

Name of movement: #OpenNMMU

Mission: Our mission is to open NMMU to complete the 2016 academic year.

Vision: Actively support a notion of fees must fall for everyone for all education while facilitating the operation of institutions of learning in the interim.

The shutdown of NMMU which began on the 20th of September 2016 and is still in progress. There have been many repercussions due to the shutdown, negatively impacting the majority of the students. During this period of time these students who do not follow the FMF movement have gone unrepresented. The shutting down of university has been a disruptive non-consensual action, against the student body of NMMU as a whole. The volatility of the situation has left us helpless and hopeless, waking up every day in anticipation of attending lectures, only to be informed that academic activities are still indefinitely suspended - withholding us from exercising our basic right to further education, which per the Bill of Rights Chapter 2 (29) 'which the State through reasonable measures must make progressively available and accessible'.

Statements of Position of the #OpenNMMU Movement:

The following statements of position are put forward by the #OpenNMMU movement. These statements represent the views of our movement, and this should be taken up with the due respect for the movement as well as the required seriousness. It is clear that the majority of students are all for going back to university and resuming, as well as completing the 2016 academic year within the 2016 year.

#### *1. Infringement of Right to Education:*

Education is defined as the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include discussion, teaching, training, and directed research. According to s29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996, everyone has the right to education, including tertiary education. By the FMF Movement halting all academic activities, this basic human right is being infringed. According to s36 of the Constitution, known as the limitation clause, a right can only be limited in terms of the law of general application, and to the extent the limitation is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom. A law of general application has not been promulgated therefore the said infringement is unjustifiable.

#### *2. Proposal of Reimbursement of Study Time:*

Students need to be assured that adequate time will be provided to prepare for tests, assignments and examinations. It will be unfair to expect students to write tests one on top of the other, the same applies to assignments.

#### *3. Resident Students:*

The situation at residence is also of utmost concern. The situation is very volatile with regards to inconsistent access to basic facilities and necessities. This needs to be rectified by the university.

#### *4. Health Services:*

The fact that there are students relying on the campus clinics for their chronic medication is very concerning. With all clinics being closed they are in a struggle to obtain the chronic medication they need, and this could be a matter of life or death. We propose that these clinics also be reopened.

*5. Effect on International Students and Students not from Port Elizabeth:*

International students attend NMMU according to strict study visas which usually expire at the end of November each year. Furthermore, many students who are not domiciled in Port Elizabeth

rent their accommodation throughout the year and are subject to leases which expire at the end of

November. Contingency plans need to be made to ensure that these students complete their academic year in time. Correspondence could be an alternative in this regard.

6. Propose that the 2016 Academic Year to Finish in 2016:

We propose that the 2016 academic year be finished in 2016. The hard work students have put in thus far this semester, or year in the case of year modules cannot be undone. It will be unacceptable to have them re-do tests and assignments in the next academic year for which they have already studied, prepared, and attained adequate results. We have students on bursaries and loans, and these students will be influenced negatively should the 2016 academic year be suspended. The potential suspension of the academic year impacts more than the university students, but is a societal problem too. Many students in their final year of studying have employment contracts in place already which are subject to their graduation in December. Many of the organizations who employ these graduates have employment requirements which have to be met and rely on. There is also the impact of students that are used by communities in the form of practical hours they have to put in. In the case of the academic year being suspended then there will be no students going out to the communities and assisting the poor. If the year is suspended we sit with the negative impact of in the case of resuming in January 2016, that there will be no students progressing to the next year, which means everything comes to a standstill, no graduates, and no new first years as it is impossible for NMMU to accommodate the influx of new students together with the rest of the students that have not progressed, the venue's simply do not allow for this to happen. The mentioned societal impacts is not an absolute list, it is an open ended list as it's impossible to list all of the societal implications in one document.

In conclusion, we are a peaceful movement and do not stand for violence and hate speech or any other related actions. We are a movement for the silent majority of students wishing to go back to university. That being said, we also advocate that fees must fall for all education and for everyone. However, we know this is a long process, and that this cannot be achieved overnight. In the interim, we propose that NMMU be reopened, study time be reimbursed, international and students not domiciled in Port Elizabeth be assisted, that the volatile situation resident students find themselves in be taken care, that the 2016 academic year be completed in the 2016 year, as well as ensuring the safety of students wishing to resume the 2016 academic year.

## Sustainable solutions to cheaper or free education:

- Management communicate transparently and regularly with all stake-holders regarding dialog between parties relating to the opening of the varsity.
- Implement student-card-only entrance to the varsity by use of allocated checkpoints including checks of public transport.
- Conduct an SMS/+Email poll amongst the students to decide on the opening of NMMU democratically.
- Implement correspondence courses to disadvantaged students, eliminating the fundamental expenses of transport and accommodation. This, while the students can work part time.
- Urge commercial banks to grant loans to deserving and needing students. The students would then be able to pay back the loan at a fixed rate given they meet certain income bracket over the period of their life.
- Instead of simply cancelling all student loans, implement measures to have terms and conditions negotiated to cater for students to pay back loans when they are in the financial position to do so.
- Involve certain NGO's which will provide work opportunities for willing and deserving students for an amount of time. Hereafter sponsoring the students to study that which interests them, given certain continued sponsorship rules.
- The possibility of implementing a continuous assessment programme as a short-term solution to achieving suitable pass marks.
  
- Instead of taxing the top 5% income bracket with up to 80% (as this will reemploy their capital interests out of the country and tax evasion), increase vat on luxury goods. Firms like Anglo American, BHP Billiton and others have already taken their capital out of the country in fear of such things as excessive tax.
- As shown by a 2012 feasibility study on free education, there is insufficient evidence to implement a free education.
- Given our unemployment rate of about 75%, our county cannot sustain education funding as countries with high GDP such as Germany Sweden.