

Praat Saam, Thursday, 16 July 2020

Lynette Francis-Purin:LFP

Loretta Feris: LF

Linda du Plessis: LDP

Michael le Cordeur: MLC

LFP: They say that the biggest challenge facing tertiary institutions is how to deal with the rising infection rate of the coronavirus on campuses. The Minister of Higher Education, Blade Nzimande, says the academic year for universities will probably only be completed in the first part of next year. Roughly 66% of students have already returned to campuses.

But where do we stand now with the academic year at universities in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic? You can join in the discussion, particularly if you are at home and get your lectures online and do not watch movies. Tell me what the circumstances are, how are you progressing, what is your frame of mind? Particularly if you would like to return, but because of the circumstances – because of travel, accommodation or even infections – you cannot do so. What is your feedback and comment on this?

Feel free to chat to my guests this morning: Your SMS line is 45889, each SMS costs R1,50 per SMS, or you can call us on 011 482 1908 or 011 482 1918, but don't worry, I will share these contact details with you again later.

The first person we speak to this morning is Professor Loretta Feris. She is the deputy vice-chancellor for transformation at the University of Cape Town. Good morning, Professor Feris.

LF: Good morning, Lynette and good morning to the listeners.

LFP: And we also welcome Professor Linda du Plessis. She is the deputy vice-chancellor responsible for planning at the North-West University. Good morning, Professor Du Plessis.

LDP: Morning Lynette, morning Loretta.

LFP: Thank you for your time – both of you. Just to inform our listeners: we will excuse Professor Feris at about half past eight and we hope that Professor Michael le Cordeur will join us then.

But to go back, in April, early April you and Professor Frances Peterson of the Free State University participated in our discussion about where we stand in terms of preparation, Loretta, and you mentioned at the time that there was a possibility that the academic year would be concluded only early in next year – 2021 – but also tabled various other considerations. What did you at the University of Cape Town decide on, how many students on campus, what is the modus operandi with those who cannot be on the campus physically?

LF: Thank you, Lynette. So yes, we did in fact postpone the academic year to the end of February next year. So, that is our new academic calendar that ends then. Our students are continuing to study online. Most of them are online. We had to

bring back some students earlier, and that because of the fact that the minister asked us to bring certain groups of students back to the campus, and the medical students in particular, because we know that it is important for our final-year medical students to complete their studies, as well as students in other parts of health education. So, we brought back a large group of the final-year health students, because they are part of the health staff who are fighting the virus.

So, those students are back on campus and then we have also started to bring our postgraduate students back. Particularly students who have to work in laboratories and who have to complete their work, complete their postgraduate studies this year and that is why they must have access to laboratories. And then we are sending out invitations to those we call vulnerable students, you know, those students who struggle to work online, largely because of their socio-economic circumstances. What we did do was we made computers available to students and we also gave them access to data. So, most of our students, it is quite possible for them to learn online from a distance, but we have now identified this group of students, just more than 600 of them, whom we want to bring back to campus when we open again. We currently have recess, so they can return early in August. They will continue to study online, but they will be in better circumstances. They will be in residences and we have followed a very conservative approach in terms of bringing back students. We have identified a few residences where we know we can maintain the social distance, because most of our residences are, you know, shared rooms, shared bathrooms and this will cause the virus to start spreading. So, we are trying to get students in types of flat units where they do not necessarily, you know, have to enjoy social interaction with each other.

So, that is the plan at the moment. So, some of our students are back, the rest of the students are online and the academic year that ends in February next year.

LFP: I will talk to you just now, Professor Du Plessis. There are only two things I want to clarify with you: These students, the 600 who are struggling because of their socio-economic circumstances, struggling to study online and that you are bringing them back and housing them in the residences, are they the original tenants in those residences? Were they there? Or has provision now been made for them there? And then what about the original students who were there?

LF: No, these, Lynette, are all students who were in the residence originally and so we are bringing back these students. So, we know there are other students who were not in the residences who are also struggling, but our policy in respect of residences was in any case that we maintain the more vulnerable students in the residences. So, we feel that we trust that most of our vulnerable students can be brought back, because they are in any case the students who live in the residence. So, those are the students we are bringing back.

LFP: And what was the financial contribution in terms of support of the laptops, or even data? I know there was mention of agreements with Vodacom, among other institutions, to make cheaper data available to those students [in] communities across the country. Did this happen? And how far did the government, because I remember Blade Nzimande also promised that there would be laptops and the NSF[AS] students would also get a share so that they

can afford it and they could borrow, et cetera. Just quickly give me the context for this and what really happened?

