

10th FAPSA Anniversary 2001 – 2011

“Celebrating our achievements, the strides we have made...it’s about where we come from, where we are, what we have learned and where we are going...”

A decade ago, few Financial Aid Practitioners from different Higher Education Institutions in South Africa met in Pretoria for a routine Integrated Tertiary Systems (ITS) user-group workshop/meeting. The come-together was organized by the ITS management in conjunction with Tertiary Education Funding of South Africa (TEFSA).

In one of the discussion an issue was raised as to how Financial Aid Practitioners could organize themselves around issues that affect their day to day office lives regarding the transparent and accountable usage and reporting as well as handling the tertiary funding in South Africa.

Some of the individuals who attended that meeting were Ms Zandile Mdhladhla from the then Technikon Natal and Ashok Seetul from the then ML Sultan Technikon, Rev James Ngomane from the then University of Natal, Graham Renecke from the then Peninsula Technikon, Roekus de Villiers from the then Pretoria Technikon, Wayne Muller from the then University of Port Elizabeth, Ms Busisiwe Sithole from the then University of the North, and other representatives from institutions such as Cape Technikon, RAU, Wits Technikon, Wits University, Technikon North West, Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon Free State and Vaal Technikon.

Michael Davids recalls the journey from that day “... I remember a few weeks before the 2001 Pretoria meeting, having a discussion with colleagues from Institutions around Durban, amongst them Rev James Ngomane, Ms Zandile Mdladla and others, trying to figure out what kind of an “animal” are we proposing as the vehicle to deal with financial aid related issues. Although we had some few ideas in mind, we knew even then, that the road ahead would be daunting but we were prepared for that challenge.

We agreed amongst ourselves that we should then start discussing the idea informally with colleagues from other institutions around the country. We had key individuals in each Province who were leading these discussions; amongst them were Wayne Muller in the Eastern Cape, Graham Reynecke in the Western Cape, Roekus de Villiers in Gauteng, and Ms Jeanneri van der Berg in the Free State. But there were also a number of key individuals who participated in this process. These informal discussions culminated in the 2001 ITS Pretoria meeting. When we ultimately met in Pretoria, we were confident that this was the dawn of something great. But it was only after our initial discussion that we came to realize how much of a task it was to start a new organization from scratch.

The Pretoria meeting was a catalyst, from the point of view that we managed to map-out what ought to be done and put some time-frames in place and assigned a few individuals to coordinate the whole process – and we called this group of individuals an Interim Committee. But this does not mean that the rest of other Practitioners from other institutions that were not part of the Interim Committee did not work as hard – all institutions were involved and played a critical role in the formation of Financial Aid Practitioners of South Africa (FAPSA). It is now history that in the same year, we manage to put together some policy documents, including the draft constitution that was to serve as the base and to guide us in the formation of this organization.

Once we were convinced that enough ground work had been done, we decided to have a Conference where these policy documents could be discussed and, where possible, adopted so as to pave a way for the formal adoption of the name as well as an election of the new leadership.

The first elective Conference took place at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Conference Centre, Pretoria in June 2002. The Conference was facilitated by Piet du Plessis, from ITS and this is where a number of policy documents were discussed.

During this 2002 Conference an Interim Management Committee was elected with Rev James Ngomane as the Interim Chairperson. As one of the resolutions, a mandate was given to organize an elective conference as soon as possible – and this culminated in the 2nd Financial Aid Practitioners of South Africa Conference at the then University of Natal in June 2003. For me, that was the beginning of another era in the lives of Financial Aid Practitioners and I knew that from then, we could only get better. It goes without saying therefore that we owe it to all those guys who met in 2001 and 2002 that today we are celebrating FAPSA 10th anniversary”.

It is now well-known that FAPSA represents over 75 Higher & Further Education & Training Institutions as well as Non-Governmental Organisations, Educational Foundations, various government departments and other student funding agencies who share an interest in student funding. It is with some measure of satisfaction that this organisation has grown in leaps and bounds to become a force to be reckoned with in higher and further education.

We have a number of reasons to celebrate our decade of commitment and hard work shown by our steadfast members - chief amongst all delegates and members present, is to celebrate the selflessness of our unsung heroes and heroines who are on the coalface of our Financial Aid offices working tirelessly on a daily basis, in servicing our financially needy students. In hindsight, it is because of these trail blazers that FAPSA is where it is today.

FAPSA LEADERSHIP OVER THE PAST DECADE:

<p><u>2001-2003 INTERIM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</u> Rev James Ngomane – Interim Chairperson Ms Zandile Mdhladhla Ms Busisiwe Sithole</p>	<p><u>2003-2005 FAPSA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</u> Rev James Ngomane (President) Ashok Seetul (Deputy President) Chris van der Westhuizen Ms Busi Sithole Ms Peta Bezuidenhout</p>
<p><u>2005-2007 FAPSA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</u> Ms Peta Bezuidenhout (President) Ashok Seetul (Deputy President) Michael Davids Wayne Muller Roekus de Villiers Ms Mapula Ramethape</p>	<p><u>2007-2009 FAPSA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</u> Brian Gallant (President) Jerry Moodley (Vice-President) Ms Margie Jacobs – Secretary Ms Nini Botsane Andrew Kubone Tseko Motsetse</p>
<p><u>2009-2011 FAPSA MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE</u> Brian Gallant (President) Ms Elmarie Britz (Vice-President) Sbusiso Ncengwa – General Secretary Arrie Hanekom – Treasurer Tseko Motsetse Wayne Muller Tsholo Choane Carl Williams</p>	

The 10th Anniversary on 22 June 2011 will...

- End the first decade of FAPSA's existence and begin the next;
- Recall the action of the FAPSA founder members in 2001;
- Be a time to:
 - Celebrate;
 - Review progress and consolidate gains made over the past decade;
 - Build a better and more focused organisation;
 - Assess challenges and seize opportunities that lie ahead in higher and further education funding;
 - Look at ways to better service our students and FAPSA members
- Bring opportunity for international collaborations.

A challenge to leadership ...

- To build a coherent organisation that operates in all the provinces where institutions and/or organisations whose interest is to promote the administration of student financial funding exists;
- Forward looking, to further progress and popularisation of FAPSA;
- Inculcate a culture of pride and selflessness in serving FAPSA;
- Inclusivity – ensuring that all sectors that deal with the administration of student financial aid are represented in decision making processes;

A challenge of co-ordination ...

Apart from core functions that are undertaken by the FAPSA Management Committee, ensuring in broader process:

- Use of limited resources, deployment of people;
- Synergy of activities in different Institutions/organisation or provinces;

“Unity in action to change the lives of students, Financial Aid Practitioners and everybody involved in the administration of student funding”