
Report on the State of the Association

This report is developed by the Secretary General's Office as an overview of the state of the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) since the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Cape Town on 29 November 2019. It is the association's account of the developments under review, and an assessment of the progress made and challenges faced by the association and the sub-sector in general. It outlines the primary tasks of our association for the period ahead.

The above being the case, as a form of background, it is important to indicate and to highlight some few events and activities that played a significant role in the build-up to the AGM. One of those events is a SAASSAP meeting held on the 4—5th July 2019 at the University of Pretoria, which meeting took historic resolutions for the future SAASSAP. The meeting resolved that a Task Team should be established and tasked with the responsibility of mapping a way forward for the association concerning a re-imagination process of SAASSAP of the future. The re-imagination process commenced with reviewing the current state of SAASSAP at the time, culminating in a new imagined association as contained in the Strategic Plan 2020—2024. A clear mandate was also issued to this new association, that of being responsive and relevant to the ever-changing South African Higher Education context way before Covid-19 matured into being a world pandemic. So, one could argue that the new mandate of SAASSAP was indeed prophetic.

The Task Team was constituted by the following members:

Mr Pura Mgolombane – **Convener**
Dr Matete Madiba
Mr Luthando Jack
Mr Lufuno Tshikhudo
Ms Zoleka Dotwana.

The Task Team undertook its work virtually, with the convener, Mr Mgolombane, preparing the first draft, which was circulated to the Task Team members for further inputs and comments. Following the members' contributions and comments, the convener consolidated the document. The convener through the Secretary-General, Dr Pakiso Tondi, circulated the consolidated report to the broader SAASSAP membership for further feedback prior to the AGM. In the last analysis, the key themes identified by the Task Team included:

- Policy Development
- Professional Development and Research
- Student Experience and Success
- Stakeholder Management
- Continental and International Partnerships.

These key themes were eventually incorporated into the report's recommendations. The report formed part of the SAASSAP AGM agenda, which took place in Cape Town on 29 November 2019. The Task Team report and its recommendations were adopted by the AGM. In addition to the Task Team, the 4—5 July 2019 meetings also resolved to map a way forward as follows:

Firstly, members were invited to reflect honestly, deeply, extensively and critically on the historical background of the association. This reflection was to go as far as the purpose for which the association was initially established by its founding members. In light of this reflection, the

SAASSAP Constitution was discussed, and it was resolved that it needed to be reviewed, mainly because it had been approximately a decade since the constitution was last reviewed. The Preamble of the Constitution of the association was identified as a starting point to align it with the new developments within the Higher Education setting. To this effect, there have been significant developments that included consultations with members for their inputs.

Secondly, a lengthy discussion ensued about the need to redefine the agenda of the association in the current context with its challenges and opportunities. It was resolved that the association should be intentional in being actively engaged in research and publication. This conscious act of activism will ensure that SAASSAP has a voice on Student Affairs theory and praxis within the South African Higher Education (SAHE) setting and beyond. Dr Matete volunteered to coordinate this initiative.

Thirdly, to enhance SAASSAP's relevance and impact, the association needed to revisit the notion of strategic partnerships within and outside the higher education setting. In this regard, the following organisations and associations were identified as possible strategic partners:

NASDEV – National Association of Student Development Practitioners
CHE – Council on Higher Education
HELM – Higher Education Leadership and Management programme
USAf – Universities South Africa
CESA – Center for Ethnic Student Affairs
SASSE- South African Survey of Student Engagement.

Thus, the meeting resolved on four resolutions to drive this narrative. A community of practice must be established between SAASSAP and NASDEV. This must be supported through joint conferences that would enhance the drive to professionalise Student Affairs practice. In some cases, programmatic relationships must be established with some of the partners. USAf should be re-engaged on the strategic position and the role SAASSAP plays within the SAHE setting.

Fourthly, an issue of membership of SAASSAP and the question of succession planning within Student Affairs at an institutional level was discussed with emphasis on how the reconsideration can improve the effectiveness of the association and its continuity. Membership of the association needs to be revisited, and the second in line to the offices of Deans/Executive Directors/Directors/Assistant Registrars, Senior Managers, should be included. This aspect of membership and succession planning is currently in motion with the redrafting of the constitution, which will, of course, await adoption at the AGM.

