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UCT's initial statement on tweets by a former student on an alleged sexual violence incident

The University of Cape Town (UCT) has noted with deep concern that an alleged incident of sexual violence, which allegedly occurred in 2020, has resurfaced on social media.

A former student, who alleges she was sexually violated by an academic, renewed the claims in a series of tweets on 24 January 2024, making untested and unverified statements in the process.

As a survivor-centric university committed to the fight against sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), UCT wishes to reaffirm its position and standard practice to not respond to a matter of this nature in detail, being mindful of the inadvertent impact this might have on other cases and survivors.

Given the nature and the gravity of the allegations, as well as the fact that this has been repeated regularly on social media for four years, the situation unfortunately necessitates that the university may in due course fully set the record straight.

At the time of the alleged incident, the complainant was a medical registrar and was thus both a Western Cape Government (WCG) Department of Health & Wellness employee and a UCT student. The UCT academic who was accused is also a WCG Health & Wellness employee (that is, he is on joint appointment).

Three separate independent and external investigations were conducted by SAPS, WCG Health & Wellness and the Presidency, and all three found no substance to the claims.

According to WCG Health & Wellness, the investigation "has concluded that there is absolutely no material evidence to support the allegations made. The investigating officer's report, through interviews with witnesses, found that fraudulent claims of rape and sexual harassment had been made and that evidence had been fabricated."

- [Read the full statement by WGC Health on the matter.](#)

Engagement with the UCT Special Tribunal

In the four-year period since 2020, the former student lodged an additional two separate cases of sexual violence against two different individuals.

Furthermore, between August 2021 and February 2022, she approached UCT on five separate occasions concerning complaints of alleged racism, sexism and sexual misconduct.

On every occasion, the university immediately offered support and remediation. However, each time, she rejected this support and instructed various UCT departments in writing not to contact her further. She was further offered referral to relevant external organisations but opted not to take up any of these.

She has also been notified that any of the complaints she has lodged can be revisited at any time should she be willing to cooperate with the UCT Special Tribunal. This tribunal was established to expedite sexual misconduct cases and to ensure that the process is survivor-centred and streamlined.

It has deeply distressed the university that, despite making every possible effort to support this student, these were futile as she declined to engage or cooperate in any of the processes.

UCT takes all cases of SGBV seriously, whether against or by staff or students, and whether on or off campus. All allegations made are investigated and pursued by the appropriate departments at the university. In cases involving joint staff, the decision on which entity takes the lead in the investigation is based on jurisdiction.

UCT remains dedicated to maintaining an environment where individuals feel comfortable reporting any incidence of SGBV and encourages open dialogue to address issues. In this regard, UCT is deeply concerned that the actions of the individual behind the social media account may affect or even discourage survivors from seeking the critical assistance from appropriate internal offices (such as the Office for Inclusivity & Change) and external structures (such as SAPS and relevant NGOs).

It is crucial to support survivors of SGBV with the utmost sensitivity and respect due to the complexities involved.

UCT has noted further new untested allegations, which the university will respond to through the appropriate platforms.

The university wishes to reiterate its commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for survivors. UCT continues to encourage open dialogue with the former student and trusts that she will engage directly with the university, not only for the resolution of any case she may wish to formally bring forward, but also for the overall well-being of those affected by this matter.

ENDS

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