



SRC 2016/17

“TELL NO LIES, CLAIM NO EASY VICTORIES”

The entire DUT community at large, receive our humble yet revolutionary greetings. “Education is the most potent weapon you can use to change the world”, in these words of Nelson Mandela we would like to express our heartfelt anger and discernment that education has become a privilege for the poor rather than a right. It had to take unity from all of us to fight for what is ours hence we extend our gratitude to all students that participated in the protest in pursuit of championing the challenges disgruntling the students of DUT. We understand it was not an easy thing to sacrifice writing your tests but nonetheless you made it and we say thank you. It was worth the course, these are the issues that we have fought for and the resolutions taken.

FUNDING / MTU6

At the beginning of the 2016 academic year, we had a very large number of students whom were unsuccessful for NSFAS 2016 for various reasons that we can count but the reason for the majority of them was due to insufficient funds. As part of the agreement between the SRC, DUT management, DHET and NSFAS more than 4000 students who formed part of that category were unblocked for tuition registration and they were coded as MTU6 (short for Means Test Unfunded 2016). The same prevailed in July 2016 for semester students. Many students were in the limbo, not knowing whether they will be paid for or not, the SRC is very confident with assurance to say that all those students will receive NSFAS full packages for 2017 and their outstanding fees will be covered. All those students under this category do not need to apply for NSFAS again, a communication in a form of SMS will be sent to them.

HISTORICAL DEBTS

When the 0% fee increment was announced in 2015, government pledged to settle all outstanding fees from 2013 to 2015. As much as there is number of students whose debts have been settled, there are a whole lot more who have not benefitted from that government commitment. With that being raised, NSFAS has agreed with the SRC that all those students falling under this category but haven't had their debts settled must consult with financial aid office from Monday 10 October 2016, the budget has been set for them.

FEE INCREMENT / FREE EDUCATION

We note the announcement made by the minister regarding the fees for 2017 with a cap of 8%. We remain unshaken in our belief that subsidizing fees is not a solution to the unaffordable cost of higher education. The institution hasn't announced the 2017 fee increment yet, the finance committee is still dealing with the budget for 2017. Our call for free and quality education is genuine, we stand firm on the call for free education, we want government to commit on when we are getting it. We know that government is capable of sourcing enough money to fund education for the poor, working class and the middle class.

UNREGISTERED STUDENTS

The SRC has mandated the DUT management to allow all these students to be registered on a condition that they have been attending lectures and have met their DPs. They won't have to pay all their debt but they will only pay the registration fee accompanied by the Acknowledgement Of Debt form that they will have to sign before getting registered. All unregistered students should consult with the SRC.

HOUSING

This semester the residences fees of Walsingham Residence increased from R12000 to R16000. We demanded that the extra R4000 charged in students account be reversed as the 0% fee increase of 2015 still stands. The management has agreed that Walsingham students will not pay the extra R4000 but the institution will cover it.

Students from Hertine Court and Sterling House were promised by the Department of Student Housing and the SRC vowed that all those students residing on those residences will be moved to the new Student Village on the 1st of September 2016, unfortunately it happened otherwise. The Department of Student Housing did not meet the deadline, as they have always failed in several occasions therefore the EThekweni Municipality did not give a pass to allow students to reside in a res that does not meet the minimum required standards as per the law.

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Nevertheless we have made it very clear that all residences that are not safe and that not conducive, meaning they do not meet the standards will be shut down. The Department of Student Housing should find an alternative because we can't allow students to stay under these conditions while they pay so much money for accommodation.

TRANSFORMATION

We are a university dominated by African students and the management racial demographics of the university must also reflect that. The first step was to bring on board an African Vice Chancellor and Principal, Professor Mthembu. We also demand that DUT prioritizes its own graduates in terms of vacancy filling in the university. We demand a decolonized curriculum that responds to workplace and societal demands. We demand all student support services to be properly equipped.

NSFAS SYSTEM

We suggested that the pilot system goes back to Cape Town for it has continuously proven that it is not student friendly, and bring back the system. Through discussions between the NSFAS CEO and the SRC when he presented to us that all universities are moving to pilot system in 2017. After presenting to him a number of scenarios as to why we say this system is inconvenient to students, we demanded that he brings a permanent employee from NSFAS to DUT, the SRC will provide an office for them within campus. It was finally agreed that from the 1st of November 2016 we will have a permanent NSFAS employee in campus. Students will no longer have to call in Cape Town whenever they have to enquire about their NSFAS issues.

All students who had reported to have not received their meals allowance have been sorted, any student who still encounters problems with their meals please report to the SRC.

INSOURCING

We remain unshaken in the view that the millions that are paid to Bidvest and Mi7 can be put to better use. We demand that insourcing be implemented with immediate effect. It does not make sense that millions are used for other purposes yet we have students that can be funded with this money. It would be a pity if all of our cries fell on deaf ears as these are burning matters that request immediate attention. This issue will be discussed in the next university council meeting.

TESTS AND EXAMS

All tests and exams have been rescheduled to make up for the academic time lost during the students protests. We further ask students to study hard in order for them to perform exceptionally.

STUDENTS ARREST

We highly condemn the victimisation and brutalisation of students in DUT. We have also witnessed how this has been used to criminalise students. The state has actively participated in criminalising students, as we have seen with the countless interdicts, arrests and subsequent criminal charges. Our stand is very clear we demand that all these students are released and their charges are dropped, these are not criminals, they're only students fighting for their education. Let us all in solidarity support our brothers and sisters during these trying times.

These victories do not belong only to the SRC but to the entire students of DUT who dedicated themselves to the course and supported the struggle, either passively or actively. Aluta continua.

"Unity is strength... when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved." - Mattie Stepanek

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