

MEDIA STATEMENT

UNISA STATEMENT ON PRETORIA NEWS ARTICLE ABOUT A UNISA PROFESSOR AND THE UNIVERSITY BEING SUED BY A UNISA STUDENT

For immediate release

19 November 2019

The University of South Africa (Unisa) has noted with concern an article that appeared in the Pretoria News of Tuesday, 19 November 2019 titled *'Unisa 'sex pest' sued by student'*.

The university confirms that it is aware of this matter; which is currently the subject of legal proceedings in the high court. The university's position is that matters before the court must be dealt with before that forum without a public interrogation based on incomplete facts.

The court case emanates from a complaint lodged by a student, which resulted in an internal disciplinary hearing held by the university against the professor in question. Allegations of sexual harassment were levelled against him by the complainant.

The disciplinary hearing found the professor not guilty of the alleged offense, and the complainant has brought an application in the high court to have the findings of the disciplinary hearing reviewed and set aside.

The university condemns all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment. In equal measure, it condemns the issue of sexual harassment allegations to settle personal scores. It is also committed to its policies on harassment, including the sexual harassment policy; and any transgressions to university policies are dealt with harshly and line with such policy pronouncements.

The university's position on gender-based violence and harassment shall not be compromised by instances where there are no genuine complaints. Equally, where there are genuine complaints, the university has acted strongly and will continue to act decisively and firmly without any fear or favour.

The university equally respects and protects the rights of all employees to fair processes and to defend themselves against any allegations levelled against them.

Once a decision has been made by an independent and objective process, the university respects such decisions; whilst it is also obliged to respect the rights of other parties to take any matter on review.

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