



DONOR NEWS

BY ANGELINE MAROKOANE

# MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE TO COME TO THE AID OF THE “MISSING MIDDLE”

Several university donors attended the recent North-West University (NWU) donors' event in Sandton, Johannesburg on 5 October 2023.

Percy Moleke, chair of the NWU Board of Donors, commended the institution for recognising the importance of donors. She highlighted that the NWU is one of the few institutions in the country that has established a donor board to ensure transparency and accountability in the use of funds contributed by donors. Percy emphasised that the board of donors will provide a report to donors, enabling them to make informed decisions about the future of workforce development and economic growth in the country.

Bert Sorgdrager, chairperson of the NWU Council, encouraged donors to become more involved by explaining the composition and responsibilities of the NWU Board of Donors. He assured donors that their contributions are properly managed and mentioned that various council members are actively engaged in relevant university subcommittees, such as the student life committee, finance and audit committee and asset committees.

The recurring theme discussed at the event was the challenge faced by the "missing middle" students. Due to the current economic situation in the country, there has been a significant increase in academically qualifying but financially needy students who do not qualify for NSFAS funding. Specifically, postgraduate students face difficulties in securing funding, as most available bursaries focus on undergraduate studies. Consequently, there is a pressing need for financial support for students pursuing postgraduate qualifications.

In his opening remarks, Prof Bismark Tyobeka, the university's principal and vice-chancellor, reassured donors that the university is in a strong position. "The state of our university is very healthy." He praised the institution's leadership over the years, acknowledging the contributions of the late Prof Dan Kgwadi and his predecessor, Dr Theuns Eloff.

Prof Tyobeka emphasised the importance of postgraduate studies for the development of a knowledge economy in South Africa. He highlighted that postgraduate qualifications are crucial for a country's research development agenda.

Prof Tyobeka mentioned that the university launched a pilot initiative to allocate more funding from its budget to postgraduate studies in the previous academic year. However, the utilisation of this opportunity by students was low, with only 40% of the allocated funds being used for postgraduate qualifications. "The university has taken this as a learning experience and plans to allocate the same amount of funding for postgraduate studies in the future, but with different allocation strategies and a reduced number of funded students," he said.

Prof Tyobeka urged donors to continue supporting the NWU in its efforts to assist the middle-class students and to see whether these changes yield better outcomes. He called upon donors to support academically and financially deserving students from the "missing middle" pool.

On a positive note, Prof Tyobeka highlighted the university's recent achievements in international rankings. The NWU has received favourable rankings in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). The ARWU places the NWU in the 501 to 600 ranking category internationally, which is a considerable achievement, as it was ranked in the 601 to 700 category in 2022. Similarly, the QS World University Rankings recognised the NWU as one of the top seven universities in South Africa in their Top Global Universities rankings for 2024 – moving up from eighth position locally. This is a significant improvement from the previous year, further solidifying the university's international standing.

In conclusion, Prof Tyobeka expressed his gratitude to the donors, emphasising that they are investing in a winning institution, as is evident from the university's achievements and statistics.





## TOMORROW TRUST SUPPORTS POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Postgraduate funding is one of the most elusive resources in the higher-education space. This is why, since his inauguration over a year ago, Prof Bismark Tyobeka has been leading strategic interventions to increase funding for postgraduates in order to alleviate the financial burden of deserving students, particularly those who are categorised as the missing middle.

The Tomorrow Trust, an NPO that is committed to providing holistic educational programmes supporting its beneficiaries - from the playground to their professions - heeded the call and was onboarded as one of our key postgraduate funders. Our relationship with the Tomorrow Trust has enabled financial support totalling R1 million to 17 postgraduate students.

Prof. Tyobeka appreciated the Tomorrow Trust's support, saying: "Your support enables the North-West University (NWU) to continue to deliver quality graduates, who make positive contributions towards the development and growth of our country."

Speaking on the newly established partnership, Taryn Rae, CEO of the Tomorrow Trust, said that they were proud partners and that they were grateful to work with such responsive and eager partners as the NWU. The NWU greatly appreciates the support and honours the new relationship.