LF: Look, the University of Cape Town has a policy in any case that we as university give every first-year student a laptop, every first-year student who is or NSFAS. We have been doing this for years. So, this meant that the biggest group of NSFAS students already had computers in any case, and then we decided further to give computers on a loan basis to students who do not have computers of their own, and we naturally asked the department to share those costs with us, but we are still waiting and we hope that this will happen, but we need not, we did not wait for the department before we made the computers available. We used our own money to purchase and distribute those computers.

And then we agreed with MTN and Vodacom that they would make some of our pages available to the students free of charge. So, that agreement, to tell the truth, with all of them – so it is MTN, Vodacom, Cell C and Telkom – we agreed for the zero-rated data for South African web pages and specifically the university's web pages.

LFP: An then because your time with us this morning is limited, just finally, the president mentioned many final-year medical students – I don't know whether these include your students – who have already started working in hospitals. Is there any percentage of your students who were channelled to whether the service must be provided, or where the need is?

LF: Yes, no, definitely. All our final-year medical students are at Groote Schuur Hospital. So, this is part of their training, they are being trained, but at the same time they are also helping to care for Covid-19 patients.

LFP: These are extraordinary times, Professor Du Plessis, and that is what the president emphasised each time, even our Minister of Health, Zweli Mkhize, too. From a planning point of view, what did you have to get in place? In terms of communication, the logistical arrangements of the physical presence or not, safety aspects, acquiring the laptops Loretta also spoke about just now. What did you have to do, and what time did this require before you were able to get the students back on campus?

LDP: Yes, Lynette, it definitely was a difficult period. I think one should remember, the first case in South Africa was announced on the 5th of March, and two weeks later we were on the highest level of lockdown. So, it was difficult to obtain all the services, but the first thing we immediately realised was that we had to invest in virtual platforms. We had to purchase additional software licences to make it possible for staff to communicate with students. We also immediately established call centres for every faculty and you must remember, we have about 44 000 contact students, but via our call centres we tried to contact every student and to find out what these students needed to carry on. Now, there are mainly three things: You need data, you need a device – whether this is a tablet, or a smartphone, or a computer – and you need connectivity.

Now the data, like Loretta said, we looked at several solutions. At the moment we give free data bundles to just more than 22 000 students every month. We also have many of our library websites and our learning management system on a zero rate. This means that students can download any material on them without having to pay for it. The data is on a zero rate.

We purchased just more than 3 500 tablets, loaded laptops with the right software and distributed them. This transpired to be an enormous task, because these students are spread across the country and in this process we then tried to [help] the students who have a problem with connectivity, could be that they live somewhere in the Karoo and there is no good network reception, there can be many circumstances. We identified those students through a survey, through this contact and then we also ... we check on a weekly basis who completes online tests, who accesses our learning management system, and when we find that students cannot do this, then we try to contact the student and so we identified all our students we have to bring back, also as part of Phase 1 – like Loretta said: We have already brought the pharmaceuticals, nursing students and some of our final-year students in engineering and natural sciences who have to do laboratory work, we also got to return to campus. At the moment there are about 9 000 who are already back on our three campuses, and our winter school is starting this week. The winter school is in online format, but this is for all the students whom we have continually identified during this entire process as having some problem.

In addition, we must give the same amount of support to our staff, who suddenly have to work from home under difficult conditions – you have to be a teacher too – so we gave the same benefits to our staff in terms of data. We had to stop all our building projects on the campuses and we obviously also had to replan our entire academic year: The assessment takes place in a different way, curriculums were restructured so that we now focus on the theory, so that when our students can return we can focus on the practical work that will have to take place and we cannot do these things in isolation. We had to do this in collaboration with all the statutory bodies, the professional bodies must also approve these plans, because in the end students still have to comply with the same conditions and then naturally we are very dependent on the Department of Basic Education for when the matric dates will be finished, when we can commence our 2021 academic year.

LFP: How did you have to rechannel the money? Because Covid-19 was never planned for, or that so many students now had to receive computers, or that the online platforms had to be expanded, professor Du Plessis?

LDP: No, I think this is a concern for many universities, and not only for universities, with every news report we hear what is happening with the economy and universities are definitely not protected. To mention only one example: roughly 27% of universities' income is from additional money streams, sports facilities, cafeterias, consultation research, short courses – now all these things are virtually at a standstill at the moment because of the lockdown for Covid. So, this has an enormous impact on the income of universities.

