

# Fraud allegations at Fort Hare

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6 May 2013

The University of Fort Hare is investigating a number of cases of corruption, fraud and maladministration at the institution.



University of Fort Hare  
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University spokesman Zintle Filtane confirmed the university was investigating the cases but would not provide details or names of employees suspected of being involved.

"There are a number of investigations underway at the moment," she said. "Although not all are fraud related, I am not at liberty to share [suspected employee] names with you."

The Daily Dispatch however has learned through sources that a senior official in the human resources department allegedly misused thousands of rands donated to the university by a private company.

The employee is alleged to have asked for donations from Fourth Dimension Health Services based in Pretoria to launch the university's new administration office in East London last month. It is alleged the employee provided her own banking details so the money could be paid to her rather than the university.

The employee, whose name is known to the Dispatch, declined to comment on the matter, saying the newspaper had "its facts wrong" and referring questions to Filtane. She said once the university had concluded its investigations it would release names "depending on the nature of the findings and whether it is in the public interest to do so".

Christo van Rooyen, a director at Fourth Dimension Health, declined to comment, saying they were "corresponding with the university" on the matter.

The Dispatch is in possession of a document detailing an amount paid by the company but Van Rooyen would not confirm its authenticity.

## Number of interventions underway

Filtane said the university had investigated similar cases last year which ended in nine employees being sacked.

In addition to the investigations, a number of interventions have been approved by the Audit Committee of the University Council. These will deal with matters around maladministration, fraud and corruption and include:

- The implementation of a fraud prevention plan;
- A whistleblowers policy.

Filtane said: "The purpose of this fraud prevention plan is to set out the approach for dealing with fraud and corruption and to elaborate on specific initiatives to prevent fraud.

"Fraud, corruption, maladministration or any other dishonest activity will not be tolerated, whether committed internally or by an external party," she said.

Filtane said the university would vigorously pursue and prosecute anyone engaged in such practices.

"This may include laying criminal charges or taking civil and administrative actions where applicable, and instituting internal disciplinary processes," Fitane added.

On the whistleblowers policy, she said: "One of the obstacles faced in the fight against fraud and corruption is that employees are too intimidated to speak out, or to blow the whistle on corrupt activities in the workplace ."

Department of Higher Education and Training director-general Gwebinkundla Qonde said university councils had the autonomy to introduce such policies and report to the department. Should a transgression be uncovered, the department would appoint an independent assessor to investigate.

Based on the assessor's report, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Blade Nzimande could then appoint an administrator.

Qonde said several universities in the country, including Walter Sisulu University, were under administration.

Source: The Daily Dispatch via I-Net Bridge

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