**SUBMISSION IDENTIFIERS:**

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| **Title** | Enhancement of academic democracy at UKZN |
| **Author & Position** | Dr AP Matthews, Institutional Forum Academic Staff Representative for College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science |

**APPROVAL HISTORY**

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| **Structure consulted** | **Target date for discussion** | **Date approved** |
| Institutional Forum | 7 Sep 2015 |  |
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**SUBMISSION CONTENT**

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| **Motivation:**  The UNZN mission and vision statement, principle 6 is, “Ensure effective governance through broad and inclusive participation, democratic representation, accountability, and transparency that serves as an example that contributes to building the democratic ethos of our country.” Although a university comprises many stakeholders, it is primarily a community of academics, and the academic way of governance is collegiality, which is democratic.  However, at UKZN the democratic influence of academics is limited. Academics have representation on Council, which is meant to be an external body representing the public and therefore should not have a majority of academics. But on the academic decision-making bodies within the university, academics should be in the majority.  Academics have limited representation on the decision-making bodies, namely Senate, College Academic Affairs Boards (CAABs), and School Boards. Academics are in the majority on School Boards, but not on Senate and especially not on CAABs.  Senate has 91 members, of which 39 (43%) are elected academics (2 elected by each School and one Fellow). There are 45 office bearers (49%) of which 35 (38%) are academic senior managers. Currently the IF chair is an academic, and at least one College manager is an academic. The UKZN statute states that the majority of Senators must be academics. This is true in one sense, in that the 39 elected academics plus the 35 academic managers total 74 (81%), but not true in another sense, in that senior managers are on Senate in their roles as managers rather than as academics.  It is the nature of their positions that office bearers, including senior managers, are accountable to executive management and not directly to the academic community. Office bearers are the largest constituent of Senate, with the result that most Senate decisions are made by managers rather than by academics. Academics do have some influence when votes are taken, but the influence is weak.  The situation is especially problematic because academics as a group cannot submit Senate agenda items. Recommendations to Senate may be made by CAABs, the IF and several committees, but not by School Boards. There is no central body in which academics are in the majority that can vote for resolutions for submission to Senate.  CAABs, according to the Statute, have academics elected by each School, one per School. It is not clear whether this is actually being implemented, but even if it is, it does not give elected academics a decisive voice. A College with five Schools has a CAAB with 3 DVCs, 5 Deans, 2 students, 3 representatives of other CAABs and 5 elected academics who thereby constitute 28% of the CAAB. It is generally understood by academics that the CAABs are dominated by senior management which can effectively block proposals from academics. A School Board may vote for a proposal with the support of the majority of academics in the School, but that proposal is easily blocked from reaching Senate if the College senior managers do not support it.  Furthermore, academics in different Schools have no forum to exchange ideas across Schools and disciplines. Senior managers have the Executive and Deans’ Forum, and students have the SRC, but academics have no equivalent.  Consideration could be given to expanding the presence of Academic Leaders (ALs) on Senate, CAABs, and possibly in an Academic Leaders’ Forum. ALs are primarily academics, because no more than 50% of their time is allocated to AL duties, and they are often closer to the concerns of academics than are senior managers. Many ALs are academic reps on Senate, which is understandable as they are academics who are willing to serve, and therefore are often the individuals who would in any case be elected to various committees.  This motivation shows that due to the current governance structure, the academic community has no effective way for submitting proposals to Senate, and does not have a decisive democratic voice on Senate and the CAABs.  **Proposal:**  In order to enhance democratic participation by academics in UKZN governance, the following are proposed:   1. Senate Charter to be amended to allow recommendations that have the proven support of 20 Senators. This is a common practice in committees, and would allow the academic representatives, or indeed any combination of Senators, to submit a proposal on the Senate agenda provided that there is significant support rather than being the idea of only one person or that of a small group. 2. Allow a proposal on the Senate agenda that has the support of the majority of School Boards. 3. Expand Senate membership so that academics who are not office bearers are in the majority. This may be done through increasing the number of elected academics, and/or by including some or all full professors, senior professors, research professors and research chairs, and/or an expanded presence of Academic Leaders. 4. Expand CAAB membership to include more academics by the same mechanism as in 3 above, so that academics are in the majority, i.e. number more than the 3 DVCs, 5 Deans, 2 students, and 3 representatives of other CAABs. 5. Create a formal academic forum that allows for exchange of views across the university. Such a forum, if created, would also be able to submit agenda items to Senate. Membership would be for all academics, an elected group or academics, professors, Academic Leaders, or some combination of these.   Some of these proposals are in the power of Senate to enact, while others require Council approval. This proposal may be forwarded to Council as advice, submitted to Senate as a proposal, and forwarded to School Boards for consideration. |
| **Financial implications:** Nil. |
| **Attachments:** Nil |