



MINISTRY
HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

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MEDIA STATEMENT

Board of Convocations & Alumni welcomes proposals, condemns violent protests

27 September 2016 - The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, MP, met with the National Board of Convocations and Alumni today, 27 September 2016. The meeting was convened at the request of the board to brief the Minister about the initiatives that would be undertaken by the board in the higher education sector.

The Board delegation led by its Chairperson and Convener, Mr Sanele Zondi, introduced this newly established body to the Minister and its objectives. The body is made up of Presidents and Chairpersons of Convocations and Alumni of all the universities across the country.

In its first meeting which convened on 5 September 2016, the Board received input from the Council on Higher Education and discussed at great length the ongoing tuition fees debate in the country. The board meeting agreed on the following points:

- The meeting condemns the ongoing destruction of university property and disruptions of teaching and learning.
- The meeting urges university management and student leaders to approach the fees discussion with an open mind.
- Convocations and Alumni Associations must play a mediating role in areas of dispute between students and the university management.
- Convocations and Alumni Associations must encourage past NSFAS recipients to make payments on their loans so as to contribute towards funding of needy and deserving students.
- The private sector must play a more meaningful role in Higher Education such as building infrastructure and providing funding to cover the shortfall.
- Convocations and Alumni are expected to play a leading role in fundraising in order to build and maintain university infrastructure for generations to come.

The Minister welcomed the briefing and hailed the establishment of the body which will go a long way in ensuring that alumni and convocations take their rightful place in support of higher education institutions.

“This is an important and welcome initiative and this will help to organize the alumni to play their role at the universities” said Minister Nzimande. The Minister also expressed his appreciation for the support the board has given to the fee adjustment recommendations he announced for the 2017 academic year”.

Minister Nzimande called on the board to also make their voices heard in ending the current wave of violent protests taking place on our universities. The board should further ensure that they also participate in the public hearings held by the Presidential Commission on Higher Education funding.

The meeting resolved that the Department of Higher Education and Training will support the structure and will work with them to improve and promote the culture of learning in higher education.

The meeting further resolved that the board, through its structures in all universities, will work with student representatives to end the current wave of violent protests.

End

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