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RMT response to issues raised by Stellenbosch Fees Must Fall

20 September 2016

1. Free Education

SU institutional stance on free education

We fully support fee-free higher education for poor students, in alignment with the USAF response to Minister Blade Nzimande's statement, dated 19 September 2016. It would be ideal to have fee free education for all students. However, this would require substantial additional investment from government and other potential sources. In the absence of such investment, universities will still require cost sharing from government grants and tuition fees from those that can afford to pay.

Colloquium on free education

The RMT welcomes the idea of a colloquium, the agenda of which will be co-created with students. This could take place in the next few weeks to provide a platform for different perspectives on the issue of free education to be presented and deliberated. Recommendations from the colloquium could be submitted to Fees Commission.

Financial relief for students

Ms Christelle Feyt, Senior Director: Prospective Students, has been tasked to establish a one-stop shop to assist students who are experiencing challenges around the additional costs of being a student on campus, for example, internet access, food and text books. SU believes that the additional government support and its already existing bursary model, amounting to R658 million in total, will cover the vast majority of the so-called "missing middle" students

The SU Bursary Office registered 207 students' unfunded status with NSFAS again, requesting additional funding from NSFAS to assist them with their study costs.

The University will on a continuous basis monitor their situation and will assist with food and private accommodation where possible.



Rig asseblief alle korrespondensie aan die Registrateur/Please address all correspondence to the Registrar

Universiteitskantoor/University Office

Privaatsak/Private Bag XI • Matieland, 7602 • Suid-Afrika/South Africa, Faks/Fax: +27 (0) 21 808 3800



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2. Private Security

Why private security?

On our journey of transformation, meaningful dialogue is of vital importance. The existence of various interest groups is a given. We should keep on talking and listening to each other in the search for common ground. That is the principle behind an “open conversation”. A university is a place of ideas around which there should be contestation in the search for answers – even if it makes us uncomfortable. As part of the open conversation, there may be protest action from time to time. In fact, all of us have a right to lawful and peaceful protest under the Constitution. Important principles, though, are that neither academic nor administrative activities should be disrupted, everyone’s rights should be respected, and no-one should be denied the opportunity to study or work at the University. We have a joint responsibility to protect our institution and all its people, property and activities.

Within the national legal framework, crowd control is only to be conducted by specially trained and insured security staff. The University’s internal security may not be deployed for this purpose since they do not meet this requirement. We are obliged to bring in external security staff that are specially trained in this area.

Incident at the JS Gericke Library on Friday, 16 September 2016

The RMT regrets that the protest action at the JS Gericke Library on Friday 16 September 2016 ended in physical confrontation between students and private security staff. On numerous occasions they were asked by dialogue and notifications to vacate the venue, but refused. An urgent, independent investigation into the incident was launched. The outcome of the investigation will be communicated as soon as it becomes available.

Trauma response

We recognise that protest situations, such as the ones that we are experiencing at present, are distressing and could result in trauma for students. We advise students in need of assistance to contact the following services:

- **Counselling Services Crisis Services: 082 557 0880**
- **Campus Health: 076 431 0305**





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3. Outsourcing/reinstatement of 150 workers

SU has opted for viable sourcing, foregrounding the principle of human dignity. The University cannot reinstate the 150 workers who were dismissed last year by their employers, since they are not employees of SU. We cannot intervene in the internal processes of any external service provider of SU.

On a month to month basis the payroll of the external service providers are checked to ensure that the employees are receiving no less than the agreed upon minimum of R5 000 cost to company.



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