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UNIVERSITY OF FORT HARE

PRESENTATION TO THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION & TRAINING FUNDING

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Vice Chancellor: Dr Mvuyo Tom

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VISION

The University of Fort Hare is a vibrant, equitable and sustainable African University, committed to teaching and research excellence at the service of its students, scholars and wider community

MISSION

The mission of the University is to provide high quality education of international standards contributing to the advancement of knowledge that is socially and ethically relevant, and applying that knowledge to the scientific, technological and social-economic development of our nation and the wider world.

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BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

- Established in 1916, the University of Fort Hare is one of Africa and South Africa's oldest universities, first founded as an Institution of Higher Learning primarily for Africans (although it is also distinguished by its original non-racial content and character.)
- From humble beginnings in the early 20th century, the University of Fort Hare emerged as one of Africa's most distinguished and iconic Higher Education Institutions

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BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

- Currently classified amongst the eight (8) historically disadvantaged institutions (HDIs).
- This indicates the previous underfunding which led to backlogs in infrastructure and equipment.
- Backlogs in infrastructure for teaching and learning, research, staff and student accommodation, transport or fleet, etc.



BRIEF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

- Student life is impacted upon in matters like sports facilities, access to ICT in residences, cultural activities, student leadership development etc.
- Post apartheid funding was not immediately transformed to ensure a level playing field with historically advantaged institutions (HAIs).

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IMPACT OF FUNDING FRAMEWORK



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The funding framework under review has posed many challenges for HDIs:

- Not favourable for institutions with low research output
- Research development grant had limited positive impact but would be reduced within a very short time once targets met.
- CESM categories were not assisting in crucial areas like African languages
- Engineering and medical studies which are having highly beneficial CESM categories are commonly found in HAIs.
- NSFAS allocations having taken Blackness as proxy for disadvantage and “total cost of study” calculations favouring the advantaged institutions high fee structure. Also recently reviewed.
- Infrastructure funding not specifically provided for except through cyclical earmarked grants which are competed for.
- Did not provide for specifically calculated recapitalisation of disadvantaged institutions with huge backlogs.
- It is only in the last cycle that the current Minister took a bold step to top-slice funding for student accommodation in HDIs



IMPACT OF FUNDING FRAMEWORK

- The provision for new infrastructure and maintenance of existing one has been through cyclical grants leading to unpredictability and uncertainty in funding.
- There is no national decision to fund higher education in an amount related to a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product. As a result of this there are varied unplanned proportions of funding compared to GDP over years.
- As a result of the decline in funding the institutions have been increasing fees to match the requisite need for quality higher education.
- For HDIs whose majority of students come from poor families this has led to high demands for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to provide more funding.
- The lack of matching increases in NSFAS funding has led to increased student debt.

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DECLINING HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING



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In 2011, South Africa's state budget for universities, including funding for NSFAS, as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was at 0.75%, which was just less than Africa as a whole (0.78%).

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DECLINING HIGHER EDUCATION FUNDING

- In 2015/16, South Africa's state budget for universities, including funding for NSFAS, is 0.72% of the GDP, lower than it was in 2011. If the NSFAS grant is excluded from this figure, as it supports poor students and is therefore not university subsidy funding, the figure reduces to 0.62% of GDP. This is significantly lower when compared to 2011 figures of African countries (0.78%), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries (1.21%) and the rest of the world (0.84%) .



FEES VERSUS STATE FUNDING

Taking audited unrestricted funds or Council Controlled funds at UFH the previous two years show that the ratio of fees to state funding income (excluding student accommodation) is 50:50 as follows:

YEAR	2014	2015
SUBSIDY	R316 million	R332 million
FEES	R298 million	R325 million

The 2016 corresponding budget figures are R425m subsidy and R330m. The subsidy was enhanced by a high research output for the period.



FEE PAID BY NSFAS

YEAR	2014	2015	2016
TOTAL NO. OF STUDENTS	13192	13619	13887
UNDERGRADUATE	9995	10269	10487
POSTGRADUATE	3197	3350	3400
% QUALIFYING FOR NSFAS	77.10%	58.93%	91.38%
%FEE INCREASE	10%	10%	10%



FEES AND STATE FUNDING

UFH has very limited third stream income that is unrestricted. It relies on state funding and fees to sustain itself.

It is clear from the number of NSFAS qualifying students that the University serves mainly the poor section of our society.

The 58.93% qualifying students for 2015 were due to reduced funds from the SETAs resulting in many unfunded students.

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FEES AND STATE FUNDING

The 91% qualifying students in 2016 show the reality of the situation because in 2016 funds have been made available for all qualifying students including those with historic debt.

The majority of students staying in residences are also funded by the state.

