



LAW SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AFRICA
PRESS RELEASE

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**LAW SOCIETY OFFERS ATTORNEY MEDIATORS
TO RESOLVE EDUCATION IMPASSE**

Disturbed by the ongoing protests at our educational institutions, the Council of the Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) – at its meeting on 29 September 2016 -- resolved to offer mediation services by experienced attorney mediators to all the parties involved in the education dispute in an effort to resolve the current impasse. 'We offer the skills and expertise of our attorney mediators on a pro bono basis in an effort to get representatives of universities, student formations and relevant government departments around the table in dialogue,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons Jan van Rensburg and Mvuzo Notyesi.

The LSSA Council expressed its serious distress at the violent and destructive nature of the student protests and stressed that it cannot condone violent behaviour and the destruction of property and infrastructure. The LSSA also emphasised that it does not support the stance of any specific party in this dispute. 'We believe that the lack of communication between the parties, the positional stances adopted, the closure of some educational institutions and suspension of classes at others, jeopardises the current academic year for many, many students – including law students that may be preparing to join the profession next year – and the outcome will have a knock-on effect on the intake of students in 2017,' say Mr Van Rensburg and Mr Notyesi.

They add: 'We are at a tipping point for our educational institutions. We are confident that with constructive dialogue we can coax the parties back from an abyss that, once we are all cast into it, will have serious repercussions for the entire country and for the Rule of Law. We cannot afford to compromise our educational institutions to the point where they can no longer recover and we cannot afford to compromise the education and development of another generation of young adults,' say Mr Van Rensburg and Mr Notyesi.

The LSSA has engaged with all the provincial law societies to set up panels of mediators to provide pro bono mediation services to the affected parties at tertiary institutions in their areas of jurisdiction, as was done by the Cape Law Society earlier this week.

- Parties in the education environment who may be seeking assistance through mediation, should e-mail the LSSA at LSSA@LSSA.org.za and they will be put in contact with mediators in their areas.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, JAN VAN RENSBURG AND MVUSO NOTYESI

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Editor's note:

The Law Society of South Africa brings together its six constituent members – the Cape Law Society, the KwaZulu-Natal Law Society, the Law Society of the Free State, the Law Society of the Northern Provinces, the Black Lawyers Association and the National Association of Democratic Lawyers – in representing South Africa's 24 300 attorneys and 5 000 candidate attorneys.