



COMMUNIQUÉ TO STAFF AND STUDENTS DISRUPTIONS AT THE BLOEMFONTEIN CAMPUS

2020 #1

Dear Staff and Students

Since December 2019, Management has been working tirelessly and engaging continuously with our student leadership and key staff members in ensuring a smooth start to the 2020 academic year. These interventions included, *inter alia*, a Management Committee (Mancom) meeting on 12 December 2019; a Student Fees Committee (SFC) meeting on 13 January 2020; a Student Services Council (SSC) meeting on 15 January 2020; and two meetings of the Executive Committee of Senate (Senex) on 21 and 24 January 2020 respectively. In addition, various engagements between myself and executive and senior managers, and members of the Students' Representative Councils (SRCs) at both campuses took place during the past few weeks. We have concluded our engagements with student leaders on Friday, 24 January 2020 in a satisfactory manner.

Sadly, and to my disappointment, disruptions of the registration process at the Bloemfontein campus occurred today. Following a meeting between Mancom and the SRCs at the Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses this afternoon, it transpired that one of the reasons for the disruptions are to show solidarity to the demands that the South African Student Union (SAUS) has submitted to Minister Dr BE Nzimande. SAUS is not satisfied with the response of the Minister to their demands, and has called for a national shutdown of universities. Furthermore, several challenges related to the registration processes and other related issues were tabled at this afternoon's meeting, which were resolved in a three-hour meeting.

The registration process and other activities at the university will proceed as planned on Tuesday, 28 January 2020 at both campuses.

Furthermore, I have received reports that some of our staff members were instructed by protesting students to vacate their offices. Management strongly condemn such incidents, as such must take place within our Code of Conduct, and according to university policy, and in an amicable manner. We, as the CUT community, have proven since 2016 that we are committed to embrace sound student activism, constructive engagements with all stakeholders, and that we are serious about addressing challenges experienced by staff and students. Incidents where employees and students are victimised will, however, not be tolerated, and we will institute processes to deal with such incidents.

I would like to extend my sincere apology to staff, students, parents, guardians, alumni and external partners for the inconvenience caused as a result of these disruptions.

In conclusion, Management has a responsibility to ensure the safety of staff and students, and to protect CUT property. We take this matter very seriously, and will continue to work together, in collaboration with the University Council, with all stakeholders in promoting positive dialogue to ensure that the 2020 academic year commences smoothly.

Thank you for your understanding!

Kind regards

Prof. Henk de Jager

Vice-Chancellor and Principal
(27 January 2020)