



CONSTITUTION OF THE NWU CONVOCATION

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CONSTITUTION OF THE NWU CONVOCATION

Preamble

WHEREAS an association of alumni known as the North-West University Convocation (the convocation) was established by paragraph 30 of the *Statute of the North-West University 2020* (the Statute) in accordance with section 26(2)(g) of the *Higher Education Act, 1997* (the Act);

AND WHEREAS the Statute provides in paragraph 31 for the objectives and functions of the convocation and for the adoption by the council of the North-West University (the council) of a constitution for and with the approval of the convocation;

AND WHEREAS the Statute provides in paragraph 32 for membership of the convocation and the right to vote;

AND WHEREAS the Statute provides in paragraph 33 for the president and executive committee of the convocation;

AND WHEREAS the Statute provides in paragraph 34 for meetings of the convocation;

AND WHEREAS the Statute provides in paragraph 30(3) that the convocation may establish its own structures, and may enter into suitable structural arrangements with other bodies within or outside the university, to achieve its objective;

AND WHEREAS the North-West University alumni have amalgamated a considerable potential in the members of the convocation of the university through which the convocation wishes to contribute to shaping the future and achieving the strategic agenda of the university;

NOW THEREFORE the council approves this constitution with the concurrence of the convocation.

1 Definitions

In this constitution, unless the context indicates otherwise, any word or phrase has the meaning ascribed thereto by the Act and the Statute, and –

- 1.1 "executive committee" means the executive committee of the convocation as contemplated in paragraph 33(1) of the Statute and in section 3 of this constitution;
- 1.2 "member" means a person contemplated in paragraph 32 of the Statute and whose name appears on the convocation roll contemplated in sub-paragraph 2.2.2 of this constitution;
- 1.3 "The Rules" refer to the Rules for the Nomination, Designation, Election and Appointment of Council Members as approved from time to time by the Council; and
- 1.4 "secretary" means the registrar of the university.

2 Membership

2.1 Types of membership

Subject to sub-paragraphs 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5 of this constitution, the following type of persons are eligible for membership:

- (a) graduated alumni of the university;
- (b) diplomated alumni of the university;
- (c) permanent employees of the university
- (d) retired employees of the university and of the former Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education and the University of the North-West; and
- (e) honorary members.

2.2 Requirements of membership

- 2.2.1 To obtain membership, a person falling in any of the categories referred to in sub-paragraph 2.1(a), (b), (c) and (d) must apply in writing, and –
- 2.2.1.1 furnish the secretary with personal particulars, valid contact details (such as mobile telephone number, e-mail address) and the details of such other communication channels and information as may be determined by the executive committee and verified by the secretary, and
- 2.2.1.2 deposit the membership fee prescribed in accordance with para 32(4)(b) of the Statute.
- 2.2.2 On satisfaction of the requirements set in sub-paragraph 2.2.1, the secretary enters the name and type of membership of a member in an official register known as the convocation roll, which is maintained by the secretary.

2.3 Rights pertaining to types of membership

- 2.3.1 A member referred to in sub-paragraph 2.1(a) may –
- (a) attend meetings of the convocation;
 - (b) vote on matters before the convocation;
 - (c) nominate members for election and vote in an election of the executive committee and councilmembers to be elected from among the members of the convocation;
 - (d) nominate persons for the award of honorary membership of the convocation;
 - (e) be elected to become a member of the executive committee, and
 - (f) be elected to become a member of council.
- 2.3.2 A member referred to in sub-paragraph 2.1(b) and (c) may –
- (a) attend meetings of the convocation;
 - (b) vote on matters before the convocation;
 - (c) nominate members for election and vote in an election of the executive committee and councilmembers to be elected from among the members of the convocation, and
 - (d) nominate persons for the award of honorary membership of the convocation.

2.4 Honorary membership

- 2.4.1 Nomination for the award of honorary membership of any person may at any time be submitted in writing to the secretary, co-signed by at least ten other members and accompanied by a detailed curriculum vitae of the nominated person.
- 2.4.2 The secretary must submit every valid nomination to the executive committee for consideration, acceptance or rejection.
- 2.4.3 On the granting of membership, the secretary must inform the honorary member of the award in writing.
- 2.4.4 A member referred to in sub-paragraph 2.1(d) may exercise the rights and has the privileges awarded in the letter confirming honorary membership on such member.

2.5 Termination of membership

Membership of the convocation is terminated on the death of a member or on receipt of the president of the convocation of the member's resignation in writing.

