

#Move4Food

Why a campaign?

Stellenbosch University (SU) has a comprehensive and integrated transformation agenda, committed to the diversification of its student and staff corps to better reflect the composition of South African society. SU's commitment to transformation also means that the student profile is changing, largely linked to the fact that more and more poor students are gaining entry to the University now than in the past. As a result, there is an increasing need for food security support at the University.

Because more students are getting opportunities to enter into the higher education system than ever before, the volume of students from low-income communities are also growing and that means that we need to relocate our strategies and think differently about our own space if we want to make our campuses a place where every student feels truly at home and part of the Matie community.

The Move4Food campaign is about creating a caring community, a community that is cognisant of the needs of its student population and a community that is pro-actively initiating sustainable solutions for the food security challenges at Stellenbosch University.

Goal of campaign

To raise R10mil in donations (financial as well as in-kind) to help sustain the food security initiatives at Stellenbosch University for the next three years (2019 – 2021). The campaign was launched on **20 August**, with the next highlight being **Campus Giving Day on 20 September** and culminating on **International Giving Day, 27 November 2018**.



Which of our students are most likely to be food insecure?

SU measures the socio-economic status of each newcomer to the University through combining ratings against the following three criteria:

- Whether they are first generation students or not
- Whether their family income is made up of social grants or not; and
- The quartile of the school they attended.

This means that students who attended schools in poorly resourced communities, whose parents have not studied at tertiary level and whose families receive social grants are considered to have high socio-economic disadvantage and are more at risk of being food insecure.

Key statistics relating to our students are the following:

- 6 in every 100 newcomers (both UG and PG) in 2018 have very high socio-economic disadvantage. They are thus vulnerable to going hungry. This translates into 465 newcomers (out of a total of 7744).
- In 2017 and 2016, 5 in every 100 newcomers had very high socio-economic disadvantage. This shows that the number of students who are newcomers to our University and who are vulnerable to going hungry has inched upwards this year.
- In 2018, just over half our newcomers – 52% – have no socio-economic disadvantage, meaning they are highly unlikely to go hungry, and may even have disposable income to give to others.

Based on interviews with students and internal service providers supporting them, we know the following:

- In South Africa, less than 1% of the population holds a degree, therefore attendance at a higher education institution is perceived as privileged.
- Although there is a need, there is also the shame and stigmatization that comes with asking for help because you don't have food.
- Food insecure students often have to choose between coming to class and being hungry all day or miss classes but having something to eat at home.
- Students on NSFAS bursaries may only load meal quotas of R10 000 which must last them for the entire academic year.
- All students that are in dire need of food are assisted through the office of the social worker, irrespective of their nationality, gender, creed or race.
- The number of food parcels distributed to students in 2017 increased by 40% compared to 2016
- 84.5% of food allowances for 2017 were allocated during Nov/Dec exam period when bursary monies have been depleted.
- To cope with financial pressures, students take on part time jobs, but jobs interfere with their academic programme, increasing their risk of dropping out before they finish their degrees.

What is currently being done at Stellenbosch University for food insecure students?

In the year of our Centenary, various things are happening all over our campuses to make sure that our students are covered as far their basic needs are concerned. Institutional initiatives are coordinated between the respective bursary offices and the social worker at the Centre for Student Counselling and Development. At faculty level, projects are being run through various channels as awareness about food insecurity increases.

Institutional initiatives:

- Emergency Fund food allocations via bursary offices
- Food vouchers and food items (including toiletry packs) via social worker at Centre for Student Counselling and Development.
 - **Vouch4US Project** – Launched in 2013 asking staff and students to donate R50 Pick 'n Pay voucher card to assist students so they can obtain basic necessities.
 - **Maties4Maties Food Drive Project** – Food drive enlisting the help of residences and private student organisations launched in 2012. Students within these clusters collect non-perishable food items for needy students on campus.
 - **Food vouchers for Walk-ins** – Food vouchers for students waiting on financial aid or registration. Mainly funded by Student Representative Council.
 - **Mandela Day** – Staff and students are encouraged to donate non-perishable food items to support the Food Drive.
 - **Food vouchers during exam period** – Supporting students who are in dire need of food during exam periods when bursary funding runs out.
 - **Work-Study Programme** – Providing students with financial reimbursement for work completed in University projects located in departments and faculties. They earn an income in a dignified manner and gain valuable work experience in the process. Funding is provided by SU and external funders.



