Journal of Student Affairs in Africa

Student Affairs in complex contexts

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The *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* (JSAA) is an independent, peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary, open-access academic journal that publishes scholarly research and reflective discussions about the theory and practice of student affairs in Africa.

Vision and mission

The *JSAA* aims to contribute to the professionalisation of student affairs in African higher education by publishing high-quality scholarly articles, research and reflective discussions by academics, professionals, researchers and students about student affairs and services in African higher education.

The *JSAA* strives to be the foremost academic journal dealing with the theory and practice of the student affairs domain in universities on the African continent, and an indispensable resource for national policy makers, the executive leadership of universities and colleges dealing with student affairs, deans of students and other senior student affairs professionals, as well as institutional researchers and academics and students focused on the field of higher education studies and student affairs.

Focus and scope

The *JSAA* considers theoretical, practice-relevant and reflective contributions from across the scholarly field of student affairs and professional domains of student development/student affairs, taking due cognisance that the scope is broad, fluid and context-dependent.

The scope of the *JSAA* is indicated by keywords such as: student affairs; student career development; student counselling; student development theory and research; student discipline; student engagement; student experience; student finances and financial aid; student housing; disability/disabled students; student leadership and governance; student life cycle; student living and learning; student organisations; student orientation; student policy; student politics and activism; student sport; student support; academic development; graduate attributes; and teaching and learning support. This list of keywords is not exhaustive.

Submissions are encouraged from scholars and reflective practitioners from across the globe. Submissions must be original and relevant to the mission, scope and focus of the journal. Especially encouraged are submissions from African scholars and professionals working in higher education on the African continent. Submissions dealing with student affairs issues from other contexts (e.g. the African diaspora; other emerging economies; developed countries) that are transferable to the African context are also considered for publication. Submit by email to: jsaa_editor@outlook.com.

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Editorial team

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Student Affairs in Complex Contexts

Birgit Schreiber*, Teboho Moja** & Thierry M. Luescher***

While the Western world – with Brexit, Trump, Festung Europa, and so forth – seems to be increasingly retreating into narrow nationalism, the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* is connecting African academics, executives and administrators and is becoming an evermore accessed international, African platform for publishing research on higher education and Student Affairs in Africa. In this issue, we do not only publish several commentaries on the recent Global Summit of Student Affairs and Services held in October 2016 at Stellenbosch University, South Africa. We also publish contributions from Ethiopia alongside articles from Australia, the USA, and universities in South Africa (University of the Free State, University of Johannesburg). Moreover, the first 2017 issue will be guest edited by colleagues from the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS), which will look beyond the African continent with contributions from Australia, Canada, China, Europe and America.

Dissatisfaction and frustration with political leaders have sent students pouring out into the streets, demanding free education in South Africa, demanding an increase on higher education funding in Ireland and protesting the presidential election outcome in the US. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Minister of Higher Education has ordered a freeze on fee increments following student protests, while in Niger student protests have pushed the government to agree to provide additional funding for higher education. On the African continent, there are various challenges facing Student Affairs professionals, for example, providing support to students whose payments by the Tanzania's Higher Education Student Loan Board (HESLB) have been delayed due to administrative problems in providing correct student data and student results. In Egypt, there is need to support students returning to institutional residential life at the Al Azhar Seminary where the facility was closed for two years. There is need to support Student Affairs colleagues, academics and students in Nigeria where unpaid salary increments threaten the educational project.

Higher education the world over requires our support in order to ensure that it survives these turbulences. Unrest tends to focus our attention on crisis and survival, forces

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discourses into binaries, essentialisms and absolutes. Student Affairs is a key role player in highlighting the complexities and creating safe spaces which engage divergent views, promote courageous conversations and counter the global trend of narrow nationalism and confrontation. Violent unrest creates uncertainty and a retreat into the familiar which are symptoms of the narrow nationalism we see across the globe. The unrest derails the focus from substantive issues and focuses our attention on the 'drama'. Aggressive and bullying tactics overshadow the demands for accessible and equitable education and Student Affairs needs to assist our collective re-focus on putting pressure on the key issues: funding, access and equity.

The global shift towards knowledge based economies has accelerated massification especially in Africa; increasing intra-continental student and staff mobility and a privatisation and commercialisation of higher education. There is a complex interrelation between the political unrest within higher education and these trends: on the one hand, increasing student activism is a typical massification phenomenon; on the other hand, student and staff mobility, and privatisation, often have a contrary effect on student mobilisation for political action (see Luescher, 2016). Student Affairs' roles in this context are manifold; among them is to ensure that graduates will have benefited from the higher education experience – even in difficult times – as a personal transformation experience that enriches their personal, familial, communal and professional lives as fully formed critically constructive and engaged citizens. Student Affairs will need to anticipate and find innovative ways to adjust to the possible resulting shifts of increase in private higher education service providers and less overall funding.

What lessons can be shared from professionals working in the field and what research agendas emerge from those experiences? The community at large, some political leadership, non-government organisations and in some cases labour unions have supported the issues around fees, affordability, the public-private good dimensions, access and equity. Academics and university managers face the challenge of engaging students in a meaningful process when they are under tremendous stress and support services are limited, more especially so in African universities.

This issue of *JSAA* publishes articles that reflect the complex context and the important role of Student Affairs in manifold ways. For instance, the massification of higher education, especially in developing country contexts, is typically accompanied by an increase in graduate unemployment. There are several reasons for this, including that graduate supply may outstrip the ability of the economy to grow and absorb graduates, the quality of graduates in general, and a skills mismatch between labour market demand and graduate output (Altbach, 2011; Reddy *et al.*, 2016). Student Affairs has the potential to impact directly on the potential of graduates to find work opportunities in at least two ways: providing entrepreneurship training, and career guidance and counselling. The latter is often a marginal service provided by Student Affairs (and in some faculties) despite its importance. The research article by Abera Getachew (Ambo University, Ethiopia) and Gobena Daniel (Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia) published in this issue precisely shows that career development is important for students to better understand their personal

values, clarify their goals and career choice direction, and improve their job searching skills, all of which improve their employability. This ties in with entrepreneurship and leadership training for students, engaging them in critical dialogue on social and economic issues that affect their responsiveness to community, national and global issues. Their academic lives and social lives need to be interwoven more seamlessly in a comprehensive conception of personal transformation.

Our role as Student Affairs professionals also includes the identification of at-risk students and supporting them towards academic success. The massification of higher education increases the diversity of students overall and brings growing numbers of first generation students, rural and working class students, into the African higher education sector. Mpho Jama's research with at-risk students in a South African medical school illustrates the 'interwovenness' of students' academic and social lives whereby a student's socio-economic background and harsh present realities may impact negatively on academic performance and, in turn, "poor academic performance can lead to an array of other social and psychological problems, such as withdrawal of bursaries; and the type of psychological problems, […] that some students experience" (see Mpho Jama's article in this issue). Razia Mayet's article focuses on the effectiveness of learning development interventions for at-risk students, particularly insofar as such interventions change students' attitudes and confidence levels and help them to develop the competences necessary to succeed academically. Both articles thus continue the topic of the previous *JSAA* issue (Vol. 4 Issue 1), which specifically focused on academic development, students' transition to higher education and first-year experience.

The professionalisation of Student Affairs, to which this journal seeks to actively contribute, is imperative in our context. Initiatives, such as IASAS' peer mentoring programme for Student Affairs practitioners is therefore highly welcome (see Eva-Marie Seeto's article in this issue). Against this, it also remains crucial to reflect on the diversity of pathways into the profession and how the professional identities of Student Affairs practitioners are shaped by formal and informal relationships with academic and administrative staff and students and reflective practice, along with formal professional training and development (see Darren Clarke's reflective article in this regard). How do we as professionals make the choices we make and become involved in Student Affairs, and what narratives do we share that can strengthen what we do as professionals?

The books reviewed in this issue focus on higher education leadership with specific focus on Kenya (Michieka, 2016, reviewed by Claudia Frittelli) and on the various strategies employed to understand conflict, especially higher education strategies with a focus on interfaith conflict (Patel, 2012, reviewed by Jon Dalton). Both books are uniquely relevant to our current context in terms of much needed leadership development and conflict resolution.

The third book reviewed by Thierry M. Luescher revisits the 'Reitz incident' of 2008 at the University of the Free State (UFS) in South Africa, which at the time sparked the establishment of the national Ministerial Committee on Progress Towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education

Institutions. 'Reitz' has come to be synonymous with persistent racism and transformation failure in South African higher education. The book *Transformation and Legitimation in Post-apartheid Universities: Reading Discourses from 'Reitz'* (2016, Sun Press) by J.C. van der Merwe and Dionne van Reenen takes an in-depth look at the history, context and discourses of transformation at the UFS, residence cultures and 'Reitz', and it thereby makes an important contribution to our understanding of the student experience of on-campus life, residence cultures and initiation practices, what is meant by 'deep transformation' in complex, transitional social contexts, and the pitfalls Student Affairs professionals and university leadership encounter in the process.

Finally, as we approach 2017, *JSAA* has moved from being an African Minds 'incubator journal' to being a fully-fledged and 'grown-up' scholarly journal of note. *JSAA* was initiated in 2013 at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) by Dr Birgit Schreiber, Dr Thierry M. Luescher, Prof. Gerald Ouma and Ms Tonia Overmeyer. After initial discussions, Prof. Teboho Moja came on board as Editor-in-Chief and lent her experience and expertise to the journal idea. In addition, the UWC Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs, Prof. Lulu Tshiwula, gave her support as journal patroness at the time, and Ms Allison Fullard, Deputy Director: UWC library, provided the technical know-how and ensured that *JSAA* would be hosted as the first fully Open Access journal of UWC on its newly created e-journals platform. Starting with this issue, *JSAA* has become part of the Stellenbosch University stable of e-journals, and is now hosted by the SU library. In addition, the copy-editing and related production processes are now performed by African Sun Media.

We are also happy to announce that starting from 2017, *JSAA* will be indexed in ERIC, the Education Resources Information Center online database maintained by the U.S. Department of Education. All *JSAA* issues starting with Vol. 1 (2013) will be fully indexed and available full text from ERIC.

We appreciate your continued interest in and support of *JSAA* and hope you will enjoy and benefit from the contributions published in this issue.