3 Office bearers

- 3.1 The convocation elects a president, a deputy president, bursar and five additional members from among its ranks at a general meeting to hold office as the executive committee for a term of three years from the closing of the meeting at which the election takes place.
- 3.2 The president is to be elected from the ranks of membership contemplated in sub-paragraphs 2.1(a) and (d).
- 3.3 Members in terms of sub-paragraph 2.1(c) are eligible to be elected as additional members.

- 3.4 An office bearer whose term of office ends through the effluxion of time is eligible for re-election for two more terms.
- 3.5 The nomination and election must ensure due regard to gender, race and the multi-campus nature of the University.
- 3.6 To qualify for election as president, a member must have been a member of the executive committee for at least two years immediately prior to the election.
- 3.7 The secretary is the chief electoral officer of the convocation, who must make suitable arrangements for sufficient rotation and continuity of membership of the executive committee to ensure that the purpose of the convocation is served consistently.
- 3.8 The executive committee deals with all matters pertaining to the convocation between meetings of the convocation, subject to ratification at the next meeting of the Convocation.

4 Attendance of meetings of the Executive Committee

- 4.1 The president may invite members of structures of the convocation and other bodies contemplated in paragraph 30(3) of the Statute to attend meetings of the executive committee to further the objective of the convocation provided for in paragraph 31 of the Statute.
- 4.2 The invitees referred to in sub-paragraph 4.1 may be allowed by the president to address the executive committee, but they do not have a vote in the meeting.

5 Election of members of the council

For the filling of vacancies in the membership of the council contemplated in paragraph 4(1)(i) of the Statute, members must be elected in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5 of the Statute and paragraph 8 of the Rules read with the following:

- 5.1 In the event of a vacancy occurring by the effluxion of time, at least three months before the expiry of the term of office of the council member concerned, the secretary gives notice electronically to all members whose names appear on the convocation roll at the time of the dispatch of the notice, of the vacancy and the procedure for the nomination of candidates.
- 5.2 Only the members referred to in sub-paragraph 2.3 whose names appear in the convocation roll contemplated in sub-paragraph 5.1 are entitled to nominate persons for election to the vacant position and to vote in the election.
- 5.3 At least two members entitled to vote as well as the nominee, must sign a nomination, which must be submitted with the requisite documentation as determined from time to time to the secretary on a form determined by the registrar in accordance with sub-paragraph 8.5 of the Rules.
- 5.4 In compliance to section 27(6) of the Higher Education Act, no persons who are employed by the University or who are enrolled as students of the University, may be nominated in this category.
- 5.5 If the number of nominees does not exceed the number of persons to be elected, the secretary declares the nominees duly elected, and announces their election.
- 5.6 If more candidates are nominated than the number to be elected, the secretary as soon as practicable after the closing date for nominations, electronically makes a ballot paper with the names of the candidates in alphabetical order available to every member entitled to vote.
- 5.7 Under the supervision of the registrar, the members of the Convocation entitled to vote elect, by a clear majority and by secret ballot taken according to an electronic electoral system, available for a period of 10 calendar days, the required number of members from among the nominees.
- 5.8 A ballot paper that has not been completed in accordance with the instructions appearing thereon or that reaches the secretary after the specified time and date is invalid.
- 5.9 In the determination of the outcome of an election, the secretary is assisted by two scrutineers appointed by the president.
- 5.10 A member who does not have access to electronic means to participate in the nomination or election process must, on application to the secretary, be provided with other suitable means to do so.

6 Members of the convocation designated as members of the institutional forum

The president must, on the advice of the executive committee, appoint the required number of members to the institutional forum.

7 Meetings

- 7.1 Meetings of the convocation must be conducted in accordance with paragraph 34 of the Statute and this constitution.
- 7.2 The executive committee has the mandate to decide on the time, format and manner of general and special meetings .
- 7.3 A special meeting may be convened by the president after consultation with the executive committee, and must be convened by the president within one month of such special meeting having been requested in writing by at least fifty members, setting out matters to be discussed and clearly indicating the reasons justifying an urgent meeting.
- 7.4 The quorum for any meeting of the convocation is fifty members.
- 7.5 The quorum for any meeting of the executive committee is five members of the executive committee.

