

**STUDENTS’ PERSPECTIVE ON THE CURRENTS STATE OF AFFAIRS AT UNIVESITY OF FORT HARE**

**By**

**UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE STUDENT REPRESANTATIVE COUNCIL**

**TO BE PRESENTED IN THE PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLEDGE IN PARLIAMENT**

# 

# Abstract

This document sought to outline the student perspectives on the current state of affairs in university of Fort Hare. It speaks about the number of issues, which include registration and enrolment, teaching and learning, student accommodation and recent deaths of students at this university.

Contents

[Abstract 1](#_Toc34094055)

[INTRODUCTION 3](#_Toc34094056)

[LECTURERS THAT RESIGN AND NOT REPLACED IN TIME 6](#_Toc34094057)

[Dilapidating lecture theatres 6](#_Toc34094058)

[Challenges regarding registration and enrolment for the 2020 academic year 7](#_Toc34094059)

[Academic Exclusion 9](#_Toc34094060)

[Student accommodation 10](#_Toc34094061)

[Recent killing on campus 12](#_Toc34094062)

[MENTAL HEALTH 13](#_Toc34094063)

[SRC VIEW ON THE ADMINISTRATOR 13](#_Toc34094064)

[SRC VIEW ON THE ASSESSOR’S REPORT 14](#_Toc34094065)

[CALL FOR THE VICE-CHANCELLOR TO RESIGN 14](#_Toc34094066)

## INTRODUCTION

In the introduction to Marx’s Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right, O’Malley writes that

‘*if one is to revolutionize human society in the interest of its perfection and welfare one must understand its nature, workings and failures, one must impart this understanding to others, and one must somehow effect the translation of this understanding into organized political action which will transform society in the interest of the common good’*.

Here, there is a cry for the right to learn and the right to learn in a teaching and learning environment that encourages academic excellence. A brief background history into University of Fort Hare, reveals that this is one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in South Africa founded in 1916 on the dilapidated site of earlier British military stronghold[[1]](#footnote-1). Predominantly catering for the marginally disadvantaged black students who are by-products of the long reaching impact and effects of the now repelled apartheid policies.

It is common knowledge that the fundamental goal of any institution of higher learning is the provision of satisfactory and adequate welfare services, in order to enhance the overall student tertiary experience and subsequent high academic performance. Failure in the provision of such fundamental services leads to poor academic performances and the rampart rise of other illicit and detrimental behaviors that affects the students’ way of livelihood within the context of an academic setting. The 2015 higher education summit report pointed out that the student well-being in any higher learning environment helped to cushion their experiences and furthermore, facilitated personal development, graduation and student confidence among other things[[2]](#footnote-2). Additionally, at the heart of any functional institution of higher learning is the proper and relevant teaching and learning environment that embodies a deep understanding of the complex history of inequality and rampart marginalization of the black majority.

The teaching and learning at the institution is inadequate in many areas and this leads to a high number of failures and repeaters. This arises on the backdrop that the student, specifically at the University of Fort Hare face a number of challenges notwithstanding the already challenging aspect of their varying poverty stricken backgrounds. Key to these challenges is the student to teacher ratio at the institution and student to tutor or lab demonstrator ratio that limits the impact and level of understanding of the students. Undergraduate studies typically revolve around a number of modules taken per semester toward the overall credits needed. The burden placed on the students, coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and then being inadequately catered for during their teaching and learning period, has a direct bearing on the high numbers that subsequent fail and have to repeat a module. To solely place the burden on the student is to relapse back into the repressive policies of the apartheid era, yet the reality on the ground is that students bear the full brunt of their academic limitations emanating from the inadequacies of the institution in the provision of a productive and conducive teaching and learning environment.

Teaching and learning provision is ideally disseminated in English, a language foreign to many students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and who attended schools devoid of adequately trained or qualified teachers to assist them grasp the fundamentals of the English dependent curriculum. Entering into a new environment much different from their previous encounters in high school takes a huge toll on the students and even the availability and provision of the Supplementary Instruction (SI) services, does little to mitigate the myriad of challenges and pressures faced by undergraduate students, especially at the University of Fort Hare. The lack of adequately qualified and trained SI leaders, also plays a huge role in the surmountable challenges burdened on the undergraduate student, leading to high rates of failures and repeaters.

Pursuant, to the above statements the inconsistency of lecturers actually attending and being available to address student’s needs is another mitigating factor that sees most students doing so badly academically. The institution lacks structures that govern and control the tuition times and availability of the already limited lecturer. On top of that, in many cases, students apply themselves fully into doing the works demanded only to be scaled on the same scale as those who lack the same motivation and drive. The ensuring demotivation of students leads them to engaging in extra curriculum activities that affect their academics and yet the burden remains the students, even in the face of such unjust and unavailable or inadequate lecturers. True to the words, the quality of teaching and learning at the institution leaves a lot to be desired and checks and balances need to be put in place and adequately qualified lecturers employed and put to task.

The pride of any higher institution of learning is the quality and level of competency of their postgraduate students. This is not the case at the University of Fort Hare, in actually fact besides the PGSA there is no visible postgraduate structures in place. The graduating of a postgraduate student is only celebrated by the institution and supervisor’s, as there are the only entities that enjoy the fruits monetary wise. The burden placed on a postgraduate student not only frustrates the student but also encourages the continued boycotting of the Alumni invitations. The majority of students on enjoying the better treatment there receive in other institutions of higher learning, make a humongous effort to erase and forget about the University of Fort Hare in totality. Many higher education institutions in South Africa enjoy the quality and wide plethora of academics who previously studied at this institution but no longer feel any ties whatsoever due to the marginal disregard of their presence as students.

Postgraduate life at the University of Fort Hare is nonexistent as is, the availability of adequately qualified supervisors. This is coupled with the mass exodus lecturers resigning due to the new Vice Chancellors unending demands. The gaps left by these lecturers still remains unfilled to date and still many lecturers and would be supervisors continue to resign and leave the institution. The impact of such a deficit is felt mainly by the postgraduates who have ended up without supervisors in the middle of their research. One fundamental factor that must be addressed is the rating given to Professors by the National Research Fund (NRF) that classified the amount of funding that is tied to an individual Professor. The departure of such a rated lecturer means also the departure of the NRF funding tied to his accomplishments and this has been the case at the institution and many students lost their funding and in the process ended up accumulating debts.

Another key factor is the existence of ghost postgraduates that have inevitably taken up the space for new postgraduates; there are cases of individuals having registered five to ten years ago for a Masters or Doctoral qualifications and still yet to produce anything tangible. The burden again is placed on the incoming postgraduates who have no bearing whatsoever on the running and absorption of previously registered individuals. A call that has continued to be ignored, that of having a separate system for those with five to ten years in the system, so as to allow for the introduction of new postgraduates into the system who are hungry to further their education.

To date the most frustrating aspect of being a postgraduate at the University of Fort Hare, was the delayed release of ethical clearance due to a lapse in the certification and clearance by the institution. Most postgraduates spent a whole year waiting for their ethical clearance letter so there could go and collect data and finish with their research. The burden of continued incurred costs was again placed squarely on the shoulders of the student, who inevitably ended up being financially excluded. In most cases, the students would be preparing to graduate in May but due to the delays now look to graduate in September but to do so must be registered and in the system. A futile and impossible factor given that there are now excluded.

It is clear enough that the crisis of higher education has a number of dimensions. The ‘economic’ dimension is all too evident. First, and most importantly, South African higher education is inadequately funded by the state. But of critical importance in this stance is the curriculum, that continues to be more Eurocentric based and lacking in indigenous knowledge systems. Students are taught concept alien to them and their circumstances, ideally meant for a different breed of academics. There are sent to higher education institutions with limited or redundant knowledge and consequently, find the academic life a big challenge and thus continuously fail to meet the set standards and demands. These high demands on a curriculum devoid of indigenous knowledge systems is another key factor in the high rates of repeats and failures faced by the institution and visible structures need to be erected to mitigate and address this continuously growing gap.

