



Statement over Racist Incident at Huis Marais: Sunday 15 May 2022

The Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Stellenbosch University wishes to add its voice to those emanating from our institution, the country and across the globe condemning the racist incident that transpired at Huis Marais on Sunday 15 May. The incident undermines the university's inclusive scholarly project and its role in building a just society free of apartheid and its institutional forms of racism. We are outraged as a department and clear that this is intolerable.

Over the last decade, our department has actively engaged in teaching and research that has explored how forms of racism continue in our institution and in the town of Stellenbosch. Amongst these activities, our emeritus professor, Rob Pattman, compiled a volume together with a colleague from the Department of Psychology, Ronelle Carolissen, entitled *Transforming Transformation in Research and Teaching in Higher Education*. This work, published in 2018, includes research by postgraduate students into everyday experiences of racism, including in residence halls and others social spaces on campus, and contributes to understanding how divisive practices persist at universities, including Stellenbosch.

We are aware as social scientists that in addition to individual culpability, we need to reckon with institutional forms and practices that sustain and reproduce — rather than challenge — racism. As scholars, we recognise the need to think and act more deliberately about racism, its practices, its symbols and material manifestations in the worlds we inhabit. Specifically, the residence where this incident occurred, Huis Marais, was noted in September 2020 by the former vice-rector of Teaching and Learning as an exclusively men's residence resistant to fostering an inclusive community. Yet the university does not seem to have taken sufficiently strong action to address its finding that the residence leadership was unwilling to transform its ethos. At our current juncture, we are again faced with an opportunity to earnestly attend to transformation at the institutional level.

As a Department we will research, teach, and write about racism and other forms of discrimination as they exist in our institution, town, and country and support all colleagues and students doing so. While we urge the university to deal with the individual concerned with all the seriousness this incident warrants, we further call on the university to thoroughly investigate residence culture and university life at large. It is vital the university takes decisive steps to not only to prevent the reoccurrence of this behaviour but also to address the conditions that fostered it.