It is, therefore, obvious that the majority of students at UFH would not have access to higher education if they were not funded.



PASS GRADUATION & THROUGHPUT RATES 2009-2013: Undergraduates Pass rates (by year and level)

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
UG year 1	76.3%	76.5%	76.6%	72.4%	76.8%
UG year 2	78.9%	80.0%	81.0%	79.7%	81.7%
UG year 3	84.3%	83.6%	85.5%	83.1%	87.4%
UG year 4	86.5%	87.9%	88.7%	88.6%	91.4%
Honours	90.1%	87.2%	87.4%	89.3%	88.0%
Masters*	68.6%	57.3%	72.4%	63.6%	69.6%

* Refers to Masters by coursework only



Retention rates -2014

2014 retention for UG programmes Percent retention of original cohorts

Program type		EDU	LAW	M&C	S&A	SSH	Institution
3 yr *	Y1-Y2			92.7	88.2	95.7	92.3
3 yr **	Y1-Y3			80	86.7	83.6	82.6
4 yr *	Y1-Y2	92.9	91.4		94.2	88.2	92.2
4 yr ***	Y1-Y4	79.6	81.8		93.8	95.6	87.3

- Retention of 2013 undergraduate students into 2014
- ** Retention of 2012 undergraduate students into 2014
- *** Retention of 2011 undergraduate students into 2014

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Throughput rates - 2013

Throughput results for academic year 2013 - UG programmes (percentages)

Programme type	Measure	Education	Law	Management & Commerce	Science & Agriculture	Social Science & Humanities	Institution
3 yr	n			26.1	21.7	27.7	25.7
3 yr	n+2			75	52.9	56.8	64.1
4 yr	n	62.8	35.3		49.5	73.2	58
4 yr	n+2	66.5	59.1		76.2	95.1	77.1



Throughput and retention – Honours student cohort of 2009

Year	Registered	Retention *	Graduates	Cumulative grads and percentages
2009	387	-	269	269 (69.5%)
2010	104	96%	67	336 (86.8%)
2011	20	92%	9	345 (89.1%)
2012	3	90%	1	346 (89.4%)
2013	1	90%		
2014	0			

* Retention calculations take into account students graduating. Thus 10.3% of the original intake had dropped out by 2014, 89.4% had graduated and 0% were still in the system.

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Throughput and retention : Honours student cohort of 2010

Year	Registered	Retention *	Graduates	Cumulative grads and percentages
2010	516	-	338	338 (65.5%)
2011	113	87%	90	428 (82.9%)
2012	15	86%	8	436 (84.5%)
2013	8	86%	2	438 (84.9%)
2014	2	85%		

* Retention calculations take into account students graduating. Thus 14.7% of the original intake had dropped out by 2014, 84.9% had graduated and 0.4% were still in the system.



