



STATEMENT BY THE COUNCIL OF THE DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY ON RECENT TRAGIC EVENTS

12 February 2019

Mr. Mlungisi Madonsela

Council is deeply saddened and in grief from the loss of a life of our own. Our deepest and sincere condolences to the family, friends and comrades of the late Mlungisi Madonsela. The tragedy of losing a child is probably the worst nightmare for any parent to be confronted with. We do hope that God will provide the family with the strength to deal with this loss.

Council is aware that a police investigation into this tragic event is ongoing and acknowledges that it needs to await formal reports before making any decisive pronouncements. However, we do deem it appropriate at this stage to condemn, in the strongest terms possible, the use of live ammunition when dealing with protest action. We have noted that the security guards who were implicated in the use of live ammunition have been suspended by their company. In the meanwhile, we will have to give the relevant authorities the space and time to thoroughly investigate this incident and pronounce on its findings before any course of action can be taken by us as Council. It will also be important for the university to understand the circumstances that led to this unfortunate incident to ensure that it never reoccurs.

Council is deliberating on this matter through its EXCO and a report on the incident, together with any recommendations for actions, will likely serve at the next full Council meeting.

Regarding the memorandum of demands submitted by the SRC to the Management, we have received reports that much engagement with students have taken place, and that common ground has been reached on a number of these issues. Where disputes still occur, particularly around the areas of NSFAS funding, it must be noted that these are matters of policy, the disputes are national in nature and therefore fall outside of management authority. The

University does not have the legal authority to work outside of national legislation. We do hope that the government will, in due course, provide guidance on how the universities must progress these issues. The localized DUT-specific issues will require constant engagement amongst stakeholders in order to find permanent solutions.

Council is encouraged by the engagements that continue to take place between Management and the Student Representative Council in the planning of the appropriate farewells for the late Mlungisi, in consultations with the Madonsela family. We are confident that Management is working with the necessary speed and determination to achieve a resolution of outstanding disputed issues which will towards the peaceful reopening of the university.

Dr Euvette Taylor

Council also notes, with much grief and regret, the passing on of Dr Euvette Taylor, a DUT staff member. Preliminary evidence suggests that Dr Taylor died of unnatural causes at one of our Steve Biko Campus student residences where he was a Residence Advisor.

We send our condolences to the family, colleagues and friends. We do hope that the police investigation will shed more light into this tragic incident.

Conclusion

Councils acknowledges the difficult time that DUT is going through and calls for calm. It is only through engagements that we can find one another and forge a progressive way forward.

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Chairperson of Council