



LAW SOCIETY
OF SOUTH AFRICA
PRESS RELEASE

23 April 2014: For immediate release

**LAW SOCIETY CONFIDENT THAT OUTCOME OF LLB REVIEW WILL PRODUCE
BETTER LAWYERS**

The Law Society of South Africa (LSSA) has noted recent views expressed by various stakeholders regarding the LLB degree following the announcement by Wits to offer its LLB as a postgraduate qualification only. 'At the outset, the LSSA wishes to state that it is committed to cooperating with all stakeholders to promote the reform of legal study which will ensure that the public receives the best possible service from professional and ethical legal practitioners. These are hallmarks that will continue to distinguish lawyers as a profession, rather than a business. It is imperative that the LLB degree, in whatever form it is presented, should prepare students not only to enter practice effectively, but also to understand the context of the society which they will serve,' say LSSA Co-Chairpersons Ettienne Barnard and Max Boqwana.

The LLB Summit held in May 2013 agreed that the structure of the LLB should change. A decision on the form that change should take has, however, not been taken. The Council for Higher Education (CHE) is drafting the standards which, in turn, will inform the discussion on the structure of the degree. 'The LSSA is confident that the CHE will provide the new LLB standards soon for consultation with all stakeholders,' say Mr Barnard and Mr Boqwana.

As a parallel process while revised standards are awaited, the LSSA has convened an LLB task team representative of stakeholders including attorneys, advocates, the Department of Higher Education, law school deans and law teachers. This task team meets regularly and we believe broad consensus will be achieved on issues that must be addressed.

'Generally there is concern about major issues, such as skills deficiencies, the depth of knowledge and an understanding of ethical and constitutional aspects. Stakeholders may, however, have different views on how these issues must be addressed. The task team has considered issues such as ethics, skills training, remuneration, the financial position of university law faculties and law clinics etc,' say Mr Barnard and Mr Boqwana.

They add: 'The LSSA is firmly of the view that the design of the new LLB must also take cognisance of students' financial position. If study is extended, assistance must be provided to ensure that access to the profession is not restricted. On the other hand, the LSSA acknowledges that most law faculties are subject to financial constraints. They are often not in a position to attract or retrain senior teaching staff. This too affects the quality of law graduates as much the structure of the degree.'

The legal profession intends to approach the government in this regard. It is in principle unfair to expect faculties to produce excellence, if the playing fields are unequal.

ISSUED ON BEHALF OF THE CO-CHAIRPERSONS OF THE LAW SOCIETY OF SOUTH AFRICA, ETTIENNE BARNARD AND MAX BOQWANA

by Barbara Whittle

Communication Manager, Law Society of South Africa

Tel: (012) 366 8800 or 083 380 1307

E-mail: barbara@lssa.org.za Website: www.lssa.org.za

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 22 250 attorneys and 5 780 candidate attorneys.