

# Sasco and Nehawu shut down Unisa over multiple financial disputes

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The South African Students Congress (Sasco) and the National Health Education and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu) have joined forces to shut down the University of SA (Unisa).



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This forced potential students to abandon their applications and registrations at the university's Sunnyside campus in Pretoria on Wednesday, 17 January 2018.

The two formations have consolidated their myriad of demands to the university, with Sasco saying it was practical for students to be in solidarity with the union as the workers were their parents. Nehawu has deadlocked with Unisa management on the union's demand for a 12% wage increase, with the university management offering 4.5%.

Sasco is demanding, among other things, the scrapping of students' historic debt and the abolishment of application and registration fees.

Nehawu has shut down all the university's campuses, which are due to remain shut until their demands are met, according to the union's national organiser Ntsako Nombelani. He said they were willing to settle for 9% if the university management was willing to negotiate in good faith, adding that the institution's management was sticking to its 4.5% offer.

"Our compromise was rejected by the university in August last year already, but this time we are not backing down. The

campuses will remain shut until our demands are met," Nombelani said, adding that the union's members ranged from academic staff down to cleaners and gardeners. The lowest paid worker at the university earns about R6,500.

Nombelani said what the university was offering would make no difference in the lives of members as this was below the consumer price index. "The university is not paying according to the higher education market. Unisa can afford the over 9% increase."

According to Nombelani, the university would be forced to suspend the re-opened application and registration process. Sasco's Unisa branch secretary Sphiwe Morema said it was pointless for students to continue applying to the institution when there were critical issues that needed to be addressed first.

"Potential students have to fork out money to apply and register but they are the poorest of the poor. The National Student Financial Aid Scheme was supposed to have confirmed applications by now, but no student has received confirmation from the scheme. This is a tactic to exclude students."

Morema said safety was also a major concern at the university's campuses, with security being lax and students being raped on campus.

*Source: BDpro*

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