TECHNOLOGY IN A TIME OF CRISIS
APRIL 2020

Like many Higher Education Institutions globally, the lockdown in South Africa and specifically at TSIBA Business School exposed vulnerabilities in our preparedness for a digital teaching and learning era.

TSIBA closed officially on the 26 March 2020; however, to prepare for the ensuing lockdown, students stopped attending campus on the 20 March 2020. The Academic Programme accommodates the 1st term vacation which was brought forward to overlap with the lockdown. The Academic Programme will, however, proceed officially on the 20th April using Google Classroom and supplemented with Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Hangouts and various social media platforms.To mitigate the effects of the loss of teaching and learning time, TSIBA invoked an earlier first-term vacation period for the students. This has enabled the academic staff to focus not on teaching but to leverage optimal value from Google Classroom, by uploading content and to test a range of online-meeting technologies.Chromebook devices were made available to all students in the Bachelor in Business Administration degree programme.

TSIBA has also opted for a 4G/LTE data bundle to take care of immediate learning needs and to ensure connectedness with our students. Depending on the time period of the lockdown, additional options will be investigated and made available to the TSIBA teaching staff and students. To support the dissemination of classwork and the management of assignments for our students, we continue to use Google Classroom. TSIBA's Student Information System is already online and students can check their results at their convenience.

LOOKING FORWARD

As a contingency plan, should lockdown be extended, we are investigating the most suitable virtual classroom/conferencing software. This software will be used to directly interact with groups of students using their TSIBA distributed Chromebooks or tablet devices, home computers/laptops and even smartphones where necessary. We will also explore ways in which we can record these interactive online learning sessions in order to make them readily available for students who could not attend.