

ACADEMICS UNIONS STATEMENT ON STUDENT DEMANDS: ACADEMIC FREEDOM & LECTURERS IN
PHILOSOPHY AND IN KRAMER LAW

26 October 2017

The Academics Union wishes to express its concern at the public accusations against academic staff in the Philosophy Department and Law Faculty in some of the student demands circulated by the SRC.

The AU believes that, where there are claims against individual lecturers and departments, the proper institutional procedures must be followed to raise and resolve these complaints where appropriate. Making such allegations the subject of political demands in a public forum does not meet the due process standard.

The Academics Union agrees that abuse of any kind is unacceptable. However, we equally deplore and reject general public accusations directed against academic and other staff.

Similarly, the AU takes issue with the SRC's accusations of abuse of academic freedom. While we may hold different views on the content and limits of academic freedom, this is a core feature of our members' working conditions at UCT and forms part of the right to freedom of expression protected under South Africa's Constitution. Challenges to the limits of the application of this principle in specific cases should be raised through designated channels, according to due process.

The AU wishes to reiterate that it affirms the right of students to engage in lawful protest, but it believes that this should take place with respect for the safety, dignity and views of others. We therefore appeal to the SRC to follow existing institutional procedures to address the issues you raise.

Maanda Mulaudzi, Kelley Mout and the Academics Union Executive