Fifthly, a reconsideration of the administration of the association was done to enhance its effectiveness and efficacy. It was resolved that the association should consider appointing a post-graduate student to provide the necessary administrative support or to fund the appointment of a senior student who will provide the required administrative support. It was further resolved that SAASSAP should approach relevant Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). Currently, SAASSAP's administrative support has been sourced through the Office of the Secretary-General (SG), and we are grateful to the University of the Free State for its contribution in this regard. So, the Secretariat Office currently has three personnel assisting the NEC in various ways.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM took place on 29 November 2019 and was held at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business. The agenda for the AGM was focused only on these two key issues: *Report on SAASSAP Current State of Affairs and the Election of SAASSAP Office Bearers.*

Pertaining to the election of the office bearers, the following members were elected:

- President: Dr. Sibusiso Chalufu
 - Deputy President: Mr. Luthando Jack
 - Secretary General: Mr. Pura Mgolombane
 - Treasurer: Ms. Thembi Kweyama
 - Media and Liaison Officer: Ms. Zoleka Dotwana
 - Projects Coordinator: Dr. Pakiso Tondi
 - Research and Development Officer: Dr. Matete Madiba
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THE STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSION 10-12 JANUARY 2020, BLOEMFONTEIN

The Strategic Planning session was held on 10-12 January 2020 in Bloemfontein. The outcome of this session was a Strategic Plan document. As already outlined by the President in one of his communique to membership, the strategy consists of nine themes, and each theme is allocated to an NEC member.

The delegation of themes is as follows:

*Provide Strategic Leadership and Facilitation - **Dr. Sibusiso Chalufu***
*Develop and Sustain Organisational Capability – **Mr. Pura Mgolombane***
*Mobilise and leverage resources – **Mr. Luthando Jack***
*Enhance Student Governance- **Dr. Pakiso Tondi***
*Facilitate Holistic Student Success – **Ms. Thembi Kweyama***
*Develop and Disseminate New Knowledge - **Dr. Matete Madiba***
*Influence Policy Development and Practice – **Mr. Pura Mgolombane***
*Advocate and Lobby Effectively – **Ms. Zoleka Dotwana***
*Engage and Mobilise Stakeholders – **Mr. Luthando Jack.***

In line with the themes, an action plan list has been compiled by the SG office, with all actions attached to themes. NEC members provide progress reports on actions in the NEC meetings. These progress reports will be compiled and distributed for a mid-term report, which will be communicated in due course.

The strategic plan meeting touched on numerous aspects of the association that need to be realigned with the reimaged vision of SAASSAP, these discussions included:

The association needs a new name that will align with the new strategy. The new name would be tabled at the AGM along with the redraft of the constitution for adoption. As such, the NEC agreed to take some time to think of a new name that resonates with the strategic direction of the association.

The meeting resolved the need for an AGM to be able to adopt the constitution, the new name, and Strategic Plan 2024. The proposed time for the AGM is the June holidays. To finalise the preparations for the AGM, it was proposed that the NEC should have a face-to-face meeting around March. However, due to Covid-19, we are unable to settle on a date as yet.

Furthermore, in January, a meeting was held between DHET and the Sector to discuss NSFAS regulations. SAASSAP had lobbied USAf in particular to cause this meeting to take place through the DHET. The national leadership of SAUS also attended the meeting. The meeting contributed in reducing the scale of upheavals across the sector as this matter was no longer a major demand in the list of demands by students to the Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation.

Since then, the NEC held regular meetings as follows:

- 16 January 2020 in Pretoria;
- 19 February 2020 via video-conferencing;
- 16 April 2020 via video-conferencing;
- 30 April 2020 via video-conferencing; and
- 07 May, 2020 via video-conferencing.

Out of the meetings mentioned above, what is important to note are the resolutions made with Higher Health, Prof Ahmed Bawa from Universities South Africa and the USAf - South African Police Service National Task Team.

The NEC held a meeting with Higher Health on Wednesday, 8 April 2020. SAASSAP was invited to a brainstorming session with Higher Health with regards to Higher Health's strategy towards COVID-19 within the post-school education and training (PSET) sector. Part of the discussion was commentary requested by Higher Health on the draft Guidelines for PSET Institutions for Management of and Response to the COVID-19 Outbreak. This document was circulated for commentary to all members before it was consolidated. After that, a Higher Health Webinar focused on Student Support Services was scheduled to take place on Thursday, 07 May 2020, but was postponed due to unforeseen circumstances from the side of Higher Health. In recent developments, the President has communicated a request for inputs on the: Protocol on Cleaning for COVID-19 Prevention within PSET; Protocol on Screening, Testing, and Linkage to Care for COVID-19 Programme within PSET; and Protocol on Student Volunteer for COVID-19 Programme within PSET. These inputs are currently being consolidated.