We had to make certain decisions, we had to build scenarios, positive scenarios, a more realistic one and then a pessimistic one and we are constantly adjusting them. We had to stop many of our capital projects, we had to stop macro maintenance projects, we had to stop some of our development projects and re-employ that money, because we made a decision, we were not going to sacrifice quality and we would really like to complete the academic year. Within this we had to make decisions, consult with our student leaders, consult with our staff and management and it is well understood that these are different times.

LFP: Professor Feris, Blade Nzimande expressed his concern about reports that students who did get these laptops from universities, or even NSFAS students, that they were lying around and watching Netflix or that they sold the laptops. What is it that you are hearing and how do you handle those cases when they do happen?

LF: Yes, you know, we have been giving laptops for years, and in all the years we have been giving laptops, we have never had this specific problem, I must say. And then naturally, the computers we have purchased now for students to whom we do not usually give computers, they have it on a loan basis. So, in a way they bear that responsibility, because if they do not return the computer, then it means they will have to pay for it themselves and we did this in the past too during times of protest, when we also have to go online and students soon learnt that when they received the invoice for that computer, where they previously might have said that the computer was lost or stolen, then sometimes that computer turned up, you know.

So, I think it is perhaps not a bad way, you know, to make sure that students are responsible, but what one should also keep in mind, Lynette, is naturally the fact that there is terrible poverty in our country, and many students are in truly bad circumstances. For example, one student wrote to me, and wrote, you know, he said that you gave me the computer, but my brother is addicted to drugs and I am afraid he is going to steal the computer and sell it. So, there are those stories that are completely a reality to many of our students, and then as far as, you know, whether they are lying around and watching Netflix, I think there are probably many students who do this, but in a way, you know, we can keep an eye on the way in which students use the data.

So, we can see, for every student we can see how much time they spend on our web pages and how much time they spend on, you know, actually with the academic work. So, we have a good idea of how students use their data and we do not have a big problem at this stage.

LFP: There are also other aspects of the challenges that I will later discuss with Professor Linda du Plessis and with Professor Michael le Cordeur, but because of the limited time you have available, there was one SMS that I would quickly like to bring to your attention. It is from Charlene van der Merwe. Charlene van der Merwe writes, we should have completed our final exams in April and May, we should have been registered nurses by now, but everything has been postponed. We have no idea when we will be able to write and work officially as sisters. Now, this is probably a nursing college, I assume, Charlene, and correct me if I am wrong. Students who now only finish in February, what and how does this affect their job opportunities and the option to be able to start looking for work and be placed if you have not yet completed your year, Loretta?

LF: Yes, I think it is a big adjustment for all of us, isn't it, and I think the whole country – to tell the truth, the whole world is affected. So, I think we will at some stage if this is necessary, we have a career centre that helps students and where it is necessary we will liaise directly with employers and talk to them. But we obviously hope that employers will understand that we are in a very unique situation and that they will give students a chance, you know, to complete their studies so that they can start a little later than is possible.

We have already started with those types of negotiations also with people who give bursaries, you know, where bursaries would, for example, end in November, at the end of the academic year, we have started those negotiations to ask them to extend the bursaries to February. So, and people are quite prepared to cooperate, because they realise that this is a unique situation.

LFP: What do you find, to conclude, happens at overseas campuses and where there are, for example, international students who, for example, cannot return to their campus here, but also where you are in contact and have partnerships with other campuses in the USA or even in the United Kingdom, or in Europe, the rest of Europe?

LF: Yes, I think we all have the same discussions. Many campuses are in the same situation. Most universities are still online and I think they had to make the same type of adjustments we made in South Africa, particularly if you are big residential universities like we are and who have never really had to study online. But yes, so many of our students who returned to their countries are still stuck in those countries and it is starting to become an increasing problem to us, because they cannot return as long as flights are restricted. Many of them, particularly in parts of Africa, have problems accessing the internet. So our international students are a major problem, but many of our own students who are exchange students did not return to South Africa, you know, students who are on an exchange basis, they are still there and we have agreements with the universities to make sure that these students are looked after and cared for.

LFP: And the adjustment for some of the lecturers, because some are not natural lecturers who now have to learn a different skill online to present their lectures. Help us to understand, what were the challenges? And what was the more humorous approach you saw?

