilities of staff and post graduate students alike. It will of course serve the needs of the undergraduate community and be accessible to all scholars who wish to use its facilities.

The Polytechnic is of particular importance to the University. With a view to establishing cost-effective mechanisms, the Polytechnic is institutionally linked to the University. There will be some degree of cross-over of University staff to the Polytechnic and it will share the administrative and physical facilities of the University. Even so the Polytechnic has its own clearly defined mission and is perceived of as being the apex of technical and vocational training in the context of Namibia.

The University also has an Institute of Research with two Units - one dealing with life sciences and the other dealing with social sciences. In addition there is an English Language Centre which seeks to develop the skills of students in all Faculties.

As a matter of policy the University seeks to develop associate college arrangements with any professionally related colleges where such a relationship would be mutually beneficial. For a start however the University will have associate college arrangements with the College of Education, Agriculture and Nursing and para-medical services. The College of Distance Learning will be very closely associated with the University as well as the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED).

With the existence of these organizational structures operated on the principles of governance outlined, we can anticipate a vibrant University life contributing to the advancement of the frontiers of knowledge in Namibia, and throughout the world.

THE ACADEMIC PROGRAMME

The design and implementation of an effective academic programme for the National University of Namibia, must be predicated upon a continuous assessment of Namibia's development needs. As a newly independent nation, Namibia requires skilled human capital if it is to re-orient a society and economy distorted by a history of South African colonialism.

As the only National University in the country, NUN will have special responsibilities to the Republic and its citizens. NUN must become an educational institution where teaching is enriched by the pursuit of knowledge, where inter-disciplinary studies are promoted and where academic staff function as teacher/scholars.

Because of the need to upgrade the intellectual quality of the student applicants, the University must make available pre-entry preparatory programmes as well as remedial courses of study. This is to be accomplished through bridging, access and extra-mural courses facilitated, in part by the Distance Education programme.

In order to pursue its mission successfully and achieve excellence, the National University of Namibia must be properly positioned - in the Government, in the society, and in the international intellectual community. Furthermore, it must be prepared to assume leadership in the establishment of norms, and the formulation of a philosophy of education that presents and encourages success among students, teachers and administrators alike.

All of this requires an academic programme relevant to the needs of the Namibian people.

In a nation ravaged by the experience of colonialism it is not very easy to establish priorities among academic areas all of which are in need of the most urgent attention. However, we can safely say that English language education emerges as one of the top priorities is so far as it is a basic requirement for the teaching of all courses in the University and indeed in all institutions of learning throughout Namibia. We therefore regard as very critical, the establishment of the English Language Centre as a separate Unit designed to service the entire University Community and beyond, offering communication skills and English access facilities.

In addition, the University has seven Faculties and a School of Media Studies.

1. Faculty of Social and Economic Sciences

Departments:

Accountancy and Business
Economics
Government, Political and Administrative Studies
Sociology and Anthropology
Psychology
Statistics and Demography

2. Faculty of Law

Departments

Civil Law
Criminal Law
Commercial Law

3. Faculty of Natural Science

Departments:

Mathematics
Physics
Chemistry
Zoology
Botany
Geography and Earth Sciences (Environmental Studies)

4. Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Departments:

History and Archaeology
Religious Studies
Languages
Philosophy
Arts (Music and Art)

5. Faculty of Education

Departments:

Educational Foundations
Language Education
Social Education
Science Education
Physical Education

6. Faculty of Agriculture

Departments:

General Agriculture
Food Sciences
Marine Sciences
Rural Development
Animal Sciences
Crop Sciences

7. Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences

Departments:

Nursing and Midwifery
Pre-medical studies
Paramedical studies

8. School of Mass Media Studies

Departments:

Print Media
Electronic Media

9.8 In view of the high cost involved in training, particularly in the professional fields, consideration has been given to linking the University of Namibia to other institutions of higher learning. In making these choices we look to SADCC and other regional universities as well as those institutions which have had traditional historical ties with Namibia.

9.9 There are a number of existing institutions in Namibia - particularly in the life sciences - which have made, and are capable of making, contributions to the research programme of the University. At the moment they are fragmented. It would be the object of policy to consolidate these institutions as far as possible and house them under the roof of the University of Namibia.

9.10 The above breakdown represents a fairly comprehensive compendium of desirable disciplinary coverage. In practice it may be judicious to phase the process of development and consolidation over a given period of time.

THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME

Introduction:

The National University of Namibia regards research as a crucial and important aspect of the work of the university. In a developing country as Namibia, a great deal of support for the development endeavour can be drawn from the university. The university would need to assist government ministries, departments and agencies with scientific work where and when required. This would represent an important contribution to the development of Namibian society. For these reasons, research would be concentrated on applied issues which have palpable benefits to the society as a whole. While this is the case, pure research would also be provided scope for pursuit, but this would be subsidiary to applied research.

Research work in the university should also provide a basis for teaching where such research affords the chance for teaching and research staff to give students skills in research, new knowledge and scientific insights. Departmental programmes would need to reflect this approach to the university's work. The Centre's research facilities would also assist towards creating the environment for university staff to upgrade and develop their scientific competence.

Full-time research staff would be expected to spend two-thirds of their time on research, and a third on teaching in the teaching departments. Teaching staff would also be expected to allocate one third of their time for research.

All research work in the university would be channelled through the Research Centre. The Research Centre would help and facilitate the acquisition of funding for research from donor agencies. The university would also provide a budget for research from its core funds. All research spending would have to be properly accounted for and reflected in the transactions of the Senate of the university.

The Research Centre would undertake consultancy work on request. The benefits and rewards for this would be shared between the researcher/researchers and the university.

The Research Centre will organize Seminars, Workshops, Conferences and Technical Meetings relating to its research work. In this way, while promoting contact between researchers, decision-makers, planners and extension personnel, the Centre would publicize its activities and keep abreast of the latest developments in the various fields of its interests.

The Centre will publish various types of scientific material, including; occasional papers, working papers, monographs, a journal/journals and other necessary scientific documentation. In addition, it will maintain a database developed around its research interest areas.

Structure of the Research Centre:

The Research Centre of the National University of Namibia would be headed by a Director. The Director would be the administrative head of the centre, responsible to Senate. The director would in his or her work be assisted by an Administrative Secretary, secretarial staff, and other support staff. The Director would be responsible for convening on a regular basis board meetings consisting of all the research staff of the university and research associates based either in the teaching departments of the university or from outside the university.

The office of the Director would be responsible for running the equipment and support facilities in the centre. Regular reports on such features and activities would need to be made to Senate.