



New Council members pictured with the Polytechnic's Rector, Dr Tjama Tjivikua, middle left, and Education Deputy Minister Dr David Namwandi, middle right, before their inauguration. Photo by Asser Niinda.

Polytechnic

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of the Polytechnic.

The Deputy Minister put more emphasis on the two committees, urging those who would be elected to these committees to take their responsibilities seriously so that the Polytechnic's budget and financial statements were not manipulated. He said that the old committees were either not effective or virtually non-existent, a situation which had landed the Polytechnic into some questionable financial deals.

The new Council members are Dr Louis Burger, from the Farmers Union, Festus Katuna Mbandeka, (private commercial sector), Loide Shaanika, (representing employees), Evelyn Breuer, (representing employers), Zitha Mnyungano, (representing the Public Service Commission), Meriam Kahitu, (representing the mining sector), Niilo Taapopi from the City of Windhoek, E N Ikela, from the Engineering Council and Katrina Liswani who represents women.

Shortly after the inauguration, the Council went into its first session where members were expected to elect the Chairperson, the Vice Chairperson and members of the various committees. But the elections of the Chairperson and the Vice Chairperson were put on hold until next week.

The new Council takes over the Polytechnic amid allegations of corruption and nepotism within the management of

the institution, with staff members and students alleging that Namibia's second biggest institution of higher learning was dragging its feet on the formation of a trade union.

The Registrar of the Polytechnic, Mr Korneers Jafta, had also recently come under fire for having allegedly engineered his daughter to be admitted on a sponsored programme, despite the fact that she did not meet the requirements but was nevertheless preferred over those who met the requirements.

Early this year, students were up in arms over how the Registrar's daughter, Ludmira Jafta, was admitted for a degree course on the medical science programme, even though she did not have the required points.

In 2007, the Polytechnic advertised the two programmes under its Health Science Division, namely the Medical Science and Environmental Health programmes. Thirty students were needed in each programme. As a requirement, successful applicants needed to have high grades in mathematics, physical science and biology, at least 30 points and above.

More than 600 applications were received from which 30 successful applicants for each programme were selected. When the pre-selection started, many needy students especially from rural areas were allegedly left out, even though they had met the requirements, while Jafta's daughter was admitted though she had fewer points.

"I want the leadership of the Polytechnic to investigate this

case. It reeks of corruption and nepotism. I am very disappointed. The Anti-Corruption Commission, ACC, should investigate this case. It is very serious. How can the Registrar admit his own daughter at the expense of others when she did not have enough points? He may claim that he was not directly involved in the pre-selection, but he worked closely with the consultant who did the pre-selection," fumed one student early this year.

In an open letter addressed to the Chairman of the Polytechnic, Labour Commissioner, ACC, and the Minister of Education early this year, staff members and students said that they were fed up with the manner in which the institution was being run, adding that the time to speak out was now.

They also alleged that the Polytechnic was the only publicly funded institution established by law which did not allow the creation of a union in the workplace, and wanted the Polytechnic Council to investigate those issues.

The students and staff members also alleged that the Rector of the Polytechnic, Dr Tjama Tjivikua, had "ceded" most of his powers to Neavera Olivier, Director of Planning and International Relations. She allegedly started as Dr Tjivikua's personal assistant and quickly rose to become a director.

None of these issues had ever been investigated by the outgoing Council. Deputy Minister Namwandi expressed the hope that the two would now work together to solve problems currently experienced by the Polytechnic and move the institution to greater heights.

Last week, Cabinet rejected the Polytechnic's request to rename the Institution to Namibia University of Science and Technology and ordered that the Institution should forthwith refrain from using the name Namibia University of Science and Technology.

Cabinet reasoned that if the mandate of the Polytechnic was to change, there should be

first a comprehensive and holistic review of the entire higher education system in Namibia in relation to its expected contribution to the achievement of Vi-

sion 2030.

"The submission by the Polytechnic of Namibia should not be entertained until such time when a comprehensive

review on higher education has been undertaken, including cost and duplication analysis," said Education Minister, Dr Abraham Iyambo, last week.