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Supporting At-Risk Learners at a Comprehensive University in South Africa

Razia Mayet*

Abstract

This paper reports on a study done within the Learning Development Unit (LDU) at a South African university. It addresses the issue that many students who arrive at university lack the requisite academic skills needed for success in higher education which increases the time taken to graduate. One of the multiple reasons for this is the 'articulation gap' between school and higher education in South Africa and in other countries. This articulation gap is exacerbated by the assumption about prior learning on which South Africa's traditional higher education programmes are based. The purpose of this study is to explore whether learning development interventions can change student attitudes and confidence levels, and develop some of the skills necessary to succeed. The study allows the academic counsellors who provide support a sense of whether their interventions are working. The study was undertaken by analysing student responses to learning development interventions. The data is gleaned from evaluation forms, assessment results and interviews conducted with students over three sets of consultations with each student. There were three hundred students who attended workshops and one hundred who sought individual consultations. Initial analyses suggest that significant gains were made in increasing student coping mechanisms and learning/study skills. This indicates that support offered by the Learning Development Unit develops the capabilities and competencies of academically at-risk learners. It is important to note that the LD unit does not pursue graduate outputs and notions of success rates but focuses on enabling at-risk students, allowing them to engage in more purposeful learning.

Keywords

academic competence, academic development, at-risk students, learning development, learning development interventions, student success, under-prepared students

Introduction

In South Africa, as in many other countries, a high number of students arrive at university without the requisite study skills and strategies required for succeeding in higher education (Department of Education (DoE), 2006; Council of Higher Education (CHE), 2013; UNESCO, 2002). Such students are more likely to leave university before graduating (Scott, 2009; Kinzie, 2011). The lack of preparedness that students face when they enrol

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for studies in higher education is referred to as the 'articulation gap' i.e. the gap between success at school and success at university. This gap needs to be bridged particularly through the work of the academic support and learning development units in higher education in order to support students to succeed in higher education. According to the CHE, "the Articulation Gap is not confined to subject knowledge but encompasses a range of facets of learning such as academic literacies, conceptual development and socialisation" (CHE, 2013). Furthermore, there is a widening gap between what students expect and what is actually delivered at university (Tinto, 2012; Shrawder, 2015).

The changing role of university and the growing diversity of students being admitted into university in South Africa make learning development even more relevant. As institutions attempt to uphold and pursue global trends and benchmarks on performativity and competition for rankings and throughput rates, the need for student academic support increases. Results in both the PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) and the NBT (National Benchmark Tests) suggested that student preparedness had been dropping over the last five years (Nkosi, 2013). However, this race to produce more human capital can lead to students feeling more disengaged, disillusioned and marginalised (Grant, 2015). It is precisely these learners that need to be reached out to, accommodated and engaged by academic development and learning development facilitators. Winberg *et al.* (2013) raise the concern that the neo-liberal agenda of preparing work-ready graduates is seen as the primary role of the higher education sector. They however point out that if curricula are understood as workplace preparation then graduate attributes such as critical thinking and learning to learn will suffer.

In the South African higher education landscape, academic development is still closely linked to the national transformation agenda (i.e. the transformation to democracy after apartheid) and perceived as a means to close the gap between racially and socio-economically disadvantaged learners and learners from advantaged backgrounds (CHE, 2013). Academic development and support programmes need to exceed their reach in higher education, especially to students in first year and those in transition. Academic (or educational) development programmes across South Africa's tertiary institutions have a limited impact as they reach only 10% of the student body (Scott, 2007). In South Africa 60% of student enrolment is now made up of black African students. The completion rate for black students at university is still less than half of the rate of white students (Scott, 2009). This statistic makes a compelling argument firstly, for the need of academic/learning development and secondly, for bridging the articulation gap between school and higher education.

Research is required that provides an account of the difficulties students face in accessing the knowledge and related literacy practices of the university. As the study described in this article shows, academic development as a programme or as an intervention to assist students can make the transition to learning at university achievable for learners aspiring to get a university qualification regardless of race, schooling background or socio-economic status. These learning support interventions are necessary as many of the mainstream diplomas and degrees offered at university do not offer learning, academic

literacies and study skills and strategies. The learning and academic development of students is thus an area of concern which cannot be neglected (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh & Whitt, 2005). More especially, research shows that first-year success requires support strategies and mentoring from committed staff to alleviate the problem of attrition and high dropout rates (Reason, Terenzini & Domingo, 2006).

The fact that the students pass a matriculation examination does not necessarily make them academically competent for success at university. University requires a whole new set of learning skills. The government's transformation policy for education after apartheid allowed for increased access to higher education for previously disadvantaged students, in order to alleviate the racially skewed patterns of enrolment and graduation. One of the ways this was done was to increase funding of academic/learning development programmes (Boughey, 2010). In response to this concern, learning development initiatives and interventions are offered at this university to provide these skills. The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of Learning Development as an intervention in enhancing learning support and improved results for students who are academically at risk. This was investigated by analysing student responses in evaluations and interviews to LD interventions. Student assessments were analysed to evaluate whether there had been improvements. Initial results indicate that students who are exposed to the interventions experience an improvement in their results and have a more positive outlook on their university experience.

Theoretical Framework

I first highlight the thinking behind Academic Development, and cite some successful interventions first focusing on the international arena and then on the national. I argue that learning development interventions can offer students foundational support to close the articulation gap and ease the transition to higher education.

Learning development at UJ has as its primary goal the aim of increasing access to learning, of encouraging and supporting students to learn independently and subsequently enhance learning and performance at university, such that students move from being at risk to being competent learners who are prepared. In fulfilling these objectives, learning development has to train and prepare students to take charge of their own learning goals and in so doing become accountable for their own progress. They should also manage their time in a more structured way so as to enhance organisational skills. In addition, students have to adapt successfully to the new environment in order to thrive in the university setting (Tinto, 2012; Kuh, 2003; Pascerella & Terenzini, 2005; Schreiner, 2010).

A comprehensive study conducted by Reason, Terenzini and Domingo (2006) based on 6,687 first-year American students across 30 campuses highlights the student's sense of support, levels of academic and cognitive engagements, and a coherent first year. Their study focused on the individual, organisational, environmental, programmatic and policy factors that shaped student development of academic competence in first year. Their evidence suggests that students' learning and cognitive development is shaped by what happens in the class, but more so by the range of learning opportunities their institutions

provide outside the classroom. Students who reported more encounters with diverse individuals and ideas, also reported advantages in academic competence.

Another such successful intervention which focused on mentoring and monitoring students is documented by Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh and Whitt (2005). They documented the practices in 20 successful DEEP (documenting effective educational practice) institutions in the USA. Student-oriented support services and academic interventions feature high on the list in all institutions. In one of them 15,000 first years are each given support and opportunities to succeed by being allocated to support and advisory staff who mentor and monitor students to identify and tag struggling students in an early-warning system (Kuh *et al.*, 2005). Kuh suggests that for students' success to be enhanced, it becomes necessary to identify with the least engaged, those who are at risk, and to target interventions towards these students. Being at risk is defined by Schoon (2006) as being confronted with an unwanted event and lacking the adaptive ability to deal with the adverse conditions. Kinzie raises these pertinent issues to direct thinking on the issue of what puts students at risk of attrition:

> Who are the culprits of depressed success rates? Is it underprepared or unmotivated students? Or is it underperforming institutions and ineffective pedagogies? Or are we ignoring emotional and psychological phenomena among a diverse student population?
>
> (Kinzie, 2012)

These questions are as pertinent to the South African students who are the population in this study as they point to the underlying factors that may be overlooked in the dilemma to find the 'culprits' that retard student success. I argue that it is a combination of under-prepared students, a diverse student population and under-performing institutions which fail to provide the requisite academic support. Kinzie's question about emotional and psychological phenomena is addressed by Rheinheimer, Laskey and Hetzel (2011) who surmise that academic readiness is not only related to skills and behaviour, but that a lack of either motivation, soft skills or personality traits can also place a student at academic risk. Learning Development as a mediator of positive learning and academic outcomes has a role to play in modifying and improving these attributes and behavioural habits through interventions and academic support.

Aud's (2010) assertion that fewer than half of college students who begin a bachelor's degree ever complete one in their lifetime (quoted in Schreiner, Louis & Nelson, 2012) further highlights the need for academic and learning support to be undertaken at first- and second-year level. In a study looking at first-year expectations and experiences conducted among Science and Humanities students, Brinkworth, McCann, Matthews and Nordstrom (2009) concluded that a successful transition was not only about academic competence, but also about "adjustments to a learning environment that requires greater autonomy and individual responsibility than students expect upon commencement". This implies that students who do not adjust easily and quickly to the rigours of studying in higher education or those that are unable to self-regulate are also at risk. The issues of general concern for

student success are those of commitment to the course, expectations of teaching, support for learning, academic confidence, time management and social engagement (Willcoxson, Cotter & Joy, 2011).

However, many international studies address Kinzie's question about ineffective pedagogies and regard these as the reason for students dropping out. For instance, several insights were provided by Long, Ferrier and Heagney (2006) with regard to teaching and being at risk. At-risk students in first year identified academic reasons for discontinuation in tertiary education and largely blamed poor quality of teaching and/or inadequate or poor interaction with teaching staff. It would seem then that lecturers take for granted that students are "university ready" and do not address these needs adequately if at all. Additionally, Palmer, O'Kane and Owens (2009) identified "liminality" and "slippage" as factors that contributed to students being at risk. Liminality relates to the student's feelings of being suspended in the "transient space" between home and university and belonging to neither; while slippage describes the transitional phase/state within the student who feels unrelated to the space or place.

In the South African higher education context, the latest report from the Council for Higher Education (CHE, 2013) reveals that:

> Some 55% of all entering students, including about 45% of contact students, never graduate. The figures show that, in the main degree and diploma programmes only 27% of all students, including 20% of African students and 24% of coloured students, graduate in regulation time.

Boughey (2007) supports the notion that access and admission to university in South Africa remains a contested arena since universities are places where knowledge is constructed in ways that sustain the values and attitudes of the university. Recent student protest action and campaigns like the #fees must fall and decolonisation of knowledge movements are a result of the values and attitudes that students blame for their unpreparedness and under-preparedness for higher education studies. Students contend that these values place them at risk of either failing, increasing the time taken to graduate, or worse, dropping out of the system as access is denied to them by virtue of their so called disadvantaged educational and socio-economic background. National throughput and statistics show the seriousness of lack of preparedness for higher education in South Africa; the apartheid legacy, ongoing economic inequalities and major problems in the schooling sector enhance the way student unpreparedness is experienced in this country. The CHE report argues that "time constructively spent on foundational learning [...] will foster quality and success" (CHE report, 2013). The SA Department of Education, too, reiterates that:

> Foundational provision is commonly intended primarily to facilitate the *ac*ademic development of students whose prior learning has been adversely affected by educational or social inequalities. Foundational provision is thus aimed at facilitating equity of access and outcome.   (DoE, 2006)

The foundational programmes generally focus "on the discontinuity or articulation gap between students' educational backgrounds as shaped by their familial and socio-economic circumstances" (CHE report, 2013).

