



Reclaiming Africa's Intellectual Futures

SRC PRESENTATION: THE STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY, CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY STUDENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

Define tomorrow.

UNISA | 
university
of south africa



REPRESENTATIVE PRESENTERS:

- SHATADI PHOSHOKO (SECRETARY GENERAL)
- SAMKELISIWE NDLOVU (PRESIDENT)



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THE STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY

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THE CURRENT STATE OF THE UNIVERSITY : STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

STUDENT FUNDING

- Over 60% of UNISA students funded by NSFAS.
- NSFAS is in an administrative and governance self destruction.
- Addition of students who cannot afford fees drop out.
- Over R830 million student debt.
- Lack of funding opportunities internally.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Outdated facilities.
- Facilities not accommodative of students and staff living with disability.
- Sports and recreational places underdeveloped and generally not natured.

CONSTANT NEGATIVE MEDIA COVERAGE

- UNISA is constantly covered in the media badly.
- Internal challenges that go on to the public negatively affect the value and dignity of students' qualifications.
- Media/PR/ Communications must improve on covering positive stories of UNISANS especially students.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS & EDUCATION QUALITY

- When we explore our values and aspirations, "what are we deeply passionate about?"
- Reflecting on our Strengths and Opportunities conversations, who are we, who should we become, and where should we go in the future?
- What is our most compelling aspiration?
- What strategic initiatives (projects, programs and processes) would support our aspirations?

STUDENT SUPPORT

- UNISA is no longer a traditional ODEL as per student profiles by age and geography.
- The needs of students have transformed from the previous traditional needs of older students who reside in the outskirts of campus and do not require much physical support.
- UNISA attracts young students from university now.
- There is lack of support for students which result in constant media outrage from students, protests and court cases against the university.
- The university does not want to adjust to its incapacity of the growing student population and low staff and academic capacity.

OVER POLITICIZATION OF THE INSTITUTION

- UNISA is an academic space.
- The work of the university ought to be centric to the academic mandate.
- Facilities not accommodative of students and staff living with disability.

CYBER SECURITY

- Cyber security is compromised.
- The above leads to student challenges such as increased plagiarism.



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CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS

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NSFAS

- Delayed NSFAS allowances.
- Delayed tuition funding to students that result in NSFAS funded students either being registered late or not being registered.
- Such students either under perform due to delayed start of the academic activities or drop out.
- Undue defunding of students.
- Unreachable offices of NSFAS.
- Incapacity by NSFAS to assist students.
- Lack of adequate funding support to students.
- Below living standards allowance.
- NSFAS is administratively in chaos.
- Lack of proper communication between NSFAS and the University.
- Anti-student disbursement systems/companies.

ASSESSMENTS IRREGULARITIES

- Late marking of assignments and exams which result in either delayed upcoming start of the semester or students unable to partake in their other activities due to the delays.
- Remarking delays.

PLAGIARISM CRISIS

- Alarming number of students subjected to disciplinary hearing due to technicalities or Information system failure

LACK OF STUDENT SUPPORT

- Unresponsive lectures.
- Unresponsive departments dealing with student admin challenges.
- Students living with disability have minimal support to match their needs.
- Blanket approach to needs of students.
- Misalignment of university needs and societal challenges that affect students such as loadshedding..

LACK OF SOLID COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

- The university is constantly in the media on negative coverage which also affects students and their confidence in the value of their qualifications from the university.
- There is under coverage on the good that UNISANS are doing, particularly students.
- Programs that are to the benefit of students are under marketed.

GRADUATE THROUGHPUT

- In the past academic year, the university had an alarming failure rate which then decrease graduate throughput.
- System challenges hinder academic progress of students and even affect their mental health.
- Proctoring tools are not favorable to all students and lead to failure rate.

STUDENT RESEARCH SUPPORT

- The university does not have a specific body focused on the publication and support of undergraduate students who are interested in research, who can be developed to produce intellectual ideas and solutions to some of the local problems in the country and globally or new ideological innovations.

GRADUATES UNEMPLOYMENT

- The university aliniate itself from the unemployment crisis that graduates experience and as such have high numbers of its graduates unemployed.



**STUDENT PROFILE-FOCUSED
RESEARCH TO INCREASE STUDENT
SUPPORT**

- There is no student centric research to look at student realities to optimize student support that speak to all students despite their economic backgrounds.

**STUDENTS LIVING WITH DISABILITY
SUPPORT : ARCSWID REDESIGN**

- ARCSWID must be redesigned to ensure that they it services students living with disability optimally.
- Students living with disability are under supported and often struggle with study material, academic support and other administrative challenge which lead to many of them dropping out of their studies.

**THOROUGH SRC LEADERSHIP
TRAINING**

- There is no strategic mechanism to develop SRC leaders to sharpen their leadership skills and longevity impact.
- The SRC did not receive leadership training and induction that is well planned to equip them with student governance.

LACK OF SPORTS FACILITIES

- Sports facilities in the University are not maintained whilst sports is not developed which is part of an important component of student wellness.



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RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. The University must have student centric personnel researchers whose focus will be to research on the different challenges of students together with possible solutions to prevent issues such high drop out rate, failure rate and high disciplinary cases.
2. The University must channel part of its revenue to the financial assistance of students. The University must Increase financial aid and scholarships. They should allocate more funding towards scholarships and financial aid programs to help students who come from disadvantaged backgrounds afford their education.
3. The University must find sustainable means to give students who have completed but owe the university their qualifications so that they can be able to seek employment and other opportunities to settle their debts.
4. The University must use the method of directly transferring money into students' bank accounts for NSFAS funded students to cut down on additional costs that take more money from students and administrative challenges that students experience with disbursement systems.
5. The Department of Higher Education must hold NSFAS accountable for its administrative challenges.
6. The University must stick to its mission and vision mandates of academia.

5 Divisional Game Changers

Your unique value proposition / key innovations

7. Enhance academic support services: Implement tutoring programs, academic advising, and mentoring initiatives to provide students with the necessary support to excel academically.
8. Improve mental health services by establishing or expanding mental health services on campus to support students' emotional well-being. This can include counseling services, workshops, and awareness campaigns to reduce stigma around mental health.
9. Strengthen career services by developing comprehensive career service that offer guidance and resources to help students transition into the workforce. This can include resume building workshops, internship placements and networking opportunities.
10. Foster an inclusive and supportive campus culture: Create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students by promoting diversity and providing resources for marginalized communities. This can include cultural events, safe spaces, and sensitivity training for faculty and staff.
11. Encourage student engagement and involvement through offering extracurricular activities, clubs, and societies that allow students to explore their interests and develop leadership skills outside of the classroom. This can enhance their overall university experience and help build valuable networks and further positively impact their mental wellness.

5 Divisional Game Changers

Your unique value proposition / key innovations

12. Collaborate with government and private sector to secure additional funding and resources for student support programs. This can involve partnerships with companies for internships, sponsorships, and research collaborations.
13. Improve access to technology and digital resources: In today's digital age, it is important for universities to ensure that all students have equal access to technology and digital resources. This can involve providing laptops or tablets to students in need, improving internet connectivity on campus, and offering online library resources.
14. Improve communications to students such as sending students messages and reminders by both Email and SMS on any important and relevant matters affecting.
15. Involve the SRC in committees that monitor assessments challenges such as the assessments jocs so that they can give real time detailed challenges of students on assessments.
16. Improve university responsiveness and hold accountable anyone who does not answer emails or calls as per their work expectations when students contact them for inquiries.



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Thank you

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