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UCT Vice-Chancellor appeals for release of Fees Commission report

The University of Cape Town Vice-Chancellor, Dr Max Price, has expressed grave concern that the President has not yet released the report of the Commission of Inquiry into Higher Education and Training (Fees Commission) established nearly 24 months ago.

UCT, like all South African universities, has to plan its 2018 budget and would normally have concluded consultations on the next year's fees with the Students' Representative Council and other stakeholders by September. "However, not wanting to pre-empt the recommendations of the Fees Commission we have delayed decisions on fees pending the release of the report," said Dr Price.

"The failure to release the report also prevents stakeholders, including students and university Councils, from responding to the proposals on the sustainable funding of higher education in South Africa and, in particular, on ensuring access for all who can benefit from it."

He added: "The uncertainty impacts on the ability of students and parents to plan financially for the next year.

"We will not be able to delay decisions on fees for much longer. We therefore appeal to the President to release the report for public scrutiny and debate."

The Medium Term Budget Policy Statement will be delivered on 25 October. Public higher education is chronically underfunded – the UCT allocation from government is expected to increase by only 4% in 2018 while costs will increase by about 8%. "This real decline in funding will inevitably compromise the global success and standing of South African higher education," said Dr Price. "We call on government to increase the core budgets to universities to ensure greater access and quality for all."

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