

Friday, 22 March 2019

JOINT STATEMENT OF DUT MANAGEMENT AND THE SRC

DUT Management and the SRC met on Friday, 22 March 2019 at 14H00 to discuss the issues the SRC had raised with the Vice-Chancellor on Wednesday, 20 March 2019. The following are the issues raised and the agreements arrived at:

1. Disbursement of Allowances

The SRC raised concern at a number of issues around the disbursement of allowances paid by NSFAS through the DUT's payment system which include:

- (i) Capacity within Financial Aid Department;
- (ii) 532 students who did not receive their allowances in March;
- (iii) Wrong allowances paid to some students

Management reported that it has already approved 10 additional posts both in Financial Aid and Finance Department for our Durban and Midlands Campuses in order to augment the existing staff. Management recommendation will serve in Council tomorrow, 23 March 2019 for final approval. Management reported that the second individual (Leigh-Anne Van Der Veen) was appointed to give additional support to ITSS in order to create efficiencies within Financial Aid on student data management. The University has committed to creating a computerized, efficient and integrated system to deal with student queries in order that they can be resolved expeditiously in future.

With regard 532 students who did not receive their allowances, Management pointed out that this was due to NSFAS feedback to DUT as DUT does not have final decision-making on student funding. Through our ongoing engagements with the NSFAS, 334 students have been cleared and will be paid on Tuesday, 26 March 2019. The University is working closely with the NSFAS to resolve the outstanding 198 cases.

The SRC will provide details of students affected by payments of wrong allowances so that these issues can be speedily resolved.

Having noted that current devolution is highly limited and creates delays, the Vice-Chancellor will request a meeting with the NSFAS administrator to discuss problems around student data that changes on a monthly basis as well as to allow the University to take final decisions on appeals in order to reduce the turnaround time.

2. NSFAS Appeals

There are 865 students who have appealed; only 100 cases are left and will be finalized on Saturday, 23 March 2019.

3. Closing Date of Registration

The SRC complained that some Faculties and Departments are chasing student away despite the fact that these students are still awaiting appeal decisions. Management reiterated its position that students who have appealed or who would have presented themselves to the Office of the Registrar and/or

Faculties/Departments before 15 March 2019 would not be turned away until their issues are finalized. However, anyone who does not belong to the two categories will not be entertained.

4. 24-Hour Library Service

The SRC charged that management had reneged on its 2018 September commitment to open libraries for 24 hours. Management pointed that the agreement then was that the Steve Biko Campus Library and Indumiso Campus Library were going to be opened for 24 hours during the entire exam period until the last day of the Special Examination. Management will engage the Director: Library Services to provide data that will measure the demand for the 24-hour service during and outside of the exam period. This will allow the University to take an evidence-based decision on this request.

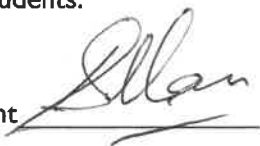
5. Compliance with Ministerial Directives

The SRC was of the view that DUT was not fully compliant with specific ministerial directives which include unblocking of final year students and assisting students who owe fees but have completed their studies with academic transcripts. The Dean of Student Services reported that the University has unblocked final year students in line with the ministerial directive. The statistical details will be shared with the SRC on their weekly monitoring meetings next week Tuesday. DUT is already assisting students with academic transcripts to employers and letters confirming completion of studies.

Conclusion

The parties mutually agreed on working together on an ongoing basis to resolve all issues that affect the wellbeing of DUT students.

On behalf of Management



Dr T. Pillay: Acting Registrar

On behalf of the SRC



P. Sithole: SRC Deputy-President

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