South African Academic Development initiatives have learnt a lot from the 'foundation programmes' which have been offered by many SA universities for the past decade. Shandler *et al.* (2011) have reported on student success in the Extended/Access diplomas at the University of Johannesburg where "foundational provision" and more supported learning takes place. Their results indicate that in many cases, foundational-phase learners have overtaken mainstream students in completing their diplomas. Academic development programmes enable South Africa's higher education institutions to offer greater access to higher education and the academic competencies to deal with the skills and strategies required to succeed in a higher education environment (Scott, 2007, 2009).

Detailed Context of the Study

This study is located in the Learning Development Unit (LDU) at a university in Johannesburg. LDU is a unit within Academic Development and Support which offers support to students who do not have the necessary competencies to cope with university study. Currently the Faculty of Health Sciences offers four learning development workshops to their first-year students in all seven departments during the first semester. Individual students may be referred by PSYCAD, the psychological services wing of academic support, or sent by a lecturer or head of department who has identified the student as being at risk of failing. Or the student may be going through a review process after failing their major subjects and receiving an F7 rating which in effect means that they are no longer eligible to register for further studies. The student has an opportunity to lodge an appeal. Often their appeals are accepted on the basis that they agree to attend academic support/learning development.

The first session with a learning development facilitator is a "getting to know you" session. The students fill in a form giving biographical and contact details and are then interviewed to gauge lifestyle issues, family and educational background, financial situation, living arrangements, accessibility to food and university funding. A food cupboard is maintained on a donation and sponsorship basis for indigent students or those who are hungry or lack immediate access to food. Students are assisted to apply for a food bursary operated by an NGO in collaboration with UJ, so that they receive at least two meals a day on weekdays through the Gift of the Givers food programme.

The next part of the conversation between the student and the academic counsellor relates to the course or diploma that the student is registered in, and the study method that the student currently employs. The student is interrogated about the number of hours and times when study is undertaken, the methods and techniques used to study, the note-taking and -making skills, the memorisation and retrieval skills used, how resources are organised, use of learner guides and Blackboard (the IT learning management system of the university) and any other related issues that may arise.

The second session with the student is used for equipping the student with time-management skills and setting up a time-managed programme for the student based on

their lifestyle and commitments. A week later, the student reports back on the time-management programme and it is further revised and fine-tuned to meet personal needs and learning styles.

In the third session, the student is inducted into the study cycle and shown how to implement each of the components for constructive cognitive engagement, namely, pre-reading, attending class, consolidation, the weekly review and revision. The student is shown how to link their individual work with the learning outcomes and assessment criteria as set down in the learner guide for each course. In subsequent sessions the student is shown how to take notes in class, make notes during consolidation and organise their learning resources and material. They are also guided to use memorisation and retrieval skills, text maps, mind maps and referred to Academic Literacy and the Writing Centre for further support if required. When test or assessment dates are announced, a specific study programme for the test is set up, taking into account the amount of work that will be tested and the time that is available. Students are urged to contact the counsellor by email or to make further appointments with the academic counsellor if additional support and help is required.

Methodology

The current study is based, firstly, on an analysis of 300 evaluation forms from the training and workshops presented by the Learning Development Unit to the Health Sciences departments. Of the 300 students that attended the workshops arranged by their departments, 100 came back for individual help and consultations. Other students are referred by their departments if they have failed more than one test. The students are generally undergraduate students from all faculties studying across a range of qualifications. Research by the Director of Academic Development, Dr Andre van Zyl, reveals that at least 40% of our students are first-generation university students.

The students each attended a minimum of three sessions of individual academic counselling in the Learning Development Unit. These students were interviewed before the sessions with the counsellor, then completed a further evaluation form, and at the end of the set of sessions a conversation was held with students about their overall impressions and to gauge if they had actually implemented suggested changes and made improvements and progress. In addition, test results from before the intervention were compared with test results from after the intervention.

The evaluation forms for both the workshops and the individual consultations are constructed similarly. They are made up of four key questions relating to the actual intervention sessions, as follows:

1. I learnt new study techniques and approaches in my academic counselling session.
2. I think I will be able to apply some of the techniques I learnt in my studies.
3. I think the academic counselling session will make a positive contribution to my success as a student.
4. I will recommend attending academic counselling to other students.

The response options of the key questions are linked to a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree'. These four questions are followed by two further open-ended questions:

1. What I found most useful about academic counselling was _____.
2. List some of the techniques/skills you will be willing to try or be able to implement _____.

For the close-ended questions, the frequencies on each option of the Likert scale were calculated. Qualitative content analysis was used for the open-ended questions and interview data. Specific themes were identified that would support or contradict responses to previous questions. The students who attended individual consultations were also tracked in terms of performance before and after the set of sessions, to check improvements and persistence. In this way a deeper understanding was gained of their experience with learning development and the contribution made by LD towards the improvement in their results and their university experience.

Finally, the 2015 undergraduate student report was also mined for statistics relating to the tutoring programme and the Academic Development Centre. This is an online survey undertaken annually. During 2014/2015 a cohort of 14,000 of a potential 30,000 students responded to the survey which is overseen by the Division for Institutional Planning, Evaluation and Monitoring (DIPEM).

Findings and Discussion

Results show that both sets of students, those who attended the workshops as a class and those that attended the individual consultations, were enabled by learning development interventions.

The analysis of the evaluation forms of the class groups showed that:
• 90% of students were positively disposed towards the workshops.
• The workshops and training sessions on time management and the study cycle were marked as the most useful.
• Approaches to study skills and note taking were next in terms of usefulness.

Students definitely felt that they had received skills that had enabled them. Students reflected on arriving at university with only their experience of learning at school. They said that in many cases lecturers do not allow them to 'slide gently' into the workload and new learning context. A fortnight of orientation is clearly not sufficient to allow first-time university students access to the learning culture of such an institution, with the result that students feel overloaded, stressed and easily start to fall behind with their studies once lectures and assessments commence. Students only realise that they are falling behind with work and/or are not coping after the first sets of results are released in the first term. It is at this point that more and more individual consultations are requested.

The analysis of the evaluations of the students who attended individual learning development consultations, revealed that:

- 92% of students agreed that they had learnt new techniques of managing their studies and time after attending academic counselling and that they would be able to apply the new techniques to improve their studies.
- 78% of students strongly agreed that academic counselling would make a positive contribution to their studies.
- 75% strongly agreed that they would recommend attending academic counselling to other students.

The students stated that they felt "less stressed" and were able to dedicate themselves to their studies with confidence once they had a time-management plan and study skills in place. Follow-up visits were scheduled to check on results of tests and assessments administered. Mark increases and improved results in assessments were noted in nearly all cases. Students who, on the first visit, were emotional, insecure and felt that they were failures who would let their parents down, showed more confidence and were more positive. Typical comments students made in their evaluations and interviews are quoted:

> It made me to excel in my studies.

> [...] all academic issues are addressed promptly and with solutions.

> [...] the workload seems less and study skills have improved after my sessions with the counsellor."

> She shows how to get the bigger picture of what you about to do.

> [...] even today I am still applying what study skills I learnt.

> Saying my problems out loud and having someone put solutions down on paper that I can use continuously really helped me.

These student comments concur with other research that shows that the more students experience success and see positive results, the more likely they are to stay on at the institution (Tinto, 2012).

The 2015 University of Johannesburg Undergraduate Student Experience Report, a survey undertaken by DIPEM (Division of Institutional Planning, Evaluation and Monitoring) revealed the following in respect of Tutoring and Academic Development and Support:

- 71% of the students who responded regarded the academic environment to be 'good' whilst 19% rated it as 'very good'.
- Overall, 90% of the students felt that the University of Johannesburg offers a supportive academic environment.
- 67% of the undergraduates said that the study method courses were helpful. They rated the Academic Development staff as 'knowledgeable, helpful and professional'. The Tutoring unit was credited with 68% of respondents saying that they sought help at least once a week from tutors.   (DIPEM 2015)

The impact of the learning development interventions on the University is that the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Building and Construction Management Department have institutionalised the learning development offerings to their first-year students based on the student and lecturer evaluations of the interventions. In addition, the Faculties of Engineering and the Built Environment, Humanities and Science are booking more workshops for their students and referring students for academic counselling. As students move into their senior years, they return for help with time management, writing skills and academic literacies. The role for direct student support cannot be ignored, as learning development interventions have an important role to play in mediating study skills and learning as a psycho-educational tool that leads to performance-enhancing behaviour.

Conclusion

Students in their first year of study and sometimes beyond, need the support and scaffolding to traverse and move efficiently through the content and context of higher education to ease the transition into and have the preferred experience of learning in university. The initial findings in this study support this claim. Both the findings and the literature indicate that, with guidance and interventions designed to support and empower them, students are definitely enabled to make the transition from school to university and succeed. These results are relevant for those educators and policy planners who are interested in increasing retention and diminishing drop-out rates, as well as those who hope to 'ease the articulation gap'. Both King (1999) and Kuh (2005) liken college for the first-year student to a jigsaw puzzle made up of many puzzling pieces that do not seem to fit. Academic/Learning Development can help students to find a way to fit the puzzle pieces together and find direction in a transitional phase of their lives.

Through supported learning of skills and strategies to negotiate the puzzle that constitutes the first year of study, learning development can provide help for the academically at-risk student to attain a greater measure of academic competence. The university has to make provision for and actively market academic support so that students remain engaged. Persistence and retention instead of drop-out and attrition will then become the experience of more students in higher education.

Acknowledgements

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Research article

Academic Guidance for Undergraduate Students in a South African Medical School: Can we guide them all?

Mpho P. Jama*

Abstract

Higher education institutions, including medical schools, still grapple with the challenge of poor academic performance of students. Some studies report the positive results of providing academic guidance for common challenges such as poor and/or ineffective time management, study methods, test- and exam-taking techniques and management, and the high academic workload of undergraduate medical students. However, limited detailed insights and understanding of medical students who experience more complex challenges are available.

This study was conducted at a medical school in South Africa to determine undergraduate medical students' perceptions of factors affecting their academic performance. A total of 89 semi-structured interviews were held with undergraduate medical students who were identified as having academic problems between 2012 and 2015. According to the results, more blacks, males and first- and second-year students experienced poor academic performance. Prominent findings included the harsh realities and implications of lack of accommodation for black students; how poor academic performance can lead to an array of other social and psychological problems, such as withdrawal of bursaries and negative achievement emotions that some students experience. Compared to the usual objective measures of individual ability, the rich qualitative data of cases presented in this study reveal critical, real insights and understanding of students' challenges from their own perspective.

