

25 February 2014

COMMUNIQUÉ FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: CORPORATE RELATIONS

UKZN RESPONSE TO ARTICLE TITLED 'STUDENTS ATTACK PREGNANT UKZN LECTURER' IN THE INDEPENDENT ON SATURDAY

To all Staff and Students

The article titled 'Students attack pregnant UKZN lecturer' published on the front page of the Independent on Saturday dated 22 February refers. The economics lecturer mentioned in the article has expressed shock and dismay at the grave inaccuracies in the report. According to the academic concerned on Friday, 21 February protesting students disrupted her economics lecture at the Westville campus. She was sprayed with a fire-hose. She grabbed the hose and sprayed the protestors to disperse the protesting students. Whilst leaving the class she slipped on wet tiles in the T- block building. The lecturer was not trampled and she is not pregnant.

The following is an excerpt from correspondence received from the lecturer: "The lecture venues have security camera's installed, and should there be any question about the events which took place, this footage, as opposed to cell-phone recordings of events, should be examined. I am extremely disappointed that the editor of the *Independent on Saturday* authorised an article to be published on this incident without a thorough investigation. To the best of my knowledge, I am not pregnant, and reporting that I am has sensationalised this incident unnecessarily amongst the public. I would like the *Independent on Saturday's* editor to issue a formal retraction of the article and an apology to both the University and myself".

It should be noted that a relatively small percentage of the student body (UKZN has over 39 000 students) engaged in protest action at the Westville campus on Friday, disrupting lectures and vandalizing University property. The protest was in breach of the final High Court interdict prohibiting any form of illegal gatherings, protests, acts of violence and intimidation. A strong police and security presence on campus was necessary to control the violent protestors and to protect the safety of our staff and students.

Issued by:

Lesiba Seshoka
Executive Director Corporate Relations
University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN)