



FACULTY OF LAW

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THE UNDERGRADUATE SUCCESS RATE of the Faculty of Law is already close to the University's projected target of 84% for 2015 (see "Transformation aims", page 7). A refinement of the selection policy and continuation of the special support programme for students who are experiencing problems in modules with a high risk of academic failure during the first year support the consolidation of this aim. A revision of the LLB curriculum, among others with a view to modules aimed at academic literacy and, where necessary, language, writing, research and even numeracy skills, as well as the reinstatement of the extended degree programme, were included in the process with the view to achieving the transformation aims for 2015.

Although the projected ratio of 60:40 between undergraduate and postgraduate students will not necessarily be achievable by the Faculty by 2015, the point of departure is that the number of research master's and doctoral students can be increased considerably. The activities of the SARChI research chair in Property Law, the Oppenheimer Chair in Human Rights, as well as the OSP project Combating Poverty, Homelessness and Socio-economic Vulnerability under the Constitution attracted postgraduate students to the Faculty in 2009 and the SARChI research chair has already produced two doctoral and three master's students. The establishment of the so-called short procedure (*registration on the basis of a provisional topic with a supervisor, but without a complete research proposal*) facilitates access to postgraduate study. Attention was paid in 2009 to targeted financial support for postgraduate students through the use of balance funds and the Dean's fund.

The above-mentioned OSP project under the leadership of Profs Andre van der Walt and Sandra Liebenberg is in full swing. With a view to the integration of the Oppenheimer Chair in Human Rights into the project, the first floor of the CL Marais Library has been refurbished with Faculty funds to house Prof Liebenberg and to provide workstations for postgraduate students and a space for seminars. Besides the emphasis on study guidance for postgraduate students, the project also serves as a stimulus for research outputs by its participants. The Legal Aid Clinic is actively involved in the OSP project and serves close on 5 000 clients from Stellenbosch, Klapmuts, Franschhoek and Ceres. Of particular interest is the Clinic's role in relation to eviction litigation and the signing of an agreement with the Norwegian Centre for Human Rights and Lawyers for Human Rights for the provision of funds with a view to the instituting of test cases in this regard.

A workshop on evictions was presented in the CL Marais Library in August. A workshop *Mixed jurisdictions as models: perspectives from Southern Africa and beyond*, which was presented in May 2009 in collaboration with the International Academy for Legal Science and the World Society of Mixed Jurisdiction Jurists, and the continuing relationship with the Jus Commune Onderzoeksschool of the Universities of Maastricht, Utrecht, Leuven and Amsterdam, confirm the international research profile of the Faculty.

The Faculty's selection policy creates an opportunity to push up the percentage of undergraduate black, coloured and Indian students from the current 24% to the projected 34% by 2015. Greater Faculty involvement in recruitment efforts through liaison with students who have been offered University recruitment bursaries and the consolidation of the Stonehage First-year Bursary Scheme, in terms of which R240 000 per year is made available on an equal basis by the Stonehage Charitable Trust and the Faculty, played an important role in the achievement of this objective in 2009.

Academic success is also linked to financial security and, in 2009, bursaries for senior students provided by legal companies and funding from the Stonehage Group, in collaboration with the LINKS SA Trust and the Amicus Fund, made an indispensable contribution. A donation of \$50 000 to the Amicus Fund from the Aall Foundation, of which Mr Steve Georgala, Chief Executive Officer of the Maitland Group, is a trustee, deserves special mention. Relationships are built with alumni through regular class reunions, and a successful gathering of former students was held in London in September.

Multiple strategies are used to improve the diversity profile of the academic staff. Apart from the development of existing staff members from the designated groups by way of succession planning, the broadening of the profile by means of Legacy funding plays an important role. The SARChI chair creates an opportunity for the cultivation of our own students with academic potential.