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UCT welcomes input on admissions policy and outsourcing

**Please cite Gerda Kruger, Executive Director: Communication and Marketing,
University of Cape Town**

The University of Cape Town supports the right of all South Africans to exercise responsible free speech and embark on peaceful, legal protest action. We welcome comments from all parties interested in our admissions policy and outsourcing practice. We particularly welcome input from members of our own UCT community, such as the Progressive Youth Alliance (PYA). We have noted the PYA's planned protest action regarding possible changes to UCT's admissions policy and outsourcing at the university. We would like to make the following points relating to the message they delivered on Thursday, 17 October 2013.

UCT will never reverse its commitment to affirmative action in admissions (but we want to seek a more intelligent way to define disadvantage)

It is not true that black students will be reduced at UCT as a result of any changes in admissions policy. The university's goal is to attract the best students from all walks of life in South Africa, and to provide redress for past disadvantage. The policy ensures a diverse student body, to reflect the demographic diversity of our country. The growth in the number of black students attending UCT, from 4,434 in 2008 to 6,213 in 2013, illustrates some of the successes achieved by the current policy. Today, almost half of UCT's South African students are black, coloured or Indian.

UCT is not abandoning "race" as a factor in determining disadvantage. However, we have discovered over the years that the issue is infinitely more complex: apartheid's attack on the dignity of black people was mounted at a variety of levels, leaving a legacy of many sites of disadvantage. This is what we seek to address in revising our admissions policy, by exploring a more refined model that defines disadvantage in ways that better capture what caused the damage and how "race" is experienced today at both individual and group level.

There will not be a "massive drop" in the admission of black, Indian and coloured students. The models being explored are underpinned by the fundamental principle that we should not lose the diversity that we currently enjoy. This principle is materially supported by the R500m that UCT through several sources makes available as financial aid.

Senate will be meeting in late November 2013 to discuss the model that has been proposed and it will take a decision at that time on whether to keep the current admissions policy or change the policy for 2015. Any new admissions policy will carry forward UCT's commitment

to transformation and non-racialism.

UCT is committed to fair labour practice and financial responsibility

We note the concerns that have been raised about outsourcing and we are diligent in negotiating with both outsource companies and their staff when disputes arise. We conduct frequent reviews of the outsourcing policy and practice at UCT and we welcome input from workers, unions, students and staff. The latest review took place in 2010 and the terms of reference for the next review were approved in August 2013. We expect the results of this review to be available in early 2014.

The university began outsourcing specific services such as gardening, cleaning and security in the 1990s, with a commitment to work with our contractors to ensure that they would follow a strict code of conduct with regards to their staff who work at UCT. The code of conduct guarantees, for instance, that outsourced staff who work at the university will receive a minimum wage that is significantly higher than the industry norm.

The core business of UCT is teaching and research. We began outsourcing these services to allow the university to concentrate on its core business and to reduce the costs of these services. We review the practice to ensure that UCT's outsourcing policy incorporates fair labour policies.

ENDS

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