

Unam changes its registration model

■ **Albertina Nakale**

WINDHOEK - In an attempt to make its debt recovery process smooth, the University of Namibia (Unam) will as of this year require students to register twice unlike in the past when they only registered at the beginning of an academic year.

Most students ended up owing the institution thousands of dollars which made it difficult for them to write the final exams.

In an interview with New Era, Unam spokesperson John Haufiku explained that the main reason for introducing the two registrations is to improve access to higher education and to help students graduate debt-free.

He said the two registrations make the initial deposit less than it normally would have been.

“This means that paying for studies becomes more manageable in the long run. We had problems in the past with students who register at the beginning of the year by paying the minimum deposit and then make very little effort throughout the year to pay instalments,” he said.

According to him, this created high student debt by the end of the year. He said Unam is confident that this change will improve financial management and in turn the services to students.

This year, Unam and the Namibia Student Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) entered into an agreement which will allow government-funded students to register at a very reduced fee.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU) which was signed by Unam vice-chancellor, Professor Kenneth Matengu and NSFAF chief executive officer, Kennedy Kandume, has paved way for first-year students with NSFAF acknowledgment letters to only pay a total registration fee of N\$1,575.

This year, Unam decided to be generous to its new and continuing students by lowering the deposits of tuition fees to make it easier for them to register.

Unam took a decision not to charge a 50 percent tuition fee deposit as it has been doing over the years, but rather give Namibian students a figure to pay of N\$3,200 regardless of their field of study.

Haufiku explained the minimum fee to pay at registration is N\$5,350.

This means those NSFAF-funded first-year students will be exempted as they are only required to pay a registration fee of N\$1,575.

He said of that amount, N\$3,200 is meant as a deposit on tuition fees, and the remaining N\$2,150 is to cover administrative and connectivity fees.

For SADC students, an amount of N\$4,800 is payable as deposit tuition fees and N\$5,150 will be paid for registration fees.

The memorandum seeks to strengthen efforts by both organisations to service a mutual and key stakeholder; namely the Namibian students.

The document will, therefore, serve as a guide through which to interact and smoothen student financing.