

Students welcome upfront fees reduction

• PAULINA NDALIKOKULE

UNAM'S student representative council says they are pleased with the decision to reduce the deposit on tuition fees this year.

The university's council decided to reduce the fees after the students' council put in a request last year.

Unam spokesperson John Haufiku on Thursday confirmed to *The Namibian* that the university's management lowered the deposits of tuition fees to make it easier for students to register. "The university decided not to charge a 50% tuition fee deposit, but rather give a ballpark figure that makes it easier for all students to pursue their dreams by registering with some breathing room," he added.

In 2018, Namibian students paid a 50% deposit plus N\$2 000 registration fee upfront.

Students from the SADC region paid 60%,

while those from the non-SADC students paid a 70% deposit fees plus N\$4 500 for registration.

This year, Namibian students will pay a minimum deposit of N\$3 200 and N\$2 150 for registration, with SADC students paying a deposit fee of N\$4 800 and registration fees of N\$5 150, while students from all over the world will pay N\$12 800 deposit plus N\$5 150 for registration.

Haufiku added that notwithstanding the tough economic headwinds, access to good quality higher education should continue.

"While these lowered deposits make it easier to register, it does not make higher education any cheaper. It requires more careful spending throughout the year to ensure that deadlines for payments are met.

"This strategy only tries to give some relief to students. What has not changed is the fact that quality higher education remains expensive

the world over," he noted. SRC vice president Kudzai Sibanda said in a statement that the Unam council's decision to reduce upfront fees is considerate.

"Taking into account the economic climate of the country and also remaining cognisant that the University of Namibia is a massive institution that requires enormous funds to keep it running, we think that the university council has imposed the best fees structure possible," he observed.

Sibanda added that regardless of the reduction, the university should still be lenient with students finding it hard to settle their dues.

"We urge the university to be lenient with those students who will find difficulty in settling these amounts at registration," he said.

The minimum payable deposit on tuition fees per faculty will be communicated to students in due course.