



## COMMUNIQUÉ TO STAFF, STUDENTS, PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND ALUMNI

### **SUSPENDING OF ALL LECTURES AND ASSESSMENTS**

**TUESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2016**

#### **Dear Staff and Students**

As you are aware, I have indicated in my communiqué of 4 October 2016 that the academic programme would continue on Monday, 10 October 2016, whilst we continuously engage, in a transparent and open manner, on matters that affect both our students and staff.

Last week, Management also agreed to meet with the Students' Representative Councils (SRCs) of both the Bloemfontein and Welkom campuses; the Student Parliament, involving all student leaders from the various student political affiliations; and the Higher Education Parents Dialogue Committee and Forum on Monday, 10 October 2016 at 15:00, for purposes of continuing our engagements on students' demands.

Sadly, and to my disappointment, disruptions of lectures at the Bloemfontein campus continued on the morning of Monday, 10 October 2016. Following a five-hour meeting on Monday afternoon with more than 100 student leaders from both campuses, parents and union leaders, the students demanded the following:

- **Rejection of the 8% increase in tuition and residence fees for 2017, which was approved by the University Council on 29 September 2016:** This is despite the fact that Management clearly indicated that 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.
- **Free, quality decolonised higher education for all, and that Management should align themselves with this demand and support students:** Note that, although Management supports free, quality decolonised higher education for poor and financial needy students, we cannot support free education for all students, including those students with a household income in excess of R600 000.
- **Shutdown of the University until these demands are met.** Note that Management clearly indicated our concerns about the academic time already lost, and that a further shutdown could compromise the 2016 academic year.
- **Various other demands:** These included (i) no financial exclusions of students; (ii) implementation of an integrated security system at the University; (iii) quality education; (iv) deconolisation of the curriculum; (v) concessions and support to international students; (vi) more student residences on both campuses; (vii) insourcing of outsourced workers; and (viii) the fringe benefit that the children of staff members can study for free, should be

scrapped. Note that Management provided extensive feedback on the progress made in this regard, and agreed to commitments and timelines to address all these demands, with the exception of the last one.

Following these demands; the continuing disruption of the academic programme; and assessment of potential risks to the University, and to the safety of our students and staff in general, **it was decided to suspend lectures and assessments until Friday, 14 October 2016.**

Furthermore, at our meeting with student leaders, they have indicated that they are committed to peaceful demonstrations and continued protest for free education. Unfortunately, a group of students continued with disruptions at the Bloemfontein campus this morning, forcing staff to leave offices and to close the Library and Information Services (LIS) building; blocking entrances and roads, etc. We then had no other option but to apply the existing Court Interdict, and to request the South African Police Services (SAPS) to assist us in restoring order on campus.

However, we remain positive that, through further engagements with stakeholders over the next few days, including a special meeting of the Executive Committee (Exco) of Council, we will reach common ground, allowing us to continue with lectures and assessments soon.

That said, Management is deeply concerned about the impact of this decision and its implications for the 2016 academic year. Losing more academic time will certainly pose a risk to students completing their studies successfully. To address this situation, Management is in the process of developing various scenarios to assist students in completing the academic year, which scenarios will be communicated to students soon.

**Once again, I would like to extend my sincere apology to students, staff, parents, guardians, alumni and external partners for the inconvenience caused as a result of this decision.**

We as Management have sustained our commitment to continuously engage with stakeholders in a transparent and open manner on matters that affect our students and staff. However, we have a responsibility to ensure the safety of students and staff, and to protect our property. Let us, therefore, as a CUT Team, in collaboration with the University Council, continue to work together in promoting positive dialogue to resolve these concerns, and to complete the 2016 academic year successfully!

Thank you for your understanding and support during these challenging times!

Kind regards



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