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17TH FAPSA ORGANISATIONAL REPORT

This report is an overview of the state of the Organization since the 16th FAPSA Conference in Durban June 2017. It is also our mid-term review report to the National Conference, under the theme “# Free Education- the impact”

It is an administrative and organizational account of developments of the period under review, and assessment of the progress made and challenges faced by our association and our country at large. It outlines the major tasks of our association for the period ahead.

Over the past few years we have been subjected to a variety of changes within the sector, taking into cognizes the emergency of the student centered model of NSFAS, “Central Application System”, # FeesMustFall”, system requirements, changes how we generally operate in our sector as a totally in function.

This pronouncement seeks to pose lot of questions to us on a number issues and the day to day running of our offices, it therefore present a gold and wonderful opportunity for us to reflect to some of this pragmatic challenges that are facing us.

The dynamics of Higher Education and Training sector are changing from time to time and is critical for us to keep in touch with the recent developments so that we are at better position to respond to the complex and pragmatic challenges facing our sector in totality.

On the 14th September 2017 the leadership of FAPSA met with institutions and resolved of the following issues:

To date there are still many students who have not yet signed their SOP's/ LAF's and it was reported that the majority of students at TVET Colleges have not yet signed their SOP's. Students are frustrated by this delay from NSFAS.

Majority of institutions are still awaiting outstanding funds, the payment process of NSFAS is creating a mess in terms of reconciliation and allocating funds to the students fee accounts.

The generation of LAF's/SOP's by NSFAS is creating problems on a daily basis as staff at NSFAS seem to send students from pillar to post and they always send the students back to our offices irrespective of how many times the registration template has been send to NSFAS

The Call Center remains one of the biggest obstacle at NSFAS, staff within the call center always give contradicting information to the students.

In the light of aforementioned issues institutions end up protesting as consequence of the misplaced and misleading that they are getting from NSFAS.

Other critical challenge that was articulated is the unfunded qualifying students, disability funding delays and students funded at other institutions. Institutions further indicated that too many students on the funding list studying at other institutions but they continue to send their information to the incorrect institutions. Institutions felt that not enough is being done by NSFAS as they fail to compare the list with registration data template that is submitted by institutions.

On the basis of the aforementioned frustrations we then realised a press statement that was published by City Press on 01/10/2017 and twin to that I has an interview with Thabiso Tema of Power FM the breakfast show where I was reflecting and unpacking the position of FAPSA.

We did all this things to reflect our respect and integrity for FAPSA as mandated by you.

Honorable Delegates,

We as FAPSA have noted and welcomed the pronouncement by the President of the Republic on Free Education, it is for this reason that we have agreed as the Executive Committee to have this year's Conference them as "#Free Education- the impact."

As part of responding to your mandate on the 12th April 2018 we met with NSFAS and resolved on the following issues:

NSFAS reported that all 2016 payments are concluded for TVET College, Universities must send request if they are any payment or funds due to them for 2016.

We have agreed with NSFAS that they should be national workshop with all institutions that will assist in closing off all outstanding 2017 issues. I wish to report that indeed the workshop took place at Cape Town from the 23-26 April 2018 for both Colleges and Universities.

One of the fundamental issues that we raised was the issue if standardize allowances, the concern was about communication with regards to this and requested that students registered for 1st semester should be given half value amount, DHET must send a formal communication to NSFAS, communication must be sent to all institutions for correct procedure that need to be followed when implementing this and communication must cc all financial aid managers.

Among other things will reflected on the following issues:

Communication by NSFAS to FAO's
Wrong status information sent to students
NSFAS call center
The exclusion of FAPSA from critical meetings
Correct appeals process
SMS shared amongst students
Students switching to other Universities
Online registration problems
FAPSA getting a seat in the NSFAS board

Please note the number and the dates of meetings we had during this current term in our quest to resolved our challenges.

14 September 2017 attended with institutions
25 October 2017
28-29 November 2017
12-13 February 2018
11-13 April 2018
23-26 April 2018 attended with institutions and NSFAS

Honorable Delegates

Our institutions were once prescribed as fragmented in a fragmented state. The latter immediately suggested that a new dawn of fresh thinking and approach need to be provided.

The Department through NSFAS has allocated... Billions for needy students across institutions of learning, however perpetual unrest in institutions suggest that this is not adequate hence the spontaneous unrest which engulfed our institutions across the country. This was not just peaceful unrest but they have been coupled

with serious damage to property to the detriment of the relative peace and tranquility we enjoyed previously.

We have demanded adequate participation in the board of NSFAS, will such a move bring about change in the board? Can we stand in unison in support of our claim that such will assist in bringing about change and adequate funding? Is it through our participation in the board that such challenges can be minimized? I am in no way trying to scorn our resolve but the current developments demand of us to ask this critical questions in response to the national question of adequate funding and transformation. Ours is a development role however we shall not meet our core objective if we don't go beyond the call of duty and be party to the transformation agenda in this country.

It is against that background colleagues that we should have a proper **institutional funding summit** which is solution driven, not talk shows that we have being witnessing. Amongst others we should involve student bodies, private sector and government to look unto other alternative funding model in order to assist students against any tailored funding which enslaves them to the detriment of their own development.

We should demand citizen's involvement in solving their own problem and in this case the private sector must be confronted. The truth is we are all at ease in blaming government but less in demanding the response from the private sector. Most private companies would rather fund our historically advantaged institutions and individuals than our historically disadvantaged institutions or individuals.

One of the Africans philosophers of his time once said "each generation must discover its mission, fulfil it or betray it" Franz Fanon. Can we claim that we are indeed fulfilling the core objective of our existence?

Former President Thabo Mbeki once said " those who complete the course do so only because they do not as fatigue sets in, convince themselves that the road ahead is still too long, inclined too steep, the loneliness impossible to bear and prize itself of doubtful value".

The critical question that is arising is are we equal to the task? Are we ready to confront this pragmatic challenges? I am interested to hear your views.
God bless you.

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