



RHODES UNIVERSITY
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NATIONAL DAY OF ACTION ACROSS ALL SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES: A UNITED FRONT IN DEFENSE OF QUALITY, TRANSFORMATIVE HIGHER EDUCATION

Dear Academics, Workers, Students and Administrators,

Please join us on Friday, 7 October from 12h30 to 14h00 on the Drostdy Lawns for a national picket calling on our government to address the funding crisis in higher education.

Our system of higher education in South Africa is in crisis. The key driver of this crisis is the steady decrease in national funding of the higher education system while enrollments have increased. The state subsidy to higher education decreased from 50% in 1994 to 40% in 2014. In the same period (1994 to 2016) student enrollments increased from 500 000 to 1 000 000 (Ramaphosa Report, 2013). The result of this de-funding of higher education by our state is the crippling of the ability of our academic institutions to provide quality, transformative higher education to students, and to produce scholarship which can contribute to wider social change in our society.

This crisis in higher education is now a collective threat: it is experienced by not only students but also workers, academics and administrators at higher education institutions. State underfunding of the higher education system is leading to freezing on hiring of additional academic and support staff, and retrenchments are now not only a present but inevitable danger. Under these conditions of severe underfunding, students who enter the higher education system can no longer be guaranteed a quality, transformative higher education.

Our strategic priority in the face of this shared threat must therefore be to unify behind a commonly shared platform in defense of accessible quality, transformative higher education. A national picket will be undertaken at all universities in South Africa on Friday at 12h30. This picket action is a building block in building a United Front in Defense of Quality, Transformative Higher Education at all our university institutions.

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