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| MEMORANDUM FROM THE PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE |

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION 1385**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION OF INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER: 22/04/2022**

**INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO 14 OF 2022**

**Ms A M Siwisa (EFF) to ask the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation:**

What (a) measures have been put in place by his department to deal with the incompetent catering team that fed students food with worms at the University of Sol Plaatjie and (b) steps have been taken by his department in order to ensure that students receive nutritious meals on time in future?

**NW1677E**

**REPLY:**

Provision of catering services on campuses and university residencies is the responsibility of the University Management.  My department was concerned about the complaints relating to the provision of quality food in the institutions of higher learning. As soon as questions were brought to our attention, Sol Plaatje University was contacted about the incident reported to have happened in one of its cafeterias.

The University responded that it has contracted with local Kimberley-based service providers to provide catering services in its student dining halls.  These service providers are required to provide food that is of a national standard, and the University holds them to that undertaking.  In the case reported, meals for lunch were prepared in the University 's dining hall and one pack was reported to contain a worm.  It is not clear how the worm entered the pack.  The University took the proactive approach to shut down the cafeteria, and invited a health inspection from the Sol Plaatje Local Municipality who visited the kitchen to conduct an inspection and was accompanied by two members of the SRC, Sol Plaatje University Manager for Soft Services and the Residence Warden.

The Health Inspector could not find fault with the operations of the kitchen, which included the processes of receiving, storing, preparing, cooking and serving meals to students.  Students were given the option to eat in any of the other cafeterias on campus, but they refused to do so, and demanded that the kitchen be re-opened. The kitchen was only re-opened after the go-ahead was received from the health inspector.

The University has instituted additional measures to support food safety in its dining halls. These measures include regular checks by management and student leaders, regular inspections by external experts, and the secondment of experienced staff to its kitchens.