



## COMMUNIQUÉ TO STAFF AND STUDENTS

### UPDATE TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS

**WEDNESDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2016**

#### Dear Staff and Students

You will recall my previous Communiqué, sent on 26 September 2016, in which I regrettably informed our staff, students, parents and guardians that all academic activities at both the CUT Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses have been suspended, with effect from 12:00 that day (Monday, 26 September 2016) until Monday, 10 October 2016 due to security concerns on these campuses at that stage. The decision to close both CUT campuses was aligned with Management's ability to assess potential risks to the University, and to the safety of our students and staff in general. I would like to once more extend my sincere apology to students, staff, parents, guardians and external partners for the inconvenience caused as a result of that decision.

The purpose of today's Communiqué is to update you on the developments at our campuses; developments at national level; to provide feedback on the special meeting of the University Council that was held; and to provide you with the revised academic programme for the fourth term of 2016.

#### 1. PROMOTING POSITIVE DIALOGUE WITH STAFF & STUDENTS

Management has sustained their commitment to continuously engage with stakeholders in a transparent and open manner on matters that affect our students and staff. To this effect, I met with all staff at the Bloemfontein Campus, the Union Leadership and the Institutional SRC President on Thursday, 29 September 2016 to find long-lasting solutions to the current challenges facing us at our University. Furthermore, the Chairperson of Council, Mr Mike Mohohlo, and I accepted a Memorandum from a group of students from our Welkom Campus on Thursday, 29 September 2016. During a visit to the Welkom Campus on Friday, 30 September 2016, I met with all staff of that campus; the Campus Management Committee; the SRC President of that campus; and I had the opportunity to address and engage with a large group of Welkom Campus students. All these engagements were held in a constructive manner, and I am grateful to all stakeholders for their support and commitment to these processes.

#### 2. MULTI-STAKEHOLDER FORUM MEETING OF THE DHET

The Institutional SRC President, Mr Thapelo Ngozo, and I attended the Multi-Stakeholder Forum Meeting of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) on Monday, 3 October 2016, at the Emperors Palace Convention Centre, Johannesburg. Present were President Mr Jacob Zuma, the Minister of DHET, Mr Blade Nzimande, other Cabinet Ministers, Director-Generals, Vice-Chancellors, University SRC Presidents, religious and business leaders. All the parties present at that meeting agreed to a Declaration, attached as **Annexure A**.

CUT's Management and the Institutional SRC President are committed to the outcomes included in the Declaration. We welcome the commitment that the academic programmes at universities are to resume as a matter of urgency in all institutions where these have been halted.

### 3. FEEDBACK FROM THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

A special meeting of the University Council was held on Thursday, 29 September 2016. Council considered the recommendations by the University’s Student Fees Committee, the Management Committee and the Finance Committee of Council, and passed the following resolution:

- ❖ Council rescinded the part of Resolution CR 8/14/02 of 6 June 2014 that speaks to an increase of 8.5% in tuition fees, and a 10% increase in residence fees for 2017.
- ❖ Council approved an increase of 8% in both tuition and residence fees for the 2017 academic year. However, it should be ensured that consultations with the students continue.
- ❖ Council accepted government’s commitment to support students from poor, working and middle-class families – i.e., those students with a household income of up to R600 000 per annum.
- ❖ Council approved the Preliminary Headline Budget for 2017

Allow me to unpack the implications of the resolution by Council and its impact on our students and the University: The Ministerial Statement highlights that there will be no fee increment for financially needy students (i.e. NSFAS students) and the “missing-middle” students: *“To ensure that such inflation-linked fee adjustments on the 2015 fee baseline are affordable to financially needy students, government is committed to finding the resources to support children of all poor, working and middle-class families – those with a household income of up to R600 000 per annum – with subsidy funding to cover the gap between the 2015 fee and the adjusted 2017 fee at their institution”.*

From Table 1 below, it can be established that a zero % fee increase would result in a loss of income of R19 million to the University. An 8% fee increase would have no impact on financially needy and missing-middle students. At CUT, these students are estimated to constitute approximately 95% of the University’s student population. The R18,05 million fee increment associated with these students will be ‘billed directly’ to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), and not to the students’ accounts. The 8% fee increase would only impact on those students with a household income in excess of R600 000. This is aligned with the spirit of free education, which emphasises that free education is intended for needy students. An 8% increase guarantees an income of R18,05 million of the R19 million, whereas a 0% increase would result in a loss of income of R19 million for CUT. Table 1 below indicates the implications of the various scenarios for CUT and its students.

