

SOUTH AFRICAN UNION OF STUDENTS



Baseline document for SAUE NEC member towards the 2nd Policy Conference and National General Council of the Union

11th September 2015

The South African Union of Students will from the 1st to the 3rd of October be going to its second ever policy conference to be held in Johannesburg. This requires that National Executive Committee members play a leading role in the development of discussion documents taking into account previous policy positions of the Union, through discussion documents, congress resolutions and NEC pronouncements on issues. This process thus requires that we form NEC Sub committees to look at preparing and presenting policy positions for engagement towards the policy conference which will assist in positioning the union towards its 6th National Congress taking place in December this year.

The context of these documents to be drafted by the NEC should take into consideration the paradigm shift in the approach of SAUS towards the developments within the higher education sector in our country and abroad.

As the NEC political report presented by the President of SAUS, Thabo Moloja, stated in March 2015 in Venda *"we must make an honest assessment of progress made since the dawn of democracy, we further need to assess the state on its commitment to better the life's of the working class and poor, dealing away with challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequalities, which affects society as a whole, and young people in particular."*

The principal objective of SAUS NEC in releasing its policy discussion documents should be to enable SRC's of the Union to review our policies, assess how far we have gone in implementing them since the last policy conference and congress. Delegates to the policy conference will thus assess the challenges that we are confronted with and how we determine new policies where appropriate, acceleration implementation of policies and to make changes where applicable.

SAUS must play a leading role in the transformation of the higher education landscape in South African, thus these documents to be drafted by NEC members must spark much needed critical debate.

SAUS not being an implementing arm, but rather a key stakeholder within higher Education requires that we take into consideration the practical effects of its policy positions in contributing to the sector.

The events of this year alone regarding the NSFAS crisis, the raising non partisan transformation movements such as #RhodesMustFall #OpenStellenbosch #TransformWits, the erecting and opening of new universities, the increasing infiltration of the Zionist movement through free trips to Israel and the slow pace of gender representation within SRC requires for us to embarking on a focused discussion around these developments, or lack thereof.

Office of the Deputy President

Marshalltown- Johannesburg

Tel: 087 023 0479 Email: prezsankara@gmail.com Cell:084 663 6929

We will be releasing these documents in the context of having adopted and launched a student charter of rights and responsibilities.

Structure of Policy Conference/ NGC Draft Discussion Document Committee.

Draft Committee Chairperson:	Tebogo Thothela
Gender Sub-committee Chairperson:	Zanele Maphumulo
International Relation Sub-committee Chairperson:	Alie Komape
Transformation Sub-committee Chairperson:	Sakh`usomeleze Badi
Fees, Finance and youth Empowerment Sub-committee Chairperson:	Siyabonga Hani

The Gender discussion document:

Sub-committee Chairperson: Zanele Maphumulo

Sub-committee member: Sinovuyo Belu

Sub-committee member: Lindiwe Mkhumbane

Sub-committee member: Sandra Radebe

The last SAUS gender discussion document was drafted close to 7 years ago. Although SAUS articulates itself to have non-sexist policies positions, a reflection must be made in how far are we in recognizing females as equal counterparts within higher education. This requires that we look at the lived experiences of female students, lectures, and staff members and whether existing women's empowerment policies have gone far enough in ensuring that there is transformative gender equality.

The intention of the Gender Paper ought to examine progress made within the sector, the Union and respective SRC's. It must identify shortcomings and propose recommendations that would ensure that issues of gender equality are embedded within the policies of SAUS and that they are articulated in the programmes of the Union and SRC's.

Amongst the priorities that the discussion document ought to focus on is the amount of female students that pass matric against those that enter institutions of higher and those that in the final analysis graduate. Other priority areas are the general representation of women within SAUS, Institutions of higher learning structures (inter alia, Council, Senate, SRC, etc). The paper must draw especially on the lived experiences of women in institutions of higher learning in general, and black women in particular as one of the most disenfranchised groups in Society.

