

To : Mr M Mapulane
Chairperson Portfolio Committee on Higher Education

From : Mrs Noluthando Gillian Pendu

Date : 24 April 2021

Subject : Dispute on claims made by Prof Peter Mbatl about me

Background

On the April 13, 2021 I watched and listened to Prof Mbatl's testimony. I was shocked and dismayed by the utterance he made in his response to a question why he fired me. His response was that I committed crime, I forged a certificate, which is nothing but a lie. I never forged anyone's certificate. I never wanted to come before the commission to talk about how Mbatl threatened and treated employees but his lie about me and that forced me to write this letter.. Below are the sequence of events on how I got to be appointed at Univen.

1. My appointment

In 2008 the University of Venda advertised the position of HEMIS Officer, I applied and was called for an interview. I happened to be the only person at that interview, but was offered the position. However, Mr Mahori who was a facilitator of the appointment called me and asked if I could go to UCT for testing because their **Acting VC Dr Leatte could not believe that there was a black who could know HEMIS as they recommended**. At the time I was working at UFH, I refused and rejected their offer on the basis of that statement and that I asked if there won't be tests after the interview but I was told that there was none. I said it would be improper for me to be absent from work again because they had two days with me to do that.

On the 20th March 2009, I received a call from the Registrar, Mr Nemadzivhanani who first apologised for how I was treated by the University the previous year. He told me that there was a new VC Prof Mbatl who had asked him to headhunt me because they do not find a suitable person. I should however know that I will compete with other people. He said that the advert would be out on the 29th March, and that they were asking me to apply. I agreed. I sent my application on the due date with my curriculum vitae. In the CV I stated that I did Diploma in Practical Bookkeeping, which I unfortunately could not get my certificate for it.

On the day of their selection they could not find my application, Mr Nemadzivhanani called to confirm if I submitted my application. I was then requested to resend the application to Mr Manenzhe's email, which I did. I was invited for an interview which was held on the 13 July 2009, and was appointed.

I feel that I have to set the record straight regarding my appointment. My appointment was not based on any qualification but on the skills I possessed. These were the words that he, Mbatl and Mr Manenzhe said and would always say to me. I had to establish the HEMIS Office and did my work diligently and due to the volume of work that I was doing I had to suspend my studies and concentrate on my work.

2. Charges

In 2015 I learnt from the then Registrar that Prof Mbatl had asked the internal auditor to investigate me because I had fraudulently entered into the Univen system. This is after I was told that I did not have matric, and by then I did not know where my matric certificate was but I know that I had submitted the copy together with my UNISA academic record.

I also heard a rumour that the university was losing money because I was submitting incorrect data. The internal auditor interviewed me and could not find any wrongdoing on my side, and I had a trail of emails to the people who had to correct data. He appointed Price Waterhouse Coopers from Port Elizabeth to investigate the safety of the system and data, and that there was no way I would be manipulating data. He was also not satisfied with the report too, Mbatl appointed SAB&T to investigate my office. Even there he could not find any wrongdoing on my part. He instructed the auditor to write what he wanted. The last report had some differences compared to the first one that is the one that led to charges for fraud and my subsequent expulsion. I took the case to CCMA and I won the case.

The reason we could not get for output among other things were that graduating student's information would be captured after submission dates and the system would not pick them up. That was not done in my office, data capturers were but that had to be put on my shoulders. Some post graduate students would only register for their first year, and graduate two years later without having registered. During my suspension, Prof Crafford wrote an email to the academic division urging academics to ensure that their students register each year, because we lose money for not registering them. One of the students registered for Master in Political Studies, there was no record of them in the list of higher degrees committee but was awarded a degree with a distinction.

At some point my emails were intercepted, this was confirmed by the former Registrar as well as Mr Nemukula who told me that he heard that too and that I was not the only one.

3. The reason behind my expulsion

I must say that the attack was mainly on NEHAWU, I was the Branch Secretary, and the majority of his victims were Shop stewards and those who were vocal about things that were happening at Univen. My expulsion was no different from others because if you ask too much and disagree with him you opened a can of worms for yourself. Cde Bally Makhado and others who were opposed his bid to get a third term.

4. His behaviour

Prof Mbatl was very bully, manipulative and ruthless. He would push for something to be done even though he knew that it was wrong.

- He forced my colleague to add a colleague to the list of graduates for his PhD on the eve of the graduation in 2013 although he had not corrected his thesis.
- He had favouritism and acted selectively and differently. He did not act on Mrs Cibi's case while she was found with three cases of water by the securities at the gates. She was charged but that was put under carpet, which anyway helped the lady security who was charged for drinking a bottle of water which she took from a laptop bag she picked at the parking.

- He never charged Mr Dzaga for manhandling Mr Manenzhe.
- He never implemented the recommendations by the Balintulo Commission which he instituted after South African students complained about being discriminated against, he rather charged Prof Mafunisa for inciting students, but was later reinstated after he won the case.

5. Conclusion

Mbati ensured that he determined the intended outcome. The prosecutor in my case said that “this is a decided case the employer does not want this person”. Mbati will have to tell me whose certificate I forged because there is a difference between misrepresentation and forging a certificate. What he said was nothing but a lie.

X 

Noluthando Gillian Pendu