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UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

ACTING RECTOR'S REPORT TO COUNCIL: 16 NOVEMBER 1990

FINANCIAL POSITION

The annual financial statements for 1989 have been handed out and indicate a surplus for the year of R4 791 901 (1988: R3 462'216). Welcome news for this year is that we have been granted an additional R1,106m. This brings our total grant for 1990 to R31 377 000 (1991: R32 066 000). Staff compensation for this year will amount to around R42m. Tuition and accommodation fees come to R15 800 000, and of this R1 800 000 is still outstanding.

BUILDINGS UNDER CONSTRUCTION

2.1 The Bisho campus is scheduled for completion towards the end of January 1991, at a total cost of R8 170 659 paid for out of our own funds. Academic activities should commence there in February.

2.2 The two women's residences are eight weeks behind schedule because of serious initial setbacks with the building workers as well as recent go-slow action. In terms of the contract we are responsible for additional expenses the contractor is compelled to incur as a result of labour unrest. The contractor has indicated that he is unhappy with the unrest among the workers, and that there are indications that it is being encouraged from outside.

2.3 Tenders have been called for in respect of 10 new houses for farm staff. An amount of R400 000 has been set aside for this purpose, and the additional houses will form a farm village for the Honeydale staff.

CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT -

3.1 The hot air heating system is to be replaced in three of the residences at a cost of R516 000, and the new steam heating system that is being installed will be operational before winter.

3.2 .The PABX system has been further extended by opening up all the direct dialling lines, and this should ease the pressure on the manual exchange and facilitate better communication.

3.3 A pipeline carrying potable water to the Honeydale farm is to be laid shortly at a cost of R40 000.

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RECONSTRUCTION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

Steps have been taken to enable members of the minority group within the academic staff to play a more significant role in the decision-making process. Certain Senate members voluntarily resigned from committees in order to make way for other colleagues, and Faculties have been encouraged to facilitate a change in the composition of Senate committees by replacing their Faculty representatives next year. This matter is being dealt with sensitively and positively.

Student participation at all levels is also being encouraged, and the Faculty of Agriculture has taken the lead by inviting the Agricultural Students' Society to send two representatives to serve as voting members of the Board of Faculty. In the same way, the Farm Committee has invited two members of the Workers' Committee to join it.

I believe that the University is moving in the right direction and that more opportunities will be opened for greater participation in the future.

STAFF ASSAULTS

It was reported in the press recently that two members of staff had been assaulted on their way to the examinations. What actually happened was that two staff members of the Faculty of Agriculture were not able to enter the Sports Centre through the main door, so they went around to the students' entrance where they found a large number of students letting off steam before the start of the examination. The students opened to let them through by forming a tunnel and then, when they were in the middle, the tunnel was collapsed and the staff members were pushed and jostled until they managed to emerge on the other side of the crowd. One of the staff members complained that he had been hit on the head with a blunt object and punched and kicked. The Heads of Departments Committee met to investigate the matter after the staff member informed his senior that he intended to leave the University. Despite lengthy counselling that same night he left for Johannesburg the next day and has not returned. He has since then written to us to inform us that he had to visit a neurologist to attend to his head injury, and has asked if the University is prepared to meet his medical expenses. The matter was reported to me and I immediately took it up with the Chairman of the Students' Representative Committee, because I regarded it as a very serious matter. He reported back to me that on investigation he had found that the students had thought that the two men were also students, because they had come to use the students' entrance, and that they had therefore included them in their horseplay and had roughed them up a bit. He assured me that they had not intended to assault staff members. I have

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discussed the matter with the other staff member concerned and he agrees that this is what took place.

The Workers' Committee reported that during a prolonged power failure on the night of Saturday, 27 October, a group of students had attempted to assault a watchman at B Gate, and had then gone on to the River Gate where they had threatened another watchman who had fled to the river, where he fell in. The students had followed him and had attempted to drown him. These allegations were also reported to the SRC, and the Workers' Committee was requested to take the matter up with the SRC as well. I have not yet had a reply from the SRC.

SERVICE EMPLOYEES: NEHAWU DEMAND

Dali (the NEHAWU representative) and the Workers' Committee a demand for an across-the-board increase of R450 per month was made on behalf of the service employees. It will cost about R7m to meet this demand, and the raising of the minimum salary to just under R1 000 per month will have to be followed through at all levels, which could mean an additional minimum cost of about R3m. While acknowledging that the demand has been based on the perceived needs of the service employees we must also realize that our Government grant for 1991 has been set at R32m which, together with anticipated tuition fees of R11m, will be insufficient to meet the University's financial needs next year. Our projected deficit in 1991 before meeting this demand will be of the order of R6m, and although we are at present doing our utmost to reduce all expenses the indications are that we may have to give serious consideration to cutting back on staff, since staff compensation takes up nearly 70% of budgeted expenditure.

At a recent meeting with Mr

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING SCIENCE

Urgent attention will have to be given to solving the problems of this Department. Amongst others these are:

(1) The Agreement between the University and the Department of Health must be finalized.

(2) The relationship between the Department of Nursing Science and the College of Nursing must be sorted out and clarity obtained concerning the legal standing of the College.

(3) Attention must be given to moving the Department into purpose-built accommodation near the Cecilia Makiwane Hospital, as its present position within the Hospital is unsatisfactory.

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(4) The arrangement whereby the Hospital is required to provide preceptors (tutors) to assist our students is uncertain, and it will be necessary for the Department to appoint its own preceptors.

8. ART GALLERY

The Claybrick Association of South Africa recently recognized the Gallery as one of the outstanding new buildings of this region, and acknowledged the work of the architect and the builders. A suitable plaque has been affixed to the building.

PROFESSOR J B GARDNER

ACTING RECTOR

13 November 1990