

## Media Statement on Late Admissions in Higher Education

The Council on Higher Education notes with regret the recent incidents relating to late admissions at the University of Johannesburg (UJ). It is indeed a sad day in the history of higher education in South Africa that a parent has died in an attempt to enable her child to fulfil his dreams for the future. The Council welcomes the announcement by Higher Education South Africa (HESA) that it will examine the collective experience of its member institutions to ensure that steps are put in place to avoid a recurrence of the stampede at UJ.

The Council furthermore welcomes the Minister's statement that he is considering the establishment of a central applications system to facilitate the admissions process in higher education. In the Council's view this is long overdue. The idea of a central applications system was first mooted in Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education in 1997. Subsequently, in 2002, the then Minister of Education commissioned a report, which outlined potential models and the principles that should underpin a central applications system. The report elicited a mixed response from the higher education sector. The Council recognises that there are legitimate concerns that higher education institutions have with regard both to the potential erosion of institutional autonomy if not properly managed, as well as the practical complexities of establishing a central applications system. The Council believes that the sector's concerns can be addressed. The Council in responding to a request for advice in 2011 from the Minister of Higher Education and Training supported the establishment of a central applications system and proposed a framework that took cognisance of institutional concerns, in particular, in relation to the right of institutions to determine who is admitted.

The death of the parent at UJ should focus the debate and enable the transcending of narrow institutional interests for the greater good of future generations. The Council believes that a central applications system will be beneficial for the higher education system as a whole.

The Council also welcomes the release of the [Green Paper on Post-school Education](#), which the Council hopes will lay the basis for addressing the need for the expansion of education and training opportunities across a spectrum of post-school institutions, including but not limited to universities.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ahmed Essop', is positioned above the printed name.

Ahmed Essop  
Chief Executive Officer  
13 January 2011