On 30 April 2020, the SAASSAP NEC invited Prof Bawa from Universities South Africa to engage the members on the issues concerning leased student accommodation. In this meeting, the NEC was able to get a briefing of the engagement of USAf and how far negotiations have surfaced as far as Covid-19 interventions are concerned. In the meeting with Prof Bawa, he made mention of several aspects, including the risks that universities are facing, the task team being established to tackle the issue of leased student accommodation, the intervention possibilities (financial and structural), etc. However, due to the ministerial address by the Ministers for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Dr. Blade Nzimande, and the Minister for Basic Education, Ms Angie Motshekga, a commitment to a broader meeting to be scheduled later, was resolved upon.

Prof Bawa's presentation was made before the Ministerial addresses of Higher and Basic Education, respectively, with updates of a way forward. Nevertheless, Prof Bawa mentioned that USAf had compiled a risk analysis of key drivers for 2020 and 2021 in consultation with all universities. These are some of the risk factors identified:

- Universities might not be able to retain tuition fees because students might not return to campuses, or students might challenge universities through legal route on the costing of online learning.
- Student housing is a significant risk for universities. The preparation of campuses for the partial return of students (awaiting the Minister's address for direction). This had to do with screening and testing, PPE (personal protective equipment), sanitization and disinfection of areas, etc.

- Social distancing is another area of expenditure.
- The isolation of students who test positive for COVID-19 is a risk (as students cannot be sent back home).

USAf met with the Private Student Housing Association (PSHA); it was agreed on the principle that they would work together. However, PSHA is also experiencing financial sustainability problems. A conversation between PSHA and a USAf Task Team made up of representatives from the Finance Executives' Forum (FEF) and Deans/Directors of Student Affairs and the Association of College and University Housing Officers International South Africa Chapter (ACUHO-I SAC), is scheduled to take place next week. That meeting will hopefully resolve on how the housing issue will be managed. The CFO from UWC, who is the Chair of the FEF, will lead the delegation from USAf.

Concerning the issue of financial sustainability, the Finance Executives' Forum, which comprises of university's CFOs, has created indicators of what universities need to be concerned about during the pandemic. NSFAS will not change any payment strategies for the year. NSFAS and the Government are looking at the possible extension of the academic year and how to manage the issue of NSFAS payments to students. National Treasury has already declared that Higher Education will not be receiving any additional budgets – what remains a possibility is DHET reprioritising funds that have already been allocated.

USAf advises that the partial return should be from 01 June 2020. The academic year may also restart on 01 August 2020 and go up to January/February 2021. If it recommences on 01 October 2020, then it can go up to March/April 2021. Universities have committed to completing the academic curriculum year irrespective of the risks they are currently challenged with.

In conclusion, the President and Deputy President serve on the joint task team established by USAf and the Minister of Police. The task team is composed of other stakeholders in the security sector as well as Higher Health and other colleagues from universities and TVET colleges. The purpose of the task team is to develop a national action plan to fight all forms of crime on our campuses and surrounding communities. The task team has held two meetings, with the last meeting being held in February 2020. At this meeting, it was agreed that the SAPS would lead the process of developing an action plan, and once adopted, it will be cascaded, and its implementation will be continuously monitored.

SAASSAP ACTION PLAN 2020

The table is colour-coded:

- **Green**- completed tasks.
- **Orange**- tasks in progress.
- **Red**- tasks that have exceeded their timeframes and no progress on tasks has been received.
- **Yellow**- tasks in which no progress report has been submitted, but still have time for completion.
- **Blue**- tasks that have exceeded their timeframes, but were not practically possible to complete due to unforeseen circumstances.

NO.	DUE DATE	RESOLUTION	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	PROGRESS TASK	ON IN PROGRESS / COMPLETED
1.	19-01-2020	Research and Development Officer to send the draft SAASSAP Constitution document to the Deputy President and Secretary General	M. Madiba	Completed.	Completed.
2.	24-01-2020	Deputy President and Secretary General to peruse, comment and return the draft SAASSAP Constitution to the Research and Development Officer	L. Jack P. Mgolombane	Completed.	Completed.
3.	26-01-2020	Secretary General to distribute the draft SAASSAP Constitution to the entire NEC	P. Mgolombane	Completed.	Completed.
4.	05-02-2020	Action List drafted by the Office of the Secretary General	P. Mgolombane N. Hlophe	The first draft was emailed to all NEC members on 13 February 2020.	Completed.
5.		Office of the Secretary General to sort out the issue of administrative support and remuneration	P. Mgolombane N. Hlophe	Completed.	Completed.
6.	07-02-2020	Secretary General to send the draft SAASSAP Constitution to all SAASSAP members – members will be granted two weeks to make comments	P. Mgolombane	A follow up communication was sent to members outlining the membership fee and draft SAASSAP Constitution.	Completed.
7.		Office of the Secretary General to make the necessary arrangements for NEC online meetings	P. Mgolombane	Completed.	Completed.

