



STATEMENT ON THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

"The primary task of a university is the advancement of knowledge by means of teaching and research. In the pursuit of that function a university has a special responsibility to the community which it serves. It must have access to information about the problems and needs of society, and it must be free to investigate, assess and debate issues according to the dictates of reason.

Because of the following features of the State of Emergency, South African universities cannot carry out these tasks effectively.

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- restricted access to information prevents investigation and research in many areas.
- The definition of prohibited 'subversive statements' is so broad that critical discussion and analysis is seriously curtailed.
- Provision for the searching of premises and for the seizure of materials and documents allows access without warrant to private papers and confidential records.
- Detention without charge or trial allows for the intimidation and arrest of staff and students for the opinions they form in the pursuit of their legitimate educational objectives.

We are deeply concerned that the principles of justice have been

subverted in relation to the above matters.

We are further concerned that what is happening in South Africa at the moment is affecting not only students but also the careers of thousands of school children. Pupils in large numbers have been detained, and regulations recently announced by the Department of Education and Training have had a profoundly negative effect on schools which feed our universities. The education of our prospective students has thus been placed in jeopardy.

The effects of the present disruption of the flow of students through the educational system, will be felt for years to come, and there is thus an urgent need for the restoration of normality.

Our universities are united in their concern as to the causes and the effects of the State of Emergency. It is our view that the current crisis is a product of delay in extending basic political and civil rights to the majority of the population, and that, in this situation, violence has escalated and black education has become a focus, a symbol and a cause of most serious social unrest.

We call upon all to desist from violence, and more particularly call upon the government

- to lift the State of Emergency,
- to release all detainees or charge them in a court of law.
- to lift the curbs placed on the free flow of information, and

- to address the problems in black education immediately and imaginatively, without measures as drastic as those currently in force, but through negotiation and with a receptive spirit.

Particular attention will have to be paid to those whose education over the years has been neglected or disrupted. Our universities bear a great responsibility in the process of reconstruction and reform. We therefore commit ourselves to continuing assistance to those from educationally-disadvantaged backgrounds, and those condemned by the policy of apartheid to conditions of life not conducive to the full realisation of their true potential.

We further pledge our support to reasonable, rational and non-

violent attempts to establish democracy, academic freedom, freedom of association, freedom of speech and the Rule of Law in this land.

And we declare that, notwithstanding the Emergency, we will, to the best of our ability, continue to provide a forum for the exercise of critical thought and the transmission of information in the service of the wider community."