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UCT closes RiverView accommodation account

The University of Cape Town is concluding a process of finding accommodation for students who arrived on campus in February in need of housing. UCT residences are now at 100% of capacity, with 6800 in on-campus residence. We also managed to find off-campus accommodation for more than 2000 additional students who either had not applied for on-campus housing or had not received offers of accommodation.

Every year UCT faces a period of uncertainty while we wait to see how many of the students who have received residence offers actually take up the offer. Once we see how many vacancies we have, we can fill the remaining spaces. This year we faced a much greater than usual shortfall in residence spaces as a direct result of a drastic increase in three drivers of demand: firstly, the number of first-years accepting offers has increased (perhaps as a result of the expectations created nationally of better financial aid and lower fees); secondly, students completing deferred exams in January needed beds while awaiting decisions related to financial aid (the government's recent allocations to assist students with outstanding debt) and academic exclusion or readmission, which are much later than usual due to the deferred exams; and thirdly, the clearance of historic debt has increased the number of returning students.

Recognising the unique situation this year compared to other years, UCT provided accommodation for some students who did not have accommodation while their applications for study or financial support in 2016 were being considered. RiverView Lodge in Observatory provided housing for individuals in this transition phase, paid for by UCT.

With the financial appeals, registration and accommodation process now having been concluded, UCT closed its account with RiverView Lodge on Monday, 7 March 2016. Ten individuals were staying there on UCT's account. Five of the RiverView guests had been allocated UCT residence and they have since been advised to take up their res offers. The other five are not currently registered as UCT students. UCT will continue our search for suitable and affordable off-campus accommodation that is within reach of the free Jammie Shuttle transportation service, in order to assist those who may still need accommodation but cannot be housed on campus.

ENDS

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