

PIONEERING COURSE CELEBRATES TEN YEARS HELPING NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

16 November 2009 - An initiative started by MBA students at the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB) to help equip current and potential managers of non-profit organisations (NPO) with the expertise to run their organisations efficiently has now celebrated its tenth anniversary.

The concept behind the course is to equip managers of NPOs who have had no previous managerial experience with the necessary skills to help progress their organisations. To date the course has assisted more than 600 individual managers from over 150 NPOs. It is estimated that these organisations serve more than 500 000 people countrywide.

It was the pioneering actions of four former students at USB that led to the creation of the Management Programme for Non-profit Organisations. Jan-Paul Roodbol, Wayne Davis, Nico Grobbelaar and Heinrich Holt donated R50 000 of prize money won in a countrywide MBA competition as the seed capital for a project that would make a difference in the community.

"For NPOs to manage their projects in a sustainable way, they must be managed effectively," says Dr Therese Fish, chairperson of the management committee and USB MBA alumnus. "This involves demonstrating the ability to attract, secure and retain funding, and applying sound management principles and good governance to enable effective delivery to their clients."

Fish says that research conducted within the NPO space has revealed that only 2% of welfare organisations actually remain viable in the longer term, demonstrating the necessity for such a course to help sustain NPOs in South Africa.

"The programme focuses on the main management functions needed for running a successful non-profit organisation. Participants eventually integrate the skills they have developed in these functional areas into an individual assignment," says Fish.

The course is run twice a year, each time over a 5-day period, and is focused on providing learners with the main skills that are needed to run a successful NPO with the aim of promoting social development and education in South Africa.

The programme is already heavily subsidised, with the USB providing the use of facilities at no cost and many faculty members also teaching free of charge. However, NPOs and community-based organisations (CBOs) can also apply for four bursaries each year, which are awarded by the USB Future Fund.

"The philosophy of paying forward – the concept of asking that a good turn be repaid by having it done to others instead – has driven the activities of the committee since its inception and through the sponsorship of others they will be able to expand the reach of the programme," said Prof Russel Botman, rector of Stellenbosch University, at the recent ten-year anniversary celebrations.

"The future of this innovative programme lies in the hands of the alumni and companies who continue to strive to be responsible citizens. This initiative provides companies with the opportunity to align their own social investments with those of the USB to make a significant difference to the lives of communities through the strengthening of NPOs."

Professor Eon Smit, director of the USB, says that while business schools have come in for criticism recently for having too much of a short-term focus, the USB's depth and period of involvement prove that this programme cannot be written off as merely being part of the current fashion in business schools to demonstrate adherence to third bottom line thinking.

"Our involvement is deeply ingrained in the spirit of the School and our alumni, and we look forward to continuing and expanding our involvement in developing leaders and managers in the non-profit sector," says Smit.

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About University of Stellenbosch Business School (TBC by client)

Since its inception in 1964, the University of Stellenbosch Business School (USB) has become a renowned player in the international business school community. The student body, which grows each year, presently comprises over 650 MBA students, some 150 students of two further Master's degrees, 26 PhD students and several thousand other students taking part in the wide range of shorter executive courses. The USB MBA offers a solid theoretical grounding for the practical, real-world application of management and leadership competencies in any business sector in South Africa, on the African continent as well as in the global business community. The USB is the only business school of a South African university with two international accreditations: [EQUIS](#) from the European Foundation for Management Development and [AMBA](#) from the Association of MBAs. Visit www.usb.sun.ac.za for more information.