

Students want defective funding agreement nullified

■ Albertina Nakale

WINDHOEK - Students at 12 University of Namibia (Unam) campuses and eight Unam centres are dismayed that the agreement signed between the Namibia National Students Organisation (Nanso) and the Namibia Students Financial Assistance Fund (NSFAF) disadvantages and financially side-lines them.

Their dismay follows a failed promise by NSFAF to settle students' outstanding accounts as a result of the agreement it signed with Nanso a month ago.

The agreement was signed last month by Nanso Vice President, Bernard Kavau, and NSFAF Acting CEO, Kennedy Kandume.

The two parties said due to the economic downturn and competing priorities against limited resources, the higher education funding is equally affected.

For non-tuition fees for the 2018 academic year, the parties agreed that NSFAF pay a flat fee of N\$17,000 per student non-tuition fees for both continuing students and new intakes.

This is applicable to both boarding and non-boarding students.

Such fees were payable on or before July 31, which lapsed last week Tuesday.

Since the payable set date lapsed, Nanso Khomas leadership did not take

this failure to the agreement lightly to the point of threatening a shutdown of the higher education ministry and turn it into a student village on Wednesday.

Unam student representative council (SRC) leadership has also condemned and distanced itself from the failed agreement.

They called on the higher education minister Dr Itah Kandjii-Murangi to pronounce herself on the matter.

"We demand that the minister intervenes in the matter and declare the agreement null and void. We expect a response from the minister by Wednesday. Should we not receive any response, we will go ahead and conclude that the minister is no longer a guardian parent to our students and that we are left to fend for ourselves, as students of institutions of higher learning," Kalola remarked.

Unam (SRC) at all central campuses conducted a students' general meeting on Wednesday at the main campus to consult the student population on the agreement signed between Nanso and NSFAF.

Tuhafeni Kalola, Unam SRC president, yesterday said the terms of the said agreement have the effect of breaching the contracts signed between the university students and NSFAF.

"The terms of the agreement further pose a threat to our students' right to education because it does not consider

the high tuition fees of our institution inclusive of boarding fees. We would also like to remind the public and all our esteemed stakeholders that the Unam SRC is the sole and legitimate representative of all Unam students across all our 12 campuses, through our liberal elections in terms of section 15 of the University of Namibia Act (18) of 1992," Kalola said.

Unam SRC demand that NSFAF honour the contracts signed by students who are NSFAF beneficiaries and respect the terms as outlined in those contracts.

He said the students have made it clear that they do not consent to changing any of the terms outlined in the contract.

The equally demand that NSFAF consult the Unam student leadership before offering the new contracts to their students.

This, Kalola says, is to ensure that all the students understand the terms and conditions of the new contract and its implications.



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