

Issued: 3 May 2020

**RE: Response to 3 May statement by DVC: Academic and Student Affairs**

Dear fellow students,

We have noted the recent statement released by the university stating that the online learning program scheduled to start tomorrow will continue regardless of the various hurdles that hinder the participation of many of our fellow students in this program. We, therefore, outright reject the commencement of the online program set to start tomorrow. We have stated in the past, and we will continue to say that online learning activities should only commence once all students are accommodated.

The SRC was not consulted prior to the release of the statement, and we found this to be very disrespectful to the student body as their views were not heard prior to reaching this decision. This flagrant abuse of institutional autonomy only seeks to broaden the divide of our student body by catering to the needs of the privileged. The decision to continue with online learning tomorrow disregards the unreadiness of many of us and will leave many lagging behind in their work.

There is still no exact timeline as to when students will be receiving laptops and other learning material to be able to participate in online learning, yet we start tomorrow. The eagerness to begin tomorrow can only be explained by their anxiety of seeing more progressive developments in other universities who also start tomorrow, not noting that we are far behind in terms of implementing an online learning program.

The minister of Higher Education, Science, and Technology stated that institutions who are not yet ready should use this period to ensure all stakeholders are capacitated adequately to participate in online learning and should begin learning in June.

The actions of the university are very disheartening as they did not consider the suggestions that emanated from our online meeting. We are yet to receive a response to the statement that was sent to them.

We have called on the University; they have not responded and engaged with the SRC with enough sufficiency. We now call on fellow students and staff members that support the suspension of the online academic program until all students are catered for. We encourage everyone not to participate in the online academic program and we urge the University to rethink its decision, or appropriate action will have to be taken against their decision.

Yours in leadership  
Rhodes SRC

