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UCT flag at half-mast to honour Esidimeni victims

Please cite Ms Gerda Kruger, Executive Director: Communication & Marketing Department, UCT

The scope of the Esidimeni tragedy and the depth of the sadness that it has caused is immeasurable. How do we lose 94 lives so flippantly, so negligently and in such a cruel manner? When students at the University of Cape Town raise awareness of mental health issues, this is the reality that they are pointing to – some see this happening at home to uncles and aunts, parents, brothers and sisters. It is a matter of neglect and poverty, stealing the dignity from the human beings that they love. UCT mourns with these families and the rest of South Africa.

We will fly the UCT flag on top of Jameson Hall at half-mast from 3 February until 10 February 2017 as an indication of our resistance to the negligence, the alleged corruption and the blatant indifference that seem to pervade the many parties that have the responsibility to ensure that this kind of tragedy never occurs. We throw our weight behind the call that justice should be delivered. We urge all members of the UCT community to work tirelessly to contribute to our society in whichever way they can to prevent these tragic occurrences.

It is critical that leadership structures that carry responsibility for caring for our people, especially for the most vulnerable among us, are held to account. Our collective failure to protect the human beings that have died speaks to the need for us to become more active as citizens, demanding better from those in power. This tragedy is a shameful occurrence that will haunt our history as a country.

UCT will, once students return, find an appropriate way to recognise this tragic moment and to reflect deeply on the matter, in the hope that one day we may return to a place where we are assured of dignity for all in society.

ENDS

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