



16 February 2019

Statement from DUT management following the threatening and inaccurate social media posts

The University is aware of the social media posts which were allegedly published on the SRC Facebook page and circulated via What's App today. We believe that these posts are purely designed to instill fear, to intimidate and to promote uncertainty for all DUT students, staff, parents and guardians, ahead of the resumption of our academic programme on Monday, 18 February 2019.

We urge the student leaders who are propagating this false news to act more responsibly and to refrain from spreading inaccurate stories that compromise the safety and well-being of all students and staff at our University. With specific regard to the comments that were posted on social media today, we would like to advise you of the following truths:

1. Following the tragic incident that led to the death of our student Mr Mlungisi Madonsela outside the Steve Biko campus in Durban, DUT Management was the first to send a representative to pay respects and to convey our sincere condolences to the Madonsela family in Jozini, on Thursday morning 7 February 2019.
2. While it would be remiss of Management to make public announcements detailing the level of support provided to the Madonsela family, we can confirm that the support that we provided to the Madonsela family was much more than what was previously given to any other family of a deceased student. This was for self-evident reasons.

Management had entered into a negotiation with the SRC on Friday 8 February 2019, where we provided feedback on the previous night's meeting with the NSFAS Administrator. Following that update, we proposed the reopening of our Administration and Support departments on Monday 11 February 2019. Management also proposed an official DUT Memorial Service for the late Mr Madonsela, which we wanted to host on Tuesday 12 February 2019.

It was in this same meeting, where the SRC proposed that DUT should only consider the resumption of the academic programme after the funeral of the late Mr Madonsela - and the SRC recommended that lectures should resume on Monday 18 February 2019. The Executive Committee of Senate had a meeting on Monday afternoon (11 February 2019), where they agreed to support the recommendation from the SRC, to only resume the academic programme on Monday 18 February 2019.

3. Management is acutely aware of certain unscrupulous and corrupt individuals who are apparently in collusion with similarly corrupt landlords, who want to force the University to enter into agreements outside DUT's procurement processes. Some sources suggest that they may have already been paid huge sums of money to deliver agreements with the University, no matter what. Unfortunately, it would seem that the entire student body has to suffer because of this corruption.

In our view, this could explain why the SRC keeps on renegeing on certain agreements that are reached with them, which includes, a process to visit all residences which they have expressed unhappiness about. These joint inspections were going to be conducted under the leadership of the Dean of Students.

We must emphasize that the majority of the buildings leased by the University were previewed by a Technical Team, comprising Student Housing officials and a delegation from the SRC. Therefore, we feel that it is disingenuous and grossly unfair to now suggest that the SRC was excluded from the process of selecting student accommodation.

4. Yesterday, 15 February 2019, the Minister of Higher Education and Training Ms Naledi Pandor, released a statement about how government will assist various categories of students with their debt, in order for them to be unblocked. It is recommended that we should wait for this process to unfold. Eventually, all of those students, once government and NSFAS have made the necessary assessments, will be unblocked and duly assisted with their registration. It is important to note that some students have already been unblocked since the SRC submitted their memorandum to the Vice-Chancellor, through multiple engagement with NSFAS. Further, it must be noted that the SRC President receives daily updates from the Office of the Registrar, regarding registration statistics at DUT. Please find the Minister's statement attached.

5. The tragic loss of Mr Mlungisi Madonsela's life had involved security officers who were working at DUT for many years - long before Xcellent Security became our service provider in May 2018. As we have publicly stated already, DUT Management condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the use of guns with live ammunition, which were turned on our students, and further, that our staff and members of the public, were violently attacked with bricks and stones during the student protests on Tuesday 5 February 2019. One of our staff members had to undergo a lengthy surgery to reconstruct parts of her face that were severely injured in the violent attack.

Whilst the University recognises the right to peaceful protest, we urge student leaders to prevent violence and intimidation from taking place. The student leaders have a responsibility to ensure that during protests, there must be no damage to property, there must be no violation of the rights of others, there must be no disruption to University operations and they must commit to honest and realistic discussions, as we strive to find a way-forward.

6. The focus on certain members of Management is part of an old dirty tricks campaign, by people who have all along benefited from shady contracts at DUT, including those who now see an opportunity to further plunder the University through pacts, that they may have with certain individuals and leaders amongst us. In our view, this is simply anti-transformation and pro-corruption, designed by anarchists who strive to destabilise our University for their personal benefit.

As of yesterday, 15 February 2019, we have registered 28607 students who are ready and waiting to commence with the academic programme for 2019. We have registered an additional 2914 students since the SRC tabled their memorandum on Monday 4 February 2019. We will work hard to ensure that we make up for the time lost following the tragic events from last week. We remain committed to working with our SRC to resolve the issues that are within our area of control. We will continue to engage with NSFAS and to complete the review of student residences with our SRC. There is important work ahead and we need a safe, stable and secure campus environment for all students and staff.

Finally, we remind all students and staff to only access official University correspondence via DUT PinBoard email system (for staff), *DUT4life* email accounts (for students) and via the DUT website (for parents/guardians and members of the public).

Sincerely

DUT Management