8 Procedure at meetings

- 8.1 An ordinary meeting, after being constituted and opened, commences with the reading and confirmation under the signature of the chairperson of the minutes of the previous ordinary meeting and the minutes of all subsequent extraordinary meetings.
- 8.2 Any objection to the minutes is raised and disposed of before the minutes are confirmed.
- 8.3 The minutes may be regarded as read if a copy of the draft minutes was previously sent to each member at least a week before the meeting.
- 8.4 The number of votes in favour of or against any proposal is not recorded in the minutes unless the meeting so decides or the president directs, at the request of a member, that the vote or abstention of such member be recorded.
- 8.5 No matters other than those stated in the notice of an extraordinary meeting are dealt with at such meeting, unless all the members present at such a meeting consent thereto.
- 8.6 To be included in the agenda, notice of any motion must be in writing and be lodged with the secretary at least ten days before the date of the meeting.
- 8.7 No motion or any amendment thereto proposed in the course of a meeting is dealt with unless it has been seconded, and if the chairperson so directs, such motion or amendment must be submitted in writing.
- 8.8 A member may not, except by leave of the meeting, speak more than once on any motion or amendment thereto, but the mover of a motion may exercise the right to reply.
- 8.9 Any member may move that a subject under discussion be dealt with in committee and, if seconded, such motion is put to the vote without being discussed.
- 8.10 If a motion contemplated in paragraph 8.9 is adopted, the meeting goes into committee forthwith, whereupon any member is entitled to speak on the subject under discussion more than once.
- 8.11 A member may not take part in the discussion of or vote on any matter in which that member has a direct financial or other interest, unless the member first discloses the nature and extent of the interest and obtains the leave of the meeting to take part in the discussion.
- 8.12 Subject to sub-paragraphs 8.14 and 8.15, all matters are decided by a majority of the votes cast openly.
- 8.13 The chairperson has an ordinary vote, but must exercise a casting vote in the event of an equality of votes.
- 8.14 The chairperson may, and if the meeting so decides, must direct that a secret ballot be taken.
- 8.15 Voting involving persons must always be by secret ballot.
- 8.16 A point of order, clarification or information may be raised in any meeting of the convocation, which may be granted or refused by the chairperson.

- 8.17 If a point of order, clarification or information is refused by the chairperson, the member who raised the point may request that the meeting decides whether the point should be allowed, in which event a vote is taken without discussion of the substance of the motion.
- 8.18 The views of a member who is unable to attend a meeting may be submitted in writing but may not be counted as the vote of such member.
- 8.19 Except for persons invited by the president with the consent of a meeting, only members may attend meetings.
- 8.20 Anyone participating in a meeting who, after having been requested to refrain from disrespectful or disorderly conduct which may reasonably be interpreted to be disruptive, and continues to disobey a ruling of the chairperson, may be requested to leave the meeting and, if that person does not leave the meeting immediately, such person's participation in the meeting must be terminated.
- 8.21 Should a member's participation in a meeting be terminated as contemplated in sub-paragraph 8.20, the member must submit to such procedures as the executive committee may determine in order to be allowed to participate in meetings or other activities of the convocation.

9 Electronic resolutions

- 9.1 In addition to elections undertaken electronically in terms of section 5 of this constitution, the president may, on the advice of the executive committee, cause matters requiring resolution by the convocation to be communicated electronically to all members for their consideration.
- 9.2 Responses to such communication, electronically or otherwise, must be recorded by the secretary, and if a majority of the responses support its adoption, the resolution must be considered to have been taken by a meeting of the convocation and be minuted as such, subject to confirmation by the next ordinary meeting.
- 9.3 A member who does not have access to electronic means to participate in electronic decision-making must, on application to the secretary, be provided with other suitable means to do so.

10 Competencies and signing authorities

- 10.1 The convocation may raise, receive and allocate funds aimed at promoting its objectives and resolutions, and to this end may open and use a suitable account with a dedicated set of sub-accounts within the university's financial system.
- 10.2 All financial transactions undertaken by or on behalf of the convocation and any property or goods received, held or alienated must be managed in accordance with the applicable policies of the university, its systems and processes.
- 10.3 The president, vice-president and bursar have signing authority on behalf of the convocation.

11 Amendment

- 11.1 Proposals for the amendment of this constitution for approval by the council may be adopted by a two-thirds majority of the members present at a general meeting.
- 11.2 At least one month before a general meeting where amendments to this constitution are to be considered, written notice of the proposed amendments must be given by the secretary to all members.
- 11.3 The requirements provided for in sub-paragraph 11.2 may be disposed of if a majority of three-quarters of the members present at a general meeting approves thereof.

