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Nazi-like posters on Stellenbosch University campus

After the appearance of Nazi-like posters on the Stellenbosch University campus on 9 May 2017 'advertising' an event about the "Anglo-Afrikaner Student" scheduled to take place at the JS Gerike Library Auditorium on Thursday (11 May), the University issued various statements and updates. The sequence below is from the most recent to first statement as published on the SU website: www.sun.ac.za.

Rector suspends students involved in poster incident

Update: 11 May 2017

Prof Wim de Villiers, Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University (SU), decided to suspend three students linked to Nazi-like posters. A disciplinary process is now being followed.

The matter was investigated by SU's Equality Unit, which has made recommendations to SU's Central Disciplinary Committee (CDC) and Management. The case is now a disciplinary matter.

"The CDC will in the course of handling this matter decide on the suspensions and further steps. The case is receiving priority attention. The disciplinary process should be allowed to run its course," said Prof De Villiers.

"When the matter was brought to our attention on Tuesday (9 May 2017), both Management and the SRC immediately made it clear that we strongly condemn racism and attitudes of racial supremacy."

The Equality Unit reported that the posters and advertised event promoting racial polarisation/superiority – combined with highly offensive references to Nazi propaganda and Neo-Nazism – were in breach of SU's Policy on Unfair Discrimination and Harassment. It found that the behaviour and actions of the students in question had a demeaning and humiliating impact, and created an intimidating environment at SU.

"Stellenbosch University is doing its utmost to be a diverse and inclusive institution. The venue booking was not approved by the University, and we did not have any information about the planned gathering before the posters were displayed – without permission. When the matter came to our attention, Campus Security was asked to remove the posters. We will continue to take a stand against racism and unfair discrimination, and promote human rights, equality, human dignity and democracy. This we do in accordance with our own policies, as well as our commitment to the Constitution of South Africa and the Bill of Rights that it enshrines," Prof De Villiers added.

Individuals involved in "Nazi-posters" identified

Update: 10 May 2017

Stellenbosch University (SU) has so far identified three individuals linked to the planning of the "Anglo-Afrikaner Student" event at Stellenbosch University and the related posters that surfaced on the Stellenbosch campus on Tuesday 9 May 2017. SU's Equality Unit (EU), supported by staff of the Student Discipline division, is leading the investigation.

The EU has received multiple complaints and subsequently launched an investigation in accordance with the principles set out in the SU Policy on Unfair Discrimination. The identified individuals are being interviewed.

Based on the investigation and statements by the students the EU will make recommendations on further steps to be taken.

"The posters and advertised event promoting racial polarisation/superiority combined with highly offensive references to Nazi propaganda and Neo-Nazism are totally unacceptable. Given the values of SU and the South African Constitution we cannot condone views, events, publicity campaigns or innuendo that undermine our innate equality as human beings," says Mr Jaco Greeff Brink, Head of the EU.

The SU Management called on the campus community to let the investigation and subsequent processes run their course. Our staff members in the relevant units are giving priority attention to the matter. The findings and further steps will be communicated to the campus community.

SU reiterated that it condemns racism, racial superiority and any attempts to polarise the campus community in the strongest possible terms and that it will not allow any event promoting racial superiority to take place on campus. Posters, which were put up without the consent of the University and which advertised a meeting venue that had not been booked, were removed yesterday.

The University confirmed on Tuesday that only a query had been received on the availability of the venue and that no official booking was made at the time the posters were displayed. No further information about the event had been supplied at that point.

Yesterday, Prof Wim de Villiers, Rector and Vice-Chancellor, said: "Not only is the message of the posters totally unacceptable; it is also contrary to our institution's values. There seems to be deliberate mischief-making involved, and if that should be the case, disciplinary steps will be taken."

SU condemns poster inciting racial polarisation

First statement: 9 May 2017

Stellenbosch University (SU), its Library and Information Service and its Student Representative Council condemns racism, racial superiority and any attempts to polarise our campus community in the strongest possible terms and will not allow any event promoting racial superiority to take place on campus.

This is in the light of SU being informed late yesterday morning (9 May) about posters on campus advertising an event about the "Anglo-Afrikaner Student" scheduled to take place at the JS Gericke Library Auditorium on Thursday (11 May). The posters were put up on campus without the knowledge or consent of the University, the Library or the SRC.

An investigation is currently underway while the posters were also reported at the University's Equality Unity.

The University would like to stress that only a query was received on the availability of the venue and that no official booking was made at the time the posters were displayed. Information about the event was not provided. At this stage the origin of the posters are still unknown, but the University is currently following up on information received about the organisers.

Prof Wim de Villiers, Rector and Vice-Chancellor, said that not only is the message of the posters totally unacceptable; it is also contrary to our institution's values. There seems to be deliberate mischief-making involved, and if that should be the case, disciplinary steps will be taken."

- Any student or staff member with more information is requested to immediately contact the Client Service Centre at tel 021 808 9111 or to send an a-mail to info@sun.ac.za.

– Ends –

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