Parole

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ducing drugs and other serious offences.

"It must be understood that this exercise is not an act of returning dangerous criminals to our streets and communities... I call upon all prisoners who will

benefit from this gesture to refrain from abusing it in any way. I want them to change their ways and become responsible and law abiding citizens," said President Pohamba.

"They must be strong so that they are not tempted to return to their former evil ways of crime and destructive behaviour. I believe that each

person deserves a second chance. I therefore call upon the communities amongst whom these individuals will return, not to see them as outcasts but to accept them and help them to integrate harmoniously into society. Such acceptance is one of the pivotal ways to ensure that they are not returning to criminal activities



A coffin containing 474 remains of human beings being buried at the Luderitz Bay Cemetery on Thursday.

Heroes Day

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commemoration took place throughout the country, but the main one, which was addressed by President Pohamba, took place in Luderitz Bay, Karas Region, on Thursday.

Commemorations in Luderitz were preceded by a solemn reburial of 474 human remains which were found in 1999 in the Namib Desert north-east of Luderitz Bay at a place called Charlottental in the Sperrgebiet mining area. It has not yet been determined whose remains were those, but government had decided to make them part of the reburial ceremony to mark Heroes Day at the Luderitz Bay Cemetery.

Many national and regional leaders from all over the country's 13 regions flocked to Luderitz Bay to be part of the commemoration there, making the port town a hive of activities it has never seen since independence.

Among those who attended Thursday's commemoration in Luderitz Bay were Founding President Sam Nujoma, Prime Minister Nahas Angula and his Deputy, Marko Hausiku, Chief Justice Peter Shivute, National Assembly Speaker, Dr Theoben Gurirab, Chairperson of the National Council, Asser Kapere, Cabinet ministers and deputy ministers, as well as regional governors and councilors from various constituencies in the regions.

After the reburial of the remains, President Pohamba,

Founding President Dr Nujoma, Prime Minister Angula, National Assembly Speaker, Dr Gurirab, National Council Chairman, Kapere, Chief Justice Shivute, Chairman of the Traditional Council and King of the Ondonga Traditional Authority, King Immanuel Kauluma Elifas, Acting Chief of the Namibia Defence Force, Major General Peter Nambundunga and Colonel John Ya Otto, laid wreaths in that order. Colonel Nankudhu was the Commander of the Platoon that launched the armed liberation struggle on August 26, 1966.

President Pohamba said that government had decided to accord the remains a proper and dignified burial so that they were not exposed to elements and continued violation by scavengers.

"We also felt that it does not accord with our values to allow the remains of our fellow human beings to be scattered around unattended and to be fed upon by scavengers. That is un-Namibian, as it is un-African. Common decency demands that we treat the departed with dignity, even our enemies," said President Pohamba.

During the 1904-1908 war of resistance, German soldiers erected concentration camps in the Namib Desert and on Shark Island and other places where thousands of Namibians perished. Some were summarily executed, while others died of hunger and diseases.

The President said that government was aware that the deaths of persons buried on

Thursday might have different causes that might have occurred at different times. While some might originate from the 1904-1908 war of resistance, others might come from later periods and events, such as the years of diamond mining rush and the developments such as at Kolmanskop, as well as the armed liberation struggle when remains of some PLAN combatants and civilians went missing without any trace and might have been disposed of in such areas by the apartheid agents.

He said that not all the remains might necessarily be those of participants in the anti-colonial war or the liberation struggle. While some might have died resisting the enemy, others could have been civilians working on the mines or engaged in other civilian activities.

"Be that as it may," he said, "they all deserve a decent burial which they may not have received after their deaths. Hence we decided we will not be deterred in our duty to pay respect to them regardless of what the cause of their deaths might have been.

"Our society is based on the respect for human dignity and common decency. Thus we are convinced that providing a decent and dignified burial to the remains, as we did early today, is the right thing to do. It is the right course of action to take."

The President told thousands of people that Heroes Day was a day of reflecting back on the road travelled to independence and paying homage to gallant

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