

11 February 2015

STUDENTS & STAFF

Durban University of Technology
Durban & Midlands Centres

Dear Students and Colleagues

UPDATE ON STUDENT PROTEST

At lunchtime on Tuesday 10 February 2015, the Deputy Secretary General of the SRC delivered a memorandum to me that emerged from a collaboration between the SRC and the Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA). The memorandum lists a number of issues that are affecting our students at the beginning of this year.

The primary issues raised in the memorandum relate to financial aid. While much has been achieved this year in rolling out the new system, there are a number of glitches and we are working with NSFAS in trying to address these. We have, of course, extended the final date of registration to the end of February, to give the University and NSFAS a chance to try to resolve as many of these issues as possible.

However, it has to be said that there will unfortunately be students who do not receive financial aid packages in 2015. NSFAS simply does not have the resources to address the national demand for financial aid.

Another issue that has been raised is that of student accommodation. I assured the students that if they receive funding for student accommodation, they will be provided with student accommodation.

In relation to housing, matters relating to the house committees and residence advisors were also raised. These will be discussed with the Student Housing Office.

One of the demands on the memorandum was deregistration of Jewish students at DUT, to which my response was that this was outrageous, preposterous and a deep violation of our National Constitution and every human rights principle.

No student at DUT will be discriminated against on the basis of religion, race, gender, political affiliation or sexual orientation.

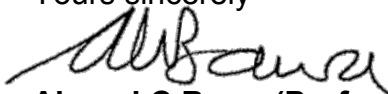
Regarding the other demands in the latter, we will be working on those and I will respond to the SRC in due course.

I also need to make this clear, that whilst we acknowledge and respect the constitutional right to peaceful protest, the University will not condone the disruption of classes and the intimidation of non-protesting students and staff. Whilst the student protest in Durban this morning was largely peaceful, sadly, we did receive reports that some classes were disrupted and a few students were threatened and intimidated by the protestors. The University still has the High Court Order in place and I will continue to urge the student leaders and protestors to respect the rule of law.

I want to reassure you that we are working with the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to assist students. I will be raising the concerns tabled about Financial Aid and Student Housing with the Dean of Student Services. I will continue to update you on the progress that we make, as and when the need arises.

In the meantime, we are all striving to ensure the minimal disruption to our academic programme and we will continue to work very hard with the SRC to overcome, where possible, the challenges facing some of our students.

Yours sincerely



Ahmed C Bawa (Professor)

Vice-Chancellor and Principal