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UCT executive reaches agreement with trade unions

The University of Cape Town executive reached an agreement with the trade unions on Wednesday, 13 September 2017. Following ongoing negotiations, the UCT executive is pleased to announce that two outstanding points have been resolved and an agreement reached that puts an end to a proposed strike.

Please see the below communication by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr Max Price, for more details.



14 September 2017

Dear colleagues and students

On Tuesday, 12 September 2017, we reported on the ongoing negotiation process with trade unions. We said that the parties had reached a significant degree of common ground last week, and that UCT expected to continue negotiations this week on outstanding points. We also reported that one trade union had given notice over the weekend of a proposed strike this Friday.

Negotiations continued throughout the day on Wednesday, 13 September. We are pleased to report that the two outstanding points were resolved and an agreement reached that puts an end to the threat of strike action. The agreement establishes a joint consultative forum and a small special task team on which all recognised trade unions may be represented to tackle any residual issues following the insourcing exercise last year. In addition the parties:

- agreed to a work study that will assess reasonable staffing levels across operations, with priority given to the insourced operations;
- resolved concerns about pregnant employees who work shifts;
- committed to a new shift pattern in residence catering with effect from 1 October, 2017 that would ensure quality service delivery;
- agreed on a timeframe to offer full-time roles to a group of four-hour part-time workers – by 1 November, 2017; and
- resolved a long outstanding dispute over whether Sunday pay and shift allowances were included in a previously agreed cost of employment, with agreement that an additional payment would be made for hours worked on Sundays and at night.

We believe that the spirit in which negotiations were conducted, involving representatives of five different trade unions, provides a positive signal that effective collective bargaining is possible even with multiple parties and in an extremely challenging financial environment. If the terms of the agreement can be successfully implemented it will provide a good example of what can be achieved when parties commit to meeting interests on both sides of the table. With improved efficiency in the catering shift system, the agreement should not impose an additional financial burden on the university. This will be crucial for UCT and its recognised unions in the forthcoming collective bargaining cycle.

We will keep the campus community informed of developments.

Sincerely

Dr Max Price Vice-Chancellor

ENDS

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