

# Funding for HET and FET

If South Africa is to maintain an adequate skills pool, it has to invest in tomorrow's leaders today



Over time, many organisations have tried to invest in the training and skills development of tertiary students. This could be seen as an attempt to not only improve South Africa's skills pool, but also to secure skills for the future. There is continuous demand for skilled workers in a world that demands constant modification.

Previously, governmental funding was mostly focused on basic education. With the separation of the Education ministry into Basic Education and Higher Education and Training, we should now see tertiary education getting the attention it needs and deserves. Concerted efforts will have to be made in order to secure funding for tertiary educational institutions, amid tough economic times that could force budget cuts.

Tertiary education should be reviewed with a level of seriousness, as a necessity and not a luxury item.

## Education on all levels should be regarded as a necessity, not a luxury

Any type of education should be regarded as fundamental, be it on a primary, secondary or tertiary level.

It remains a challenge to the various Sector Education and Training Authorities to combat the skills shortage in some of South Africa's most pivotal sectors.

The increased number of Further Education and Training (FET) colleges throughout the country attempts to address the issue of skills within both commerce and industry.

Tertiary education in rural areas is still problematic, with challenges that include affordability of fees, the lack of or costly accommodation for students, and the long distances that students have to travel at high cost.

Recently, PPS Insurance, an insurer catering exclusively for graduate professionals, granted monetary donations to several local universities. These donations totalled more than R1 million, intended for campus refurbishments.

Perhaps most significant is the fact that the donation covered universities in nearly every part of South Africa.

Limpopo, Western Cape, Fort Hare, KwaZulu-Natal, Zululand and Pretoria universities were among those chosen.

Many students who are studying in their fourth year have also benefited from the organisation's scholarship and bursary programmes. "We are committed to building a strong local graduate professional base, by growing the skills and competencies of future generations," says Mike Jackson, chief executive officer of PPS Insurance.

However, this may not be enough, as it is vital to not only provide encouragement or funding for students, but also to have qualified lecturers in place. The quality of the educator, or the lack thereof, could impact negatively on the education provided.

Not many skilled lecturers are willing to work in remote locations. Most lecturers often prefer to be based in larger metropolitan areas.

Many have suggested an invigoration in terms of lecturing and research, in order to attract "young blood" and to avoid a depletion of the teaching and research pool.

Even with the assistance of organisations such as PPS, it is still expected that the government plays a role.

If South Africa is to compete in the global economy, it is crucial that we invest in our education system.

The refurbishment sponsorships are aimed at improving the general higher learning experience. PPS awarded approximately R200 000 to the University of KZN, for the refurbishment of the foyer of the admin building on its Westville Campus; and R230 000 to the University of Pretoria towards the acquisition of sophisticated information technology equipment.

The University of Pretoria's Academia Latina received an amount of R150 000, for the third consecutive year, to develop, maintain and promote use in the Latin language and its use in legal and medical terminology. The University of the Western Cape, Wits, Zululand, Fort Hare and Limpopo universities also received sizeable donations.

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