

15 May 2024

Dear Conference Delegate

Welcome to this 2024 AAA Conference and AGM, the fifth of the Association for Academic Administrators at The Boardwalk Convention Centre in Gqeberha, Eastern Cape. It is called by many people the “friendly city” and by some the “windy city”.

After the 2023 conference at Emperors Palace in Gauteng, when we could not accommodate all members that wanted to register due to the limitation on the numbers that the booked venue could take, we have booked The Boardwalk Convention Centre that can take a maximum number of 400 people. We have received 384 registrations representing 29 Southern African higher education institutions – a record for our relative young association. With this growth of the Association, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find suitable venues that can accommodate 400 plus delegates for a two-day conference, including the provision of sufficient rooms for overnight accommodation at the venue or close to it. This presents the Board of Directors with a challenge, and we will have to look at innovative ways to overcome this.

This year we again received 8 submissions from members to present a paper but could only accommodate 3 of these in the program. Again, this presents a challenge and maybe the Board will have to look at extending the conference with an extra day to accommodate our members that want to share their best practices with their presentations.

The theme for this year, i.e., “*The past, present and the future of academic administration in higher and further education*”, seems to have created a lot of interest for the profession of academic administration. We were fortunate to involve two speakers from the Association for Higher Education Professionals (AHEP) in the UK to come and share their experiences on how the academic administrator’s professionalization was achieved in the UK.

In the past year or two, the higher education sector in South Africa has seen increasing, and highly publicized, incidences of corruption and fraud at some institutions. These incidences are of great concern to the AAA and as an Association we need to address this matter and look at ways how these can be addressed at our own institutions and constantly applying a code of ethical behaviour within academic administration.

Delegates will find all the conference documentation and the constitution and the rules and regulations published on the conference webpage at <https://assocacadadmin.co.za/conferences/2024-conference-agm/conference/>

If you have a problem with your accommodation, please take it up directly with the hotel’s staff. We are not responsible for that part of the conference.

You are also more than welcome to engage with us, the members of the elected Board of Directors, to address any concerns, make contributions or proposals on the format and organisation of future conferences.

We trust that you will leave from here on Friday afternoon, feeling rejuvenated and that you again had the opportunity to take something useful back to your institution to contribute to a more effective and efficient administration of your institution, and that you also made some new friends.

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