



Office of the Vice-Chancellor

TO: STAFF AND STUDENTS

FROM: PROF O AYO-YUSUF, VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACTING)

DATE: MONDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2019

SUBJECT: UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENTS ON CAMPUS

It is important to brief the University community about developments on the campus, including the developments on addressing some of the infrastructural challenges submitted to the council at a joint seating of students and staff and, developments related to the investigations pertaining to the passing of our beloved student Hunadi.

1 Alternative arrangements to Student Cafeteria

As communicated previously, the Student Cafeteria will remain closed until further notice. I have also instructed that all other food business be closed until they are able to obtain a certificate of acceptability (COA) for indoor and/or outdoor food preparation. As an interim arrangement, management engaged the services of a private catering company to provide food services to students and staff. A condition for the appointment of this service provider was to be in possession of certificate of acceptability, which is a food preparation quality standard. The service provider will be on campus until the University cafeteria is re-opened. It is important to note that the meal costs to the students are highly subsidized by the University so as to make this food as affordable as that which the students paid for at the University's cafeteria.

2 Status of the investigation into the circumstance leading to the passing of Student Hunadi Magongoa

As reported to the University community previously, a multi-disciplinary team had initially commenced work to look into the source of the suspected outbreak. This team's effort was later taken over by broader investigation by experts from the Provincial Department of Health (Tshwane Outbreak Response Team - ORT), City of Tshwane Municipality and the South African Police Service. In addition, the state has opened an inquest docket related to the death of Ms Hunadi Magongoa, and an autopsy examination was conducted to determine the cause of death. We have also been informed that the final report of the Tshwane ORT would include autopsy results, but we got no indication when to expect the ORT's report finalised. However, we have been informed that the autopsy report might

only be ready in three months' time as part of the inquest proceedings. We have therefore made a request to the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology, through the Department of Higher Education, to speak to his counterparts to fast-track the release of the report. It is pertinent to note that when I initially communicated that the results of investigations on the outbreak would be released on Wednesday 4th September 2019, I had not known that the state/government agencies (Gauteng Health and SAPS) were going to get involved with the investigation. Any results from our lab in isolation therefore would only be relevant as part of the larger investigation.

Although samples taken from the only six students who were not in the soccer team and provided stool or vomitus samples showed no foodborne pathogens of clinical relevance according to our lab results. I was however informed by our Head of Department of Microbiology that on the instruction of the Tshwane ORT, these samples along with rectal swabs taken from members of the ladies' soccer team have had to be sent to National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD – a government assigned lab), which would be able to test for a broader range of possible pathogens (organisms which may cause disease). We therefore waited for these tests results and the final official reports from the Tshwane ORT. A recently obtained preliminary report from the Tshwane ORT suggests no pathogens were isolated in any of the 11 rectal swab samples, and concluded that investigations are still ongoing but suggested that the likely source of a food poisoning outbreak might be food consumed from the campus cafeteria.

We await the outcome of the autopsy and the inquest proceedings to establish the cause of Hunadi's death and whether there is a link to the outbreak described earlier.

While we await the final reports to conclusively establish the source of the outbreak from Tshwane ORT, I can report that upon inspection of the cafeteria, there were a number of things that needs to be attended to in the food preparation areas. These include broken tiles, the conditions of the serving warmers and coolers, hand dryers, basins and extraction fans. The drainage system was also not in an acceptable state. It would also appear that more training for staff to meet food preparation compliance standards would have to be given priority attention. We have started addressing these issues and we would keep the cafeteria closed until all matters are addressed to acceptable standards for it to comply with relevant regulatory requirements, including training of staff in food safety.

3 Natural Sciences Building (NSB)

The stench at the NSB has been a source of great concern for Management. I am pleased to report that after a long process, the broken sewer pump system has been fixed, and we are in the process of commissioning a third sewer pump. NSB was restored to a habitable state by Monday, 9 September 2019 and all academic activities scheduled in the NSB have since continued. Management will continue to monitor the situation. We are confident that by the end of the year, we would find long-term solution to this recurrent challenge.

