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Re: UCT in race row over academic's appointment

Good day,

Your article titled "UCT in race row over academic's appointment" (02 March 2018) refers.

The article runs two allegations made by the members of the BAC but did not afford UCT an opportunity to respond to these prior to publication. The first is that the decision to appoint the Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Teaching and Learning was based on "racism", and the second claim is that Associate Professor Lis Lange "does not meet the requirements". While we were contacted for comment, these two claims were not put to the university for a response.

On the claim that this was a racist appointment, the principle of selecting a black candidate over a white candidate, using race as the criterion, assumes that both candidates bring broadly the same expertise and are suitable for the post. This was not the case in this appointment. Only one candidate was considered appointable by the selection committee. The BAC's argument also assumes that a white person cannot drive a transformation agenda. We reject this view and in this particular case, Associate Professor Lange has years of experience in transformation in other universities and across the sector as a whole.

In response to the claim that Prof Lange did not meet the requirements, the BAC appears to believe that the selection committee's decision on the appointability of candidates for the position relied on the candidates' title as Professor. This is not the case: professorship was not a condition of appointability. The selection committee took careful, holistic consideration of the scope and depth of each candidate's active leadership experience; years of involvement in a position of authority in the higher education sector, especially with regards to teaching and learning; and overall suitability for the demands of such a position at UCT. Only one candidate demonstrated this suitability.

Please also note that your publication incorrectly spelled the name and surname of Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng as well as my surname.

June 2018. Two short-listed candidates – UCT deputy vice chancellor for research Mamogheti Pakeng the and University of

University spokesman Elijah Mohololo said the BAC had not formally objected to any of the other appointments.

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Kindly afford us the right to reply and update your article accordingly.

Regards,

Elijah Moholola

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