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Re: UCT struggles to provide student accommodation

Good day,

Your article titled "UCT struggles to provide student accommodation" (06 February 2018) refers.

The headline suggests that UCT is struggling to provide accommodation, while the introduction claims that the university "is currently facing a student accommodation crisis".

However, neither of what is claimed in the headline or the introduction is supported by the rest of the content in the article.

The article claims that "many students" have to turn to private accommodation, but this is not supported by any figures. UCT has residence capacity of 6 800 plus an addition 380 beds at two leased private residence, and the university accommodates approximately 25% of its student population in our residences.

The university has had approximately 86% of students with accommodation offers placed at residences on campus as at Tuesday, 06 February 2018.

The university is, at this stage, aware of only 80 students who were made accommodation offers but were yet to be placed. Although the 80 students are yet to be placed, residences are only 86% full and there are still approximately 900 places available. This does not in any way point to a struggle to provide accommodation nor an accommodation crisis.

The university's Student Housing department is working as speedily as possible to ensure that the outstanding 80 students with residence offers are placed.

Students who have not yet been placed in residences for which they were made an offer will be placed in other UCT residences or one of the two leased off-campus residences. UCT urges any student who encounters accommodation challenges to please contact Student Housing on 021 650 2977 or email res@uct.ac.za.

Students who have not received residence offers are being assisted with securing off-campus accommodation through the university's Off Campus Student Accommodation Services (OCSAS). UCT encourages students who need assistance to contact OCSAS on 021 650 4934 or email ocsas@uct.ac.za.

The article also claims that "the problem lies with the university's allocation process". While UCT responded to this in the article, we reiterate that the over-allocation factor is always applied to ensure that the university is ultimately able to fill all the available beds. Annual analysis shows a no-show average of 10-15% of the offers made.

The over-offer rate for first-tier residences was 112%, while for second tier residences it is 121% (first-tier residences provide accommodation for undergraduate students who are usually under the age of 21 while second-tier residences provide accommodation for senior undergraduate and postgraduate students).

We kindly request that the incorrect perception that has been created that UCT is facing student accommodation crisis be corrected please.

Regards,

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