



# **SAUS Presentation**

**Portfolio Committee on Higher Education**

**Colloquium on Institutional Autonomy**

**29 March 2022**

# Introduction

- SAUS triggered the debate of Institutional Autonomy, a year ago an agreement was reached to host a colloquium under the leadership of the previous portfolio committee chair.
- Institutions are too autonomous to a point that students as primary stakeholders can't even question the salary of a Vice-Chancellor.
- Institutional autonomy is more entrenched to a point that VC's can easily attack and undermine the Ministry and get away with that, when they're attacked by student leaders they revoke their autonomous powers.
- This colloquium must find a way to deal with IA and as SAUS we are here to lobby to for a semi-autonomy.
- Academics should focus on academic enterprise and the rest should be in control of the Ministry/ DHET.

# Current status quo

- Minister of Higher Education Training and Technology provides a range on how to adjust fees in consideration of inflation rate, Institutions decide to disregard that guidance and increase fees and accommodation as they wish.
- Enrollment targets particularly when it comes to demographics remains a big concern in many institutions, e.g. historically white universities.
- Institutions introducing mandatory vaccination policies haphazardly (no government policy on the matter).
- Executive officials are fixated with fat tenders of the institutions but not with quality of the throughput. Why is this case?

# Autonomy vs Semi-Autonomy

- The difference between semiautonomous and autonomous. is that:
- **semiautonomous** is partially, but not fully,
- **autonomous is self-governing intelligent, sentient, self-aware, thinking, feeling, governing independently.**
- Public Institutions depend on government funding for their sustainability but government has minimal say on how things are done in these institutions. Is this correct??
- Does institutional autonomy assist the national foot print of government particularly when it comes to NDP of 2030???
- SAUS is of the firm view that government should control about

70% of the institutional operations.

- **Fees, enrolments, student health and wellness and student welfare, all of these should be in control of government.**

# Student Victimization

- Institutions can't be ball players and referees when it comes to student disciplinary matters, most importantly with student leaders
- Internal bodies are conflicted, chairpersons of these bodies are appointed by VC's and they are forced to listen to the hand that brings food to their table.
- External body will have to listen to disputes from both parties'
- External body must be established to deal with student disciplinary matters, this can be located within the ministry, university branch or a portfolio committee can advise on this matter.

# Way forward

- Restructuring of all university structures or bodies, if council has 30 members 15 of those members should be elected students.
- Government to take a Centre stage when it comes to the direction in which institutions are taking.
- Academics to be reminded about their responsibility to focus on academic enterprise and its quality assurance.
- DHET University branch to be given powers to handle the issue of student disciplinary matters
- To involve national student leadership in all institutions when comes to student disciplinary matters