Keywords

academic guidance, academic performance, academic self-perception, student challenges, student experience, student development, student success, undergraduate medical students

Introduction

In general, studies regarding factors affecting the academic performance of students worldwide have mainly focused on social and academic variables affecting students from disadvantaged school and family backgrounds, often referred to as non-traditional students. In medical education, studies have reported on academic and non–academic factors such as the increased volume of complex material, ineffective time management and study skills, long hours and limited time for self, as well as personal and exam problems that affect the

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academic performance of undergraduate medical students (AlFaris *et al.*, 2014; Artino, La Rochelle & Durning, 2010; Cleland, Arnold & Chesser, 2005; Salem *et al.*, 2013; Sayer, Chaput De Saintonge, Evans & Wood, 2002; Sohail, 2013; West & Sadoski, 2011). One of the key aspects of addressing this challenge is to teach time-management principles, such as avoiding procrastination, previewing information, reviewing material shortly after presentation, prioritising items, managing study periods and making time for other commitments (West & Sadoski, 2011).

With regard to gender, it has been reported that male students perform poorly academically compared to female students (Algan, Cahuc & Shleifer, 2013; Fortin, Oreopoulos & Phipps, 2015). In medicine, a South African study by Moagi-Jama (2009) reported the same findings among undergraduate students. Salem *et al.* (2013) also found a similar trend in a Saudi medical school.

With regard to racial comparisons, Woolf, Potts and McManus (2011) reported that non-black medical students had better throughput rates than their black counterparts. In South Africa, Lehmann, Andrews and Sanders (2000) and Moagi-Jama (2009) also reported high attrition rates among black undergraduate medical students. In the United Kingdom, Esmail and Roberts (2013) found that the pass rates of both British black and minority ethnic graduates and international medical graduates were lower than the pass rates of white UK graduates.

Generally, in higher education, research has shown that the majority of students leave university during the first year of study, with most experiencing emotional challenges that in turn affect their academic performance (Sperry, 2015). In medicine, the results of studies regarding poor academic performance of students during the second year have been reported by Lehmann *et al.* (2000) and Moagi-Jama (2009).

A common assumption is that medical students are predominantly high-functioning and successful, and possess inherently strong motivational beliefs and advanced coping mechanisms that will help them to deal with negative achievement emotions. Regrettably, this is not the case because medical students are not immune to such emotions (Artino *et al.*, 2010).

Although numerous studies have reported on the challenges of medical students, Todres, Tsimtsiou, Sidhu, Stephenson and Jones (2012) noted that little is known about their own perceptions of factors that affect their academic performance. Given the consequences of not detecting the problems of students who go on to either fail, drop out or qualify as problem doctors, medical teachers and advisors must know what to look out for in their medical students (Artino *et al.*, 2010) and develop a deeper understanding of their challenges. Hence the importance of this study, the aim of which was to determine the students' own perceptions of factors affecting their academic performance in an attempt to provide a deeper understanding of some aspects of the web of complex challenges that they face.

Context

Undergraduate medical training in the School of Medicine in the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of the Free State (UFS) in South Africa is offered in a Programme

for Professional Medicine leading to conferral of the degree Medicinae Baccalaureus and Chirurgiae Baccalaureus (MBChB). The programme is structured in three phases and spans a minimum of five years of full-time study. Phase I commences in Year 1 Semester 1; Phase II commences in Year 1 Semester 2 to Year 3 Semester 5, with Phase III commencing in Year 3 Semester 6 up to Year 5 Semester 10. In Phases I and II, the content of the curriculum is arranged in thematic or system-based modules, while Phase III is devoted to clinical medicine. Students commence their clinical training in Year 3 Semester 6 and continue to Year 5 (final) Semester 10. A programme director manages the programme with the assistance of phase chairpersons for each of the three phases. Furthermore, each module has a module leader. The total number of students (1st to 5th year) in a year is approximately 750.

The main focus in the Division of Student Learning and Development (DSLD) in the Faculty of Health Sciences is to contribute to the academic success of students and this is achieved by designing and implementing programmes, strategies and mechanisms to develop and support students. The development and support is provided by an academic staff member referred to as the student support practitioner.

Methods

Process of identifying students with academic problems

The following process is followed to identify students in the School of Medicine who have academic problems: (i) the phase chairpersons and module leaders send all test and exam results to the programme director; (ii) after receiving the results, the programme director notifies all students with a mark below 55% to consult a student support practitioner; (iii) at times the module leaders also refer students with academic problems directly to the student support practitioner; (iv) the student support practitioner conducts academic guidance interviews with the students referred by the programme director and/or module leaders. (v) Students can also decide by themselves to visit a student support practitioner.

Academic guidance interviews

Individual interviews were held with all the students who were referred and provided with academic guidance by the student support practitioner. An interview guide was used to capture the following data: gender, race, year of study, previous and recent tests and examination results, and students' own perceptions of their academic performance. The main focus during the interviews was on the students' self-perception with regard to reasons for poor academic performance. According to Meltzer, Katzir, Miller, Reddy and Roditi (2004), the term 'academic self-perception' is sometimes used interchangeably with other terms such as 'academic self-concept' and 'academic self-efficacy', to refer to variables such as, among others, academic success or failure. During these interviews some 'cues' were given to encourage students to reflect further (Denison, Currie, Laing & Heys, 2006) on their perceived reasons for poor academic performance. As reported by Saunders, Davis, Williams and Williams (2004), there is a positive relationship between self-perception and academic outcomes. Importantly, students' self-perceptions are better

predictors of academic performance than objective measures that determine their academic ability (Colbeck, Cabrerra & Terenzini, 2001). According to Balmer, Richards and Varpio (2015), these self-perceptions are real. For this study, academic self-perception refers to undergraduate medical students' own perception of factors that contributed to their poor academic performance as reported during the interviews with the student support practitioner.

Although students are referred according to the process explained above, not all of them sought the services of the student support practitioners for academic guidance. According to the records, 168 of the 750 (22.4%) undergraduate medical students were referred between 2012 and 2015. Only 89 of the 168 (52.9%) requested academic guidance. Semi-structured individual academic guidance interviews were held with the students who were identified as having academic problems. In terms of the ethics of the study, the research formed part of an ongoing research project registered with the Ethics Committee of the UFS Faculty of Health Sciences (ETOVS 154\06). The participants gave consent before the interviews, participation was voluntary and they were informed that all personal information would be kept confidential. All the names used in the article are pseudonyms. The main aim of the interviews was to determine students' perceptions of factors that affected their academic performance.

Results and Analysis

Although the main aim of the interviews was to determine students' perceptions of factors that affected their academic performance, it was also important to identify their biographic profile. Most of the results emanating from the interviews confirmed the same biographic variables regarding the academic performance of students. Firstly, 61% of the students with poor academic performance were male. Secondly, more black students (59%) were provided with guidance for poor academic performance. These findings show that the notion 'access with success' for black students still has not been realised in higher education in a developing country such as South Africa and in developed countries. Lastly, most students who reported academic challenges were in the first and second year of study (41% and 47%, respectively).

The qualitative responses from the reports of interviews were read and re-read to get an overall understanding and sense of the data, thus discovering meanings, patterns and connections (Bradley, Curry & Devers, 2007; De Vos, 2005). In addition, the researcher's own thoughts, reflections and intuition were used to discover meanings, patterns and themes, which was possibly due to the researcher's 16 years of experience working as a student support practitioner in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Furthermore, Tinto's theory of academic and social integration (Tinto, 1975, 2014) was used as a guide to develop themes to determine factors affecting the academic performance of these students. The purpose of using a theory was to guide further outcomes and interventions. Using the identified themes assisted in characterising the experiences of the students from the whole data (Bradley *et al.*, 2007). Finally, data were conceptualised and linked to actual students' responses as written in the records of interviews (Niewenhuis, 2007).

The following three main recurring themes that were identified in the analysis of data were also not surprising, although the rich data of the students' own perception of factors that affected their academic performance provided more critical insights and understanding: academic, social and psychological.

Academic factors

Most students felt that one of their challenges was the unmanageable academic workload, with one student stating that she was "struggling to get through the massive content". In addition to the academic workload, some students reported a challenge with managing their time effectively. A notable finding was that students seemed to struggle to answer integrated questions as the School of Medicine has adopted an Integrated Medical Curriculum (IMC). Unlike the traditional methods of assessment, the assessment in the IMC consists of an Integrated Medical Assessment (IMA). Instead of the usual test and exam covering the work dealt with in one particular module, the IMA questions integrate the content of three to four modules in one paper, thus requiring a student to study the content of all these modules when preparing for an assessment. For example, in the first year of study, one of the IMA question papers consists of four modules, namely General Skills, Psychology, Community Health and Concepts of Health and Disease.

Social factors

As expected, students reported social factors such as deaths in the family, financial problems and involvement in extracurricular activities in residences. One black female student reported that her mother had been a domestic worker and they were both living in a one-room dwelling at the back of the employer's house. In a country such as South Africa, an employer in such a case is usually a white person and the employee is a black person. Among the many other problems that this student shared was an incident in which she forgot to close the main gate, and her mother's employer shouted at her and made utterances such as she "doubts if she will be a good doctor if she cannot even follow a simple instruction such as closing a gate". According to this student, this statement had remained in her mind, made her doubt her intellectual ability and consequently, she developed low self-esteem.

Another case is that of a black male student who came from a small rural town and could not be accommodated in the university residences. Eventually he also went to stay in a one-room dwelling at the back of an uncle's house. Unlike the previous student, this particular student stayed with a family member. However, the problem was that the uncle was selling liquor and his 'customers' were noisy, and therefore the student could not study effectively.

Psychological factors

Once again the most common psychological factors that students mentioned were feelings of hopelessness, anxiety, panic attacks, negative feelings, loss of self-esteem, loss of

motivation and sleeplessness. What was striking was a student who reported that she was 'bulimic' for over three months and did not want her mother to know because she was depressed due to her parents' marital problems. This student's behaviour was consistent with the findings reported by Chew-Graham, Rogers and Yassin (2003) that medical students do not seek support for psychological problems.

Deeper Insights and Understanding of Students' Challenges

The following cases provide deeper insights into and understanding of the type of challenges that could not be resolved by intensive academic guidance. The names that are used are pseudonyms.

Mixed ethnicity male Cecil

Cecil was referred for academic guidance because he had failed four modules in the first semester of his first year. During the interview he stated that he only failed the first test. No academic guidance was provided because he stated that he had no problems. He actually gave an assurance that "everything is under control" and promised to come back and report on his progress regarding his studies. Cecil never came back to do this and the student support practitioner sent him a message to come for academic guidance to which he did not respond.

