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UCT statement on controversial *Varsity* article

Please cite Patricia Lucas, Manager: Communications & Media Liaison at UCT

The University of Cape Town respects the right of all to express themselves, and the right of a student newspaper like *Varsity* (which has editorial independence) to print what it wants.

When one expresses one's personal views and decides to print a particular opinion, the writer needs to accept the responsibility such an act requires, and be prepared to bear responsibility for the consequences.

The article in the 2 April 2013 edition of *Varsity* newspaper, titled "Is love colour-blind?" is problematic in many instances. This includes the incorrect use of the headline "UCT votes on most attractive race" for a pie chart that reflects the views of just 60 people. But the most worrying matter is the thinking that inspired the article. One would have hoped that a more informed, enlightened view would have guided those involved to understand the offensiveness of the question that was asked, namely: "Which race is more attractive?"

This article has created discussion, and as an institution UCT values the impact of free and unhindered debate, even if it is sometimes offensive or uncomfortable in parts. We believe such an experience can serve to change people's perspectives and, in a sense, enlighten them to a new view. This in itself is an educational experience and we will do what we can to enhance such learning.

UCT wishes for its student newspaper to be an example of outstanding editorial quality. In this case, perhaps the journalist and the paper disappointed.

ENDS

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