LF: You know, yes, suddenly many lecturers who said for many years, I do not believe in online, now had to go online. So, we spent a lot of time and money on training and building the capacity of lecturers to learn the new technology and skills and it is very interesting, you know, you see the generation gap now. It is the younger lecturers who find it much easier to work with this and our more senior lecturers are struggling a bit, but there is truly a great willingness to learn and it is interesting, you know, people are excited about this new technology and are starting to think about how they can be much more creative with their students. Interestingly enough, Lynette, suddenly there is much more contact with students, you would think that with face-to-face learning you have much more contact, but because we are aware of the fact that our students are isolated, we try much harder to be in contact with students. So this, yes, there are positives in this situation too.

LFP: Thank you for your time this morning, I appreciate it. Professor Loretta Feris, she is deputy vice-chancellor for transformation at the University of Cape Town. We could borrow her for only half an hour, because she has a meeting to attend, but Professor Linda du Plessis, deputy vice-chancellor responsible for planning at the North-West University, she can stay with us and you can talk to her as well.

You can send your SMSs to 45889, each SMS costs you R1,50 per SMS, or you can call us on 011 482 1908 or 011 482 1918. After the break we hope to

welcome professor Michael le Cordeur, he is with the Department of Curriculum Studies at the Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Education.

This morning we are talking about the academic year at universities, where they stand with their planning, how things are progressing there and what their prospects are for 2021. Don't go away, we will be back just now. If you are a student listening to the programme now and you ...

Professor Linda du Plessis, is there better communication now between lecturers and students, because the inter-dependence for everyone's success is so much greater?

LDP: I think there is really, when I see our lecturers have WhatsApp groups, they talk on social media, smaller groups have been established within classes, emails are answered, because we now have dedicated people sitting in call centres whose daily work it is to answer students' enquiries or channel them correctly. So, I think we are actually getting to know one another better, and like you said, one realises that you are much more of a person, often a lecturer will be teaching and his dog jumps onto his lap and that is part of the new normal. We have also found that there are some of our classes that are also presented in real time, this means we must all connect at the same time to teach, but what the lecturers then do is they record it and then afterwards we make it available at a zero rating on the learning management system and we have found that where the student who was in class could listen to the class only once, you can now do it more than once.

So, to some it is really a positive experience. I think it is not easy for students, much more self-discipline, time management, but we see very good results from our students.

LFP: One of our listeners writes here: I am currently a final-year student in Financial Accounting studying at NWU Potchefstroom. The online learning is sometimes challenging, but also has its advantages. Routine and self-discipline are important. All the best to all fellow students.

Is that the feedback you get and what do students tell you – where and how can you improve?

LDP: Thank you for the feedback. Students sometimes complain especially about the work load and the number of assignments to be submitted and it can happen that while you are writing a test, your power goes off and you cannot complete the test. So, we try to show a lot of understanding for these types of situations that can occur in any circumstance and I think we have made most of our assessment methods relatively flexible, for example you have a certain time to complete a test, some of our little online tests you can complete more than once just for revision. We have also created more opportunities of which we only take the best few into account, should you not have been able to complete one.

So, it is basically a build-as-you-go process. I think it is already easier since some of the students who had connectivity problems have been back on the campus and although the classes are still online, these students now have access to the computer laboratories and the library, which does make it easier for them. Our facilities are naturally organised with the required distance in between, are cleaned every two hours, et cetera.

LFP: Wow, that's a lot of adjustments you had to make, because many schools still do not manage this. Welcome to *Praat Saam*, professor Michael le Cordeur. Professor Le Cordeur is with the Department of Curriculum Studies at the Stellenbosch University's Faculty of Education.

How reasonable and fair is it to expect that where a student studied in a protected environment, they now have to complete a curriculum for a year that runs over, literally flows over, to a subsequent year? Can this be done, and how do you decide how to adjust that curriculum, Professor?

MLC: Yes, Lynette, thank you for the opportunity, good morning to your listeners. Look, Lynette, it is a very difficult situation: At the moment we are in uncharted, unknown waters and you, we build a house while you are actually already living in the house. So, like the previous person said, we are as flexible as possible. We have already informed all students that we will relax the measures with respect to re-admission for next year so that nobody will truly be disadvantaged. How do you decide? I think we rely on the initiative of our lecturers and good communication between the students, the student bodies and lecturers and in that way we want to tell all students that nothing will get in their way if necessary to be re-admitted for next year. We will go out of our way and be as accommodating as possible.

LFP: In terms of employers, that is a question I asked Professor Feris, how do you liaise with the final-year students in particular? Professor Du Plessis said just now that the assessment must be adapted. Initially there is a greater focus on the theory, because the practical aspects cannot be dealt with. What adjustments did you make at Stellenbosch University?