According to the assessment regulations of the School of Medicine, Cecil could not write exams and failed his first year. He wrote a letter to the Appeals Committee requesting the opportunity to write the exams. In the appeal letter, he stated that he had minor problems at home and thought they would be resolved. His appeal was not successful. Subsequently he came back with his mother to enquire why his appeal was not successful. The programme director explained the regulations to both of them. On further enquiry as to why he did not make use of other support services such as tutoring and mentoring, he stated that he did not make any effort to find out about them. This was not true because all the first-year students are provided with information about these services at the beginning of the year and reminded to use them regularly by the programme director, module leaders and lecturers. Cecil's case might be a symptom of students who cannot regulate their own learning. These are students who lack the "will" and "skill" to take responsibility for their own learning (Sandars, Patel, Steele & McAreavey, 2014).

White male Stefan

Stefan was also a first-year student who was referred for academic guidance because of his poor academic performance. During the first interview he admitted that he had always struggled with low self-esteem, felt negative and pessimistic about everything in life and struggled to maintain personal relationships. Stefan was referred to a psychologist and encouraged to attend academic guidance sessions as well. According to a report from the psychologist, he never attended all his sessions despite the reminders that were sent to him. With regard to academic guidance, he also never reported back. These two interventions did not help him and he failed his first year of study. Stefan's case is the same as the case

of Cecil mentioned earlier. He had psychological problems and did not use the support services effectively.

Black female Neo

Neo failed her examinations at the end of the first semester of her first year and, according to the rules, was admitted to a remedial programme during the second semester. No academic guidance was provided during the first semester because she was performing well before the exams. During the first academic guidance interview in the second semester, Neo stated she failed because she underestimated the academic workload. She passed all her modules in the remedial programme and was re-admitted the following year. Unfortunately, her bursary was suspended because she failed and her mother took a loan to pay for her studies. As is the case with most loans, the amount of money was not sufficient to pay for all expenses.

Although Neo was repeating her first year, her performance was still not satisfactory. She was referred for academic guidance. During the interview, she reported that she was struggling with her "thought processes" and was afraid that she would fail again. Neo was referred to a psychologist. Fortunately, she passed her first year. During her second year she continued to struggle with her studies. During the interview she reported that she had personal problems and feelings of anxiety. Despite psychological intervention and further academic guidance she failed the second year. Neo's case provides insights into a student whose problems started as academic but escalated to psychological and social problems.

Black male Tsepo

Tsepo was referred for academic guidance during his first year of study. During the interview he stated that after completing high school, he studied Economics for three years. He did not obtain a qualification because he "felt that Economics was not for him". The following year he worked at a retail store but found it "depressing" and left to pursue part-time studies in Accounting, which he never completed either. In the following, year he registered as a part-time student to improve his Chemistry, Physics and Biology high school marks in order to apply for Medicine. He was successful and was admitted as a medical student. Tsepo stated that he always knew that "he was not cut out for the corporate world because he was very compassionate".

On enquiring about his own perception of his poor academic performance he mentioned the following: (i) he always had a "depressive personality and suffered from chronic depression his whole life" but was never treated; (ii) he had an abusive childhood because his mother was a "monster" and his father was a "ghost"; (iii) he did not have a close friend or a girlfriend; (iv) he was impatient with "lesser" people who he explained as those who were ignorant and illiterate; and (iv) he was at that time writing a short story. Tsepo was referred to a psychologist but did not complete his sessions. He failed his first year of study, could not be admitted into the second semester remedial programme according to the regulations and was advised to reapply after successful counselling. Tsepo was one of the multifaceted cases requiring multiple interventions that could not be provided.

Black male Lebo

Lebo failed his first year of study as well, was admitted to the remedial programme and repeated his first year the following year. He passed and proceeded to the second year. Once again Lebo failed during the first semester of the second year. He was allocated a personal mentor and was urged to attend regular academic guidance during the second semester, which he did attend. Lebo passed and proceeded to the third year of study. As is the case with most students who fail, his bursary was suspended. At the beginning of the year he struggled to get accommodation and stated that he was "squatting illegally" and slept on the floor in one of his fellow student's rooms in the university residence. His parents managed to pay for his registration, but he continued to struggle with other living expenses such as food and books. During this period, Lebo continued with academic guidance sessions with the mentor. However, his performance did not improve because of the following academic problems: (i) not being able to answer case study questions that required him to apply theoretical knowledge; (ii) inability to manage multiple-choice questions in one of the tests; and (iii) not following instructions in one of the question papers, stating that he "missed the integrated questions". Additional support was provided by some lecturers who, for example, discussed question papers and his answers and spent time with him in the museum and dissection room to help him understand Anatomy. At one stage Lebo failed to write one test claiming that he had overslept. Because of his particular circumstances he was allowed to write a special test.

Once again he did not perform well in his formative assessment. Because of the regulations he could not write his exam at the end of the third year. He wrote a letter to the Appeals Committee requesting permission to write exams. In the letter he stated that he had financial problems and was not satisfied with how marks were allocated for some of his tests. After consideration, his appeal was not successful. Eventually he dropped out of medicine.

Lebo is one of the cases with multiple problems and intensive academic interventions that could not help him. Unfortunately some of the medical programmes in South Africa do not have an exit level that can allow a student to be awarded a qualification or certificate for the number of years he or she has spent studying.

Discussion

Despite being provided with information and constantly encouraged to make use of the services of the DSLD, some students did not make use of these services at all or did not use them effectively. One of the reasons for that was some of the students' perception that they would cope and did not need these services. Students such as Cecil, Stefan and Tsepo are typical examples of students who do not use support services (Jiménez *et al.*, 2015). Another concern is that the attendance of support programmes is voluntary and in most cases these are attended by motivated students who are performing well (Dancer, Morrison & Tarr, 2015).

Other students' perception of factors that affected their academic performance was the unmanageable volume and underestimation of the high academic workload. Coupled

with the workload were the complicated IMA tests and examinations, which together usually constitute one of the challenges faced by medical students (Sandars *et al.*, 2014). This provides a deeper understanding of the assessment challenges that this group of students experience. In the case of students' perceptions of social factors that affected their academic performance, one of the challenges was accommodation. The comments made by the two students who mentioned accommodation difficulties provided a deeper understanding of this type of challenge. Unfortunately, not all higher education institutions are able to accommodate students in their on-campus residences; hence students resort to unsuitable places for accommodation. In the USA, only 20% of students live on campus (Tinto, 2014). Also, students such as these cannot afford decent accommodation because of financial problems. Therefore, typical academic guidance on time management, study methods and test and exam techniques cannot help such students until the social problems such as accommodation are resolved.

The two important closely related dimensions of students' challenges with regard to their academic performance and support as described above are academic and personal (Sandars *et al.*, 2014). In this study, the psychological dimension was also interrelated to these two issues. For instance, some of the students' perceptions of factors that affected their academic performance in the psychological dimension were, among others, feelings of hopelessness, anxiety and negative emotions. In some instances, as was the case with Tsepo and Stefan, the psychological problems preceded the academic problems, while in other cases, such as Neo's, the academic and social problems preceded the psychological problems.

Conclusion

As compared to the usual objective measures of individual ability, the rich qualitative data presented in this study revealed critical and real insights and understanding of students' challenges from their own perspective. Every institution has an obligation to provide academic, personal and financial support to the best of its ability once a student is admitted. Sometimes it can be easy to identify students' challenges, but provision of the relevant support can be more challenging. Although institutions aspire to guide all students to succeed, the unavoidable fact is that they have little control over some of their many challenges as revealed in this study. Also, some of the common initiatives are not always grounded in complete understanding of and insight into the social structures (Balmer *et al.*, 2015) and challenges of the students as revealed in this study.

As asserted by Sandars *et al*. (2014), academic problems are just the 'tip of the iceberg' and there is no simple solution or magic bullet (Tinto, 2014) for student support and guidance. Hence, supporting students with the challenges described in this study requires more than academic guidance. For instance, it is common knowledge that one of the main challenges facing students is finances. Funding for tertiary education has become more challenging because globally most countries are facing economic crises. Some of the first-world countries cannot support developing countries such as South Africa, which is now perceived as one of the first-world countries on the African continent. Consequently, most of the funding from first-world countries goes to underdeveloped countries. For students

who ultimately receive a bursary, as was the case with the students referred to, sponsors have requirements that do not consider other challenges that students face and they ultimately terminate or suspend funding. Eventually, this leads to an array of other social and psychological problems.

It is evident that the students described here required holistic support for the complex web of challenges that they faced. This type of support should be provided in a trusting and supportive environment where students can freely talk about their problems rather than only explaining the web of challenges when they are identified as experiencing academic problems.

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Declaration of Interest

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Research article

Career Development among Undergraduate Students of Madda Walabu University, South East Ethiopia

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Abstract

Career guidance and counselling is a vaguely implemented concept in most educational institutions, governmental and non-governmental organisations. The severity of the problem and scarcity of relevant information among university students have prompted the undertaking of this study the aim of which was to assess career development among undergraduate students of Madda Walabu University. Cross-sectional study design was employed to gather quantitative data through self-administered structured questionnaires. The participants in the study were 605 undergraduate students of Madda Walabu University who were recruited through multi-stage sampling. The analysis employed SPSS-20.0 to calculate t-test and ANOVA. The findings suggested that socio-demographic variables were important in determining the factors, levels and variances in career development. The participants' perceived benefit of career development has shown that there is a statistically significant difference between the expected mean and the observed mean, t (604) =29.11, p<.01. However, they had only some unsatisfactory information on career development and most of them (47.4%) did not have a bright future. The result of this study showed that career development is important in understanding students' personal values, clarifying their goals, career choice directions and job-searching skills. Because the respondents' reported information on career development is so poor, lack of future direction and decreased performance are inevitable. It is suggested that career counselling services are seen to be highly recommendable in advancing students' career development in many aspects.

Keywords

career development, socio-demographic variables, university students

Introduction

Career guidance and counselling is a vaguely implemented concept in most educational institutions, governmental and non–governmental organisations. Students need a professional counsellor's guidance to develop their career. Student services should be available on campus to help them develop self–awareness (personal interests, skills, potentials, weaknesses) and assess occupational opportunities such as, employment trends, expected

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competencies in the field, requirements for employment and job descriptions related to the area. Students also need to prepare a career plan related to their career research, goal setting and means of accomplishing goals, and develop job-searching skills (identifying prospective employers, preparing résumés, preparing for interviews). Hence, the role of career guidance counselling services is invaluable in enabling students to select the best fit with their ability, interest and personality.

