

**SACOMM 2016
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
AGM/PLENARY SESSION
MONDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2016 12:15 – 13:00**

Dr Colin Chasi welcomed everybody present and thanked the UFS Team for their wonderful work done on the 2016 conference amidst the threat of protests and the unsafe environment. It is important for SACOMM to travel around the country and cover South Africa through the annual conference. SACOMM has to consider the wide range of issues currently surfacing in the country and the crises in Higher Education during 2016. The role of the University in the changing landscape should be considered. Libraries, books and study material should be built around current issues and times. Universities are no longer considered the dominant source of learning, education and insight. All SACOMM members should re-imagine the case for ourselves as Universities, teachers and educators.

The question is: where are scholarships and universities going to, and how will this all end up? Are there a positive outcome to be found during these troubling times? Many Humanities Departments are in trouble (low student numbers and interests) and are closing down. Universities are under threat because of the rapid changes in technology.

A question arises: How do we produce studies in Humanities that are deep and worthwhile, but also radical enough to really address the needs of society? A solution can be to: produce material that is more exciting and inviting to the world; re-imagine scholars and academia; become part of the creative changing force; engage across the spectrum of experiences and built on what we have learned. Take from the past, apply it to the current context and move forward. Re-imagine what a University is and what it should be and should look like. The current challenges are immense, but should be embraced and taken notice of.

SACOMM executive committee is to make a public statement on their position on the Fees Must Fall campaign and the rights of journalists. Statement published on the SACOMM Website for all to see.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING UFS CAMPUS MONDAY 3 OCTOBER @ 18:00 It is important for SACOMM to establish a collective position on all current issues which includes the Fees Must Fall Campaign, violence and destruction, attacks on journalists. The current crisis in Higher Education is unfolding differently on all campuses. Universities are currently underfunded by Government. It is clearly stated that SACOMM do NOT support criminal acts. During the process of re-curriculum attention should be paid to decolonialisation and aim to include the previously marginalised part of the community. The current curriculum should be re-considered and the new curriculum should be, across the board, be relevant to the current African scholar and address their needs. Communication professionals should be trained to take leads in activist processes. All principles of media ethics should always be considered.

2 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 4 OCTOBER 2016 AT 08:00 AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE MINUTES OF THE MEETING PRESENT AS CHAIRS:

President: Dr Colin Chasi Vice-President: Mr GP Van Rheede Van Oudtshoorn Thirty-five (35) SACOMM members attended the meeting.

AGENDA:

1. HOUSEKEEPING

1.1 Opening and welcome The current President, Dr Colin Chasi, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone present.

1.2 Approval of the minutes of the 2015 AGM The minutes of the 2015 AGM was approved by everybody present.

1.3 Personalia Prof PJ (Pieter) Fourie is a lifelong and highly respected member of SACOMM. Regrets were expressed for him not present at the 2016 conference. After 36 years of being the Chief Editor of Communicatio, he has formally resigned. Prof Arrie de Beer was wished a speedy and healthy recovery during illness and could therefore not attend the conference. 1.4 Declaration of conflict of interest None.

2. INTEREST GROUP FEEDBACK

2.1 Media Studies And Journalism Interest Group Prof Ylva Rodny-Gumede UJ Interaction between all journals in all streams should be encouraged. Mini-seminars should be held to produce outputs for all journals. A new website should be created which contain all links and resources. The relationship between SACOMM and The Journalist should be discussed and seriously extended.

2.2 Film Interest Group Mr Francois Smit AFDA Johannesburg

A new website on Film will be up and running. AFDA was part of the launch of the Johannesburg Film Festival. The Film Interest Group will contact academic departments at other universities directly to encourage cooperation and more interaction. A suggestion was made to change the name of the Film Interest Group to SCREEN STUDIES.

2.3 Corporate Communication Dr Tanya le Roux North-West University New life and ideas are urgently needed in this group to revive interest in Corporate Communication. The Emerging Scholars group have made great contributions so far. Corporate Communication used to be historically a strong stream. There are lots of current changes going on in this stream as well as in the corporate world.

2.4 Communication In General Mrs Martine Van der Walt-Ehlers UNISA This stream is seen as the “stepchild” and a difficult stream. All themes/topics that does not fit in anywhere else, resorts to this group. It is suggested that the name be kept as Communication In General, but the following substreams should be added:

- Communication Philosophy
- Communication Studies
- Communication And Identity
- Communication Theory Scholars which falls under “General” should rather be guided in a specific direction as Communication In General does not sound too well.

A suggested name change for this group can be COMMUNICATION STUDIES. This group should not compartmentalise too much as the term Communication Studies cover a broad field. This group should not exclude anyone who does not really fit into the other groups/streams.

2.5 Communication Education And Curriculum Development Dr Elnarine Greeff UNISA There is collaboration between this stream and the College of Human Sciences. The African University should be decolonised. Sessions on change and curriculum development should be recorded and archived on the SACOMM Website. Roundtable discussions should be held about indigenous knowledge from South Africa. More open discussions on this will follow. All academics should be concerned about the current curriculum. Interdepartmental discussions should be held on the discipline of Communication in the new and changing environment. Cooperation should be emphasised during re-curriculum. There are great and new exciting opportunities at this moment for change to take place. Each interest group should have a representative in the re-curriculum process. All initiatives will be driven with

passion.

