

***Statement to the Vice-Chancellor from the Dean's Advisory Committee of the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Cape Town (UCT)***

The Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) continues to support the demand for equitable access to good quality higher education.

It is critical for the health needs of our country that newly graduated health professionals enter the health system annually. The significant service-delivery protests throughout the country have included community demands for access to good quality healthcare. The Faculty recognises this, and remains unequivocally committed to graduating health professionals to provide much needed health services to our communities.

It is of critical importance that health sciences faculties in the country graduate their final year students in the next two months so that they may commence internship and professional duties on 1 January 2016.

In order for this to happen, *we need to address two key issues that are the root cause of the current protests.* To this end, the university must state its commitment to address access to free tertiary education for those in need, and commit to the 'in-sourcing' of the currently 'outsourced' workforce.

Firstly, in support of the demand for free tertiary education for those in need, the university must commit to develop a revised financial model that will increase the number of financially disadvantaged students accessing tertiary education. Furthermore, the university must improve the transparency and public accountability of its financial operations. This will enable the various constituencies within the university to contribute meaningfully to realising its mission in providing high-quality tertiary education that is viable and sustainable.

Secondly, the DAC recognises that our 'outsourced' workers are an integral part of the university. We are committed to transformation and inclusivity recognising that the workers' demands are legitimate and need to be honoured. We urge the university to make a decision on the outsourcing issue that will enable us to resume our operations as soon as possible so as to ensure that all university students complete the academic year. We support a decision to 'in-source' the current workforce while recognising that revised financial planning will be required to ensure our on-going sustainability. The Vice-Chancellor must make an unambiguous statement about the 'in-sourcing' of the workforce.

A positive resolution to the current impasse will enable the university to resume its normal operations so that the assessment and examinations programme commences by 9 November 2015. Our Faculty is currently developing a revised assessment and examination timetable despite the constrained environment.

Decisive action is therefore needed from the Vice-Chancellor to allay student concerns and stabilise the operations of the university. The university community needs greater assurance that operations will be normalised immediately. This will enable health professionals in our faculty to complete their degrees by the end of the year and take up their positions in the health service on 1 January 2016.

(Greg Hussey, 27 October 2015 8h00)