

INVITATION TO THE 2016 CONFERENCE

Conference Theme: “#Crossroads: Where to next?”

Co-Hosted by

Walter Sisulu University (WSU) & University of Fort Hare (UFH)

Monday, 27th June – Wednesday 29th June 2016
International Convention Centre (ICC), East London

Dear Colleagues

FAPSA since 2001 has always played a pivotal role in determining what the Best Practices would be in assisting Financial Aid Offices as well as what the Best Processes would be in assisting NSFAS and Donors alike in the management, administration and allocation of funds within the industry. Over the past few years we have been subjected to numerous changes within the industry, taking into account the student centred model of NSFAS, “Central Application System”, system requirements, changes in how we operate within our sector, etc. Change has always been accepted within our sector as we all believe in changing for the betterment and to improve the way we administer our funding nationally in compliance with our sponsors rules. We as FAPSA have been subjected to numerous changes over the years and thus our theme for this year’s conference, **#Crossroads: Where to next?**

In the 2015 academic year, we were faced with a huge shortage or should we say the gross lack of funding being made available within the HEI and TVET Sectors. The lack of funding resulted in thousands of students being unfunded over the past three years. It was ultimately in 2015 that students decided to stand tall above all and started protesting, raising their slogan **#FeesMustFall** which was launched in September 2015. Tensions grew and our students became impatient. Universities throughout South Africa were forced to close for weeks and some were closed for months. Students raised their issues and made it clear that there should be No Fee Increments in place for the 2016 academic year. A Presidential Task Team was established and resolutions were passed taking into account the demands by our students. Part of the resolutions made were to cover the Historical Debts of NSFAS Qualifying Financial Needy Students as well as those who dropped out of the system as a result of the lack of funding.

In 2014 our conference theme was, **“Embracing change”**. In 2015 our theme was, **“Financial Aid – Rising above Change in Unity”**. The theme for this year as stated above is, **#Crossroads: Where to next?** We as FAPSA believe that our theme for this year’s conference clearly indicates that we have come to the crossroads and need to prepare for the challenges that lie ahead of us. The conference hopes to enlighten all of us on the way forward.

The 2016 academic year also sees yet another mild stone being reached for FAPSA as we celebrate our 15 year anniversary since the birth of FAPSA in 2001. It is important to take note of all our contributions made to date, as well as acknowledge our peers who have been within the Financial Aid Office environment over the past few decades.

It is from this premise that FAPSA invites all member institutions and organizations to the 2016 and 15th FAPSA Conference.

Early Bird Registration fee of R4,000.00 per delegate **until 30th April 2016, thereafter the fee will be R4250.00 per delegate which** includes FAPSA Membership Fee, Gala Dinner, Conference fee, Goody bags, Gifts, Teas & Lunches but **excludes the Monday night Dinner.**

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A maximum of 5 delegates per University/University of Technology/FET College/Educational NGO and a maximum of 2 delegates per Provincial Department of Education and any other organization is hereby invited.

Institutions/organizations intending to send more than the stipulated maximum number of delegates should contact Alberto Lai Wing at 043 704 7245 or alai-wing@ufh.ac.za before making bookings for additional delegates.

Registration starts @ 18H00 – 20H00 on 26 June 2016, commencing again the following morning at 08h30am to 09h30. The last session of this year's conference will conclude @ 14H00 on 29 June 2016.

This invitation serves as a call to member institutions and partners to start with the preparations for the 2016 Conference and the 15th Annual General Meeting where **You** will begin developing and bringing to life the request made by the former leaders of FAPSA, that of “**Building a better and more focused organisation aimed at better servicing our members, institutions and students**”.

Yours sincerely

Alberto Lai Wing
(FAPSA President)