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UCT statement on four-hour permanent staff

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has noted the ongoing discussions around the insourced staff members who work only four hours per day. A number of incorrect claims have been made about these staff members' conditions of service.

The UCT executive has worked tirelessly over the past year to address issues and to ensure the smooth insourcing of previously outsourced workers at UCT. The executive is still in negotiations with unions and workers on some issues and will honour this ongoing commitment to resolve any issues that may arise.

A total of 61 residence cleaning staff were insourced by UCT on a permanent basis. These workers received further benefits when moving from being employed under the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), which most companies offered, to becoming permanent staff members at UCT. These benefits include generous leave conditions, retirement funding and staff tuition rates, among others.

These staff members previously served as casual labour and were deployed to UCT as and when additional staff were required. The university confirms that their working hours have not been reduced. Following an agreement with the National Health Education and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), these workers were all appointed on a permanent four-hour-a-day basis – regardless of their previous working hours.

While these workers were outsourced, these 'four-hour staff' were called upon from time to time to augment normal residence cleaning operational requirements. Following insourcing, these staff members are being utilised as relief staff, for example when regular staff members are on leave.

Following insourcing in 2016, an opportunity was created for these staff members to work additional hours by assisting the residence catering staff on alternate weekends.

The unions objected to the four-hour staff working additional hours on alternate weekends. However, to date, a total of 27 four-hour staff have signed up to increase their working hours over alternate weekends.

In addition, an agreement has been reached that the four-hour staff will get first preference for any full-time pay class 2 positions that become vacant at UCT. At this stage, four of the four-hour staff members have been appointed to Residence Catering in this manner.

There are currently 57 permanent staff members who are still on the four-hour shift (with 27 of these staff members working additional hours on alternate weekends whenever operations require).

ENDS

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