STATUTORY PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO THE CONVOCATION OF THE NWU

In accordance with section 26(2)(g) of the *Higher Education Act* 101 of 1997, the *Statute of the North-West University, 2020*, with which the constitution of the convocation must be read, provides for the establishment, constitution, objectives, functions, membership, right to vote, president, executive committee and meetings of the convocation in the paragraphs set out here for convenient reference:

Establishment and constitution of convocation

30.(1) There is a North-West University Convocation.

- (2) The council must, with the concurrence of the convocation, approve a constitution for the convocation.
- (3) The convocation may establish its own structures in accordance with its constitution, and may enter into suitable structural arrangements with other bodies within or outside the university, to achieve its objective.

Objective and functions

- 31.(1)** The objective of the convocation is to establish and develop mutually beneficial relationships between the university and its alumni in order to promote the welfare of the university and present and future members of the convocation.
- (2) In order to achieve its objective, the convocation may –
 - (a) elect members to the council in accordance with paragraph 32(1);
 - (b) establish an association of alumni of the university;
 - (c) support other university structures focusing on promoting professional educational, social and other relationships between the university and alumni and between groups of alumni;
 - (d) consider any matter of interest to the university and to alumni, and convey any resolution to the university governance structures or the general public;
 - (e) maintain a database of members of the convocation in order to enhance communication and information dissemination between members and the university, and maintain the voters' roll for the election of council members.

Membership and right to vote

- 32.(1)** Every graduate of the university or its predecessors is eligible for membership of the convocation, to be nominated for election as a member of the council, and to vote in an election of council members in accordance with paragraph 5.
- (2) Every diplomate and permanent staff member, present or past, of the university or its predecessors is eligible for membership of the convocation in terms of subparagraph 3.
- (3) In its constitution, the convocation may define types of membership in addition to those referred to in subparagraphs (1) and (2), and may determine the rights and privileges pertaining to such other types of membership.
- (4) A member may participate in the proceedings, activities or elections which, in terms of the constitution of the convocation, is open to that member's type of membership, as reflected in the convocation roll, if –
 - (a) the member's personal particulars, valid postal address, and the other communication channels determined from time to time in terms of the constitution of the convocation have been furnished to the registrar; and
 - (b) the member has deposited the prescribed membership fee, as determined by the council on the recommendation of the convocation, into a bank account of the convocation.

President and executive committee

- 33.(1) At a general meeting, the convocation must elect from among its members a president, a deputy president and the other officials determined by the constitution of the convocation to form an executive committee with the president and the deputy president.
- (a) The term of office of the president, the deputy president and the other members of the executive committee is three years from the conclusion of the meeting at which the election takes place.
 - (b) If no meeting of the convocation is held in the third year of the term of office, the current term of office is extended until after the conclusion of the next meeting of the convocation.
- (2) In the event of a vacancy in the executive committee occurring before the expiry of the term of office, the other members of the executive committee must co-opt a person to fill the vacancy for the remainder of the term of office.
- (3) The president may from time to time recommend that the convocation establishes committees consisting of members of the convocation to perform specific functions as directed by the convocation.

Meetings

- 34.(1) As determined by the constitution of the convocation, a general meeting must be convened by the president at least once every three years at the seat of the university or another place determined by the president, taking into account the multi-campus nature of the university.
- (2) (a) The president is the chairperson of a meeting of the convocation.
(b) In the absence of the president, the deputy president acts as chairperson of the convocation. If the deputy president is also absent, the members of the convocation present must elect from among their members a chairperson for that meeting.
 - (3) The types of meetings, rules of convening, quorum requirements, agendas, and procedures for meetings of the convocation and the executive committee, and liaison with other bodies of the university and the general public must be determined by the constitution of the convocation.
 - (4) The convocation and another university structure responsible for liaison with individual alumni or groups of alumni may meet at any time after consultation with the executive committee of the North-West Alumni Association.
 - (5) At a meeting, the convocation may discuss any matter of interest to the university or to alumni, including a matter which the council refers to the convocation for advice, and the president of the convocation must convey the opinion of the convocation to the council.
 - (6) A copy of the resolutions of the convocation, and a notification of the other matters determined by the convocation, certified by the president and the registrar, must be forwarded to the chairperson of the council for the information of the council and to the vice-chancellor for the information of the senate, and must be recorded by the registrar.