

UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

07 September 2021

Dear staff and students

On Sunday 05 September 2021, the DUT branch of the EFFSC hosted an event where they had advertised that the meeting point would be outside Gate 3 of the Steve Biko campus in Durban. By midday, approximately 150 people had gathered peacefully outside Gate 3 and no negative incidents were reported. Members of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Metro Police were monitoring the gathering.

Around 18H00 that evening, the assembled group had dispersed peacefully. It must be noted that the number of attendees at the event had increased, after the initial DUT group had allegedly been joined by students from other institutions and non-students too.

We have since been informed that the group then marched along Botanic Gardens Road towards Berea Centre and they were apparently joined by other individuals along the way.

We have received further reports that the group continued to march along Dr Pixley KaSeme Street towards the Point area, where students from DUT and other universities are accommodated at outsourced residences. Law enforcement officials estimated that the group had numbered between 800 to 900 people at this stage.

The situation then allegedly turned violent, when some members of the group started throwing objects and projectiles at motorists, apparently damaging a number of vehicles. SAPS and Metro Police were on the scene and reacted to the threat against public safety. Police responded to the public violence and 15 people were arrested.

The number of DUT students who may have been arrested is unknown at this stage. The identity of those who were arrested will only be revealed once they appear in court.

Following the incident, we were notified that a case of Public Violence was opened at the Durban Central Police Station, case number: 203/09/2021.

The University is aware that the SRC elections are imminent and we advise all student leaders and political clubs to act responsibly, to respect the law, to follow the COVID-19 regulations and importantly, to avoid mass gatherings and violent behaviour. We remind all political clubs to adhere to our request that was shared with them last week:

SPREAD YOUR MESSAGE NOT THE VIRUS!

ALL NON-ESSENTIAL GATHERINGS REMAIN BANNED AT DUT.

Gatherings for the purposes of electioneering fall under non-essential gatherings, and are therefore banned.

PLEASE REFRAIN FROM ELECTIONEERING IN GATHERINGS.

The University will not hesitate to act against any registered student or club who violates the rules, regulations, policies and codes that we all have to abide by.



Please remember that we are still grappling with a third wave of the coronavirus pandemic in KwaZulu-Natal, so you must continue to follow the public health protocols. Wear your mask securely covering your nose and mouth, wash your hands regularly with water and soap, observe physical and social distancing, avoid gatherings and when you are invited, please register for the COVID-19 vaccine and then, take the vaccine when it is offered to you.

Sincerely

DUT Management team