4 Infrastructure challenges facing the University

Council acknowledged that the state of the student residences is less than ideal (evident in dysfunctional geysers, showers, toilets and level of uncleanliness etc.). While we are still awaiting the approval of our 3-5 year deferred maintenance plan and thus the release of associated funds, council requested management to urgently address critical issues such as ablution facilities in 1A and 2B; kitchens in 2B, Geysers installation in 1B, 2B & 5A. We also decided to put generators in all academic areas so that load shedding doesn't disrupt the operation of the academic enterprise and particularly to ensure that laboratories do not have interrupted power. We also plan to appoint a panel of service providers that can be called upon in a short time to supply generators to residences on a rental basis until we procure generators for all residents in the medium-term.

Following the commitment made by Council task team on above matters and relay of same to Management, the latter unfortunately could not start procurement process immediately as we still continued to have disruptions to university operations including procurement during the week of the 19th August 2019. We were then finally only able to finalise procurement process but with delay of one week from the date originally published in the Council's response to the then protesting section of the SMU community. I hereby provide summary of progress on various key projects in general;

(a) Replacement of 22 Lifts on campus

I would first like to apologise for any inconveniences this might have caused the SMU community. I am working with my team to move this project along to ensure speedy completion and would now more closely monitor implementation. The following progress has been recorded on site:

Dental Building	-	Two out of the 3 lifts are on 90% completion; The lifts are on high speed, and are currently under the inspection of independent inspectors. It is expected that the lifts will be commissioned by the 30 th of September 2019; One of the two dumb-waiters has been delivered to site, and is due to be installed as from the 25 th of September 2019;
Health Sciences Building		One out of the two is on 60% completion; The lift is expected to be commissioned by 31 st October 2019;
Library		The lift is on high speed and on 90% completion; The lift is currently under the inspection of independent inspectors and will be commissioned 30 th of September 2019;

CP Building Lifts at CP 4 (VC's shaft) are on slow speed and 85% completion;
The lifts are due to be commissioned on the 30th of September;
CP1 to CP3 are on 60% and are due for completion on 31st of October 2019;

BMS Two out of four lifts at BMS are on 60% and are due for completion on the 31st of October 2019;

NB. Phase 1 consists of 11 lifts which are due to be completed by the 31st of October 2019 and Phase 2 consisting of the next 11 lifts would start.

(a) Deferred Maintenance (Short-term)

Residence 1A Service Provider appointed to revamp the ablution facilities and kitchens, has commenced work and is intended to be completed within 8 weeks (6 November 2019);

Residence 2B Service provider has been appointed to revamp ablution facilities and kitchens. A turn-around time of 8 weeks is also expected with work having commenced on 13 September 2019. Contractors are to work with house committees and residence managers to limit inconveniences during this time.

Geysers - Service Provider appointed to install Geysers in 1B, 4B and 5A, has commenced work and is intended to be completed within 4 weeks (6 October 2019);

Generators - Service provider appointed to install new generators for BMS/NSB, library & Sports complex has commenced work and is intended to be completed within 4 weeks (30 September 2019);

(b) Upgrade of Road Network – Phase 2

Practical Completion is scheduled for 30 September 2019.

5 Bomb threat on the 23rd September 2019

I received a report that someone from SMU had reported to the local police station that there was a bomb in the CP building and the Sports Complex. The police came into campus and called the bomb squad. The Bomb squad subsequently swept through the whole CP building and the sport complex and declared the buildings safe as they found no bomb. The bomb threat is being investigated and any update would be shared with the University community. The safety of our students and staff remains paramount.

I urge all students and staff to remain focused and continue to work together in implementing our recovery plans, so as to ensure majority of our programmes are concluded this year.

I thank you all for your continued support as we continue to build a better SMU community.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'O Ayo-Yusuf', written over a horizontal line.

PROF O AYO-YUSUF
VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACTING)