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## **UCT concerned over disruptions by group of non-employees**

The University of Cape Town (UCT) is deeply concerned about a group of people (not staff of the university) who are disrupting classes and interfering in UCT's operations.

The group of around 60 people are employees of companies outside UCT that provide some services to our institution. They are employees of Bytes Document Centre, Protea Boekwinkel, Food and Connect (Pty) Ltd, Protea Hotel Breakwater Lodge, Protea Hotel Mowbray, Food Vendors and the Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organisation (SHAWCO).

The group has been protesting on the UCT campus for the past two weeks. The UCT executive has repeatedly indicated to the group and previously in public statements that UCT is not able to address the demands of the group or to engage them on their labour issues as they are not employees of UCT.

The group has demanded to be insourced into UCT as university employees. UCT is not able to address this demand of workers who are employees of independent business entities outside of UCT.

On Tuesday, 10 September and Wednesday, 11 September, the group entered several UCT's buildings, including kitchens and classrooms, and instructed UCT staff and students to leave the buildings. Several classes were abandoned and in several cases the disruptions meant that food could not be served to students and a voucher system needed to be rolled out to ensure that students do not go hungry.

UCT recognises the right of employees to embark on protected strike action that is lawful and peaceful and that complies with the picketing rules which have been agreed to by the union and the university.

However, UCT cannot accept that a group of people who are employed by independent companies come onto our campus and disrupt our classes and operations. These disruptions have a negative impact on our academic programme. In addition, the disruption of classes places additional stress on staff and students to catch-up and in some cases may lead to a situation where a student or a class may not be able to finish their academic commitments successfully. This is not acceptable. UCT is five weeks away from year-end exams and we

should be able to concentrate without interruption on the work that is necessary to conclude the academic year.

UCT wishes to make it absolutely clear that the protest from this group is not related to any protest on sexual and gender-based violence or perhaps any labour issues at the university or any other issues that there may be at UCT.

It is plain and simply a group of employees of independent companies wishing to force UCT to employ them. The fact that they are disrupting our operations and trying to force people from their classes and work stations is completely unacceptable. UCT is considering our options in dealing with this worrying matter.

***ENDS***

***Issued by: UCT Communication and Marketing Department***

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