ACCESS, RETENTION AND SUCCESS



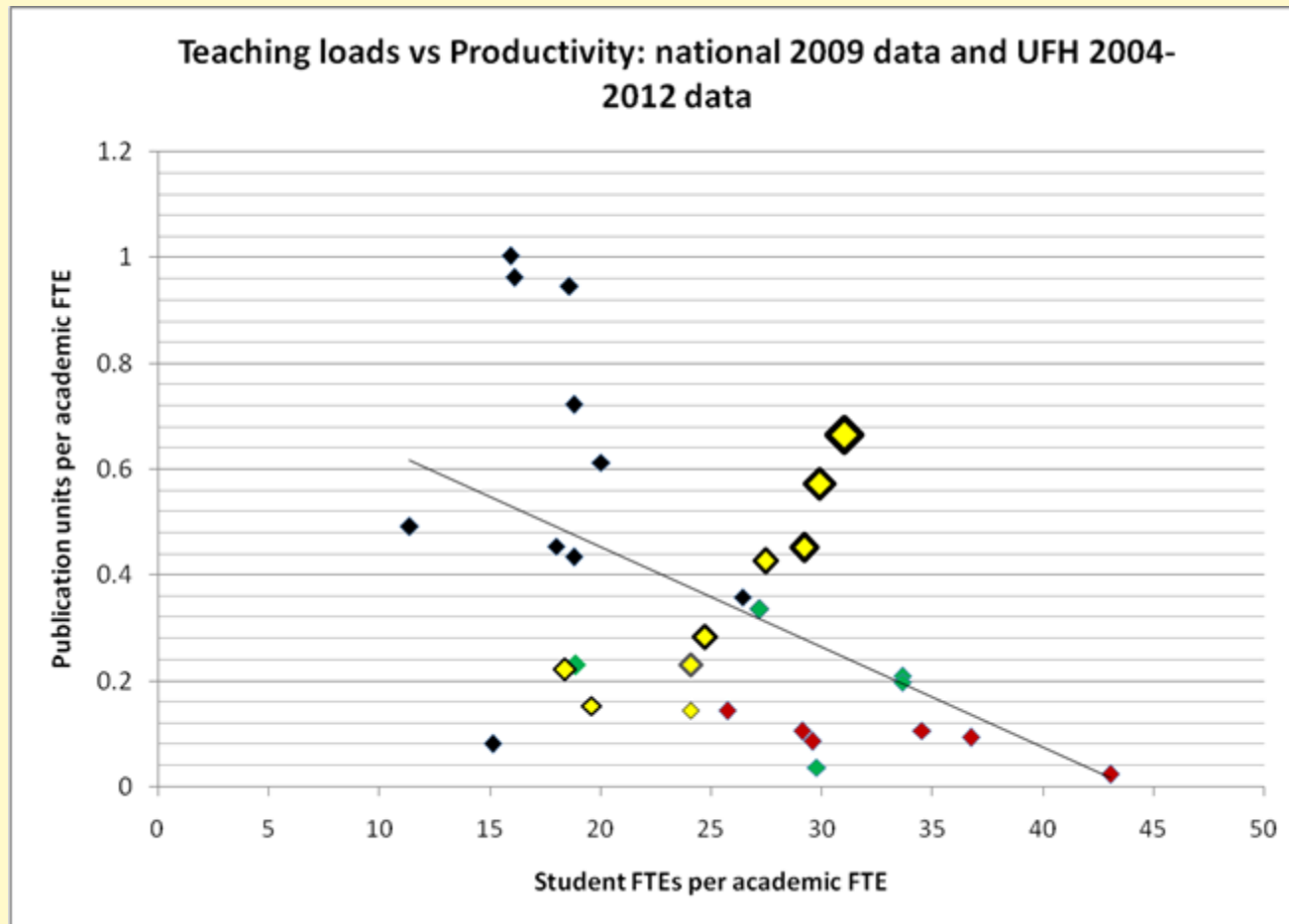
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Of the total students enrolled in the sector including both distant and contact students the University of Fort Hare has a 1.4% share.

The current enrolment plan has a target of 15 000 students by 2019.

It is obvious from the preceding tables that the UFH has good retention and success rates although its enrolment is small.





- The graph shows HE teaching loads (Student FTEs per Teaching/Research staff FTE) against publication output the sector as a whole in 2009. The dark blue diamonds are traditional universities, the green diamonds are comprehensive universities and the red diamonds are universities of technology.
- Superimposed on this is Fort Hare's "journey" from 2004 to 2012 (yellow diamonds with black borders). The oldest are the smallest diamonds and they grow in size and emphasis towards 2012.
- What this figure demonstrates is that there is a relationship between publication output and teaching loads – the lighter the teaching load the higher the publication output tends to be (and vice-versa). In Fort Hare's case, we have steadily moved away from this general relationship.

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TEACHING LOADS

- Low levels of funding affect recruitment of academic staff.
- Salaries are also affected by limited funding.
- Lower salaries result in inability to compete with other institutions for quality academics.
- Inability to attract and retain academics leads to increasing student : staff ratios which in turn lead to decreasing quality of teaching and learning.
- Increasing teaching loads impact negatively on research.
- In a system where subsidy is increased with increased research output and throughput rates the increasing teaching loads impact negatively on income for the institutions.



WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

- Without addressing the higher education funding the country is unlikely to meet the 2030 targets it has set itself in the NDP for participation rates, throughput rates, academics with doctoral qualifications etc.
- The country has to acknowledge that education, and higher education in particular, is a public good and should be funded with that in mind.
- Fees should be a component of higher education funding but the poor should access higher education without having to pay at the point of service.



WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

- There should be a full scientific quantification of how much it would cost to fund a sustainable quality higher education system for a country of South Africa's economic development.
- That should be followed by establishing what percentage of the GDP would be required to fund that system so that there is predictability and certainty in funding.
- It should be determined what proportion of that should be state subsidy and what proportion should be fees. The determination of the quantum of fees will need involvement of university councils if it were not to violate the Higher Education Act on the powers of Councils.
- The state should then support the poor with fees whilst the rich have to pay the fees.
- The distinction is made so that inequality is not perpetuated.





WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

- The source of the funds to be used to support the poor has to be determined. Some form of taxation should be considered. Further efficiencies in the public service may release funds to assist. The NSFAS is already taking up the majority of the poor students as exemplified in the UFH experience.
- The students supported by the state should pay back after qualifying, either in kind or in cash. Public service in various spheres of government is one option. This needs proper HR planning so that the public service is not bloated in the end.
- The private sector also has to play their part both in experiential learning and in funding the system for particular categories of students.

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THANK YOU

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

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