We look forward to more mutually beneficiary opportunities it brings!





## OLD MUTUAL EDUCATION TRUST SUPPORTS **NWU STUDENTS**



For over 18 years the Old Mutual Education Trust (OMET) has been changing the trajectory of the lives of many young South Africans. Through a partnership with participating unions, the trust has used education as a pathway for union members and their beneficiaries to access post-graduation opportunities.

Funding for the OMET initiatives is sourced from unclaimed shares in Old Mutual that have been allocated to the trust, which manages the dividends on behalf of its member trade unions. Since its inception, the trust has produced over 400 graduates. From the latest cohort of graduates, 10 graduated from the North-West university (NWU).

To celebrate their graduates, OMET hosts a formal dinner annually, with their partner unions and parents accompanying their children. The glitzy event, fit for the stars, was held at the Gautrain Radisson Blu. Speaking during the event, the head of OMET, Leonie said: "Today we have 43 graduates, degrees are across the spectrum ... engineers, doctors, nurses, teachers, psychologists. There is a wide range".

Mokete Kekana, who was classified as a "missing middle" student while at the NWU, said she often faced numerous exclusions, when trying to access financial support from bursary providers. "OMET was a light at the end of the tunnel when I did not have hope for furthering my studies." On behalf of the NWU graduates, she thanked the trustees and union members. Kekana is currently completing an internship with Old Mutual in their Knowledge and Insight Department.

Three of the NWU graduates attained their qualifications with distinctions (cum laude).

OMET's student support officer, Nkqubela Ntloko, who walked the journey with the graduates, said: "It has been greatly fulfilling to play an essential role in helping students succeed academically, socially and emotionally while pursuing their respective degrees."

OMET's ten partner unions are as follows:

- The Democratic Nursing Organisation of South Africa (DENOSA)
- The National Teachers Union (NATU)
- The National Education Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU)
- The National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)
- The Professional Educators Union (PEU)
- The Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (POPCRU)
- The South African Commercial, Catering and Allied Workers Union (SACCAWU)
- The South African Communications Union (SACWU)
- The South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU)
- The Finance Union (SASBO)



# EXCELLING IT AND COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENTS RECEIVE LAPTOPS



Loop, a subsidiary of Lightstone, recognises the importance of investing in our students' future. The company recently donated laptops and laptop bags worth approximately R60000 to four IT and Computer Sciences students at the Vanderbijlpark Campus of the North-West University (NWU).

"We carefully selected the recipients on the basis of their academic achievements, passion for technology and financial need. These four students demonstrated exceptional dedication and potential, and we are confident that they will make a valuable contribution to the industry in the future," said Nhlanhla Mabuza, head of human resources at Lightstone.

Loop understands that technology plays a crucial role in the modern world, and that IT and computer sciences are rapidly growing fields. As the demand for skilled professionals in these areas continues to increase, nurturing and encouraging talented individuals in these fields is essential.

The collaboration between Lightstone and the NWU began in 2013, and earlier this year they also granted scholarships amounting to nearly R500 000 to six students studying IT and Computer Sciences.

# PVM VISITS THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

PVM, a renowned supplier of top-notch nutrition products, paid a visit to the Potchefstroom campus on recently and the North-West University (NWU) embraced the opportunity for an interesting and illuminating relationship. The purpose of this visit was to strengthen the bond between PVM and the NWU, while increasing the performance, general health and sports nutrition of the university's athletes. At the meeting there was a lively exchange of ideas, as well as plans for a potential collaboration.

