



EFFSC STATEMENT ON NSFAS AND LEARNING REFORM

28 May 2020, Thursday.

The EFFSC Central Command Team has taken an unpopular decision to commit to an absolute halt of the 2020 academic year until issues relating to NSFAS, E-Learning and the reform of the TVET sector are afforded the necessary attention.

This doesn't mean the disturbance of the academic year alone, but also any sitting examinations in high schools and the tertiary sector.

We can longer appeal to the conscience of incompetent ministers and administrators to rescue students from problems of their maladministration, corruption and clumsy lack of direction. Structures and institutions in the education sector are not accounting for their failures, failures that continue to sideline the poor while overseeing the exclusion of black students in the entire education sector.

Students are financially excluded because of an unchallenged maladministration of NSFAS, as well as rules and policies that don't account for material conditions of students. Blade has lied and made the advocacy of N+2 to be about redundant and rhetorical advocacy of perpetual failure. We view the attempt to impose N+2 as a relegation of the departments duty to ensure maximum access to Students who cannot afford, it is an attempt to reduce costs at the expense of academic progress and completion of qualifications ironically by the same NSFAS which is on record to have misappropriated over 2 billion Rands due to maladministration and corruption, it doesn't take a record time Student to realise where NSFAS should tighten up in order to curtail costs and avail more resources for the funding of Students.

The advocacy for the end of the N+2 exclusion is from a knowledge of the underperformances of institutions of higher learning, and the exclusion of students who need funding most. EFFSC has noted that the N+2 rule does not take into account the possibility of a student who passes over 50% modules yet fails prerequisite modules, compelling them to wait for the next academic year of the same semester to re-register such a module, it doesn't account for clashes in the timetable or the number of modules learners at risk can take as per institutional regulations. It is seemingly modelled on the time spent doing a particular course rather than progress on the number of modules acquired towards a qualification, It overlooks the fact that some students might choose to register minimum modules due to a variety of valid reasons. This N+2 rule also overlooks possible shortcomings on systematic pedagogy, lack of institutional infrastructure and assumes that failure to progress should be placed solely on students without a self-introspection by the sector, improving of learner support and many other factors like racism that contribute to the lack of progress on particular sciences, disciplines



and modules. We reject this lazy attempt at systematic exclusion by Blade Ndzimande.

The governments lack of intervention in addressing historic debt, financial exclusion, the lack of infrastructure, support and intervention in the TVET sector. The snail pace in administrating e-learning, the corruption and maladministration of NSFAS, the nonsensical N+2 rule as well as the governments deafness and ignorance of students who fall under the missing middle category. Are among the many reasons why the sector is dismally failing black students and why students can no longer breath.

We cannot allow another class of matrices to be incorporated into a failing system, and neither are we going allow students in the higher learning sector to be bullied into another anti-black and antipoor academic year. We have no choice but to galvanize students within one voice to shut down the academic year 2020 as we end the arrogance of Randall Carolissen and Blade Ndzimande.

After failing to show us scientific evidence to vindicate its thumb-sucked and immature decision to open the gates of institutions of higher learning. The 33% that minister Nzimande mentioned in his briefing on the 23rd of May 2020, continues to not be accompanied with scientific evidence speaking to institutional readiness and capacity. This is testament to the non-compliance of institutions and a material lack of readiness of institutions of higher learning to receive students. The ministry of education doesn't have capacity and does not have a political will to play a meaningful oversight role to this effect, Students are on their own and very vulnerable to contamination.

The ministry of education has said very little to nothing, on issues pertaining the safety of students. The only one narrative it has advanced, is that of the academic year. #SaveTheAcademicYear outside of a cogent report on plans regarding mass screening(which must be done on daily basis as student will be moving in and out of their respective campuses) and testing since students will flocking in from different provinces, some of which are COVID-19 hotspots, the preparation on classes and labs for contact learning, preparation of residences, daily traveling of students from private accommodation to campuses particularly students who reside in residences that are far from their respective campuses, campus based health preparation and capacity, distribution of data and devices to students who won't be coming to those campuses as per the phase-in guideline, and the issue of connectivity for students who are in deep rural areas, and spaces that are not network friendly nor conducive for learning. The ministry must help us understand how institutions like UJ and UP with a student populace of over 50 000, which brings the 33% of aforementioned institutions to not less than 17 000 students, will



be able to conduct massive and effective daily screening to ensure the curbing of the virus from spreading in those spaces of learning. This impractical, and even more impractical in historically black and disadvantaged institutions where even the infrastructure is nowhere close to supporting such developments. What the ministry is trying to do is dangerous and must be rejected.

As the EFFSC we unapologetically pride ourselves in academic excellence. Our call for Reform of N+2 is still consistent with ensuring students must pass 50% of their modules to secure NSFAS funding with a legitimate burden to account for the extenuating circumstances where this is improbable. However even as we advocate for academic excellence, we are cognizant of the character of this period and the uncondusive nature of the shift in educational pedagogy and make a clarion call for a concession from all institutions of higher learning to grant a waiver on the academic exclusion of the 2020/2021 academic year. The academic year 2020/2021 must never bear any penal consequences for students both academically and financially. No institution (including NSFAS) should even consider excluding students based on academic results of this grim period.

We call on parents, members of civil society and responsible citizen's not to take their children to school come 1 June 2020. Government has not shown capacity and readiness beyond their sponsored rhetoric, majority if not all schools are not ready to receive learners and with the rising figures of this pandemic, learners are at risk. The sitting president of the country has released the responsibility to fight against COVID19 into our own hands, and that on its own shows that the administration of Ramaphosa has given up and want to gamble with the lives of young people. This is the first task of the collective to protect our own from lazy and incompetent ministers.

With that we encourage our members to await the coordination of this paramount call as we charge the ministry to respond to our call for the end of the N+2 exclusion the settlement of all historic debt, the inclusion of the missing middle students in the government funding models, the waiver of academic exclusion, an account of the roll out of laptops, supporting infrastructure and NSFAS particularly in the TVET sector and finally the formation of an institutional forum for the reform of the TVET sector.

Finally, we call on Blade Nzimande to refrain from his tendencies of wanting to divide students, he is not a minister of NSFAS students, he is a minister of a department that administers for all students; thus, he must treat all students equal and ensure no student is left behind. If this task is too much for the aged quack, he must step down.

No Retreat. No Surrender. Victory Is Certain. Hasta la Victoria Siempre.



#EndN+2Exclusion
#TvetsMustRise
#DataMustFall

Issued on behalf of Economic Freedom Fighters Student Command
Xola Mehlomakulu (National Spokesperson and Media and communication)
Contact: 0785236366
Twitter: @EFFStudents
Facebook: EFF STUDENTS' COMMAND