Transformation Discussion Document:

Sub-committee Chairperson: Sakh`usomeleze Badi

Sub-committee member: Phiwe Mathe

Sub-committee member: Nelsile Ginindza

In the Transformation Discussion document amongst other issues it should highlight the structural crisis inherited from the Apartheid higher education system in relation to issues of curriculum, admission and entry requirements and the apparent differentiation between previously black universities, Afrikaans medium universities and English universities.

Focus must be on how to respond to issues of access, success and redress in higher education. The document must also make a case on whether it would be for the betterment of the transformational agenda to have a single student union in the sector rather than the current case where we have SAFETSA and SAUS. The document must evaluate how far government has come in the creation of a single coherent post school education and training system and make policy proposal where they feel that there has been a short fall.

Fees and Finance youth Empowerment discussion document:

Sub-committee Chairperson: Siyabonga Hani

Sub-committee member: Thabo Moloja

Sub-committee member: Refilwe Ronica Nkambule

Sub-committee member: Siphokazi Toto

The discussion document must look at the current funding model within the higher Education landscape. It must look at both the progress and challenges that are faced by NSFAS and bring forward policy proposals for both short-term and long-term measures, particularly how the student movement must position itself in this regard. The paper must make a researched case for free education and the form that it ought to take in South Africa. The paper must take into consideration the current policy articulations on fees and finance as raised by the Student Charter of Rights and Responsibilities. The document must propose strategies on how to curb the increase in fees as an interim measure of arriving to free education and improving levels of access to higher.

The document must evaluate the internal finances policy of the union and look at the last resolutions made in this regard at the first Policy Conference in UJ in 2013. The document must propose how SAUS can influence and develop programs that look at youth employment and skills , possibly through a job seekers database. This has to be complemented current relation already established with entities such as SAGDA and CEPD.

International Relation discussion document:

Sub-committee Chairperson: Alie Komape

Sub-committee member: Insaaf Isaacs

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Marshalltown- Johannesburg

Tel: 087 023 0479 Email: prezskara@gmail.com Cell:084 663 6929

Sub-committee member: Mlamli Ngowapi

The discussion document on International relations focuses on key issues regarding SAUS participation (or lack thereof) in both the regional, continental and International issues facing students.

On Regional Issues the document must articulate what the policy position in relation to Southern African Student Union (SASU) must be and how we can build relations. The document must in particular speak on our relations with the students of the Swaziland and what solidarity resolutions and campaigns the national congress in December must take forward.

On Continental: the document must articulate what the policy position of SAUS in relation to the All African Union of Student (AASU), particularly noting that in 2016 it will be the organisation elective conference. The policy document must speak on the experiences of continental students in the wake of the xenophobic attacks experienced in the Republic this year and seek to ensure we articulate programs to raise consciousness in our people. The document must make a policy proposal around involvement in other key African entities such as SADC and the AU.

On International Issues the document must speak on the changing international balance of forces. The role that SAUS should play in bodies such as the UN, G20, BRICS, etc. The document must look at how SAUS can deepen its relations with fellow BRICS countries student formation and other socialist country such as Cuba, Venezuela, etc.

Our position on the Israel-Palestine conflict must be evaluated especially in the wake of the developments of SRC members taking on Zionist funded trips to Israel.

A strong solidarity policy position must be taken with regards to the people of Western Sahara.

Timeline

Release of base document to NEC members:	11th September 2015
Drafting of Discussion Documents by NEC members:	12th-23rd September 2015
Preliminary Report by Sub-committee's:	18th September 2015
Final Report Submission Deadline by Sub-committee's:	24th September 2015
Consolidation of All Sub-committee reports:	25th September 2015
Official release of Discussion Documents:	28th September 2015

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Conclusion

It is upon us as NEC members to ensure spark the debates within the higher education landscape by ensuring that these discussion documents ensure self-reflection, self-correction, innovation and renewal within higher education landscape in South Africa. These discussion documents are thus crucial in assisting SAUS in shaping a future that is characterised by a transformed higher education.

We intended on releasing all discussion documents on the SAUS when it is up as a living testimony to future generation to our commitment to policy development within the sector ,
"let a hundred flowers bloom; let a hundred schools of thought contend."

I thank you.

Released by:

Tebogo Thothela

Deputy President

South African Union of student.