There are insufficient resources devoted to academic development programmes in light of the support many students require to ensure that there is meaningful equity of opportunity and outcomes, and that they can graduate successfully at the University of Fort Hare. On top of that the facilities and infrastructures that the teaching and learning process take place are not adequate. In most classes, students lie on the floor, sit on broken benches or stand for long periods of time as there are no adequate resources to cater for them. In some cases, students opt to miss the class or if there attend end up failing asleep on the floor and this has had a significant impact on their academics and again there carry the burden that is supposed to be borne by the institution. Although, it is evident and true that since 2007, the state has provided considerable funding for ‘infrastructure and efficiency’ to address backlogs and increase institutional capacities related to teaching, research and student accommodation at all universities, and especially the historically black universities like the University of Fort Hare.

The severity of the backlogs at historically black universities as a legacy of apartheid era inequalities, infrastructure funding has been inadequate to eliminate the range of conditions that impact on the quality of higher education provision. This has continued to compromise equity of opportunity and outcomes for the students at these historically black universities, who are largely from working class and rural poor families. The burden placed on students is unprecedented and unfair to say the least, the aftermaths of a system that favoured individuals along a racial divide continues to place the burden on the innocent and impoverished and in the process seeks to usurp their one and only hope of a better tomorrow, for the student and community dependent on him or her.

## LECTURERS THAT RESIGN AND NOT REPLACED IN TIME

It is a norm at the University of Fort Hare that staff members, mostly academic staff members are never replaced immediately after their resignation. For an example, in the Faculty of Law, there were close to 10 staff members that resigned between February and August 2019, and the position for these lecturers were advertised in October and November 2019. These can be verified from the Human Resources Dept. at the university. This clearly means that students go for months without lecturers, or in some instances, in-experienced time-on-task masters and PhD students are then used to lecture students whilst they advertise their positions for months on end. However, we expect students to perform, whilst this has a direct bearing on their performance.

## Dilapidating lecture theatres

There are lecture theatres/classrooms in the East London Campus that are leaking. Actually the whole of the Administration Block in East London Campus is leaking. When it’s raining, students are asked to vacate classes. This has been the case for almost 4 years now. However, the University received an infrastructure grant from DHEST in 2017, and in terms of the schedule given to DHEST, these lecture theatres /classrooms were to be repaired and renovated during holidays in December 2017 to January 2018 using this funding. To date, these lecture theatres are not renovated. It is only the Vice-Chancellors office that was renovated in 2018 in the Administration Block in East London Campus

## Challenges regarding registration and enrolment for the 2020 academic year

In preparation for registration, the SRC and the management are expected to meet and discuss extensively on how the registration should take place. Furthermore, the registrar’s office is expected to organise workshops on how to conduct the registration. This ensures that there is smooth registration and gives the SRC a platform to iron out all matters that are of concern, this includes exclusions.

In or about the 28th of November 2019, the SRC had an SRC-MANAGEMENT meeting with the proposed agenda items as reflected in **annexure 1**, the SRC pleaded for suspension of the agenda so as to discuss the registration matters, instead the VC deferred the registration matters to the 9th of December 2019. This decision was contested on the basis that it will be late then to discuss matters that are of importance concerning registration.

On the 9th of December 2019 as reflected on the agenda attached as **annexure 2**, the SRC called for free registration for all. The latter stance was categorically explained to the management, the SRC stated that the new entry students should be allowed to register without paying the minimum initial payment. Secondly, the SRC stated that all NSFAS approved students should be allowed to register without paying the MIP and that a debt acknowledgement must be signed in an event where NSFAS has not made payments on behalf of that student.

Thirdly, the SRC stated that for self-funded students who are academically performing and are within the N+2 rule, an acknowledgement of Debt form must be used so that the students can register. Lastly, the SRC proposed that all postgraduate students must be allowed to sign the debt acknowledgement and be allowed to register. The SRC and the management did not agree on the number of issues and as a result, the VC deferred the outstanding matters to 6 January 2020. The student body cautioned the management about the risks of failing to resolve these critical matters and that all the outstanding matters should be finalised before the 20th January 2020, that is the first day of registration. The latter is reflected as **annexure 3, page 3 para 4**.

