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## **STATEMENT FROM UNIVERSITIES SA ON RECENT INCIDENTS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Following reports of multiple incidents at universities across the South African higher education system in the last ten days, Universities South Africa is extremely concerned about the impact that these incidents will have on student performance in the lead up to mid-year examinations.

There have been student protests organised by political parties, clubs and societies at multiple institutions focusing on a range of issues, including demands for more student funding and the lack of accommodation. In one case a campus had to be evacuated and shut down as students arrived with guns and other weapons. Moreover, strikes and other forms of protest action by some unions are also contributing towards destabilising the sector just before examinations.

Whilst we recognise the Constitutional rights of students, unions, political parties and other stakeholders to strike and protest, we should be mindful that these rights come with responsibilities, and should not infringe on the rights of others to learn and to work. The education of our students should not be put at risk and universities should not be held to ransom in order to further the particular interests of certain groups who wish to destabilise the system for their own personal gains.

As Universities SA we call on all political parties, unions, students, academics, parents and others to act responsibly to ensure that our universities are not compromised in any way and that mid-year examinations continue without disruption.

*Universities South Africa represents all South African universities.*

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