UFS MEDICAL STUDENTS ASSISTED BY NEW TRANSPORT PROJECT

Previously disadvantaged medical students at the University of the Free State (UFS), who have struggled to get from campus to academic hospitals on public transport, have been given a lifeline after PPS, the specialist financial services company focused on graduate professionals, donated R114 000 to establish a shuttle/transport system.

Gerhard Joubert, Head of Group Marketing and Stakeholder Relations at PPS, says that more than 80 students have experienced frequent problems getting to hospitals in time for practical training. “It is imperative for students to attend each class and practical session on time, yet relying on public transport to get there means this is not always possible. This new transport system, which comprises two PPS-branded shuttles, each with the capacity for 21 people, will change the lives of many medical students currently studying at the UFS.”

“We recognise that obtaining a medical degree is very expensive for both students and their parents and it is our hope that this project will help to alleviate some of these financial pressures and will also assist many of them to continue with their studies,” says Joubert.

Dr Scarpa Schoeman, Senior Lecturer at the UFS, says the lack of efficient public transport was extremely demoralising to many students, who spent a significant amount of money trying to commute between hospitals for their clinical training. “Many of our medical students previously spent up to R5,000 per year on public transport costs, which has been halved with the new buses.

He says the transport project has already had a hugely positive impact on these students’ academic performance. “The students’ travel times to the hospitals have been significantly reduced due to the shuttle system, meaning they are much more refreshed and are also less stressed in classes due to the introduction of this transport initiative.”

“Students previously incurred huge costs on taxis and wasted time waiting for the taxi to be full, before it would depart to its destination. This problem has now been resolved thanks to the help of PPS,” says Schoeman.