The SRC called for a meeting to be convened as per the resolutions, the management failed to honour the resolutions and unilaterally decided to call the meeting on the 20th January 2020. Attached is the invitation marked as **annexure 4** as evidence. The SRC called for the suspension of registration pending the outcomes of the meeting. The latter requested was motivated by the above-mentioned reasons and another area of concern was the fact that the students will register at the Institution with a new fee increment that the SRC was not consulted on due to the fees committee not meeting quorum and without the necessary documentation for accountability and transparency. Complaints to the VC’s office about the committee were sent asking for his intervention, attached are the complaints marked as **annexure 5.**

On the 20th January 2020, the meeting was convened and deadlocked as the management was clear on both academic and financial exclusions. A blanket decision was unilaterally taken by the University management, which they are implementing currently, and which is at the heart of the crisis, is that “student whose debt is more than R 10 000, 00 they must pay and reduce their debt to less than R 10 000, 00 before they are allowed to register”. From the data that we, as the SRC, have collected directly from students, as of Sunday, 01 March 2020, there are approximately 1500 students that are unable to register. Amongst the categories of students who are unable to register are the following:

1. Self-paying students that are doing well academically and are within the N+2 rule but are having historic debt are not allowed to register.[[3]](#footnote-3)
2. Students that are have exceeded the N+2 rule and are unable to register.[[4]](#footnote-4)
3. There are FTEN[[5]](#footnote-5) students who are within the N+2 rule and meet the 50% NSFAS criteria for funding but they were only informed in 2020 that NSFAS never funded them yet they receive meals, books, travelling and living allowances from the institution. They had a reasonable belief that they were funded by NSFAS and are now unable to register as they required to reduce their debt to less than R 10 000, 00.
4. Students who were once NSFAS beneficiaries but failed to meet the funding criteria, i.e. 50%, but have recently met the 50% criteria and are still within the N+2 rule but did not re-apply, this category of students is blocked and is unable to register.
5. LLB students who are doing LLB as a postgraduate qualification are blocked even though they are funded by NSFAS. Financial Aid have refused to unblock them as they are saying NSFAS does not fund LLB.[[6]](#footnote-6)
6. Post-graduate students (masters and PhD students) who have exceeded the N+1 rule, not because of their own making but because the University did not have the Ethical clearance certificate in 2019 that would have allowed the students to go out and collect data in the 2019 academic year. The latter challenge has been caused by poor administration of the University and now those students are adversely prejudiced, as they cannot register.
7. Post graduate students who have exceeded the N+1 rule, not because of their own making but because the University did not have enough supervisors in 2019. As a result, the students were registered but did not submit any of their work, as there were no supervisors.[[7]](#footnote-7)
8. There are students that failed to meet 50% in the 2019 academic year and are now undergoing the NSFAS appeals process, the management has refused to register these students and stated that they are to register after the outcomes of appeals. The only students that will register are those who will be reinstated by the sponsor and those that will be rejected are not going to be allowed to register.

The appeals process is lengthy and might be concluded towards the end of the semester and the students will lag behind in tests and other academic activities setting them up for failure. Moreover, some of these students do not owe the institution but are denied access to the system on the basis that they do not have sponsors for the 2020 academic year, which negates the possibility of getting another sponsor during the course of the year.

1. The university management is failing to communicate critical information to the students and other stakeholders of the institution this is incidental to the fact that the management down plays the importance of committees that forms the integral part in the operations of the University. Therefore, this is the root cause for poor communication. The Vice Chancellor stated that even if these committees can sit nothing would change, this presupposes the centralisation of power to MANCO and takes away, the powers vested in committees. The University did not inform the International students of the changes about the medical aid that the University prefers. The international students were only informed when they came for registration and as a result, they already prepared medical aids that are different from the preferred one and as a result, there is a crisis concerning medical aids and the international students cannot register.
2. Furthermore, permanent residents must be treated the same as domestic students and should enjoy the same benefits as like the local students. Concessions made for domestic students should also be made for permanent residents.

