

03 November 2022

**Minutes of the 1st Annual General Meeting of SA Student Finance Forum NPC t/a HESFF that was held on Friday, 14 October 2022 at 11:40 at The Premier Roodevalley Lodge, Kameeldrift, Pretoria.**

**1. Welcome and attendance**

The apology was recorded from the elected chairperson, Mr Mzwakhe Matukane of UJ, who was on an overseas trip with their newly appointed VC to raise funds for their institution.

**2. Finalizing of the agenda**

The chairperson allowed that a further point was added to the agenda under par. 9 regarding the proposal by Mr Peet du Plessis to extend the term of current members serving on the Board until 2024.

**3. Report from the vice chairperson of the Board of Directors of SASFF**

Dr Frans Kgomo who was chairing the meeting presented his report.

He again introduced the other members of the Board who was elected at the previous AGM in 2019. He requested the following Board members to just rise. They were Mr Udeshe Ramsundar, DUT, Mr Ismail Soobader, Wits, Dr Nonhlanhla Mabuza from Unisa whom he also congratulated with obtaining her Ph.D. since the last AGM, and lastly the TVET Colleges representative on the Board, Ms Mercia Leeson, Ikhalala TVET College.

He addressed the following matters in the chairperson's report:

3.1 The Board that was elected at the 2019 SAAF AGM in George in October, met for the first time after the AGM on 18 November 2019 at the Adapt IT Head Office in Midrand.

The focus of that meeting was the following:

- Process to register the HESFF as a non-profit company with the CIPC.
- The position of Adapt IT as the main sponsor and their possible disengagement once the non-profit company is registered and the Forum will operate as an independent legal entity.
- Other operational matters and financial structure should Adapt IT withdraw.
- Planning of the 2020 Conference, which had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

3.2 During the Covid-19 limitations in 2020 and 2021, the Board met on-line for several times to decide on the following most important matters:

- Progress with the registration with CIPC – delayed due to Covid-19.
- Consideration of the quotations for the organisation of the annual conference, administration and financial services received from Adapt IT and Peet du Plessis.
- Clarification of the financial position of the Forum to afford the appointment of a service provider.
- Negotiations with Adapt IT to become independent from them as main sponsor and the eventual withdrawal by Adapt IT.
- Negotiating a new contract with Peet du Plessis for the organisation and administration of the annual conference and to provide financial administration of the Forum.
- Overseeing the eventual registration with the CIPC as a non-profit company on 16 March 2021 under the name of SA Student Finance Forum NPC, as the words "higher education" could not be used in the registered name.
- Overseeing the opening of a bank account for the company, and getting the membership fee fund transferred from Adapt IT.



- Putting governance structures in place for the effective operations of the company.
- Appointment of an independent auditor for the company namely the firm OMA Chartered Accountants Incorporated based in Durban, following the consideration of four quotations submitted by other firms.
- Meeting several times during 2021 and early in 2022 to decide on holding a conference, and whether it should be an on-line conference or a face-to-face event, which eventually lead to a request to Peet du Plessis to conduct a survey with the Forum's members.
- The result of the survey was indeed a majority in favour of a face-to-face conference, and as the Board was considering this outcome, the limitations of the pandemic were relaxed earlier this year.
- The Board then met on-line again for several times during this year to plan this conference and the AGM.

Dr Kgomo therefore sincerely thanked the Board members for their inputs over the last 3 years done completely voluntary and in their own time, without any compensation. He also conveyed a special word of thanks to the chair in his absence, Mr Mzwakhe Matukane, for his leadership and perseverance to ensure that this Forum continued during this very difficult period.

3.3 Mr Udesch Ramsundar commented on the chairperson's report by expressing a word of gratitude to Peet du Plessis, the Forum coordinator. He was contracted by the Board to continue to render the services he rendered to the Forum on behalf of Adapt IT and take over all the financial services previously rendered by Adapt IT. He mentioned that Peet performed these tasks over the last 2 years at no compensation as there was no conference held and therefore no income to compensate him for his services.

