

27 August 2018

Statement by the Council on Higher Education concerning the death of a student at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT).

It is with deep sadness and dismay that the Council on Higher Education [CHE] has received news of the passing of a student from Tshwane University of Technology at Soshanguve north campus following a shooting incident on the 23rd of August 2018. It is alleged that the incident came as a result of a dispute over student representative council (SRC) elections. The CHE extends its deepest sympathies to the student's family and friends, as well as the University community for the tragic loss of a young life.

The CHE abhors violence as a way of resolving conflict of any sort. It is especially opposed to the use of lethal force on campuses, either as a way of resolving student problems, or as a way of maintaining order by police and campus security. It is our view that this constitutes a fundamental violation of the hard won constitutional principle of the sanctity of human life. The use of firearms in law enforcement on our campuses exposes the innocent to mortal danger, and has the effect of inflaming rather than defusing tensions. Guns should never be allowed onto our campuses.

The CHE has consistently advocated for dialogic and nonviolent approaches towards resolving conflicts or pursuing political objectives. The right to protest is a sacrosanct right, and the exercise of this right should not potentially lead to a threat to life or loss of limb flowing from violence. The essential rights enshrined in our constitution equally impose a responsibility that when an individual or group exercises their rights, this should be done in a peaceful manner taking into consideration the rights and safety of others. In light of this, the CHE also condemns violent demonstration or destruction of property as tactics to draw attention to political causes. We encourage constructive engagement in resolving any institutional issues directly impacting on the safety and security our students in our universities.

The CHE is pleased to note that Tshwane University of Technology leadership has taken swift and decisive action by launching a full-scale investigation into the passing of the student and the reported contestations concerning the SRC elections. The CHE has also taken note that the Independent Police Investigative Directorate (IPID) is now investigating the fatal shooting of the student.

The TUT community is urged to allow these processes to proceed unhindered.

Prof Narend Bajinath

CEO

27 August 2018

The CHE is an independent statutory body established by the Higher Education Act, no. 101 of 1997. As the Quality Council for Higher Education it advises the Minister of Higher Education and Training on all higher education issues and is responsible for quality assurance and promotion through the Higher Education Quality Committee.

Council Members: Prof N. Themba Mosia (Chairperson) Mr Luzuko Buku, Prof Chris de Beer, Prof André Keet, Mr Cassie Kruger, Dr Bandile Masuku, Prof Pamela Maseko, Prof Shireen Motale, Ms Nombulelo Nxesi, Dr Kimberley Porteus, Prof Selby Ripinga, Prof Beverley Thaver, Dr Mvuyo Tom, Prof Mala Singh, Prof Sophie Mogotlane, Prof John Mubangizi, Dr Thomas Auf Der Heyde, Dr Sagren Govender, Mr Suren Govender, Ms Joyce Mashabela, Dr Diane Parker, Dr Mafu Rakometsi, Mr J Samuels, Dr Molapo Qhobela; Prof Narend Bajinath (CEO).