

MEDIA RELEASE	PSA demands urgent intervention from the Minister of Higher Education and Training in coastal TVET college crisis
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The Public Servants Association (PSA) calls on the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Nobuhle Nkabane, to urgently intervene in the ongoing governance and operational crisis at Coastal TVET College. The institution's mismanagement and failure to deliver on its commitments are now reaching a critical point, with significant implications for students, staff, and the broader educational community.

The PSA is alarmed by the latest development involving the postponement of the college's graduation ceremony, which was originally scheduled for June 2024 and later rescheduled for 26 September 2024. This is the second time this important event has been postponed, and yet again, no explanation or communication has been provided to students or staff. This lack of transparency is both unacceptable and damaging, leaving students and their families in distress and financial difficulty. Many students had made substantial investments in travel, attire, and accommodation for graduation, with some coming from as far as Dubai. Their hopes for celebrating a significant academic milestone have been dashed without any justification from the college.

This postponement of the graduation ceremony is not an isolated issue, but part of a broader pattern of dysfunction at Coastal TVET College. The institution has long struggled with governance failures, including the chronic delay in paying council staff and an alarming reliance on temporary appointments in senior leadership positions. Currently, the college has a disturbingly high number of key roles filled by staff in acting capacities, including but not limited to the Principal, Deputy Principal of Corporate Services, Deputy Principal of Academics, and several Assistant Directors across critical operational areas such as infrastructure, human resources, curriculum management, and student support services.

The PSA finds this overreliance on acting appointments unacceptable and a clear indicator of the institution's leadership crisis. It undermines the college's ability to make stable, strategic decisions and casts serious doubt on the competence of its management to deliver quality education and training. Staff are demoralised, students are disillusioned, and the reputation of the institution is in jeopardy.

In addition to the ongoing graduation debacle and the mismanagement of senior appointments, the PSA is gravely concerned about the financial mismanagement and operational inefficiencies that continue to plague the college. These issues are not new but have persisted over an extended period without any meaningful intervention from the college's leadership.

The PSA therefore demands:

1. An immediate investigation into the reasons for the repeated postponement of the graduation ceremony, and a clear, public explanation to be provided to the affected students and staff.

2. The urgent appointment of permanent leadership positions to address the current overreliance on acting positions, which is contributing to the destabilisation of the institution.
3. A comprehensive audit of the college's financial management and governance structures, to hold accountable those responsible for its mismanagement.
4. The Minister's direct intervention to ensure that corrective measures are implemented swiftly to restore confidence in the institution.

The PSA is unwavering in its commitment to protecting the rights and interests of our members, who have worked tirelessly to ensure the academic success of Coastal TVET College's students, despite the considerable challenges they face due to mismanagement. The continued disregard for the needs of both students and staff by the College's leadership is intolerable, and the time for excuses is over.

The PSA urges Minister Nkabane to act decisively and with urgency. The future of Coastal TVET College, its students, and its staff depends on swift and effective intervention.

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