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UCT's picket protest is for long-term solution to funding higher education
Please cite Dr Max Price, Vice-Chancellor, UCT

The University of Cape Town is picketing at Parliament today. At the heart of the picket is our plea to Parliament to help us find a solution to the ongoing unrest but also, more fundamentally, the ongoing funding issue in higher education.

We are thankful for Higher Education Minister Dr Blade Nzimande's short-term decisions that effectively placed a moratorium on fee increases for the poor and the missing middle for the 2017 academic year. But this is a short-term solution.

Our picket is about the long-term issues. We will face the same issues every year. We must find a longer-term solution, in terms of investment into higher education, that will also help us with bringing the unrest to an end.

At present the Heher Commission's timelines might only have an actual impact in 2020, if we are lucky. It closes its work in June 2017, but a final agreement and incorporation into the national budget will only make actual implementation possible by 2020. Are we to be in limbo until then?

We need a plan by year-end, this year, so that it can be incorporated in the national budget in March 2017, to allow it to be actually implemented in January 2018. In order to achieve this, the Heher Commission timelines must be sped up, or another commission must be constituted to achieve this by December 2016.

ENDS

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