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Response by UCT and the Faculty of Health Sciences to email smears against the university's academic in relation to the proposed River Club development

The University of Cape Town (UCT) and its Faculty of Health Sciences notes with great concern the email smears against academic, Professor Leslie London, regarding his activities with the Observatory Civic Association (OCA) in relation to the highly contentious proposed River Club development. Professor London is an accomplished and highly respected UCT academic, with a substantial history of engaged scholarship, specifically in the area of human rights advocacy and activism.

We reject the call for the university to act against Professor London. We will continue supporting his freedom, as well as other members of our faculty community, as an activist scholar in social justice civic engagements within the parameters of international human rights and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

We further endorse the statement of support published by his colleagues in the School of Public Health & Family Medicine, and echo their call for 'a more meaningful civil discourse', and one that asserts the dignity of the First Nations in resolving the differences between parties on the proposed River Club development.

Below is the statement:

Statement regarding claims made against Professor Leslie London in the School of Public Health & Family Medicine, related to the River Club development in Cape Town

24 May 2021

On 15 May, an email was circulated widely regarding Professor Leslie London's activities with the Observatory Civic Association (OCA) related to the highly contentious proposed River Club development. While these activities are not directly related to university business, this

email makes a number of spurious and defaming attacks on Professor London's professional work and character, and calls for university action specifically. In response to this, we can confirm that:

- *Professor London is a highly respected public health professional in South Africa and senior academic in good standing the Faculty of Health Sciences at UCT known internationally for his work in health & human rights.*
- *While they are not directly related to UCT business, no element of Professor London's activities with the OCA related to the River Club development have involved unprofessional conduct in any manner whatsoever.*
- *The accusations against Professor London brought in that email and related communications are not detailed, and by all accounts are without merit or substance.*

Professor London continues to have our full support. More generally we are deeply concerned about any practice of anonymous, broadcast emails being sent to attack an academic (or any citizen) without substantiation. We hope that a more meaningful civil discourse can be used going forward to help resolve the differences between parties and vested interests around the proposed River Club development.

ENDS

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