Mr Ismail Soobader supported Mr Ramsundar and commended Peet for all his hard work over the past two years and for putting together this conference.

3.4 A question was raised by Mr Seale Malapane of Unisa regarding the contract agreed with Peet du Plessis on how the contract was agreed and at what fee. The chairperson requested Peet to respond to Mr Malapane.

Peet explained that in his quotation to the Board, all his services to be rendered in terms of the marketing, organisation, administration and facilitating of the event, as well as the financial services which include the issuing of all invoices, processing of payments, reconciliations and keeping all financial records up to financial statement stage, were broken down into line items. Each line item was assigned a duration in hours, and which was then costed in terms of an agreed hourly tariff.

The Board delegated the chair, Mr Matukane and the treasurer, Mr Soobader, to negotiate a final contracted amount with Peet taking into consideration the affordability within the limited funding available. They then gave Peet a capped amount that should not exceed of R120 000. After a re-submission the fees were agreed below the capped amount and the contract was finalised.

Mr Malapane expressed his concern on this expense and other expenses of the Forum and called upon the Board to ensure that costs are contained within the means of the Forum.

Mr Soobader and Mr Ramsundar then ensured Mr Malapane that the Board took note of his concern, but that the Board has been very prudent regarding the expenses and that no unnecessary costs have been incurred without compensating on the continuity of the Forum.



3.5 A proposal was then received from the floor that the 2019 elected Board is mandated to continue with their most appreciated hard work to oversee and manage the Forum. The proposal received consensus support.

#### **4. Approval of the previous minutes**

The minutes of the 15th AGM of SAAFF held on Friday, 13 September 2019 at 11:40 at the Protea Hotel King George, George, Western Cape was tabled for approval.

Approved: Ms Mercia Leeson, Ikahla TVET College

Seconded: Mr Tendani Nembidzane, UJ

#### **Matters from the minutes:**

**4.1 Revision of the SAAFF Constitution** – After the changes to the constitution that were approved at the previous 2019 AGM, there has been one foreseen minor structural change to the HESFF, which have now been incorporated in the revised constitution. The changes were due to the registration of a non-profit company in 2021, SA Student Finance Forum NPC and therefore also the change in the Forum's legal status as its own legal entity.

Refer to par. 3 of the constitution as published on the website.

The changes were approved.

#### **5. Changes to the constitution proposed by the Board**

**5.1** The recommended change by the Board of the trading name of "Higher Education Student Finance Forum" to the registered name of the Non-profit Company, i.e., "SA Student Finance Forum" was approved by the AGM. The necessary changes to the constitution to reflect this approval will be made by the forum coordinator.

**5.2** Change to the stipulation on contribution to the membership fund

Par 8.3 of the Oct. 2019 approved constitution stipulates that: "A part of the conference registration fee paid by delegates will be allocated to the SAAFF Fund, whereas such part is to be determined by the Board".

In the current financial structure after the withdrawal of Adapt IT, the surplus from the conference, after the contracted event organisation fee payable to Mr Peet du Plessis, is used to cover the operational costs of the NPC, such as auditors' fees, bank charges, financial and taxation administration fees, CIPC fees, website domain and administration fee, etc., and any balance on the surplus befalls the NPC.

The Board's proposal that par. 8.3 is changed to read as follows: "The surplus from the annual conference, after all annual operational costs have been covered, is allocated to the membership fund" was approved by the AGM.

#### **6. Annual Financial report**

The chairperson requested the forum coordinator to table the annual financial report and independent review of the SA Student Finance Forum NPC as of 30 June 2022, which was compiled by the appointed auditors, OMA Chartered Accountants Inc. The financial report was also published and available on the above-mentioned website.

The forum coordinator pointed out that there was very little financial activity over the financial period, as there were no conferences held over this period since the registration of the NPC.



The financial report as tabled was adopted by the AGM.

On a question regarding the appointment of the auditors, Peet du Plessis explained that an RFQ was compiled and approved by the Board, after which four independent auditors' firms identified by the Board, were requested to submit quotations. The quotation received from OMA Chartered Accountants Inc. from Durban was by far the cheapest, as much as less than half of the highest quotation.

