

NWU student housing shortages addressed

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The North-West University is not allowing the Covid-19 pandemic to interfere with its commitment to dealing with student accommodation. Work on residences with hundreds of beds is under way.

The university recently conducted a site handover and briefed successful contractors on expectations ahead of the start of a two-year construction project for a 1728-bed facility on its Mahikeng Campus.

“It is the biggest project in the history of the university, so we will make sure that we stick to the programme and hand over the project on time,” says NWU contracts manager and principal agent Retha Kooij-Kok.

According to Retha, the NWU will also keep a close eye on issues such as quality by ensuring top-class workmanship through regular inspections, while keeping tabs on the allocated project funds to avoid overspending.

The NWU Mahikeng student housing project will comprise six student residence units with guard houses and recreational areas.

Currently the NWU accredits off-campus accommodation providers to ensure suitable housing for its students. The institution says it will continue to do so, as the student accommodation need is great.

“Over the past five years the North-West University, in partnership with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), has identified the need for additional student housing in Mahikeng. We are happy to confirm that the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr Blade Nzimande, formally approved the continuation of this R463m project on 30 June 2020,” the NWU said in a statement. The NWU says it also remains grateful for funding provided by the IEG grant, National Treasury’s BFI grant, and a DBSA loan.

Meanwhile, the NWU Mahikeng student leadership says it is extremely grateful for this project. “The project will assist students to have decent accommodation on campus, which will give them a good opportunity to do well in their studies. Students will be able to use university facilities optimally. Most students want to stay on campus, but that has not been possible because of a shortage of beds on campus. This will also address the issue of students’ safety and security, which has been a major challenge recently,” says SCC chairperson Theo Seepamore.

The official sod-turning ceremony is scheduled to take place on the Mahikeng Campus soon.

Radio version: The North-West University is not allowing the Covid-19 pandemic to interfere with its commitment to dealing with student accommodation. Work on residences with hundreds of beds is under way on its Mahikeng Campus. NWU contracts manager and principal agent Retha Kooij-Kok has described the initiative as a flagship project. ([Sound clip: Retha MHK housing project](#))

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