8.		Office of the Secretary General to arrange for the launch of the SAASSAP Strategic Plan	P. Mgolombane	The current focus is membership affiliation as Covid-19 is not allowing gatherings.	To be reconsidered in the context of Covid-19
9.	29-02-2020	Office of the Secretary General to organize the SAASSAP AGM	P. Mgolombane	Could not be arranged due to Covid-19 regulations.	Plans are afoot for an AGM to be scheduled either virtually or face-to-face, depending on the developments in so far as Covid-19 is concerned. This will be preceded by a virtual general meeting scheduled for May 2020.
10	08-05-2020	Office of the Secretary General to arrange for the SAASSAP membership general meeting	P. Mgolombane	A virtual SAASSAP general meeting has been scheduled for Friday, 08 May 2020.	In progress.
11	08-05-2020	Office of the Secretary General to finalize the agenda for the SAASSAP membership general meeting	P. Mgolombane	The draft agenda of the SAASSAP general meeting has been sent to the NEC for inputs.	In progress.
12	08-05-2020	Office of the Secretary General to compile a detailed report of the activities of the NEC post-election to be circulated to SAASSAP membership before the general meeting.	P. Mgolombane	In progress.	In progress.

13	29-02-2020	The President and Secretary General to draft communiqué to be sent to SAASSAP membership, to include the issue of membership affiliation and fees payable.	S. Chalufu P. Mgolombane	Completed.	Completed .
14	30-03-2020	The Deputy President to draft the resources mobilisation strategy.	L. Jack	Informal engagements have been proceeding with regards to the theme. A progress report will be submitted before the next meeting.	In progress.
15	30-03-2020	The Research and Development Officer to draft the SAASSAP research development strategy and plan.	M. Madiba	The research strategy document has been completed and circulated to NEC members for inputs.	In progress.
16	31-03-2020	Office of the Secretary General to draft the strategy for influencing policy development.	P. Mgolombane	A report will serve at the next NEC meeting.	In progress.
17	31-03-2020	The Treasurer General and Secretary General to draft Guidelines for Honorarium.	P. Mgolombane T. Kweyama	A draft document has been developed. A follow up with Treasurer General is in process.	In progress.
18	31-03-2020	The Research and Development Officer to develop a presentation from the organisations strategy, and to investigate possible service providers to partner with/on the launch.	M. Madiba	A draft document is required for engagement on the possible service providers to partner with.	In progress.
19		The President to draft a strategy for SAASSAP's provision of strategic leadership and facilitation of the sub-sector, including the establishment of a think tank led by an NEC member.	S. Chalufu	Formal document to be presented at the next NEC meeting.	In progress.
20		The Deputy President to develop a strategy for stakeholder engagement.	L. Jack	Formal document to be presented at the next NEC meeting.	In progress.
21	30-04-2020	The Treasurer General to draft SAASSAP Finance documents to regulate the use and control of SAASSAP finances.	T. Kweyama	Progress report to be tabled at the next NEC meeting.	In progress.

22	14-04-2020	The President to write to SAASSAP membership to share the SAASSAP Strategic Plan 2020—2024.	S. Chalufu	Completed.	Completed.
23	31-05-2020	The Media and Liaison Officer to finalize the revamping of the SAASSAP website and social media presence.	Z. Dotwana	In progress.	In progress.
24		The President and the General Secretary to write to the key stakeholders to share the Strategic Plan 2020—2024.	S. Chalufu P. Mgolombane	Once the SP 2024 has been adopted by the SAASSAP membership.	Once the SP 2024 has been adopted by the SAASSAP membership.
25	30-06-2020	The Media and Liaison Officer to develop and implement the advocacy and lobby strategy and programmes.	Z. Dotwana	Due by 30-06-2020	Due by 30-06-2020
26	31-07-2020	The Treasurer General to develop and implement the student success strategy and programmes.	T. Kweyama	Due by 31-07-2020	Due by 31-07-2020
27	31-07-2020	The Secretary General to develop a strategy for the development and sustenance of SAASSAP organisational capacity.	P. Mgolombane	Due by 31-07-2020	Due by 31-07-2020
28	14-12-2020	The Projects Officer to develop a strategy and programmes for the enhancement of student governance.	P. Tondi	Due by 31-07-2020	Due by 31-07-2020

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