



COMMUNIQUÉ TO THE CUT COMMUNITY

UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS AT CUT

18 AUGUST 2020

2020 #30

Dear CUT Community

We welcome our President's announcement that South-Africa moved to Level 2 of the lockdown. Although this involves an increased presence on our campuses, a very cautioned approach will prevail. Our Executive Managers and their teams are in the process of finalising the relevant guidelines and protocols, and will communicate with you soonest. The team includes: (i) Prof. Phatha Ngidi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC): Teaching and Learning, and Prof Alfred Ngowi, DVC: Research, Innovation and Engagement, on the phased return of the next cohort of undergraduate and postgraduate students to the on-campus academic activities; (ii) Dr Nothemba Mrwetyana, Institutional Registrar, on the phased return of the next cohort of students to the residences; and (iii) Dr Gary Paul, DVC: Resources and Operations, on the return-to-work protocols for staff members.

This global pandemic resulted in elevated levels of anxiety, uncertainty, and fear for us all. Such emotions complicate our experience of loss and grief. Hence, our sincere condolences go to family, friends, fellow students, and colleagues of the four students and one staff member who have passed away due to COVID-19. Our thoughts are also with those who are currently ill. May they have a speedy and full recovery.

Despite the lockdown challenges, Management and Council remained committed to enhance the university and ensure smooth operations. Several meetings were held since the lockdown began on 27 March 2020, including 21 Council and Council committee meetings (the norm is 24 per annum), and 25 Management and Extended Management Committee meetings (the norm is 19 per annum). Furthermore, regular meetings and engagements were held with Organised Labour and the SRCs. Some positive developments at the university, to mention a few, include:

- ❖ Council approved Management's recommendation to conclude the staged insourcing of Protection Services by December 2021. Consequently, all cleaning, gardening, and protection services will be completely insourced, reflecting CUT's young, dynamic, and socially conscious nature.
- ❖ The consultation processes with all stakeholders to finalise Vision 2030 and the Strategic Plan: 2021 – 2025 have been concluded and submitted to all statutory bodies for approval during this term.
- ❖ Council approved the appointment of a contractor to develop and complete the soccer, cricket, and rugby fields at the Welkom campus during 2021, costed at R6, 315 million.
- ❖ The procurement and professional teams' appointment processes for our six mega infrastructure projects have been finalised, and the design processes are finally on track. The projects include two 200-bed residences, a new Teacher Education Building, and a Multipurpose Hall at the Welkom campus; and two 130-bed residences, a new Management Sciences Building, and a Jewellery School Building at the Bloemfontein campus.

- ❖ Council approved the policy and procedure on harassment, sexual harassment, and gender-based violence. This is an important tool towards our aim to create a university that is free from gender inequality and violence, and to be an institution that supports and promotes female empowerment.
- ❖ We are happy to indicate that the External Auditors (SNG-GT) expressed an unmodified audit opinion, and that Council approved the 2019 Annual Report and Annual Financial Statements.
- ❖ In this women's month, CUT congratulates and celebrates one of its own, Mrs Lerato Mogotsi, for making it to the top 50 Mrs South Africa semi-finalists. Lerato is a Senior Lab Technician: Natural Sciences in the Faculty of Humanities. You are our winner Lerato – go to the end!
- ❖ Our Chancellor, Madam Justice Mahube Molemela, will deliver the keynote address at the colloquium entitled “I am Generation Equality: Realising Women's Rights” to celebrate 2020 Women's Month celebrations, at 17:00 today.
- ❖ The special branding project on both campuses have been implemented, and you will notice the innovative and professional-look branding signs and endeavours.
- ❖ Management, in collaboration with Council, worked non-stop to secure the financial sustainability of the university, despite the decrease in subsidies implemented by government, and the major additional expenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the compilation of a Business Continuity Financial Plan and implementing a cut of 10% in the Operational Budget for 2020. Despite these challenges, the financial support to students continued unhindered, which include NSFAS allowances, CUT bursaries, CUT Thusanang Project and the CUT COVID-19 Relief Fund. We can also confidently say that permanent employee salaries for 2020 are secured, although adjustments had to be made to new and vacant positions, and part-time appointments. The next few years will be challenging for the university, and the CUT community will have to do their part to support the implemented cost-containment measures.

In conclusion, we remain committed to complete the 2020 academic year, and Management remains grateful to each student and staff member for your commitment to walk the extra mile, despite many challenges and stresses along the way. Furthermore, I must commend the CUT Council, the Management Team, Organised Labour, and the SRCs for their leadership, guidance, support, and hard work during this challenging period.

Be assured that strict health and safety protocols will remain in place during Stage 2 of the lockdown to protect the safety and well-being of all staff and students. The default position to work from home where possible and to continue with online academic activities where possible, still applies.

As an institution, we will continue to do our part in preventing the infection risk, and to combat this disease. Together, we will be able to overcome this pandemic. I remain positive that, through this challenge, South Africa as a nation and CUT as an institution will become stronger and more unified than ever before. Take care and stay safe!

Kind regards / Ditumediso tse mofuthu / Vriendelike groete

Prof. Henk de Jager
Vice-Chancellor and Principal