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## Media Release: ETHICORE – Political Practice in Occupational Therapy

### ETHICORE landmark support on “Political Practice of Occupational Therapy” with the University of the Western Cape - a first in Africa and the Middle East

#### CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA: 3 SEPTEMBER 2024

Pioneering pan African and Middle East public policy and political advisory, advocacy and lobbying firm – ETHICORE Political Lobbying, proudly announce its support to advance the impact of Political Practice of Occupational Therapy, through its sponsorship of the University of the Western Cape’s Department of Occupational Therapy.

ETHICORE’s patronage of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference of the University of the Western Cape’s Department of Occupational Therapy, is a first-of-its-kind significant landmark. In our industry, it is a first-of-its-kind for Africa and the Middle East, in collaboration with a leading research-led university, teaching the values of Political Practice in Occupational Therapy (PPOT), in its curriculum.

The milestone conference is convened under the theme “*Celebrating a Legacy of Occupational Justice and Social Transformation*”, on 6 September 2024.

ETHICORE Chief Executive Officer, Abdul Waheed Patel: *“ETHICORE’s landmark support for the University of the Western Cape’s Department of Occupational Therapy, furthers our mission to be a global African leader in our industry. As an ethically focused firm, our vision and values commit us to leverage our expertise for positive people-centred impact, inclusion and development. Through our association and support, we recognise the importance of teaching the theory and application of political practice in occupational therapy, by advocating for occupational rights and the political determinants of human occupation. Political Practice in Occupational Therapy, has the potential to strengthen African public policies and national strategies, for enhancing universal healthcare systems, and socio-economic inclusion.”*

Prof Lucia Hess-April, Postgraduate Coordinator in the University of the Western Cape’s Department of Occupational Therapy (UWC OT): *“Occupational therapists view engagement in occupation as a fundamental human right. When people experience barriers to occupational participation through social injustice, poverty and related social determinants of health, a Political Practice of Occupational Therapy (PPOT) is required to address their occupational rights. The UWC OT curriculum teaches values of a PPOT that include being concerned about human rights, equity and systemic change, thus engaging various political aspects of human occupation. In the case of people with disabilities, ableism in society is a form of systemic oppression that marginalises people whose bodies do not fit into the societal construct of what is regarded as normal and desirable. In this case, occupational therapists not only see themselves as therapists but also as advocates and change agents by creating inclusive opportunities for occupational participation. Through systemic advocacy and community development, they address disparities in access to work, advocate for resources and social participation; and implement disability awareness campaigns to educate society about disability inclusion and the rights of people with disabilities to be treated equally and with dignity and respect.”*

In 2023, the University of the Western Cape ranked 6<sup>th</sup>, in the “Times Higher Education Sub-Saharan Africa University Rankings”, and 4<sup>th</sup> among South African universities.

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*“ETHICORE is honoured to partner with the University of the Western Cape. Not only does it coincide with the university’s commemoration of four decades of academic, research, and training excellence in occupational therapy, it’s timing fittingly honours the memory of former University Rector and Vice-Chancellor (2001 – 2014), Prof. Brian O’ Connell who passed away, on 25 August. Prof. O’ Connell’s visionary leadership and tenure, marks a transformative era in the history of the University of the Western Cape. The legacy of his work continues to shape and inspire its present and future”, adds Abdul Waheed Patel.*

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**For more information and enquiries:**

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**About ETHICORE:**

ETHICORE is a leading pan African government and public affairs firm established in 2009, working in 29 African and Middle East markets. The firm specialises in public policy, regulatory, government relations, investment and political risk analytics, strategy, advocacy and advisory.