Nayak and Rao (2004) disclosed that discipline choice is a very important decision and that it is a long process rather than a simple incident. Vocational interests and choices do not appear all of a sudden during adolescence; they appear as a result of the development process. Different scholars have listed the main factors which can have a major influence on the selection of occupational types. For example, Mesfin (2000) mentioned that the most frequent factors are interest in the job, personal abilities, personality traits, security, stability and prestige appeared to play a subsidiary role in influencing the choice of a vocation. In general students are uncertain of what courses they should study, and there is always a preference for courses that are believed to be easy or enjoyable. Most of the students do not understand the relationship between course selections and their future destinations for business, interest and physical fit; therefore, the connection between education and career entry is also not understood by many (Stuart, 2002). It is emphasised that students who join different occupational training areas should select and be placed in accordance with their interests, aptitudes and capabilities for the requirements of that particular occupation (Antinios, 2006; Heluf, 2005).

Even though students' career choice, interest and aptitude are essential factors influencing their success in universities and colleges, the Ethiopian tertiary education admission system is merely based on university entrance examination results and some affirmative action targeting girls, physically disabled students and students from 'developing' regions believed to be disadvantaged.

Scholars in the field recommend that comprehensive modern career guidance and counselling programmes will be effective in assisting students, along with their parents, in responding to these and similar issues. It is believed that when career counsellors have time, resources and the structure of a comprehensive programme within which to work, worthy things happen. These include improving academic achievement, helping students to take more demanding courses and development and use of career plans (Day as cited in Yilfashewa, 2011).

Through improving career guidance demands for young people, policy makers can address challenges in tertiary education. There challenges are in meeting gaps in access, level of quality of services and improving the nature of services. In college, the major challenges are to provide sufficient human and capital resources of the right type within educational settings. Gaps in access are particularly evident in career development and in the vocational tracks of college settings. There is generally a lack of career guidance provision for students in tertiary education despite the significant benefits of career development (Sun & Yuen, 2012).

Some local researchers described that the existing modern counselling services in Ethiopia are confined to educational settings, especially universities; but the availability

of counselling in non-academic settings is insignificant (Yusuf, 1998). Thus, the process of vocational development is a continuous, ongoing one, and it is essentially an act of developing and implementing a self-concept.

Counselling Services in Madda Walabu University

The origin of provision of counselling services to the students at Madda Walabu University was in September 2008. It commenced with employing a counsellor who had the qualification of Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. This person worked as a student counsellor for about two years. During the first year of service, many functions were not fulfilled. Among these, the counselling service office location was not suitable for all students. The university administrators did not give much emphasis to the services. Counselling services for the students were considered useless.

Between 2010 and 2012, the counselling service was unofficially provided by the dean. This service is not recognised by the university's administrators. The services covered various psychological, academic and social problems requiring the help of professionals. The counselling service was subsequently closed for two years whereafter the university employed two Bachelor of Arts in Psychology graduates as counsellors.

Addressing individuals and group trainees' problems needs educational and practical experiences at individual, small-scale and association levels as well as careful career guidance and counselling services. Students need this career counselling from various angles ranging from field selection, marketing and recruitment potentialities to interests and other psychological requirements, and physical and psychological fitness. Seeking the required readiness appropriate for career counselling and guidance services could be provided to promote the overall development of the trainees and the country. It also enables learners and practitioners to be productive for themselves as well as for society.

Hence, it is unquestionable that the relevance of conducting a study on this issue is that it gives prompt solutions for the improvement of the service. Unless the psychosocial and emotional problems of students are addressed through effective career counselling services, these problems are aggravated or persist at the same pace, resulting in the wastage of more human resources.

Methods

Research design and area

The study used a cross-sectional survey design to collect data for portraying the characteristics of career development among undergraduate students of Madda Malabu University which is found in Ethiopia; and located at a distance of 430 km to the southeast of Addis Ababa. This design was chosen because of its appropriateness for the purposes of the study. The cross-sectional survey design is suitable for describing the way things are. The data gathered from respondents through questionnaires were used to discover particular characteristics of undergraduate university students. The study used quantitative design because all variables in this research were measured instead of being manipulated.

The study was conducted among 605 randomly selected regular undergraduate students in March 2013. The university has two campuses: Robe main campus and Goba College of Medicine and Health Sciences. In 2013 the university had ten schools, one institute, one college and thirty-seven departments with a total number of 5,960 undergraduate students.

Sampling and participants

This study used 605 randomly selected undergraduate students of Madda Walabu University in March 2013.

Table 1: Background information of sample students by college/school and department

Institute: College/School	Department	Sample for Regular	Sample for Extension
Engineering and Technology	Civil and Urban Engineering	36	–
	Construction Technology and Management	33	5
	Water Resource and Irrigation	–	–
	Information System	–	–
	Computer Science	–	8
Mathematical Science	Mathematics	–	–
	Statistics	36	–
Natural Science	Biology	38	–
	Physics	–	–
	Chemistry	–	–
	Sport Science	16	–
Biodiversity and Natural Resources	Eco-Tourism	–	–
	Natural Resource Management	–	–
	Forestry	–	–
College of Health Science	Generic Nursing	40	14
	Health Officer	35	11
	Midwifery	25	–
	Medicine	–	–
Agriculture	Animal Science	–	–
	Plant Science	20	–
	Rural Development and Agricultural Extension	–	–
Business and Economics	Accounting	34	9
	Economics	32	–
	Marketing Management	22	–
	Management	29	12
Social Science	Tourism Management	18	–
	Geography	–	–
	History	18	–

Institute: College/School	Department	Sample for Regular	Sample for Extension
Behavioral Science	Civic and Ethical Education	17	–
	Sociology	24	10
	Law	–	–
	Psychology	–	–
Language	English	10	–
	Afan Oromo	20	13
	Journalism	–	–
	Amharic	–	–
Institute of Pedagogical Science	EDPM# Educational Planning	20	–
Subtotal		532	82
Total		605	

#EDPM – Educational Development Planning and Management

The samples in Table 1 were determined based on single population proportion to size sampling in relation to college/school and department. For more information see the above Table 1.

Regular undergraduate students of Madda Walabu University were the source population and the study populations were those students selected for the study through simple random sampling. The sample size was determined by using a single population proportion formula considering the following assumptions: proportion of career development which was 50%, level of confidence of 95%, margin of error 0.05, design effect of 1.5 and 10% non-response rate. Finally the sample size was computed to be 605 by using the following formula:

The respondents were stratified into the health and non-health campus. From the total ten non-health schools (Robe campus) and one medicine and health sciences college of the university (Goba campus), one college, one institute and nine schools were selected randomly. The total sample size of the study was allocated proportionally for the schools/college. Samples allocated for the schools/college were allocated proportionally for the stratified class year under the departments of selected schools/college.

Data collection and analysis

In order to collect relevant and reliable data the researcher employed questionnaires which were used before by scholars in the area. Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires. Supervision of the data collection was done by the instructors from different schools in the university. The questionnaires were first developed in English and then translated into both Afan Oromo and Amharic languages to suit the respondents. Data-collection facilitators were fluent speakers of both Afan Oromo and Amharic language. Two days' training were allocated for data collectors on how to collect and process

data. *SPSS-20.0* was used to compute descriptive statistics, analysis of *t*-test and ANOVA because the questionnaire was Likert scale or ordinal type.

Ethical considerations

Ethical issues were approved by the Addis Ababa research review committee. After approval for ethical clearance, communication was made with Madda Walabu University using the joint letter taken from Addis Ababa University before data collection. Prior to administering the questionnaire, the objectives of the study were clearly explained to the participants and oral informed consent was obtained. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured throughout the execution of the study. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary that they could withdraw from the study at any time if they wished to do so and that this would not affect any service or benefit that they were get from any institution.

Operational definitions

Career: a job or profession for which one is trained and in which one intends to be involved through life.

Career development: encompasses all activities that foster the individual student's knowledge, skills and capacities in relation to planning, developing and directing their career through informed choices. Career development involves the person's creation of a career pattern, decision-making style, integration of life roles, value expression, and life-role self-concepts (Herr *et al.*, cited in Niles & Harris-Bowlsbey, 2009).

Career information: comprises the delivery of accessible written, text, online, media or oral information concerning career needs and pathways; and includes career fairs, employer presentations, documents from tertiary providers and employers, and job search websites. It incorporates opportunities for students to relate career information to personal, career opportunities, progression routes, and build knowledge about where support may be available and how to access it.

Career counselling: refers to the professional help provided to students to deal with their career concerns and to facilitate their career development. Helping students in field selection and becoming aware of the many occupations available for exploration; assisting them in deciding what to do after their graduation; and helping them to understand the challenges and opportunities of work are the main issues of career counselling in educational settings.

Career guidance: the process of providing an individual with career information and information about the world of work (information, exploration). This term is used interchangeably with vocational guidance.

Vocational guidance: the process of helping an individual to choose an occupation, to prepare for it, to enter into it, and progress in it. It is vital in assisting students who have the usual problems experienced in vocational development. It was originally thought to be provided only prior to training and employment.

Results

This section deals with the findings of the study. The aim of this study is to investigate the status of career development of Madda Walabu University undergraduate students. To assess the overall status among Madda Walabu University students, the researcher used quantitative data based on self-administered structured questionnaires.

It is believed that the demographic characteristics of students may determine their career development status. Hence, students' socio-demographic characteristics were studied and the results are presented hereunder.

Table 2: Socio-demographic variables in terms of age, gender, origin of residential and academic year level of respondents

Variables		N	%
Gender	Male	452	74.7
	Female	153	25.3
Admission type	Regular	523	86.4
	Extension	82	13.6
Origin of residential	Urban	239	39.5
	Rural	361	59.7
Age	16–20	194	32.1
	21–25	353	58.3
	26–30	47	7.8
	31–35	11	1.8
Academic year level	I	244	40.3
	II	203	33.5
	III	138	22.7
	IV	20	3.6

Table 2 describes the general information of the student respondents based on their socio-demographic characteristics. The total number of participants in the study was 605. As indicated, 452 (74.7%) of the participants were male, whereas the rest 153 (25.3%) were female. It is shown clearly in the table above that the frequency of participants in terms of age ranges from 21–25 years old. This constitutes the majority of the respondents which was 353 (58.3%). On the other hand, 194 (32.1 %) of them were in the age range of 16–20 years. Respondents in the age range of 26–30 was 47 (7.8%). The rest of the respondents were in the age range of 31–35, which accounts for 11 (1.8%).

