

21 September 2021

SAASSAP statement on Workshops/Conferences/Summits by Companies Not Linked with Professional Bodies/Associations

The South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) National Executive Committee (NEC) has noted with concern the proliferation of workshops/conferences/summits that are without contextual Student Affairs professional content and which are being hosted by private companies primarily for profit motives and at exorbitant prices. The curricula and/or programmes developed by these private companies are not linked to professional bodies nor associations, instead in many occasions these programmes undermine and further distort the developmental trajectory and national agenda of the Student Affairs and Services sub-sector. Notwithstanding institutional autonomy, SAASSAP wishes to advise against subscribing to these programmes and supporting such profit driven initiatives by these private entities at the expense of the limited public funds. Rather, we recommend that colleagues in the sub-sector consider seeking advice in their professional bodies before committing the limited institutional resources to these self-serving and in some cases unethical service providers whose false advertisement misrepresent the speakers and/or presenters in these workshops/conferences and/or summits. To this effect, we know of cases where people's pictures and bios were included as advertising material not only without their consent but without those people's knowledge.

In light of the above, the NEC wishes to discourage the sub-sector from exposing their institutions to these profit driven service imposters. These predatory workshops/seminars/conferences and/or summits organisers seek to undermine, subvert and further frustrate every effort to professionalise the sub-sector. We therefore, encourage our members to make use of Sectoral Stakeholders as listed on our website under the tab 'Affiliates & Stakeholders.' If a workshop has a primary focus area of Student Affairs and Services, for example in Student Housing, it must be aligned to and/or in collaboration with



the Association of College and University Housing Officers-International South Africa Chapter (ACUHO-I SAC) – to ensure the legitimacy of the conference/workshop which you are interested to attend. Thus, we call on all key stakeholders in the sub-sector particularly DHET, USAf, NASDEV, SAUS, ACUHO-I SAC, HEDSA, NASPA, CAMPROSA, IASAS, NSFAS, CHE, SAACDHE, FAPSA and others, to rally behind this call to further conscientise their members to refuse to be complicit to these unscrupulous initiatives by not approving requests to attend these often bogus and exploitative workshops/seminars/conferences and/or summits.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pura Mgolombane', written in a cursive style.

Pura Mgolombane
Secretary-General: SAASSAP
E-mail: pura.mgolombane@uct.ac.za
Mobile: 072 215 8469