University vows to fight sex offenders

VINCENT CRUYWAGEN

STELLENBOSCH University has taken a firm stance against the recent claims about a rape culture at the institution.

A task team has now been appointed to urgently look into the matter.

The Rector’s Management Team at its weekly meeting earlier this week reaffirmed the university’s zero tolerance towards sexual misconduct.

The university’s spokesperson, Martin Viljoen, said they had recently learnt with shock of a reported rape of a female student outside the university’s Harmonie residence last month.

Viljoen said there were indications that the assailant was not a student but warned if the investigation proved otherwise the university would take firm action against the alleged perpetrator.

Rector and vice-chancellor, Prof Wim de Villiers said: “Sexual abuse of any nature is a despicable act and we urge the police to make sure that the incident is thoroughly investigated so that justice is served.”

De Villiers said the university was working to create a safe environment for students and staff and had introduced safety initiatives over the past years. However, the security environment was constantly changing, which required responsiveness and adaptability.

“It is, however, not only an issue of safety. It requires a change in the psyche of society, the development of an understanding that respect for woman excludes verbal abuse, sexual harassment, catcalling and wolf-whistling. Let’s all treat each other with respect,” De Villiers said.

Students who are sexually harassed, abused or raped can call either the university’s crisis service on 082 557 0880 or campus security on 021 808 2333 and 021 988 9507 for the Tygerberg Campus.

Meanwhile, anyone with information regarding the rape incident is requested to contact Det-Sgt LD February on 082 469 1470 or 021 809 9168/5.

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