## Academic Exclusion

The management of the University of fort hare prioritises a rhetoric and as such they disregard the resolutions of forum of the management and the src. On the 9th December 2019, the SRC and the management agreed that the appeal processes for academic exclusion would be concluded before registration. Attached is **annexure 8** as evidence for the latter assertion. The registrar’s division was expected to communicate to the students that are excluded and inform them of the exclusion during the summer holidays. The students were not informed and only learnt of their exclusion on the day of registration when they were blocked from registering

The departments that were to conduct the process were confused as to how to conduct the process and other faculties stated that it is the registrar division that should deal with the exclusions and the registrar stated that the exclusions are to be handled internally by faculties. Moreover, the process started and the faculties failed to handle the exclusion processes and the SRC had to object the process of conducting the appeals. Attached is **annexure 9** as evidence. Furthermore, as things stand some faculties have not concluded the appeals of students and those students are still out of the system and are not registered. It is important to note that the University of Fort Hare does not have support services as evidenced below that ensure student success on the system yet the institution is prioritising academic exclusions.

An institution that has a tutoring system that have collapsed, labs that are not working, libraries are with no prescribed books, teaching and learning venues that are dilapidated. In addition, this institution does not have any policy that seeks to support students before academic exclusions. The University has a crisis and this shows from the number of NSFAS appeals, which was 520 in 2019, and currently we are anticipating more than 1000 appeals, this indicates that the University guarantees no success for its students in the system.

In conclusion, the above listed categories of students are not allowed to register due to the fact they do not have the means to clear the debts or amounts owed to the University. The recent financial exclusion informs the recent student actions in both campuses. The University management is adamant and is not willing to converse in resolving the matter, this is reflected by the disturbing utterances made by the VC, and DVC IS that seeks to prove the commodification of education and that education is for the priviledged. The DVC IS stated that,” financial exclusion is a bitter pill that you must find water to swallow”. The latter statement was followed by discussions deadlocking as the management was not willing in assisting the above affected students.

Student accommodation  
Student accommodation is a crisis at the University for both campuses, that is East London campus and Alice campus. At the Alice campus the University has 4 000 beds and the campus has in or about 10 000 students. The statistics show that there is inadequacy of accommodation. Alice campus is located in rural areas and the University cannot expand its capacity using the private accommodation accreditation system, this then results in students squatting and living in overcrowded rooms yet they pay full accommodation costs. These students pay rent to other students as they are not allocated and they cannot get any private accommodation to the location of Alice.

Furthermore, the residences are not in a good state, they are not maintained and are dilapidated. The residences at the Alice campus are in a dire state, toilets are not working, there is sewage exposed, the kitchens are no longer working and the students cook in their rooms. Moreover, the common rooms are not working and there is absolutely no hygiene in the residences. In essence, Alice is a health risk. There are residences with cracks and the SRC have been complaining about such since 2016 till date. Other students at the Alice campus are allocated in prefabs that are rotten and others are allocated in mud-houses (huts) and some students get sick as the structures are not up to standard. At the Alice campus, all of the residences are not disability friendly.

Students with disabilities are struggling to make ends meet as they are not catered for in the system. In the assessors report, the assessors noted that a student living with disability was allocated in a dilapidated building and the institution does not care about the wellbeing and the need for essentials for this category of students.[[8]](#footnote-8) Moreover, at the East London campus the accommodation is not adequate even though the campus is located in the CBD. East London residences are not meeting the norms and standards as per the DHET guidelines. Furthermore, the residences at the campus are not disability friendly, there is one residence that is closer to the campus and is said to be disability friendly, the stoves are not adjusted for students with disabilities.

The washing lines are at the roof top where there is no access and the rooms that they are allocated in are not spacious and do not allow the students to move around. The Vice chancellor of the University was invited for a walk so as to see the condition of the residence, he attended and saw the dire situation and until to date there is no intervention made by his office. Furthermore, in 2017 a residence at the EL Campus had a ceiling that collapsed during heavy storms[[9]](#footnote-9) and in the following year the students were allocated back to that residence. Earlier on this year in January during heavy rains the ceiling collapsed again in the same building. The residence is in a bad state and there are leakages everywhere.

