



University of Fort Hare

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATION

PROF SAKHELA BUHLUNGU
VICE-CHANCELLOR and PRINCIPAL



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

6 March 2021

Dear Staff and Students

RESIGNATION OF PROFESSOR EOC IJEOMA

On 16 October 2020, the University of Fort Hare placed Professor Edwin O C Ijeoma, a Professor in the Department of Public Administration, on precautionary suspension pending the outcome of investigations in relation to alleged serious misconduct on his part.

Whilst the disciplinary process was underway, the University was informed that Professor Ijeoma had his South African citizenship revoked by the Minister of Home Affairs in 2013. He failed to inform the University of this fact. He then lodged an application to appeal the Minister's decision, which was turned down in 2017. The University was not informed of the Minister's decision. Professor Ijeoma subsequently made an application to the Bhisho High Court to review the Minister's decision. Judgment in the case was delivered on 28 May 2020. Professor Ijeoma again failed to inform the University of this outcome.

Once the matter of Professor Ijeoma's citizenship status was brought to the University's attention, the University immediately obtained a copy of the judgment in respect of the matter. It is the University's understanding that the Bhisho High Court dismissed Professor Ijeoma's application to review the decision taken by the Minister of Home Affairs to revoke his South African citizenship. In the University's view the revocation of his citizenship meant that Professor Ijeoma was not permitted to work in South Africa and as such could not continue to be employed by the University. In light of the above, the University afforded Professor Ijeoma an opportunity to provide it with written reasons as to why his employment should not be terminated as a result of the revocation of his South African citizenship.

Professor Ijeoma subsequently submitted a letter of resignation, dated 26 February 2021.

The University accepted Professor Ijeoma's decision to resign with immediate effect. However, the University will continue with the disciplinary hearing. Professor Ijeoma is facing serious allegations relating to the misappropriation of University funds in excess of 5 Million Rand, failing to declare his business interests, conducting business without approval and conflicts of interest.

The disciplinary proceedings are required to proceed in order to establish whether or not there is any merit in respect of the allegations against Professor Ijeoma. This is important to the University from a governance perspective and in order to ensure that the serious allegations are properly ventilated and determined. Professor Ijeoma has been invited to continue to participate in the hearings.

The University has also opened a case with the Fraud and Corruption Priority Crimes Unit (Hawks). We will also be lodging a civil claim to recover University monies.

Through the appropriate University structures, the University is also addressing instances where Professor Ijeoma is alleged to have flouted University procedures and rules, which includes taking unauthorized decisions on

academic matters, including admissions. Such decisions are the prerogative of University structures. Professor Ijeoma also failed to bring matters to relevant structures for consideration and decision-making.

It is our hope that the disciplinary process will be concluded shortly. The outcome will be communicated to the University community.

Sincerely

Professor Sakhela Buhlungu
Vice-Chancellor and Principal