MLC: Look, I am just going to talk from my own faculty now, and our situation here is that we had to move almost within days from a face-to-face method to an online method. Our students returned home within days to all the corners of South Africa, and we had to switch over to an online type of lecturing that posed enormous challenges to lecturers and to students.

I have heard about computers now – we discovered that just in our environment there were more than 2 500 students who did not have computer access, internet access, smartphones, and like all other campuses we quickly had to order thousands of computers and virtually deliver them to students' homes and that process is still continuing, but after seven weeks the term is finished and we could make adjustments. Many of our lecturers were not familiar with the technology and courses had to be presented to lecturers and this is still continuing, because you know, you asked just now – the adjustments are, you cannot just send students notes any longer and expect them to read through everything by themselves. You also cannot just send PowerPoint slides, they must now be accompanied, sound must be added, the lecturer's voice must be recorded on the sound slides so that the student can at least receive a given that is as close to the classroom as possible.

Now, we are not saying, and we also do not want to pretend it is exactly the same and it is therefore difficult to say to a student, yes, you have enrolled to study here for a year and you were to have lived in a residence within a portal environment, now you have to rely on yourself. You are sitting somewhere in the Eastern Cape on your own, you have no friends around you with whom you can

discuss classes and this is an enormous challenge. The online option is a very good substitute but it will never be able to replace the real McCoy.

So, if you think in terms of the future, then it seems as if the online option will be with us for a long time, but we will have to find a balance, face-to-face classes will have to be a part and will have to supplement the online option, because we have now established that the online option is good, but it is 100% a substitute model.

LFP: How on earth do you measure the outcomes to decide what we can do online, move to those platforms, and what is preferable face to face with a student with their bum in a class?

MLC: You have to listen very closely to what your students tell you, because they are usually very honest, they stand very close to the real situation, for example, we initially would have had classes, our terms started on Monday, 20 April and it would run to Friday, 6 July, seven weeks of online classes, but at the request of the students this was extended to 13 July, because they then told us themselves that it takes them much longer now to go through the scope of the work. They have to read every PowerPoint and imagine they are hearing the lecturer's voice, they have to read all the notes themselves and then make summaries for themselves. There are no friends they can talk to. So we made that concession and we will continue to make such concessions for our students.

In Education we naturally have the problem that many of our students have to go out to schools for the so-called practice teaching or the school visits. This could not take place and now today we are in the middle of July, and we ask, check every day what is happening outside in the schools, but at this stage we do not even know 100% whether our students will have a chance to test themselves as future teachers in schools. So, that is another challenge we face and for which we will have to find a solution soon.

LFP: There is another follow-up question I have for you about the curriculum at schools. Just hang on a moment. Professor Linda du Plessis, what do you have in place to measure the outcomes in order to decide how you are going to approach next year?

LDP: Look, like I said, we did a whole replanning of our curriculums and they were approved by the Senate and our question papers are still being moderated and we talk to the statutory bodies, but we depend a lot on the students and staff to provide feedback on the experience. We have now conducted two surveys since we started fully with online classes on the 2nd of May to get feedback from students about this, can you handle the work load, what is difficult for you, what can we do better, what can we change, and the same from lecturers and we are learning from this process.

Our first academic semester now ends on the 31st of July and then we have a recess and I think that after that we will really be able to see how our students handled the first semester and then build on that from there.

LFP: I just want to stop for a moment with the curriculum, because a lot of what happens at universities, many of the trade unions refer to it and want to duplicate this in schools and I do not know to what extent this is possible, because I want to ask you, professor Le Cordeur, initially at the beginning of the year with the

first cases Professor Jonathan Jansen said, for example, the year can be readjusted, the curriculum can be adjusted so that you have certain children who go over or where you make adjustments to the curriculum and decide what are the critical and the core points you have to air in each subject, given the circumstances at that school – the teachers, their susceptibility to Covid infections and the like and that you can, for example, involve curriculum experts to help you rewrite that curriculum for the year. How is it possible to make adjustments, because the trade unions are now asking that especially the peak that we have to reach, that the schools must close. To what extent can you really adjust a school year so that a child can still receive valuable instruction?

MLC: Lynette, that is an enormous challenge. Let me start by saying about the, I also check the thing from my side and I am aware that the trade unions and the ministers are at the moment involved in discussions and that they will only complete this by Friday, but I want to repeat what Professor Martie Sanders, my colleague in Education at Wits, said recently. She said remember that the curriculum is a human-made thing and the curriculum must be developed by the people at local level so that it is tailor-made for the situation for which it is intended. In other words, South Africa must provide its curriculum, or a curriculum for children to pursue that is linked to South Africa and that is true to the reality of South Africa. I am going to give only one small example, or only two that are often in the news these days, the prohibition on liquor and violence against girls and against women.

