

MEDIA STATEMENT

13 March 2019

UNISA's response regarding alleged unlawful treatment of Ms Gugu Ncube

The University of South Africa (Unisa) has noted with regret and great concern the intention by a former employee of the external company that was previously sponsored by Unisa, called the Unisa Centre for Early Childhood Education (UCECE), Ms Gugulethu Ncube, to stage a one-woman protest at the Union Buildings on Wednesday, 13 March 2019.

Unisa's main concern is that it is not for the first time that Ms Ncube continues to misconstrue this matter and attempt to drag its name into the dispute between herself and UCECE regarding her termination of employment; despite repeated attempts by the university to clarify that UCECE is an independent entity established in terms of the Trust Property Control Act; and thus operates autonomously, including entering into and terminating employment relationships. Accordingly, Ms Ncube was never an employee of Unisa.

As for the complaint of sexual harassment laid by Ms Ncube in 2018, the university followed due processes to deal with this matter, including the immediate suspension of the staff members of Unisa who were Board Members at UCECE and against whom the complaint was raised as well as providing counselling to Ms Ncube; as it viewed the matter in a very serious light. After thorough investigation, it was established that there was no basis to charge the staff members concerned with the alleged offences.

'It is regrettable that Ms Ncube is persisting with her action of dragging the name of Unisa into her dispute with UCECE; and in the process bringing our name into disrepute. Whilst we respect her right to fight for what she believes is unfair treatment towards her, we appeal to her to desist from her actions; and that the name of the university should not be dragged into this matter as it is solely between herself and UCECE'. The university is on record that it does not support bullying in any form and takes issues of abuse seriously', said Unisa Principal and Vice Chancellor, Professor Mandla Makhanya.

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