

25 September 2016

Dear students, colleagues and Alumni

We are about to commence with the final term of the 2016 academic programme and I want to take this opportunity to wish you continued success as you strive to write your examinations and conclude the academic project.

I am sure that you are well aware of the fact that many of our sister universities in the country have witnessed student protests following the Minister's announcement on fees last week. The result is that several universities have had to suspend their academic programme and in some instances, shutdown entirely. This is clearly very concerning and I know that you and your families must be equally worried about what the next few weeks will bring?

Last week, members of the executive management team and I had a productive meeting with our SRC. During our open and honest conversation with the student leadership, it became clear that the issue of the MTU6 group of students needs to be resolved. This group included students who had applied to NSFAS for funding earlier this year, they were then means tested but unfortunately, remained unfunded. NSFAS had proposed that DUT register the students in this group but to date, no long-term solution has been found. Therefore, as opposed to waiting for NSFAS to resolve the MTU6 matter, I have written to the CEO of NSFAS requesting an urgent meeting between DUT, our SRC, senior officials from Department of Higher Education and Training and with NSFAS. I am pleased to announce that the meeting has been confirmed for this Wednesday and I am confident that an agreeable solution will be reached. I will update you later this week, on the results of the meeting with NSFAS.

As per the agreement with the SRC, management is prioritising the matter of the MTU6 students. Furthermore, the consultation process to reflect on the Minister's statement is ongoing with various DUT stakeholders. I wish to reiterate my plea to all stakeholders to participate in this consultation process, to ensure that the final proposal to the DUT Council has input from the wider university community.

Some of you may have also read the social media comments alluding to student protests at DUT this week. At this stage, I have received no formal notice from our SRC regarding student protest action however; DUT continues to respect the rights of students who want to protest, provided that it is done within the confines of the law. So, I want to urge all students who are considering protest action to remain peaceful, to refrain from violence and to resist any temptation to damage university property.

Please remember that official DUT statements from my office will be posted on the DUT website, www.dut.ac.za, on the DUT PinBoard and staff portal, on DUT4life and the student portal and to all Alumni via our Alumni Relations Department.

Sincerely

Dr John Volmink

Interim Vice-Chancellor & Principal