

UCT's Price set to lay criminal charges against #FeesMustFall students

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UNIVERSITY of Cape Town (UCT) vice- chancellor Max Price is allegedly pursuing criminal charges against students who participated in the recent #FeesMustFall protests on campus.

Price will only be in his job until July. Steven Ganger, the university's investigations manager, is allegedly assisting in building criminal cases against students who protested.

UCT's spokesperson Nombuso Shabalala responded to the students' allegations yesterday.

She said criminal cases had been opened against students during protests but did not clarify whether cases were still being pursued with the intention of charging more students.

Seipati Tshabalala, the university's student representative council president last year, was arrested for malicious damages to property and contravening the UCT's interdict to curb protests on campus.

She claimed: "Ganger has been sending out more emails. There are more students that are being charged. He's even digging up stuff from 2016. My lawyer told me he's been filing new charges against people."

Tshabalala's trial is set to start in the Wynberg Magistrate's Court on July 17. She has Legal Aid representatives assisting her.

She also alleged that Price intimidated her when she was called into his office last year while protesting.

"Max Price was calling me into his office in late October. He started intimidating me. He told me there have been damages to property and he'll be naming me. He then asked me what's my plan forward," said Tshabalala.

"He said he just wanted to let me know I'm going to be charged and the police would arrest me."

She added: "By early November I had a warrant out for my arrest. I started hiding because I didn't want police to arrest me. Then I got tired of hiding. I handed myself over to the police in Rondebosch. I was then kept in a holding cell in Wynberg. Max was making me the martyr."

Mlingani Matiwane, an economics and psychology student at UCT, also accused Ganger of harassing and intimidating students.

"Steven Ganger pointed a gun at a student during a protest. He followed students and took photos of them," said Matiwane.

"Students were arrested at their residences at 2am and he gave the police permission to enter. He has stalked people and emailed them pictures that place them at a protest scene."

Matiwane alleged Ganger also sent students emails that ended with "you can run but you can't hide".

Another student, who did not want to be named, alleged that Ganger had injured students while they were protesting on campus.

“There are multiple accounts of Steven Ganger intimidating students; entering residence rooms of students early in the morning without consent, verbal threats and innuendos intent to victimise students,” the student said.

Shabalala said the students could lay a complaint against Ganger, as any staff or student had the right to do.

Qondiswa James, who graduated this year in theatre and performance, was also arrested for protesting last year but is appealing to the NPA instead of UCT’s commission for amnesty.

James was arrested along with a male student and charged with public indecency and contradicting a court interdict.

James and the male student held a naked #FeesMustFall protest at a UCT transport hub. The university had by then taken out an interdict to prevent students from protesting.