

## UNIVERSITY STATEMENT

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16 September 2019

Dear Staff and Students

Our country has been plunged into a series of violent and criminal acts in recent weeks. Sadly, the violent attacks on the women and the children of our beautiful country continues, despite the efforts to raise awareness of gender-based violence. Violence, in general, has also taken deeper root in our society. We see it right in our campuses. We see it in xenophobic attacks. It is now epidemic!

Being the light of society that universities should be, there is certainly more that we can do. And we must do more to eschew violence in general and in particular, gender-based violence (GBV). Nobody but ourselves, can deliver us from this societal scourge and epidemic. Even as DUT, we are only a small community in the broader scheme of things, we could help to start a revolution against violence and GBV, in particular.

DUT has taken an unwavering stance by having a zero-tolerance approach towards violence, abuse, sexual harassment, crime and corruption. So with that in mind, we are working with the International Centre of Nonviolence (ICON) and other relevant units at DUT, on a programme of focused initiatives and engagements against violence and GBV, in particular. As a start, we will host an Open Forum, speaking out against violence and GBV. This important event is taking place on:

- **Wednesday, 18 September 2019** in the **Main Hall** on the **Indumiso Campus** in Pietermaritzburg. It is scheduled to commence at **12H00** and end at **14H00**.

I would like to request that all of our staff and students to please consider attending this Open Forum. Importantly, I urge our staff to give our students an opportunity to also participate on the day. We anticipate that this will be one of many dialogues and programmes that we will introduce on violence and GBV, so that we can empower, inform and call the entire University community to deliberate and collaborative action.

I am confident that this engagement will benefit our colleagues, students, alumni and the broader communities that we serve.

We all have a responsibility to make our country a better and safer place.

Sincerely

Professor Thandwa Mthembu  
Vice-Chancellor & Principal