2.6 Communication Advocacy and Activism Group Dr Julie Reid UNISA There are currently lots of interest around this stream. SACOMM will publish a media statement during the conference to cover the current short-term issues and to state the position and sentiment of SACOMM on the “Fees-Must-Fall” and violence surrounding the issues. The long-term collective position of SACOMM related to the crisis in Higher Education will be communicated and published later. This position is discussed among all members and consensus were reached on the media statements to be made public. Open and honest dialogue and communication should be emphasised and encouraged between all parties concerned. The position of all communication scholars should be emphasised. Two issues are at stake:

- The criminal acts by students
- The decolonialisation issue

The press statement will address all above mentioned issues. Pier Paolo was thanked for his editing and writing skills to fine-tune this statement. It is emphasised that violence should not be met with counter-violence and SACOMM do condemn all criminal and violent acts and activities. All communication channels are to be kept open at all times. There is a worry on why violence is used to get message across to the public and Government. There is currently a huge breakdown of trust and communication on all academic campuses and institutions. The role of private securities on campus was also questioned. There are great concern for academic staff and students who were harassed/bullied by these private securities. On 19 October 2016 Media Freedom day will be celebrated. It is suggested that SACOMM make a statement on that day.

2.7 Emerging Scholars Mrs Taryn Isaacs De Vega Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University PE Mr Mvuzo Ponono University of the Free State The emerging scholars were praised for their outstanding work and sincere contribution to SACOMM activities by all senior colleagues. The Emerging Scholars held an annual general and networking meeting which proved to be a huge success. There is currently a big movement of young and upcoming scholars in Academia which is really important. A constitution on the position of scholars should be drafted. A funding model is needed to support students. Senior academics indicated that they are willing to support emerging scholars through funding. Many burning issues are to be discussed. In future a pre-conference discussion slot should be schooled into the programme for emerging scholars. Representative from all streams should be elected to be present at the emerging scholars stream. Research and discussions are shared among them.

3. THE RUNNING OF SACOMM

3.1 Finances All SACOMM finances are in good order. Funds can also be used for contingency issues. Proper financial figures on income/expenditure on the 2016 conference are to be provided at a later stage. All expense incurred by UFS for this conference was paid for by SACOMM.

3.2 SACOMM Communication Strategy Prof Keyan Tomaselli, the University of Pretoria and the University of Johannesburg strongly support all communications by SACOMM. A new strategy should be considered to ensure all members are reached with relevant and new information.

3.3 SACOMM 2016 Conference Host Feedback Lots of conference attendance cancellations were received at the last minutes. Academics from Rhodes withdraw due to the violence and turbulent environments. The UFS tried to accommodate all and the changing programme made planning really

difficult. The final programme could only be made available at a very late stage. The Gala Dinner was to be held at 18:30 at the Campus of the University of the Free State. The organisers, especially Prof Milagros Rivera, were thanked dearly for an excellent organising job done during the most turbulent, violent and dangerous times. This conference proved to be a huge and outstanding success.

3.4 2017 Host Affirmation The 2017 Annual SACOMM Conference will be hosted by the University of Rhodes. All guidelines and specifications on how to organise the conference will be communicated to them.

3.5 2017 Executive Committee Elections All elections for positions will be held during 2017. All members are urged to consider their availability to stand for elections.

3.6 2018 Host Bid Nominations were requested. The University of Cape Town and University of Johannesburg were nominated as possible hosts, but could not be confirmed during the meeting. The 2018 venue are to be confirmed soon and nominations for 2019 are welcomed and encouraged.

4. ADDITIONAL MATTERS The following issues should be considered throughout the year:

- The formal statement on the protest actions and violence
- Decolonialisation and transformation
- Future research
- The future of the study of the discipline
- Collective solutions to be sought and found through collective intellectual capacity

4.1 The Journalist Zubeida Jaffer University of the Free State Prof Ylva Rodny-Gumede University of Johannesburg The Journalist is a brainchild and platform from the University of the Free State. Journalism students publish and engage on this forum. The editorial team at the University of Johannesburg are led by senior students. Many stories from local municipalities and the election were published. An edition on Cape Argus was also done. Promotional drives are needed for The Journalist. An archive should be build up to be used as a teaching tool. The importance of history and South African writers and journalists should be emphasised. Cooperation and encouragement should be emphasised to get more students involved. A proposal from the editors' forum to transform within three years are considered. Collaboration is established from Mozambique and will be followed up on. The Journalist survives on little resources and mainly voluntary work and contributions. A UFS broadcast was launched. The Journalist has the potential to become the knowledge bank for all the journalist organisations in South Africa. All persons who contributed and worked towards the success of The Journalist were thanked and acknowledged. All contributions are really valued and treasured.

5. NEW ITEMS

5.1 Marketing Communication This stream is no longer active. A suggestion was made to revive this stream and to make it part of Corporate Communication. At first it should be collective with Corporate Communication, and once it is well-established it can form a separate stream. This matter will be taken up by Dr Tanja le Roux of North-West University.

6. CLOSURE

All attendees were thanked for their contributions. The President and Vice-President are mentioned for their contributions and support and hard work done for SACOMM. The continuing support from Julie Reid was mentioned and highly appreciated. Prof Keyan Tomaselli volunteered to be



continuously active and supportive on all SACOMM activities. All contributions and drives are welcomed. The AGM ended at 09:00. In future more time should be allocated to the AGM.