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Remembering Nene: rise against sexual and gender-based violence

UCT declares day of mourning and activism against gender-based violence

The UCT executive and members of the Leadership Lekgotla have been in urgent discussion since receiving the formal announcement of the brutal death of our student Uyinene Mrwetyana, fondly known as Nene.

There is no doubt that this tragic event has devastated us as a community and has left us bereaved and angry. Many staff and students have expressed their sadness and have gathered in separate vigils, prayer circles and small groups across campus.

It is important that as a community we recognise this moment for what it is. A devastating incident of gender-based violence which is utterly unacceptable, shocking, criminal and should never, ever occur in our community or in our society. Sadly, it is a fact that sexual and gender-based violence is rampant and our Nene is just one of a long list of women and vulnerable and marginalised people who are brutalised daily. It is for this reason that we have initiated a gender-based violence campaign that says #JustNo to sexual and gender-based violence.

We are declaring tomorrow, Wednesday, 4 September 2019, a day of mourning and UCT activism against sexual and gender-based violence. Our chancellor, Mrs Graça Machel, as well as the chair of UCT Council, Mr Siphon M Pityana, will be in Cape Town and may be able to attend the memorial service.

We are hoping that students and staff will, as a community, come together to participate in the events that have been planned. We recognise that many individuals and entities within our community may arrange their own significant events, and the executive will attempt to attend these wherever possible.

You are invited to come together at the following times tomorrow.

09:00 to 11:00 – Picket against sexual and gender-based violence

- The picket will be held at the gates of Parliament at the intersection of Plein and Roeland streets.
- Please wear black clothing and make banners that speak out against sexual and gender-based violence.

12:00 to 14:00 – Memorial Service for Nene

- The memorial service will be held on the steps in front of Sarah Baartman Hall.
- Please wear black and bring flowers if you wish to.

14:00 to 16:00 – UCT staff and student assembly Remembering Nene and against sexual and gender-based violence

- The UCT assembly will be held on the plaza in front of Sarah Baartman Hall.

We as the UCT executive have been inundated with messages of sadness, grief, anger and anxiety. We have also seen how members of our community are supporting each other, reaching out for help and holding each other during this painful moment.

Please use tomorrow to mourn the loss of Nene, to signal our bereavement and grief, to rise against sexual and gender-based violence in our community and in our society.

Academic classes are suspended for tomorrow. Where tests or essential academic activities were planned, please make appropriate arrangements within departments and faculties.

Sincerely

Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng and the UCT Executive

ENDS

Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department

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