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UCT condemns hate speech in any form

The following statement was sent to the University of Cape Town community:



11 February 2016

Dear colleagues and students

Yesterday we were alerted to a person entering and sitting in a University of Cape Town dining hall wearing a T-shirt with the words: "Kill all whites." Overnight, a visual image confirming this incident circulated on social media.

We immediately investigated the matter and have identified the individual and gathered the relevant evidence.

We view this behaviour as direct incitement to violence. UCT condemns in the strongest terms possible any act or expression that incites violence or promotes hate speech or intimidation in any form.

The individual involved is not currently a UCT student (although he has been involved in Rhodes Must Fall activities on campus). He is not subject to internal UCT disciplinary action. However, other legal channels are being pursued urgently and charges are being brought against the person, including reporting the matter to the SA Police Service and the Human Rights Commission.

It is important to remember that the South African Constitution protects free speech. Free speech includes the right to offend, even the right to be offensive. But what free speech specifically excludes is the right to incitement or a call to action that can result in grievous harm to another person.

The T-shirt message in this matter breaches all limits of free speech. It is hateful and vindictive. The university executive condemns it in the strongest possible terms. Such expression has no place in society, let alone in a university that upholds the values of tolerance, human dignity and respect. The most heinous atrocities have been

carried out as a result of hate speech. Countless innocent people have lost their lives as a consequence of such incitement.

Sincerely

Gerda Kruger
Executive Director
Communication & Marketing Department

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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