The matter was reported to the University DVC IS and to the acting residence manager, no actions have been taken, and the students are suffering. There is one kitchen at the basement where there are swaps from underground water. The management stated that they will look into the matter and they take total disregard of the urgency in addressing the matter and since 2016 to date the matter is reflected on each agenda item of the SRC-Management meetings, please see the evidence marked as **annexure 6**. In addition, there is an inadequacy of accommodation and the University Vice chancellor is aware and the matter was reported to the then University Council. The University at the East London campus is not making use of the fact that they are allocated in a CBD and they are not making use of that in trying to expand their accommodation through private accommodation accreditation system.

Other Universities like TUT, when they were struggling with accommodation, they introduced the private accommodation accreditation system and as a result, the crisis was resolved. At the University, there is no policy on private accommodation accreditation and even though students go and stay at the private accommodation, they are receiving sub-standard services yet they pay large sums of money that is financed by NSFAS. The students are victimised and the institution is silent about that even though the SRC has called for the adoption of such a policy in addressing the accommodation crisis. Lastly, the SRC notes the absence of the disability policy and the Vice Chancellor was furnished with the draft policy on disability and has sat at the Institutional structures for approval for four (4) years and this has opened room for non-compliance with regards to disability friendly residences.

## Recent killing on campus

At the University, there is a looming fear factor amongst the students and this is caused by the recent murder of two (2) students at the University in February 2020. The recent killings are preceded by the killings and suicides that took place in 2019. At the Alice campus, one (1) was stabbed to death in 2019 and there were in or about seven (7) suicides.[[10]](#footnote-10) In the East London campus there was one reported suicide and several attempts of suicide. This year three (3) attempted suicides took place on campus. One would be concerned as to what is the root cause of such happenings at the Fort Hare campuses.

The killings on campus are caused by lack of security personnel on campus and the security measures that are not in place. There is easy access in campus and everyone even the people from the community can access the campus easily. At the main gate at the Alice campus, there are no biometric access gates and there are no boom gates to limit access at the University. There are other entrances at the campus and there are no stringent security measures. Moreover, at the University residences there are biometric gates but they are not working as a result people can access residences at any time.

The access is not monitored. Attached are communiques requesting improved security systems, they are marked as **annexure 6**. At night the campus security personnel at the Alice campus does not do patrols, this is because there are few securities employed by the University. At other instances, a residence would be without securities at night and you can imagine the consequences of not having any security measures at the residences. Moreover, the assessors report makes mention of the fact that at the Alice, there are no recreational centres for students and as a result, students go out of campus to look for entertainment because the institution does not have any extra-mural activities in trying to enhance student life on campus.

These students are victims of violence on the way to and from the places where they find entertainment. The then acting DVC IS, Prof. Majova made promises that security would be employed and that they would allocate money for security equipment. She stated that the biometrics will be installed and that those at the residences would be activated. Until up to date the status quo has remained as is. The promises have been there since 2017. The university does not care about the safety of the students and the lack of responsiveness in addressing security concerns. The management has no plan in addressing the matter.

## MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is a biggest concern for the university and there are no plans by the institution in remedying the situation. In 2019 as alluded above there are in or about seven (7) suicides at the Alice campus and there was one at the East London campus. In addition, there were more than ten (10) attempted suicides for both campuses. The trend is continuing in 2020 as a result we have three (3) reported attempted suicides and the latter information provided above is sufficient to prove that indeed as the institution we are having challenges of mental health.

The root cause for mental illness at the institution is that the Student counselling Unit does not have sufficient psychologists. At the Alice campus there is only one (1) professional psychologist that is servicing the population of 9 000 + students. Moreover, in East London there is one psychologist also servicing 6 000+ students. A student is placed on a waiting list in order for him or her to get consultation with the psychologist and as a result it may take ten (10) days before you get a consultation.

