PANEL DISCUSSION:

Panel Members

Dr Frans Kgomo, TUT

Mr Ismail Soobader, WITS

Mr Udesh Ramsundar, DUT

Matters under discussion:

- Other means of funding
- Fees being capped
- Programs to meet industry needs
- Graduates are not being employed
- Industry involvement in programs offered
- Regulate the fees in universities
- NSFAS not funding any increases implemented by universities
- Cost containments in universities must be addressed
- DHET is doing work on fees - Task teams to research hidden costs in fees structure
- Australia introduced more international students to sustain the institution
- Institutions opened branches in other countries.
- NSFAS criteria not sustainable – "no pay back"
- Through-put rate

Members totally agree with this, it is not sustainable at all, we as institutions should not rely on the NSFAS funding.

NSFAS is Funds coming from taxes, but nothing going back into the coffers of the state.

Institutions are not producing employable graduates, how can this be corrected, will we wait till we are sitting with the "loadshedding" of our students, withholding results from students with outstanding fees is not assisting the process

Not enough is being done to deal with through-puts, students are taking too long to graduate, and this is at a great cost to the institutions.

Peet reported that the UK introduced the capping of fees per qualification

Should we not be encouraging students to do fundraising, student unrests are targeting the institutions and not government.

Drop-outs a big issue with the NSFAS funding.

Our focus needs to move slightly away from capping of the fees and rather to the rising costs of running the institutions. PURCO might be able to assist with an update.

Foreign student fees – how are they structured.

Udesh reported that there is no difference in the funding received for foreign students. Staffing cost is the biggest drain on all institutions. Software programs are out there to assist with cutting down staff, invest in IT infrastructure to strengthen systems. Programs are correctly costed. This is to sustain the institutions. Wits charge a once of international fee and the fees are double and 75% of fees upfront.

SCM and staffing needs to be looked at for cost containment measures.

As a student finance forum, we need to concentrate on the self-funding students. NSFAS criteria is not well balanced.

College Councils not playing an active role in the institutions. Dr Nonhlanhla Mabuza recommends that all the bursaries should be centralized, managed by NSFAS.

Psychosocial issues not being addressed, we need to involve Social Development as well. Students are supporting their families with the NSFAS allowances. The cost of the residences is very high, you could build a two roomed house for every student

Institutional body to ensure that TVET Colleges' Councils do not operate outside their mandate.

How are the missing middle being dealt with - this needs more attention.