



## Update Newsletter – December 2020

### Dear AAA Member and Prospective Member

The elected Board of Directors of the Association for Academic Administrators NPC would hereby like to give you an update on the status and progress of the AAA at the end of 2020 – indeed a most unprecedented and challenging year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown regulations applied by the Government from lockdown level 5 in March to the current lockdown level 1.

You are all very aware of the major impact this pandemic is having on the world, this country and specifically the higher education sector, as well as education at all levels. There is however a light in the tunnel for 2021. The UK is the first country that started to administer a vaccine against the Covid-19 virus in the week that this letter is compiled. Although there are serious concerns of a second wave, all indications are that we as a country has learned from the first outbreak and is now in a much better position to deal with such an upsurge. Under the current level one lockdown the economy is busy making drastic improvements and there are positive signs for 2021.

### The AAA registered as a non-profit company (NPC)

As was reported at the 2019 AGM in Pretoria, the AAA has registered with the CIPC as a Non-profit Company. It therefore now operates as a legal entity and has its own bank account.

The NPC is managed by the elected Board of Directors, who were confirmed at the 2019 AGM. They are Mr Vido Kungune from VUT as chairperson of the Board, Mr Ashmind Daniels from US, as the vice chairperson, Ms Ranitha Ramdeyal of UKZN as additional member, and Ms Thilo Dhooki as the TVET Colleges elected representative. The other elected member, Ms Simone Williams of Sol Plaatjie University, resigned from the Board during 2020 for personal reasons.

Mr Peet du Plessis who was the administrator of the AAA on behalf of Adapt IT's Education Division, also recused himself from the Board due to a possible conflict of interest.

There would have been an election of Board members in accordance with the AAA's Constitution at the 2020 AGM, which had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Therefore, this process will stand over to the 2021 AGM.

The Board had various on-line meetings during 2020, as there were several material developments that required its attention, apart from the major impact caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. These developments are further addressed below in this newsletter.

### The role of Adapt IT Education

In terms of a decision by the AGM in 2018, the AAA registered as an NPC in 2019 for various reasons, which included registration of the Association as a professional body with SAQA that required a separate legal entity, and then also to become independent from Adapt IT, which was the founder of the two merged bodies, i.e., Higher Education Faculty Administrators Forum (HEFAF) and the Examination Administrators Forum (ExAF).

The higher education administration best practice forums initiative by Adapt IT started in 2001 and was managed

by Peet du Plessis from 2001 to 2019, when he reached the company's compulsory retirement age. Adapt IT then contracted Peet for another two years until the end of 2020 to continue to run the established best practice forums which included the AAA on their behalf. Their sponsorship included the organisation and administration of the annual conference by Peet du Plessis as well as the financial administration support. The funding that Adapt IT provided was during all these years always covered by the surplus from the annual conference.

After independence of the AAA NPC from Adapt IT, the conference surplus was going to befall the AAA after Adapt IT was remunerated for its sponsored support and administration services as from the 2020 conference. However, then the pandemic struck, and the 2020 conference was cancelled. The Board then requested Adapt IT to extend its sponsorship of the AAA to the 2021 conference. Adapt IT informed the Board that they will not be able to extend their sponsorship any further, and that they will therefore also not extend their contract with Peet du Plessis to organise and administer the AAA on their behalf. Adapt IT transferred the balance of the AAA Membership Fund that was kept in their books and bank account, to the bank account of the AAA. This Fund amounted to just over R83 000. Adapt IT also decided to request a refund of their venue deposit that was paid to the EL-ICC for the 2020 conference.

The management of Adapt IT wished the AAA all the best with its future as an independent operation from Adapt IT. The AAA Board in turn expressed their gratitude to Adapt IT for its sponsorship and support over the last almost 20 years.

### **New operational structure of the AAA NPC**

The withdrawal of Adapt IT from the AAA as its main sponsor as described above, necessitated that the AAA Board had to re-structure its operations to ensure continuity of the Association after 2020.

The Board has contracted Peet du Plessis directly for the organising of the annual event and rendering all administrative support services and financial administration. He will be operating as the contracted General Manager of the AAA and will be reporting to the Board. He will be remunerated for his services from the income generated by the annual conference and exhibitor / sponsorship income.

Therefore, delegates registering for the 2021 conference will be invoiced by the AAA NPC and payments will be made to the bank account of the AAA. For this purpose, the AAA is in the process to register with SARS as a VAT vendor and will obtain the necessary BBB-EE certificate. All higher education institutions will then have to register the AAA on their supplier database to generate payments of the registration fees for the institution's delegates attending the annual 2021 conference.

The AAA will use as its office, Peet du Plessis's home office with the registered physical address of the AAA as 180 Walnut str. Moreleta Park, Pretoria, 0181.

The AAA has developed a new website at [www.assocacadadmin.co.za](http://www.assocacadadmin.co.za) . It will be updated on a regular basis with relevant information to AAA members. The process to link e-mail addresses to the website domain is receiving attention. For the interim members are requested to use Peet du Plessis's g-mail address for any enquiries or correspondence at [stephandup1956@gmail.com](mailto:stephandup1956@gmail.com) . As soon as the new addresses are activated, members will be informed accordingly. Please note that Peet's previous e-mail address of @adaptit has been deactivated when his contract with Adapt IT ended at the end of November 2020.

An independent auditor's firm, JTC Inc., has been appointed to perform an audit of the annual financial statements of the AAA NPC in accordance with the relevant accounting and auditing practices. The annual financial statements will then serve at the AGM according to the constitution of the AAA.

All the changes will be incorporated into the constitution which will also be tabled at the next AGM.

### **Registration of the AAA as a professional body with SAQA**

This process has been delayed due to the re-structuring of the operations and the Covid-19 lockdown measures during 2020. The application process will be initiated within the near future.

Some of the groundwork for the application has already been done. These include:

- Different membership classes as specified in the AAA constitution.
- A system of CPD points have been implemented whereby members earn points through attendance of the annual conference, presenting a paper, serving in the management structure, etc.
- A membership register was compiled after the approval of the membership classes at the 2018 AGM, and as membership is automatically earned from the attendance of the annual event, all delegates that attended the 2018 and 2019 conferences and who meets the criteria of membership, have been recorded in the register.
- On recording a new member, the AAA's administration issued an electronic membership certificate which was e-mailed to such members.
- The CPD points earned are also recorded in the membership register.

The registration process with SAQA is quite extensive and there are several requirements that must be met. However, the AAA Board is aiming at completion of the process before the 2021 AGM.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, AAA members and prospective members are reminded that the AAA belongs to its members, and as such every academic / student administrator at higher education institutions, public and private, is invited to engage with the Board to give advice, make inputs and even positive criticism will be welcomed.

We would like to wish you a period of rest, safety, and peace during the December festive season with loved ones, family, and friends. Our sincerest condolences go to everybody that might have lost loved ones during this year due to the pandemic or otherwise.

We sincerely hope that you will be back in the new year feeling rejuvenated to tackle all the challenges of 2021 which we know will be a lot better than 2020.

Kindest regards

**The AAA Board of Directors**