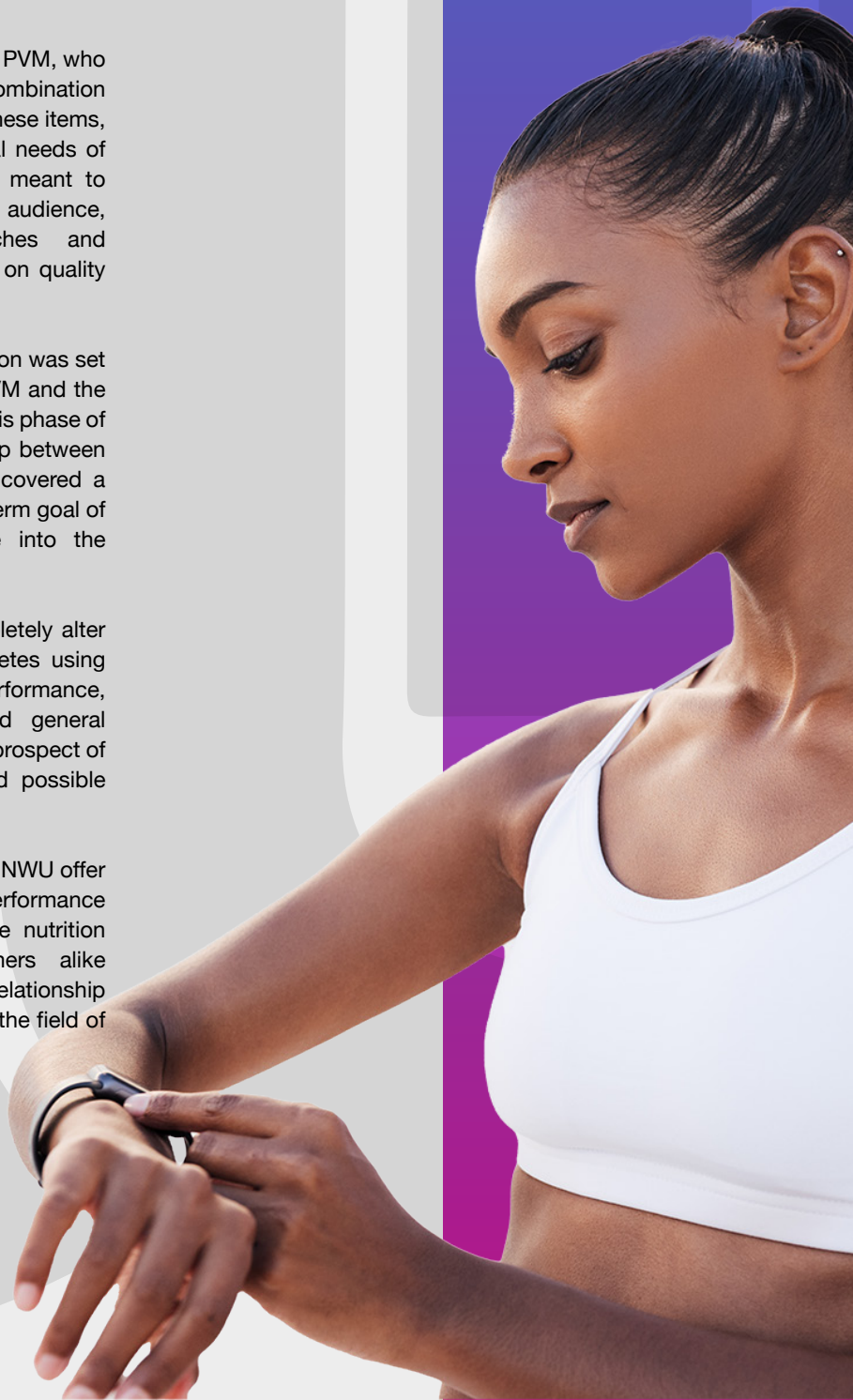
The day started off with a presentation given by PVM, who showcased its line of goods, which included a combination of necessary proteins, vitamins and minerals. These items, which are made to meet the special nutritional needs of athletes participating in physical activity, are meant to maximise performance and recuperation. The audience, which included sports managers, coaches and nutritionists, connected with PVM's emphasis on quality and effectiveness.

After the insightful morning session, the afternoon was set aside for a high-level conversation between PVM and the department heads from the NWU. The goal of this phase of the collaboration was to finalise the relationship between the two organisations. The topics discussed covered a wide range - from logistical issues to the long-term goal of incorporating PVM's goods and knowledge into the NWU's sports programmes.

