

17 October 2017

Statement by the Council on Higher Education concerning the continued unrest at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

It is with great concern that the CHE noted the recent closure of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in Cape Town as a result of a dispute between the management of the institution and the students of CPUT. The CHE consistently advocates for harmonious and non-violent approaches towards resolving conflicts of this nature, the interests of higher education, students and the sustainability of the institution being of paramount concern. Recent occurrences of violent protests have proven to be detrimental towards the stability and sustainability of our universities in myriad ways, affecting both the students (local and international) and the universities. The most critical areas affected as a result of the suspension of lectures is that valuable academic time is lost, leading to tremendous disadvantage to students, and having a deleterious impact on the quality and depth of their learning. As the Quality Council for higher education and training, we are dismayed by the potential impact on learning and the loss of academic time ahead of the examinations.

We are pleased to note that there have been discussions to resolve the matter and bring an end to the violent disruptions to ensure that the academic year is completed successfully. We also have great hope that peace will be restored in all CPUT campuses and that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) jointly with all the affected campus stakeholders will work relentlessly to find a speedy resolution. We are also pleased to note that contingency measures have been put in place to ensure that urgent work related matters can be attended to at CPUT, as reported by the institution.

The university took a decision to resume normal institutional activities on Wednesday 18 October 2017 (tomorrow) across all CPUT campuses. In light of this, we urge that a peaceful resolution to the current situation at CPUT campuses be found, mindful of the dire consequences that would ensue should there be a failure to do so.

The CHE is an independent statutory body established by the Higher Education Act, no. 101 of 1997. As the Quality Council for Higher Education it advises the Minister of Higher Education and Training on all higher education issues and is responsible for quality assurance and promotion through the Higher Education Quality Committee.

Council Members: Prof N. Themba Mosia (Chairperson), Mr Luzuko Buku, Prof Chris de Beer, Prof André Keet, Mr Cassie Kruger, Dr Bandile Masuku, Dr Siphokazi Moeng, Prof Shireen Motala, Ms Nombulelo Nxesi, Dr Kimberley Porteus, Prof Selby Ripinga, Prof Beverley Thaver, Dr Mvuyo Tom, Prof Mala Singh, Prof Sophie Mogotlane, Prof John Mubangizi, Dr Thomas Auf Der Heyde, Dr Sagren Govender, Mr Suren Govender, Mr Vijayen Naidoo, Dr Diane Parker, Dr Mafu Rakometsi, Mr Joe Samuels, Dr Molapo Qhobela and Prof Narend Baijnath (CEO).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Narend Bajinath', written in a cursive style. The signature is contained within a light pink rectangular box.

Prof. Narend Bajinath – Chief Executive Officer