Services already offered at SU

Food insecure students on campus can either contact the **Undergraduate/Postgraduate Bursaries** Office or consult the social worker at the **Centre for Student Counselling and Development** for assistance. The two units work closely together to ensure that they provide the most efficient service to students in need.

Both entities adhere to the CRITERIA FOR THE APPROPRIATION OF EMERGENCY FUND, in accordance with which students must comply in order to receive assistance.

The Undergraduate/Postgraduate Bursary Office

Students would come in or email the office asking for assistance. Email has become a popular form of establishing first contact because it is a sensitive issue to talk about. The bursary officer in charge of the emergency fund would then access the SU Bursary System for a profile of the student. If no profile is on the system, it means that the specific student have not applied for bursary funding before and they then get referred to the social worker on campus for an assessment. If there is a profile on the system the bursary officer will be able to have a more accurate picture of the student and will be able to verify the information (situation at home, income level, etc) they provide when asking for assistance.



Who qualifies for the Bursary Office Emergency Fund assistance?

- Students who are needy according to the means test of the University.
- Students who have applied for financial assistance in the past.

What type of expenses are covered under the Emergency Fund?

- Attending the funeral of an immediate family member.
- Medical emergencies at state facilities.
- Once-off purchases of personal items (toiletries) to the value of R300 via Intellicard¹.
- Once-off purchase of groceries to the value of R300.
- Transport costs for one month maximum.
- Procurement of hearing aids and glasses.
- Academic excursions where neither the parents nor department can cover costs.
- National sport or culture event where neither the parents nor association can cover costs.

Centre for Student Counselling and Development (social worker)

The social worker at the Centre for Student Counselling and Development allocates food vouchers or food items to the following students after they have been assessed:

- Students in financial need whose bursaries/NSFAS/study loans do not cover meals or those who do not receive a stipend for food or food allowance.
- Students in financial need who do not qualify for financial aid assistance because they did not meet the academic criteria for assistance.
- Students who receive NSFAS traveling allowances, but do not qualify for food allowances because they are living at home with their parents. They are experiencing hunger because their households do not provide enough food for the entire month.
- Students who are the “missing-middle”. Their family income is between R360 000 and R600 000 per year.
- Senior students who are readmitted to the university and couldn’t secure any university accommodation nor funding due to their poor academic performance. Some of these students had to appeal to NSFAS in order to be funded for the current academic year.

¹ Money is loaded on to a card which the student may use to purchase items directly from a contracted service provider.

- Towards the end of October, we assist students who do not receive any more food allowances for the remaining academic year with food vouchers and/or food items because they are still writing exams in November and during the first week of December.

Additional needs:

Toiletry packs with basic products such as toothpaste, toilet paper, soap, shampoo, deodorant and sanitary towels/tampons are also a significant need amongst students. The social worker distributes these packs when she has supplies, but cannot do it on a regular basis due to shortages.



How will donations be administered?

- **Financial donations** – Funds raised through this initiative will be administered through a dedicated cost centre accessible only through the Under- and Postgraduate Bursary Offices and the Social Worker at the Centre for Student Counselling and Development. The same due diligence processes will be followed as per SU Financial Policy and SU Emergency Fund Criteria.
- **In-kind donations (groceries and toiletries)** – All in-kind donations will be recorded and distributed to the Centre for Student Counselling and Development from which grocery and toiletry packs will be created for distribution to students. Groceries should preferably have a long shelf life.

Want to get involved? Contact tel: 021 808 4020 or e-mail: ontwikkeling@sun.ac.za.

Move4Food Payment Details:

<http://www.sun.ac.za/english/donors/Documents/Move4FoodPaymentDetails.pdf>