In relation to frequency of participants in terms of origin of residential, from urban residence were 239 (39.5%) and a large number of the respondents were from rural residence which accounts for 361 (59.7%). Moreover, in terms of academic year level, Year I participants accounted for the majority of the respondents with 244 (40.3%) while Year II, Year III and Year IV respondents totaled 203 (33.5%), 138 (22.7%) and 20 (3.6%) respectively.

Table 3: The importance of career counselling services for the students

Item	Agree		Disagree		Not sure		Total	
	N	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
Understanding students' personal values	431	71.2	54	8.9	120	19.8	605	100
Students to clarify their career goals	362	58.9	52	8.6	191	31.6	605	100
Helping students in their choice of career direction	445	73.6	34	5.6	126	20.8	605	100
Assessing students' skills and abilities	390	64.5	40	6.6	175	28.9	605	100
Locating career information for the students	438	72.4	42	6.9	125	20.7	605	100
Helping students in job-searching techniques	422	69.8	60	9.9	122	20.2	605	100
Developing students' interview skills	397	65.5	53	8.8	155	25.6	605	100
Decision-making skills	381	63.0	47	7.8	176	29.1	605	100
Identifying obstacles to students' career choice	371	61.3	123	20.3	111	18.3	605	100
Helping in writing résumé	385	63.6	126	20.8	94	15.5	605	100

Table 3 clearly illustrates that most respondents do agree with the benefits of a counselling service for career development. Accordingly, the respondents pointed out that in relation to their career development, a counselling service would help them to understand their personal values (71.2%) to classify their career goals (58.9), to assess their skills and abilities (64.5%), to develop their job-searching techniques (69.8%) and to identify obstacles to career choice (61.3%). In contrast, relatively few students − 20.8%, 7.8% and 8.8% − did not agree that the help of a career counselling service would be effective in writing a résumé, decision-making skills and developing students' interview skills respectively. Therefore, Madda Walabu University students believe in the importance of a career counselling service for their career development.

Table 4: One sample *t*-test on perceived benefit due to career counselling

Variables	N	Mean	Expected Mean	SD	Df	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perceived benefit due to career counselling: Sum 1 to 10	605	25.25	20	4.662	604	29.112[#]	.00

[#]$P < 0.01$

One sample *t*-test, used to investigate perceived benefit of career development has shown that there is a statistically significant difference between the expected mean and the observed mean, $t(604) = 29.11$, p<.01. Therefore, students' perceived benefit is above expected.

Table 5: Advancing students' career development

In relation to advancing your career development, have you thus far been successful in:	Agree		Disagree		Not sure		Total	
	N	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
Understanding personal values in career development	341	56.4	159	26.3	105	17.4	605	100
Clarifying your future career goals	342	56.5	158	26.1	105	17.4	605	100
Choosing a career direction	327	54.0	158	26.1	120	19.8	605	100
Assessing abilities, potentials and weak points	345	57.0	135	22.3	125	20.7	605	100
Locating career information	338	55.9	155	25.6	112	18.5	605	100
Acquiring job-search techniques	339	56.1	153	25.3	113	18.7	605	100
Developing interview skills	357	59.0	164	27.1	84	13.9	605	100
Developing decision-making skills	363	60.0	142	23.5	100	16.5	605	100
Identifying obstacles to career choices	357	59.0	135	22.3	113	18.7	605	100
Writing a résumé or other correspondence to advance career	381	63.0	120	19.8	104	17.2	605	100

Counselling services are thus seen to be highly recommendable in advancing career development in many aspects. According to data shown in the Table 5, the respondents believe that advancing students' career development helps them to understand their personal values in their career development (56.4%), to clarify their future career goals (56.5%), to develop decision-making skills (60%), to identify obstacles which might hinder their career choices (59%), and to write a résumé or other correspondence to advance their career. Respondents who disagreed account for 26.1%, 25.6% and 25.3% respectively, claiming that career counselling services do not help in choosing a career direction, locating career information and acquiring job-search techniques. Despite the fact that there is a lack in terms of advancing students' career development in the university, it shows misunderstanding of the students about the concept of advancing students' career development.

Table 6: Students' information on career development

Item	Agree		Disagree		Not sure		Total	
	N	%	n	%	N	%	n	%
Have adequate information	323	53.4	198	32.7	84	13.9	605	100
Do not know where to secure this information	275	45.5	208	34.4	122	20.2	605	100
Graduate and this worries you greatly	283	46.8	204	33.7	118	19.5	605	100
Worry that affects your educational performance	306	50.6	203	33.6	96	15.9	605	100
Do not see a bright future ahead of you	287	47.4	231	38.2	87	14.4	605	100

Table 6 reveals that students have different level of information on career development. Accordingly, about 53.4% reported as they have adequate information, whereas about

45.5% do not know where to secure the information. Even though students have some information on career development, most of them (47.4%) do not see a bright future ahead. This in turn results in creation of worries which affect their educational performance (50.6%). Moreover, almost half of the respondents admitted worrying about what to do and how to get employed after graduation (46.8%). In short, the data shows that the information that the students of Madda Walabu University have in relation to career development is not satisfactory.

Table 7: ANOVA knowledge and information on career development by academic year

	SS	df	MS	F	Sig.
Between groups	110.085	3	36.695		
Within groups	7296.247	597	12.222	3.003#	0.03
Total	**7406.333**	**600**			

#*P < 0.05*

Analysis of variance on knowledge and information on career development has revealed a statistically significant difference among the students based on their year level, $F(3,597) = 3.00$, p<.05. The descriptive statistics have shown that third-year students have greater knowledge of career development. As academic year increases, career development information rises due to exposure to different information sources.

Discussions

According to Hartman (1999) career counsellors provide students with experience that increases knowledge of occupations, training path, lifestyle, employment-seeking skills, decision-making strategies and above all knowledge of self. The finding of Adedunni and Oyesoji (2010) also show that career guidance and counselling services can provide students with the necessary tools to set career goals, and give them an understanding of the education and skills needed to meet their goals. Lack of career counselling undermines the economic productivity of a country due to lack of proper career preparation, training, placement and satisfaction of students. The finding of the current study was consistent with these finding and reported that career counselling helps students to understand personal values, clarify their goals and choices of career direction, and acquire job-searching techniques.

Some students' educational and career aspirations are inhibited due to personal and social difficulties that must be addressed by counsellors if students are to experience success (Schmidt, 1997). In relation to advancing their career development, this study revealed that more than 60% of students recommend career counselling for assistance in developing decision-making skills and writing a résumé or other correspondence to advance their career. The finding also showed that 56% of students were able to understand their personal value, clarify future career goals and acquire job-search techniques as a result of advancing in career development skills.

Career development is seen as a process of individual development rather than just getting employment and includes lifelong behavioral processes and influences that lead to one's work value, choices of occupation, creation of career pattern, decision-making style, role integration, self-identity and career identity, educational literacy and related phenomena (Schutt, 2000). Nziramasanga (1999) also reports that guidance and counselling assists learners in identifying their own talents and in making intelligent choices for their future careers.

The analysis of information on career counselling suggested 53.4% of students have adequate information, whereas about 45.5% do not know where to secure the information. Again, the finding indicates that lack of future vision and decrease in performance among MWU students need attention. Therefore, the counselling centre of MWU should take the importance of career counselling into account in the process of its re-shaping or restructuring.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions have been drawn.

The result of this study showed career development was found to be important in understanding students' personal values, clarifying their goals, career choices and direction, and job-searching skills. However, they reported that information on career development is poor. As a result, the students do not know where to obtain career-related information, resulting in lack of future direction and decrease in performance.

The career development services offered in the university were not enough and also not strong enough to provide adequate information about the characteristics of different vocational fields, labour market information, and skills required by different vocational fields. Career development services through traditional consultancy services from parents, elders and peers may lead trainees to make irrational choices. However, scientific career development services should help to provide necessary information about the course of the study, information about world of work, labour market information and relevant information about abilities and skills in terms of related qualifications and competencies required to take up the identified training programme.

Career development services are relevant in assisting trainees to identify job opportunities and job availabilities in the area of their studies and enable them to avoid wasting time in training for vocations to which they are unsuited. By contrast, the study revealed that career development service was not given adequately in the sample the parent organisation institutions. Therefore, the availability of the services is limited. As a result, this reality has adversely affected the training programme as a whole. Using the intake capacity of higher education institutions as a major criterion can be a cause for some problems like unemployment of trained personnel.

The placement guideline favors students. Moreover, the placement guideline used to place trainees in different vocational institutions gives attention to the living area of trainees during placement activities being undertaken. Finally, career counselling alone does not lead to provision of jobs or eradication of poverty. National governments, therefore, need

to create an economic environment that promotes the growth of enterprises and generally stimulates the economy. When businesses develop and expand, additional labour–market demands emerge for trained personnel, and new job and further training opportunities are created to trace and light the path of industrialisation. For this to happen on a sustainable basis, however, the higher education institutional system must be labour–market relevant, efficient and of high quality.

Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, the researcher made the following recommendations:
- Career guidance and counselling services should be well established in order to reach all students.
- Career guidance and counselling should focus more on creating career self–awareness, and it should adopt a strategy to improve career information and planning among students.
- Career guidance and counselling should be strengthened if students' career awareness and career planning are to improve.
- Career guidance and counselling services should focus on building a bright future for students.
- The Ministry of Education should give more training to career counsellors and provide adequate resources for their use in career guidance and counselling.

Competing Interests

The authors declare that they have no competing of interests.

Authors' Contributions

Abera Getachew (AG) was involved in conceiving the idea, proposal writing, designing, raising funding for the study, data collection, drafting of the manuscript and participated in all implementation stages of the project. He drafted and finalised the text of the manuscript. Gobena Daniel (GD) was involved in proposal writing, raising funding for the study, data collection and participated in all stages of the project's implementation. AG and GD were also involved in data entry, analysing the data, drafting the text of the manuscript and participated in all stages of the project's implementation. AG and GD were both involved in drafting, analysis and reviewing the manuscript critically for important intellectual content and participated in all stages of the research implementation. The authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Socialisation and Professional Identity: Reflections of an Administrator's Pathway into Student Affairs in the United States

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Abstract

Pathways into student affairs careers may not always be clear or well defined. Often, student affairs professionals experience unconventional beginnings. Formal and informal relationships with faculty, staff and students in higher education may eventually inspire a career in student affairs. This process of socialisation positively influenced my development as a student and continues to shape my perspectives about college student development as a professional. My professional identity, influenced by the student affairs socialisation process and reflective practice as a professional in higher education, are discussed.

