

25 March 2015

*The Senate of the Durban University of Technology, at its meeting on 25 February 2015, agreed to constitute a task-team to develop a statement in response to the call by the Durban branch of the Students Representative Council and the Progressive Youth Alliance for the deregistration of Jewish students from DUT.*

### **Senate Statement**

We, the Senate of the Durban University of Technology (DUT), hereby express our concerns about the recent call by the Durban branch of the Students Representative Council and the Progressive Youth Alliance for the deregistration of Jewish students from DUT. This call undermines the most basic values and principles of the University. We reject this call, and are concerned that such a statement could have been made by members of the University community. While the University encourages and defends the free expression of ideas, including controversial and contested social ones, this does not extend to include violence or hate speech that threatens and compromises the human rights of any individual or group of individuals. We oppose discrimination, whether on grounds of religion, nationality, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation or any other arbitrary criteria. This is not only as a matter of ethical principle, but because these are antithetical to the very idea of the University as a safe and inclusive space for learning, for free exchange of ideas, and for positive social transformation.

The Senate celebrates the richness of the diversity and difference that permeate the University as an intellectual, political, social and cultural space. It will not allow the closing down of this treasure.

As a university, we would like to state clearly that we will not tolerate any form of bigotry. We further believe that it is critically important to draw a very clear line between considered intellectual critiques of the policies of the state of Israel which can be an acceptable part of University debate, and bigoted attacks on Jewish people in general, which it cannot. While DUT will protect the rights of students and staff to engage in protest and demonstrations it will not tolerate the violation of human rights of individuals or groups.

DUT remains committed to offering excellent education and promoting an institutional culture that actively counters all forms of oppression, discrimination and violence. This is clear in all our policy statements, our engagement activities, and in our formal teaching programmes.

DUT has already dealt decisively with the students involved in making this statement. The Vice-Chancellor has met with the Jewish Board of Deputies to develop ways of addressing these problems and conversations with the Human Rights Commission to discuss a collaborative approach have begun.

We acknowledge the complexities of the modern world, and the difficulties young people face in attempting to understand the many injustices that exist. Rather than just blaming the individuals involved, both DUT and the broader community should do more to create better understandings of these varied forms of injustice, and to support more tolerant and dignified ways of living together in a democratic society.

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