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UCT statement on protest and charge against security guard

The University of Cape Town confirms it has received a complaint regarding the behaviour of one of our security guards against a photographer who accompanied a journalist on campus to cover a student protest. The Vice-Chancellor's Office has demanded a comprehensive and immediate report on this alleged incident. The university does not condone any form of unlawful behaviour on the part of students or staff members. If any unlawful behaviour is found to have taken place on the part of students or staff members, the university will act.

UCT confirms that about a dozen people, including some UCT students, participated in a toyi-toyi protest at the statue of Cecil Rhodes on Upper Campus this afternoon. Two members of the group threw excrement on the base of the statue. The statue does not appear to have been damaged.

The university's Campus Protection Services is investigating the incident to determine the identity of the protest organisers. No injuries have been reported.

The university has procedures in place to allow students to hold peaceful and safe protests on issues that concern them. The protesters did not follow such procedures, and by dumping excrement in a public place they violated the law. They did not inform UCT of their intention to demonstrate, nor did they issue a statement to the university about the reasons for this protest.

Vandalism of UCT property, and violating health laws, is illegal and an insult to our students and staff as well as to the wider community that participates in events on campus. We do not condone such behaviour. UCT is investigating this action and we will take legal steps if it is established that there was unlawful behaviour.

UCT supports the exercise of peaceful and lawful freedom of expression. We encourage engagement of different opinions and open debate, and urge our students and staff to participate in discussions that contribute to responsible action.

END

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