Mr Sihlangule Boniwe of NMU queried this low fee and Peet du Plessis explained that it was much lower because an independent review is issued instead of a full audit. With the activity of the Forum limited to only the one conference per year, the Board decided that an independent review is quite sufficient.

Mr Seale Malapane of Unisa again expressed his concern regarding the control of costs such as office rental. On this point Mr Tendani Nembidzane of UJ enquired why the SASFF office cannot be situated on one of the member institutions' campuses, which would probably be made available at no rent to the Forum. He also suggested that to cut the costs further on the event organisers fees, the Board should try to engage a volunteer assistant from the members to take over some duties of the coordinator.

The Board members, Mr Ramsundar and Mr Soobader, responded to these proposals. They pointed out that Peet is rendering his services from his home office that is equipped to run the administration of the Forum, including internet, telephone, printer, etc. at no costs to the SASFF over the last two years. They also expressed their doubts if a member institution would avail a free office and infrastructure to the Forum and thanked Peet for making his home office facilities available at no cost.

The discussion was then closed by the chairperson, and he undertook that the Board would consider the proposals mentioned.

## **7. New institutional members of HESFF**

There were no new institutional members attending. There were two new first time attending associate members that were welcomed namely Nutun Transact and Alefbet Collections & Recoveries

## **8. Board of Directors**

The AGM noted that at the previous Oct. 2019 AGM, the 6 Board Members that were elected in terms of the HESFF Constitution, for a first term of 3 years (2020-23) were as follows:

Chairperson of the Board	Mr Mzwakhe Matukane, UJ
Deputy Chairperson:	Dr Frans Kgomo, TUT
Additional members:	Dr Nonhlanhla Mabuza, UNISA
	Mr Udeshe Ramsundar, DUT
	Mr Ismail Soobader, Wits
TVET Sector Representative:	Ms Mercia Leeson, Ikhala TVET College

As per par. 6.2.2 vi) the Board allocated the duties of treasurer to Mr Soobader and that of secretary to Mr Ramsundar whose responsibilities are specified in par. 6.2.4 iii) and iv) respectively.

It was noted that as the current Board Members' 3-year term is until 2023, there was no election of board members at this AGM.

## **9. Additional points for the agenda**

9.1 Mr Peet du Plessis motivated his proposal to extend the current term of the Board to 2024 with the main reason that there were no conferences held in the first two years of their three-year term. The



chairperson checked with the Board members for their consent and after they all gave their consent, the proposal was accepted by the AGM.

## **10. Next AGM**

### **10.1 Topics / Guest Speakers for 2023 conference.**

There was substantial support from the TVET College delegates that SASFF should invest more into this sector to see if more interest could be attracted to attend the annual conference. A proposal was tabled that a TVET College workshop should be held prior to the conference, e.g., on the preceding Wednesday. Alternatively, there should be more topics of interest to the TVET Colleges and more speakers from this sector.

Peet said that he will investigate the support from the Colleges for a preceding workshop, and if sufficient it could be organised. However, he also pointed out that it is up to the TVET College members to submit proposals for presentations of papers and of possible speakers, as well as mustering support from other colleges.

Ms Carmien Snyman of Stellenbosch University proposed a topic on benchmarking of international / foreign students' fees.

### **10.2 Proposals for venues for 2023**

In terms of par. 6.2.3 iv), the Board follows a rotation basis in selecting a venue, with one year in a coastal region and the following year in an inland region of the RSA. As this event was at an inland venue, Peet proposed the 2023 venue at the Coastal Hotel in Umhlanga where he had held two previous successful events. They are very reasonably prized and there are also various other accommodation offerings in the immediate vicinity.

## **11. Closing**

The Chair thanked all members for their attendance and cooperation with this very important AGM. He also thanked the sponsors and exhibitors for their valued participation. He then declared the AGM as closed.

Compiled by:

Mr Peet du Plessis

Forum Coordinator