Both these enormous crises are, to my mind, a thing that can be addressed in the South African curriculum, but this is not done adequately. Yes, for now we must prohibit liquor, because the hospital beds are full, but the longer-term solution is to educate the youth from childhood and teach them how it should be done and a curriculum is required for that. So, the curriculum can and must be adjusted. I want to state very clearly that a curriculum is a thing made by people and, in my opinion, it can and must be adjusted for 2020, because we cannot continue as if everything is just the same.

LFP: I want to conclude with that point of everything is not the same any more, let us just hear quickly what our listeners are writing. One says, how do universities handle the costs involved in accommodation, are students responsible for the account while they are at home and studying?

Another listener says, I am currently studying at NWU Vaal, Pukke and yes, I am very proud that I am a student at NWU, I sometimes also feel that we have to be very disciplined and our lecturers help us a lot. I am SUPER proud of this. Thank you, NWU.

My son is at TUKS, must take a mathematics subject next semester, online classes will not gel well with that. He does not like the online classes.

Another listener says, I am currently ... no, sorry, it refers again to the same discipline and routine, I have already read it.

And then Joy Wilkins in Roodepoort writes that the home schooling for all students makes them more independent. They now have to do their bit for success, no longer be lazy, say Joy Wilkins there in Roodepoort.

Professor Du Plessis, Professor Le Cordeur just said that we must make adjustments, things are no longer the same. Everyone is repeatedly referring to a new normal. What do you and your colleagues say to parents listening this morning with a student who is in matric, who is considering university next year, or even considering any tertiary institution, about what their new normal will be and what they should look at? How does that student prepare for the years ahead because it is no longer normal as we knew it?

LDP: Yes, like Michael said and we should tell each other, this is going to be the normal for a long time still. You really do not know what January is going to look like. What we promised our students is that we are going to complete the academic year and we are trying to do it as closely as possible to the target date. We do realise that with all the challenges some of the programmes will end in January or February and the circumstances in the country may still change, particularly if it involves, for example, the practical training for which the hours just have to be completed.

What I want to tell the matrics, is I do not think this is an enjoyable matric year, I have a child in matric too and there won't be any matric dances, it is really not a nice year, it is a very tense year with the uncertainty. But we are prepared for them and we talk very closely to the Department of Basic Education and we look forward to receiving them. It may perhaps not be in February, it may perhaps be in March, we are dependent on the department, but what we offer them, it will be a combination of what you can always expect at university and then the best of what we have learnt now, of how you can use technology to enrich your course.

So, we hope that we will be ready next year for our senior students and our first years and we actually greatly appreciate the determination and the dedication of all the people to make the best of the situation in this crisis, because it is not easy.

LFP: Professor Le Cordeur, you have about a minute and a half.

MLC: Yes, I think I agree with my colleague, at this stage it appears as if the matric exam will be written very late in December. I heard the date of up to and including 22 December, and the marking will only be done in January. The results will therefore probably only be released very late in January, perhaps only early in February. So, universities also have to adapt. We will also have to postpone our commencement dates and I am quite sure we at Stellenbosch are comfortable with that, these are exceptional circumstances. We want to tell our matriculants there, if you have applied, or have not applied yet, keep on applying. Your applications will be processed. You will receive a fair chance to be admitted and the doors will not be closed. Like my colleague says, even if it must be at the beginning of March, you will be able to start studying next year, because we are prepared and we will make the necessary adjustments. Even though it means that our year for 2021 will start later than is usually the case, because our matric students are very important to us. They are the youth of today, the future of tomorrow. They must become our new leaders, so we want to look after them and we want to support them as far as possible. It will be possible to come and study with us.

LFP: Thank you for your time this morning, that you could stand in for us, Professor Michael le Cordeur, Department of Curriculum Studies at the Stellenbosch

University's Faculty of Education, Professor Linda du Plessis, deputy vice-chancellor responsible for planning at the North-West University, as well as Professor Loretta Feris, deputy vice-chancellor for transformation at the University of Cape Town.

We are going to need each other in these times. It is clear, it is clear at each and every level at which you need help, we will have to learn to ask for help and reach out and do our bit. Thank you for the bit you do and your share in helping us through this crisis.