

## Statement

# WILGENHOF RESIDENCE

UPDATED 26 January 2024

Stellenbosch University (SU) has consistently affirmed its position on ensuring the human dignity of all our students and staff, and we will continue unabated to eradicate unacceptable practices from our campuses and SU student accommodation.

As part of the institution's endeavours to be an inclusive, diverse and welcoming place for all, the University recently approved a new residence placement policy (2023) as well as a new Regulation for the Appointment of Residence Heads (2023). These come on the back of revised residence rules (2021) and the revised disciplinary code for students at SU (2021).

Over the years, these policies, regulations and rules were reviewed and amended several times as the University fully embraced transformation and tackled injustices of the past. Since 2003, SU worked meticulously to address historical systemic problems within the residence spaces, and to adapt, transform, and change the culture, mindset, and practices aligned with the Constitution and its principles, including that of human dignity. This was done by way of, amongst others, management's commitment to SU's vision and values, extensive conversations with students, thorough training of student leaders, workshops, mentor programmes, and new policies, rules and regulations for student communities.

In addition, one of the workstreams of the University's [Committee for the Institutional Response to the Commission's Recommendations](#) (CIRCoRe), which was established to address the recommendations of the Khampepe Report, focuses on the entire spectrum of student life and develops proposals to align the practices of all University environments responsible for facilitating an inclusive student experience at the University.

The disturbing items that were found in two rooms of Wilgenhof during an audit of the spaces and amenities of the residence have been removed and stored in safekeeping. These two rooms have been repainted and will be used for their original purpose.

The University is putting in place a panel (consisting of the Deputy Registrar: Governance, Ethics and Compliance; an experienced independent Advocate from the Cape Bar; and a former experienced university executive in higher education) to review the items and to advise on the appropriate next steps.

The panel will be asked to submit their report by the end of February.

Prof Wim de Villiers comments: "As the Rector of this formidable institution, I want to assure all our staff, students, and parents that we are attending to the matter with the seriousness that it deserves within the approved policies and practices of our institution. Let us allow the panel to do its work and in the process help us to shape the welcoming and inclusive center of excellence that we are all striving for."

"Significant attention and preparation have gone into the Welcoming for 2024 to enable a positive experience for the new first year students arriving shortly", adds Prof Deresh Ramjugernath, DVC for Learning and Teaching, who is responsible for the Division of

Student Affairs. “The University management can assure students and parents that it is resolute in its unwavering commitment to the safety, security and wellbeing of everyone on our campuses.”

**END**