Moreover, the University does not have any doctor for both campuses. The Dean of students keeps making mention that there is a doctor employed by the University, this is a doctor that is retired and was paid by the University for two years yet he was critically-ill. The doctor was a time on task Doctor and he closed his own practice due to illness. The spouse of the doctor came to advise the institution to terminate its contract with the doctor as he was paid without servicing the students due to his health. The university has reinstated back in the institution in light of the concerns raised above.

In most instances, students do not even bother to go to this department because they know they will not receive any service. As SRC, we are not surprised that students end up resorting to suicide, alcohol and substance abuse, etc. Furthermore, two posts have been vacant since 2018 to date. Additionally, the position of the manager at the SCU has been vacant for more than a year. Attached are reports sent to the office of the Dean, DVC IS and the VC, they are marked as **annexure 7**. The University of Fort Hare does not have any policy that seeks to address mental illness.

## SRC VIEW ON THE ADMINISTRATOR

The SRC is of the view that the Administrator’s term should not be extended, in fact it must be terminated with immediate effect. It holds this view because the Administrator, Prof Nongxa did not come to party at a time when his counsel was need in the midst of conflict, as a person who assumes the role of council. We strongly feel that he has been captured and, thus, cannot be objective on the matters that need his immediate interventions. On numerous occasions when SRC consulted him for his intervention, he failed to intervene.

## SRC VIEW ON THE ASSESSOR’S REPORT

The SRC holds a view that the report fails to give a clear state of affairs of the institution. It somewhat gives a blur picture of the current state of the university. The report seems to be justifying the current VC’s behaviour on many aspects of what is happening in the institution currently. One would be tempted to believe that the VC wrote the report himself.

## CALL FOR THE VICE-CHANCELLOR TO RESIGN

**Reasons**

1. Failure or deliberate disregard of the Minister’s directive regarding NSFAS students.
2. Compromising Student Safety and Security.
3. Pervasive Financial Exclusion of Students.
4. Deliberate Victimization of Student Leadership
5. Poor Stakeholder Engagement as noted by the Independent Assessor’s report.
6. Police and private security brutality on students and militarization of campuses.
7. Undermining the role and existence of SAUS in the post-school sector.
8. Deliberate disregard of the interventions of the provincial government on the situation of Fort Hare University.

The issues outlined above, together with a number of other issues related to mismanagement and reign of terror by the Vice-Chancellor are just a tip of what is happening at the University of Fort Hare. The issues outlined above characterises his term of office as a Vice-Chancellor, hence our call for him to resign. Student Representative Council is tired of begging Prof Buhlungu to meet with students. As the SRC we have been trying to engage with the Vice chancellor to engage with us on these issues, instead he responds with court interdicts and private security. As the SRC we believe that Prof Buhlungu is tired of being a VC, in fact he wants to resign just that he does not know how to put it to the public.

1. www.ufh.ac.za/About/Pages/History.aspx [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Self-paying students include those referred to as the missing middle – meaning that their family income exceeds 350 K but not more than 600 000 K. These students are not funded by NSFAS and at fort hare are referred to as self-paying students. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. These students are referred to as self-paying students as NSFAS have excluded them due to exceeding the N+2 criterion, however, in the case of the Fort Hare, the majority of these students should be referred to as falling within the N+3 category as they are potential graduates. Many have less than five modules left in order for them to complete the qualification. The University like UCT and others have a prerogative of devising mechanisms in assisting those students to finish off their qualifications [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. First entry students (FTEN), the affected parties are from 2017 – 2019. The historic debt for such students is more than R 220 000 as they were receiving all allowances, this is due to the ineffective and incompetence of the financial aid department. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. NSFAS funds LLB as a postgraduate qualification and it appears on the funded postgraduate qualification in the NSFAS website. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The non-employment of lecturers is discussed in detail below under … [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Report of the Independent Assessor regarding the University of Fort Hare, page 12 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/daily-dispatch/20170714/281530816066147> (accessed 01 March 2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. <https://www.dispatchlive.co.za/news/2019-11-08-12-fort-hare-students-have-died-in-2019-so-far/> (accessed on 01 March 2020) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)