



Management update on the suspension of the academic programme in Durban

21 February 2019

The Executive Committee of Senate (SENEX) met earlier this morning, to discuss developments regarding the ongoing student protests, to receive updates on the negotiations with the SRC and to evaluate the situation regarding the resumption of the academic programme on the five campuses in Durban. SENEX also noted that the academic programme was continuing, uninterrupted, on the Indumiso and Riverside campuses in the Midlands.

Management provided SENEX with feedback following their meeting with the SRC on Wednesday 20 February 2019. The meeting dealt with financial aid, housing, registration and the SRC's request for BTech funding. Representatives from NSFAS were also present to update the SRC directly. The outcome of the engagement with the SRC was that the student leadership were going to meet yesterday afternoon and provide their proposals on:

1. A date for the resumption of the academic programme in Durban.
2. Their support for the first year orientation programme to commence.

During the course of Wednesday afternoon, the SRC advised Management that they could not meet as promised, as they did not have a *quorum*. The Treasurer-General of the SRC informed the Dean of Students that the SRC would reconvene in the evening but they then later provided feedback, that the second meeting could not take place, as the SRC President was in the Midlands.

SENEX was concerned that the SRC seem to be employing delaying tactics and that they were negotiating in bad faith. The SRC President had previously dismissed some of the agreements reached during the meeting of Friday, 8 February 2019. The SRC President denied making a recommendation to the resumption of lectures on Monday 18 February 2019, even after other colleagues who are on the SRC, admitted that the SRC President had made those comments in the meeting on 8 February 2019. The SRC President did not attend the meeting on Sunday 17 February 2019. He failed to attend the meeting on Monday, 18 February 2019. During yesterday's meeting with Management, the SRC President only attended for 25 minutes and walked out of what was a two hour negotiation, without excusing himself or requesting a postponement. SENEX has questioned the SRC's commitment towards finding a resolution to the current crisis, especially considering the fact that Management has provided the SRC with complete feedback on all matters that they had raised.

Having expressed serious concerns about the commitment of the SRC to resolve problems and resume academic activity in Durban, university management will still continue to engage with the SRC. Management has already invited the SRC to another meeting this afternoon.

During the meeting that occurred on Monday morning, 18 February 2019, whilst the discussions between Management at the SRC were taking place, the SRC had co-ordinated student protests that resulted in the disruption of classes, the intimidation of students and staff and the SRC President made serious threats "to deal decisively" with members of the University community.

As a result, SENEX supported the University's application to the High Court of South Africa seeking an interdict against the SRC. The interdict was confirmed earlier this morning. Copies of the court interdict will be emailed to all students and staff for their records.

The University will now be better positioned to announce a date for the resumption of the academic programme in Durban. A formal announcement will be made tomorrow (Friday, 22 February 2019) and this will be communicated to all students and staff and to members of the public via the media.

SENEX has noted that there are 121 students who will need to write a Special Exam on Tuesday 26 February 2019. If the SRC in Durban continues to protest and disrupt the academic programme, it will compromise the Special Exam and it could prevent the 121 students from graduating this year. Therefore, the University must restore stability and create an environment that will be conducive to teaching and learning in Durban.

The University once again apologises to all staff, students, parents and guardians who have been inconvenienced by the disruption to the academic calendar in Durban. We are working hard to implement plans that will not further compromise the academic programme. DUT reminds all students and staff to only access official University statements via the DUT PinBoard email system (for staff) and *DUT4life* email accounts (for students). Official statements will also be posted on the DUT website (www.dut.ac.za).