



18 March 2019

Dear Students and Staff

It has come to the attention of university management that the SRC plans to hold a mass meeting on Monday 18th March 2019. However, management would like to remind all stakeholders about the Court Interdict that remains in force. The interdict clearly stipulates that while the SRC reserves the right to hold meetings it is expected that the rights of those students and staff members who choose to observe official university business will not be violated as such violation will be in contempt of the said Court Order, punishable by law.

As per the SRC – Management Agreement dated Friday 23rd February 2019, the following issues emanating from the Memorandum of Demands dated Monday 04th February 2019, are being attended to:

- Student Housing

A process is currently underway to evaluate the state of leased residences and where deficiencies were discovered, landlords have been robustly engaged to implement corrective measures within tight timelines. This also includes reduction of student placements to ensure compliance with DHET norms and standards, and in some cases students have also been moved from non-complying residences. An opportunity has also been provided to affected students to engage with Student Housing directly especially where they wish to be moved for various reasons including personal and medical, from their allocated spaces to alternative residences. Such requests continue to be honoured by Student Housing.

Through the Office of the DVC: People and Operations, the university has issued an RFP process to ensure leasing of additional residences which will be allocated to students who are due to be moved from two university residences, namely Baltimore and Herton Court which are due for renovation. However, students that may still need to be moved from other residences, will also be accommodated under this scheme. Potential residences are currently being visited for inspection and evaluation by a team comprising of the Acting HOD and the SRC. It is envisaged that the evaluation report will be submitted to the Bid Adjudication Committee for EMC approval not later than the end of the first term, as per the SRC-Management Agreement. It must also be noted that the SRC remains an active participant through the Residence and Accommodation Officer in initiatives to address Student Housing challenges and provision of solutions thereto.

- NSFAS and Student Funding

Most outstanding cases of undergraduate student funding challenges including disbursement of allowances have been resolved and the SRC has been provided with regular updates. On Thursday 14th March 2019, a Financial Appeals Committee meeting was held as per counsel from NSFAS and the SRC was represented by the Treasurer General. The main purpose of this committee is to adjudicate appeals from various categories of students including those excluded on grounds of poor academic performance. The committee is further tasked to make the necessary recommendations to NSFAS for final ruling. Every effort is made not to unduly exclude academically deserving and financially needy students. However, BTEch funding remains the policy competence of the Minister of Higher Education and Training to make an appropriate determination and advise universities and NSFAS accordingly. It therefore remains outside the university's competence to make such a determination.

- Conclusion

Finally it must be noted that regular meetings are scheduled between the SRC and Management via the Office of the Dean of students to monitor and evaluate progress on matters since Monday 04th February 2019. Although there is still room for improvement, as at the last engagement on Thursday 14th March 2019, there was mutual agreement between SRC and Management that there has been considerable progress in terms of putting systems in place to monitor and evaluate progress. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday 28th March 2019 at Midlands Campus. Management remains committed to finding a lasting resolution to the above mentioned challenges through an open door policy for constructive engagement with the SRC across all DUT campuses.