

Issued: 4 May 2020

**RE: An appeal to students with the resources to not participate in the online learning**

Dear fellow students,

The university believes that we are ready for online learning because 6000 of us logged into RUConnected over the two-week orientation. As there are 8000 Rhodents, this means that 2000 of us were unable to participate in the orientation. Two thousand of us will not be able to take part in online learning.

Even among those 6000 students who logged in, not all of them had adequate network coverage. Not all of them logged in on a laptop computer. We have been promised that no student will be left behind, but 2000 of us will be left behind because we are starting too early #The2KMatterToo.

We cannot entertain the idea of starting online learning when not all of us have been equipped with the necessary resources to do so. The university has made it clear that they are unprepared to start this early as they are still expecting to receive the first batch of laptops during the first week of term.

What is even more concerning is that many students are yet to be provided with the data they were promised. The university is still in the middle of negotiations with Telkom and Cell C. International students currently outside of South Africa are yet to receive their data bundles.

Students cannot be expected to spend the first part of the second term waiting for their parcels to arrive while their peers are in the middle of learning new material. Occasional students are still expected to do the same amount of work as full-time students but have been told they won't receive data bundles. As is the case with all students, it is the view of the

SRC that occasional students should not be expected to participate in online learning without being given the resources to do so.

We have made every effort to make our voices heard, to present solutions to the problems we are facing. Our cries have fallen on deaf ears.

NSFAS students that normally stay at a university residence but are now at home should be receiving a living allowance of R1500, as is the case with Oppidan NSFAS.

The university is very much aware of our socioeconomic condition and is seemingly turning a blind eye by not assisting in this regard. Some of us are products of feeding scheme programs and social grants, yet we are now expected to tackle university content on a compromised diet.

The government is aware of our plight and has said that NSFAS allowances will be continuing, and a provision will be made should the academic year extend beyond the previously planned calendar. Students who are externally funded should be appealing to their bursars to receive an allowance while at home.

With or without a pandemic, we remain, purple people, we can still stand together while we are apart. We appeal to those students who are privileged enough to be part of the 6000 not to participate in online learning until it is made equal for all students. Don't participate in online learning until we can all start together and enjoy our constitutional right to education; together. Real leadership starts here. Learning can be done remotely, but so can challenging an injustice.

#RhodesIsNotReady #StayOffline

Yours in leadership

Rhodes SRC