The proposed alliance has the power to completely alter the NWU's approach to sports nutrition. Athletes using PVM's products should anticipate improved performance, shortened recuperation times and improved general health. In addition, the agreement holds up the prospect of knowledge-sharing, research partnerships and possible strides in the field of sports nutrition.

Partnerships like the one between PVM and the NWU offer a light of development in a time when sports performance is more and more connected to cutting-edge nutrition research. Athletes, coaches and researchers alike excitedly anticipate the good effects that the relationship will have on the NWU's sports community and the field of sports nutrition as it moves forward.

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## MOTSEPE FOUNDATION DONATES R1,3 M TO MORE THAN 250 NWU STUDENTS TO ERADICATE HISTORICAL DEBT



The North-West University (NWU) Student Representative Council (SRC) has received a generous donation of R1,3 million from the Motsepe Foundation.

The gift is earmarked to address the pressing issue of historical student debt that so often prevents students from registering for the next academic year. The donation came at an opportune time for the more than 250 students who will benefit during registration at the NWU for 2023.

“At the start of the academic year, it is urgent that we enable access and offer support to students beginning or completing their studies or graduating,” wrote Dr Precious Moloi-Motsepe, founder and CEO of the Motsepe Foundation, to the NWU.

“We are beyond thrilled at the receipt of the donation!” the principal and vice-chancellor of the NWU, Prof Bismark Tyobeka, said. “The NWU greatly appreciates and commends the Motsepe Foundation for recognising that, now more than ever, we need all organs of society to work together to support the future of this country, which rests on today’s youth.”

“We hope that many more partners will come on board and support us in our call to make education accessible to deserving students who come from underserved communities,” he added.

The SRC has equitably allocated the funds across the three NWU campuses, as well to the Unit for Open Distance Learning.

Yikumba Andreas, president of the NWU SRC, echoed the sentiments of Prof Tyobeka. “The donation was much needed. It came as a huge relief! There are many students who require funding and cannot access it due to systemic challenges facing South Africa as a country,” he said. “This includes challenges in the provision of free education and a lack of funding for the missing middle.”

“Thanks to the Motsepe Foundation, students do not have to resort to dropping out because of insufficient funding now. We take our hats off to the Motsepe Foundation!” Andreas said. “We as students encourage all funding institutions to come on board and help curb the national crisis of insufficient funding.”

Dr Adele Broodryk, an inspirational long-distance runner and staff member at the North-West University (NWU), finished second in the women's division of this year's Comrades Marathon.

Her endurance not only tested her physical limits but also managed to garner more than R150000 in pledges for the NWU's Meal-A-Day campaign. She was again an inspiration for so many people and this year she served our NWU cause with pride and passion.

The Comrades Marathon, a renowned ultramarathon held annually, attracts thousands of participants who push themselves to their limits for over 87 km in pursuit of personal achievement.

This year was no exception, and Broodryk, an alumna of the NWU and a dedicated supporter of the NWU Meal-A-Day project, was running for the Nedbank Running Club (Green Dream Team) and seized the opportunity to make a lasting impact through her run.

According to her, her primary goal was to challenge her boundaries and complete the race, while simultaneously raising awareness and funds for the noble cause of eradicating hunger among students.

Supported by her family, friends and the vibrant spirit of the race, she pressed forward, motivated by the knowledge that her efforts would directly impact the lives of students. The pledges poured in, totalling R150 000 by the time she crossed the finish line.

The funds raised will be directed towards the NWU Meal-A-Day campaign, which aims to provide nutritious meals to students who face financial hardship and struggle to afford regular sustenance. She also assisted the NWU through her sponsors for extra funding to the students, with donations being received from Nedbank and Futurelife.

Broodryk's selfless act serves as a reminder of the power of individual determination to effect positive change and helps to focus on the pervasive issue of student hunger, prompting conversations and encouraging further contributions towards initiatives combating this pressing challenge.

Her story continues to resonate across the nation, and her efforts stand as a testament to the transformative impact of compassion, perseverance and community support.



RUNNING FOR  
**MEAL-A-DAY**