

NATIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

The National SRC of UNISA rejects the call from labour unions to transition staff work remotely.

The institution had previously radically shifted to remote working amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, a move necessitated by the need to adapt to unprecedented circumstances in delivering services and facilitating teaching and learning to our students. However, we can now scientifically affirm that we are safely emerging from the pandemic, with a noticeable decline in positive cases following the widespread distribution of vaccines.

It's evident that students are not receiving adequate support when staff is working remotely. This is reflected in the consistent venting of frustrations raised by our students to the students leadership on a day to day basis and also the on various social media platforms outlining how staff neglects their emails of queries and at times responding extremely late which subsequently taints the image of the institution in the public domain. The NSRC believes that the lack of support the students are highlighting to their students leaders and on the abovementioned various online platforms can be directly attributed to the absence of staff and lecturers in their respective offices and posts. Face to face interaction is crucial and necessary for our students to feel supported as most queries gets to be speedily resolved with face to face interaction unlike with remote working of staff workers and that assists a lot in the academic journeys of our students as the support through physical presence of staff in their respective offices and posts will be accessible and furthermore it is worth mentioning that not all our students have access to gadgets like smartphones and laptops to can maintain the online consultations.

The University of South Africa prides itself on having one of the best infrastructures. However, this infrastructure is at risk of becoming underutilized due to the absence of on-campus staff to assist, guide, and ensure the security of our students who rely on campus facilities. For many students, being on campus is the only option for accessing a conducive learning environment, including stable electricity supply, accessible free Wi-Fi, silent rooms for studying, etc.

The labour unions' call for remote working of staff is selfish and inconsiderate and an injustice to the students populace of UNISA as the approach by the labour unions is not grounded in scientific rationale and indicates a lack of passion for teaching, learning, and nurturing future leaders within the university community.



As the National SRC, we urge students across all regions to utilize on-campus facilities, including libraries, labs, seminar rooms and support services, to enhance their academic experiences and ensure their success in their academic journeys. We call on labour unions to prioritise their primary stakeholder being the students of the university and their needs in the academic environment and not incentives that encourages laziness and slack in productivity of the staff of the university.

THE END

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