

24 October 2019

Dear Sponsor

RE: REQUEST FOR CONTRIBUTION TO THE NWU FACULTY OF LAW STUDENT WELL-BEING FUND

Introduction

1. South Africans love education. In *Long Walk to Freedom*, former president Nelson Mandela famously wrote:

'It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farmworkers can become the president of a great nation.'

2. These words continue to epitomise the *South African Story*. A story of dreamers; a story of hopeful, passionate and ambitious young people who overcome the odds and attain university education and take leading positions in many facets of industry. Yet many South Africans will identify their university experience as a struggle. Whereas overcoming the odds is admirable, our *Humanness (Ubuntu)* calls for all of us to contribute to the creation of a *more comfortable* university space conducive to all admitted students to pursue a successful academic life. It is in this spirit and realisation that the NWU Faculty of Law has decided to establish a *Student Well-Being Fund*.

Aim of the Fund

3. The aim of the Fund is contribute to the well-being of law students by harvesting resources from a variety of sources, managing such resources and using such resources in favour of students' extra-curricular needs. In so doing, it is hoped that this will result in an environment in which students who are assisted by the Fund will maintain the necessary confidence and stability conducive to thrive in their studies, and ultimately to develop into responsible and productive people who will contribute positively to society.

Outcomes of anonymous student survey to establish their needs

4. The decision to establish the Fund was born of research, in the form of an anonymous survey, in which law students were asked various questions pertaining to their well-being and extra-curricular needs. Of the 243 respondents, 77% indicated that they face financial or resource-related challenges that impact their well-being as well as their studies. Most indicated that they faced these challenges on a daily basis. The needs which students cited as most pressing were food and groceries; prescribed textbooks; accommodation; transport; printing costs and IT resources (both hardware and data). Of significance is that students cited the stress they experience from facing these challenges, resulting in poor academic performance. These are some of the comments from affected students:

(a) *'I can't study on a hungry stomach'*; (b) *'Not focused, lack of sleep, lack of concentration'*; (c) *'The extra financial stress diverts my attention away from my studies It would be nice to have one less factor to stress about'*; (d) *'If I do not have money to go home regularly, my depression becomes worse and my overall performance and willingness to study becomes less'*; (e) *'I cannot study when I'm hungry. I need energy to study. As for textbooks I perform poorly as they are limited textbooks at library for take home'*; (f) *'I have one pair of tekkies and I don't know who to tell because I can't tell my parents, it will only stress them more'*; (g) *'I haven't been coping, my marks dropped and I got a warning letter from the faculty'*; and (h) *'Obviously you cannot sleep under a bridge and be expected to function normal.'*

Beneficiaries

5. The Fund shall be for the benefit of law students across the Mafikeng, Vaal and Potchefstroom campuses whose well-being is diminished and studies impacted due to lack of resources. Determination of whether a student applying to benefit from the Fund is made on the basis of the following factors:
- Whether the student is an NSFAS beneficiary (i.e. family income is below R350k), and if so, the needs of that student are not covered by NSFAS.
 - Whether the student is a beneficiary of any other bursary or resource assistance.
 - Whether the student falls within the 'missing middle' category (i.e. usually family income of more than R350k but clearly not enough to meet the family needs).
 - The expenses of the parents/guardian of the student.
 - The specific need/s of the student.
 - Emergency situations or urgency of the assistance required.

Management of the Fund

6. The Fund is managed by a panel of four academic personnel in the Faculty from the different campuses who report to the Dean of the Faculty and consults from time to time with the Law Students' Council. The day-to-day administration of the Fund (including interacting with applying students) is undertaken by the Faculty Manager: Student Performance and Support. Adjudication of applications are made by the said Panel. A proper and up-to-date register of all applications and disbursed amounts is kept.
7. The Fund is supported by the University which has availed infrastructure, including banking and Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) status with the South African Revenue Service (SARS) for the benefit of sponsors. The panel will, on an annual basis, report in full to all sponsors on how the funds are used.

Benefits to a Sponsor

8. Other than the satisfaction that comes with contributing to a good cause, sponsors will receive the following benefits:
- A Section 18A Certificate, issued by the University, enabling the sponsor tax deductions as the University has PBO status with SARS.
 - Announcement of the sponsorship on the Faculty website.

Target amount

9. Our target amount for 2019/2020 is to raise **R200 000** towards the Well-Being Fund. We believe that this amount will go far in meeting the well-being and extra-curricular needs of affected students.
10. We welcome any amount from your organisation towards this target.

Banking Details

11. Sponsors wishing to make a donation may use the following banking details:
- NWU
Absa Bank
Account Number: 670640086
Branch code: 632005
Cheque account
Reference nr: 2B02499/name of business

If you are in need of a Section 18A Tax certificate, please let us know at law@nwu.ac.za.

Yours sincerely.



Prof Stephen de la Harpe
Executive Dean