**Table 1: Implications of the various scenarios**

Student details	0% fee increase for 2017		Total income for CUT at a 0% increase	8% fee increase for 2017		Total income for CUT at an 8% fee increase
	Students	Government		Students	Government	
Financially needy students (72%)	R0	R0	R0	R0	R13,680 M	R13,680 M
Missing-middle students (23%)	R0	R0	R0	R0	R4,370 M	R4,370 M
Students above the R600 000 threshold (5%)	R0	R0	R0	R0,950 M	R0 M	R0,950 M
<b>Total</b>	<b>R0</b>	<b>R0</b>	<b>R 0</b>	<b>R0,950 M</b>	<b>R18,050 M</b>	<b>R19,000 M</b>

Please note Management’s commitment that no financial exclusions will be imposed on academically deserving students based on their historic debt, i.e. outstanding fees. The Financial Exclusions Committee convenes regularly to ensure that students who cannot meet their financial obligations are given an opportunity to be heard. In 2016, Registration and Financial guidelines with concessions

were developed and shared with students to make the registration process less stressful. Similar sets of guidelines will be made available for 2017 registrations.

#### **4. MEMORANDUMS RECEIVED FROM STUDENTS AT BLOEMFONTEIN & WELKOM CAMPUSES**

Management, with the support of the University Council, is currently in the process of attending to the demands and concerns of our students, as expressed in the Memorandums received from the Bloemfontein students on 23 September 2016, and the Welkom students on 29 September 2016.

The relevant Executive Managers are working tirelessly to resolve these matters. Regarding the strengthening of the security systems at our campuses, Council has decreed the repair of cameras, at the very least, at its meeting of 9 September 2016, for which R5 Million has been set aside. The repair of faulty cameras and the installation of other critical ones have already commenced. Furthermore, it was also agreed that extended hours for both libraries will be implemented from 10 October 2016, and that dedicated computer rooms will be made available for 24 hours a day to our students. It should be noted that Council and Management are committed to continue to grow our Welkom Campus, and to improve the infrastructure on this campus - of which the addition of a 252 beds Student Residence at the Welkom campus is just one example. In addition, a 96 beds Student Residence at the Bloemfontein campus was recently opened. Management will provide continuous feedback to the students on their demands included in these Memorandums.

#### **5. ACADEMIC PROGRAMME FOR THE FOURTH TERM OF 2016**

In order to make up for the academic time lost, and to ensure that our students are not disadvantaged as a result of that, the University Senate, on 30 September 2016, approved the following revised academic programme for the fourth term of 2016:

- *Contact sessions and normal assessments to continue until 28 October instead of 21 October 2016.*
- *The main assessment for year subjects to commence on 29 October instead of 22 October 2016.*
- *The main assessment for year subjects to conclude on 19 November instead of 12 November 2016.*
- *The main assessment for semester subjects to commence on 31 October 2016.*
- *The main assessment for semester subjects to conclude on 19 November instead of 12 November 2016.*
- *Sickness, special and re-assessments to commence on 23 November instead of 21 November 2016, and to conclude on 29 November instead of 26 November 2016.*
- *Mark announcements will still take place on 9 December 2016.*

In conclusion, I rely on the support of all our stakeholders to ensure that the academic programme will continue smoothly on 10 October 2016, while we will continuously engage in a transparent and open manner on matters that affect both our students and staff.

Thank you for all your support during these challenging times! Let us as a CUT Team continue to lead by example through managing and running our University efficiently.

Kind regards,



**Prof. Henk de Jager**  
**Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal**  
(4 October 2016)