

From the VC's Desk

Highlights | Thought Leadership

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NEWS



SMU hosts a high-level delegation from the Gauteng Department of Health

Deepening stakeholder relations is important to the growth and development of SMU, especially given the interconnectedness that the university has with different critical role players, and their contribution to its success. Anchoring this understanding, the Vice Chancellor Prof. Peter Mbatia hosted a high-level delegation from the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) on the Campus on 03 July 2023. Leading the delegation from the GDoH was the Acting HoD Mr. Lesiba Malotana, who was accompanied by amongst others, the DDG for Corporate Services, Ms. Basani Baloyi, Advisor to the MEC, Dr. Victor Ramathesele, and Dr. Terence Carter of the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI). This meeting follows on the heels of earlier meetings between the University Management and the MEC of GDoH, Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, and the Minister of Health, Hon. Dr Joe Phaala. Discussions happened in a frank and conversational manner, with respective parties gaining appreciation for current context and challenges, and providing reports on the status of various matters previously deliberated on. This approach sets a good foundation for finding solutions to problems, and also to ensure constant feedback and monitoring on developments on



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matters affecting the University and the Hospital. It also helps build working relationships between persons responsible for functions from the perspective of GDoH and SMU, and allows for quicker interaction to address matters.

Feedback revolved around a number of issues, providing important insights and timeframes. A draft bilateral MoU to govern the relationship between SMU and GDoH has been shared with the University for further inputs. Whilst a short-term resolution for the staffing needs in the School of Oral Health Sciences has been implemented, a long-term solution to address the staffing needs for both Dr George Mukhari Academic Hospital (DGMAH) and the SMU Dental hospital are receiving appropriate attention and should be finalized within the next six (6) months. Urgent repairs to some critical infrastructure backlog maintenance at the DGMAH and the Dental Hospital have been initiated, and there is a commitment by GDoH to embark, in a prioritized fashion, in resolving all other infrastructure and maintenance challenges in the clinical training platforms used by SMU staff and students. Other important agenda items explored included expansion of the SMU PQM to cater for a range of training needs and, the resuscitation of student bursaries by GDoH. The meeting emphasized the importance of GDoH and SMU jointly managing joint appointees across the entire value chain, from recruitment, including adverts and interviews, appointments and performance management. It was accepted that making reference to GDoH as the “Primary Employer” is incorrect and inadvertently exposes fissures of inefficiencies in the management of joint appointees. This will be immediately resolved by the HR heads from the University, DGMAH and the Dental hospital.

The parties agreed that there will be monthly progress reports on the various work streams, including progress towards planning, resourcing and implementation of a new state of the art tertiary academic teaching hospital that is fit-for-purpose.