Keywords

socialisation, professional identity, competencies

An Unconventional Beginning

Professional journeys in student affairs are seldom direct or clearly defined. The pathways, however, are often filled with ongoing interactions and relationships with individuals in helping roles that serve to deepen understanding of the importance of student affairs professionals in the lives of students. For me, this realisation came about unconventionally, and eventually through ongoing dialogue with peers and mentors encountered as a student, and continues to be reinforced through reflective practice as a professional in higher education. The purpose of this article is twofold. Firstly, the influence that student affairs professionals had on my career choice is acknowledged. Secondly, the significance of the student affairs socialisation process in the development of professional identity is discussed. A phenomenological approach is used to explore the ways in which student affairs professionals impacted my overall learning and development. According to phenomenology, knowledge and understanding occur in the everyday world and meaning is made from our subjective experiences (Byrne, 2011). Using this qualitative approach, my "lived experiences" as a student and a professional in higher education are explored with the goals of identifying and describing lived experiences (Schwandt, 2007).

My awareness of student affairs began over thirty-five years ago when many institutions had not yet fully articulated or developed distinct academic programmes to educate student

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affairs professionals. While attending a four-year college, I worked part-time at a two-year community college, distributing attendance folders for faculty when they arrived to teach their evening courses. A benefit of this job was the opportunity to talk with faculty and staff who took an interest in me. My career path, at that time, was undecided even though my education, training and skills were directed toward a career in business.

Although I knew that my interests matched careers that would provide opportunities for me to interact with students, my knowledge base about student affairs and higher education administration as academic disciplines was non-existent. This lack of awareness made it difficult to ask questions about a major or a career that was unknown to me. Furthermore, since I was a commuter student and worked off-campus, my involvement in on-campus activities was limited. Tinto (2014) noted that many college students in the United States do not live on campus and are also employed full time, limiting student involvement in co-curricular activities. Any involvement in supportive networks that I may have experienced occurred in the classroom through faculty and student interactions. Therefore, my entry into the student affairs profession parallels discussions of professional pathways for student affairs practitioners in that, "People enter student affairs careers by accident or by quirk, rather than design" (Brown, 1987:5). My introduction to student affairs and my entry into the student affairs profession may be considered an accident, but surely not a mistake.

Student Affairs as a Career Option

Through my interactions with people working in student affairs at American colleges and universities, I felt the impact of caring administrators and staff on my overall development. I also realised the importance of the services that student affairs professionals provided to students on a daily basis and began to see myself in the role of a helping professional. Although my interest in student affairs was emerging, several mentors encouraged me to seek further education towards a career in business. Like many college graduates at the time, I was at a crossroads of career decision-making. The struggle to connect interests, education and skills with a professional career resulted in unanswered questions and some confusion. In reflecting on my discussions with faculty, I now realise that many people I met during those critical years were unaware of the path to becoming a student affairs professional. Therefore, not only were they unable to suggest student affairs as a career option; they were also unable to suggest ways for me to explore my interests in ways that would assist with career decision-making.

Fortunately, things quickly changed when I was introduced to the dean of students at a large, private research university. My plan was to meet with the dean to discuss applying for a graduate degree programme in marketing or accounting; however, during our two-hour meeting my life was changed. Not only did she learn about the work I had done with students and faculty at a two-year community college, she could see how excited I was when talking about these experiences. She talked with me about student affairs as a career and encouraged me to apply for the master's degree in student personnel administration. My graduate education would begin my pathway into the student affairs profession.

Brown (1987) described a pattern in which the decision to pursue student affairs as a career choice tends to occur later in the college years or after the completion of a bachelor's degree. Exposure to the profession as a career possibility results from interaction with a mentor or role model (Brown, 1987). In my case, the dean of students served as my mentor/role model and exposed me to the student affairs profession as a more realistic choice for a career. Key in this interaction was the time she devoted and concern she showed towards me, as well as her willingness to assist me in my development.

When I began my graduate studies in student personnel administration, I was given the opportunity to learn about student development theory and practice. Having a graduate assistantship in a residence hall was instrumental in helping me to connect student development theory learned in my classes with real-life experiences. I gained a wealth of knowledge by spending time with diverse students in the residence hall, where every day had its unique opportunities and challenges. This work experience also gave me the opportunity to build on-campus relationships that I had missed as a commuter student. Having experienced student life both as an on-campus and commuter student increased my awareness of the needs of both student populations. I began to see how students' needs differed depending on their life experiences and how their ability to connect with the campus environment was influenced by their perceptions of self and others.

In my next graduate assistant position, I worked in a dean of students' office assisting with student programming and working collaboratively with various student-serving units. These experiences helped me to gain invaluable skills as I began to understand the essential roles that admissions, financial aid, student activities, housing and residence life, student disabilities and career services played in student life. I also learned that student affairs professionals' roles and responsibilities include addressing the needs of students on a daily basis through non-academic and out-of-classroom services, particularly services that foster academic and social integration.

While this position spanned a two-year period which is relatively short in terms of engaging with the full scope of the large private university system, I gained a firm foundation for the launch of my professional career in higher education. The socialisation experiences I was exposed to in graduate school played a critical role in preparing me for my early career in student affairs. Hirschy, Wilson, Liddell, Boyle and Pasquesi (2015) emphasised "the importance of authentic experiences that heighten self-awareness and a deeper understanding of themselves as practitioners in the profession" (p. 778).

Transferable Skills in Student Affairs

Working in student affairs in several different college environments provided me with essential skills that I would later use in my career as a university administrator. With a master's degree in student personnel administration, I obtained my first full-time job as an Area Coordinator in residence life at a private university with approximately 8,000 students. I lived and worked on-campus for three years, where my primary role and responsibilities were to help to instill positive norms and to foster a supportive campus environment for a population of diverse students living in the residence halls. I also assisted in providing

experiences for student learning outside of the classroom through student programming. Learning quickly that student affairs professionals wear many hats, I also delved into the area of student conduct. Working in student conduct was informative and taught me that this was not an area that I wanted to pursue. Rather than adjudicating students who violated college norms, I knew I would rather provide students with learning opportunities that assisted in maximising their development as leaders in society. These experiences helped me to understand the importance of community and the need for students to value diversity, equity and social justice as important aspects of their collegiate learning and preparation to live in a global world.

My career in student affairs advanced further when I was promoted to the position of assistant director in housing and residence life at a public university with approximately 10,000 students. It was in this position that I sought to expand my experience of working with on-campus students. Consistent with Wilson, Liddell, Hirschy, and Pasquesi (2016), the role and responsibilities of my mid-level professional student affairs position focused on providing programmes and services that enhanced students' educational and career goals. While in this position, I also managed a residence hall and served as a mentor to undergraduates, particularly students who worked as resident assistants (RAs). As a result of interactions with student affairs mentors, many of these students chose student affairs as their profession. Reynolds (2009) considered mentoring as an aspect of supervision an essential component of student affairs practitioners' personal and professional development.

Looking to enhance my experience in residence life at the university, I became involved with a residential academic support programme where I assisted students who were on academic probation and at risk of being removed from on-campus housing. This experience broadened my interest in working full-time with students on academic and retention issues in college. I successfully transitioned from working in the area of student residence life to working as an academic counsellor at a public urban university with approximately 12,000 students, and subsequently as an assistant director of an academic support programme at a large research university with approximately 35,000 students. In these positions, I provided support to students in all phases of their daily campus life, which included recruitment and first-year orientation through matriculation and graduation. As a result, I was able to interface with many different student affairs/services such as Admissions, Housing and Residence Life, Student Activities, Advising, Career Services, Financial Aid, Registrar, Bursar's Office, Student Conduct, Student Disabilities and Campus Police. The student affairs competencies and skills that I developed continued to guide my approach to working with students. I valued each student as an individual and recognised the potential impact of my role and responsibilities on his or her overall development. I was committed to serving students and helping to make their college experience rewarding no matter in which unit (student affairs or academic affairs) my position was situated.

These experiences further strengthened my professional identity and my commitment to working as a member of a team of professionals in support of students. Using the knowledge, skills and dispositions that I had developed as a student affairs professional and through my work in academic support services, I eventually obtained a director's

position managing off-campus continuing education programmes for a graduate school of education at a large public university with approximately 60,000 students. Working closely with faculty and staff in developing and marketing programmes and professional development courses, I reflected back on my earlier professional experiences and how these experiences had influenced my personal and professional development. I had reached the point in my career where my education and training in business (marketing and advertising) dovetailed nicely with my current work. The culmination of my many years working in student affairs, managing programmes and effectively dealing with crisis situations, along with the opportunity to be entrepreneurial gave me a sense of work fulfillment. The skills I developed in my various positions and my commitment to support students had prepared me for the increased responsibility at each higher-level position.

Multiculturalism and Global Learning

In integrating multicultural awareness, knowledge and skills necessary for effective student affairs work, Pope and Reynolds (1997) helped to advance the student affairs profession by conceptualising a dynamic relationship between seven core competencies that included:

- Multicultural Awareness, Knowledge and Skills
- Helping and Interpersonal Skills
- Assessment and Evaluation
- Teaching and Training
- Ethical and Legal Experience
- Theory and Translation
- Administrative and Management Skills

These competencies were designed to more effectively assist students in understanding their culturally biased assumptions, and to work effectively with racially and culturally diverse students in addressing current social issues on campus.

> Although all student affairs professionals should have basic awareness, knowledge and skills in the seven areas, some professionals will develop more expertise in a particular area than what would be described as the basic and expected competence (Pope & Reynolds, 1997:268–269).

Consistent with changing students' needs, student affairs educators' ten competencies have been revised and updated with social justice and inclusion now included among the domains of knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for effective practice (ACPA/ NASPA, 2015). Given the diversity of today's students, professionals may be expected to have several areas of competence in order to effectively address students' needs.

According to Bresciani (2008), students must know themselves in order to work with culturally diverse others. To this end, Reynolds (2009) stated, "Cultural issues are central to most of the important conversations on our campuses, such as admissions policies, core curricula, campus violence, and how diverse students related to one another" (p. 111). Through reflection of student diversity and the importance of community as central to

the collegiate environment, I decided to focus on creating learning opportunities that deepened cultural understanding. My interests were aligned with transformative learning, global education and study abroad for U.S. adult learners.

To better understand issues of equity, power, privilege and oppression in society, I developed a special topics course for graduate students that evolved into the South Africa Initiative (SAI). The components over the years have included a three-credit graduate cultural immersion course to South Africa, a distinguished lecture series, community service-learning projects, and educational and infrastructure support for South African schools. As a result of these activities, partnerships were developed in South African townships and rural schools, with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and with several U.S. companies. Through these collaborative efforts and intercultural exchanges, students were able to develop culturally relevant knowledge, skills and dispositions for community as well as global citizenship.

The need to increase students' cultural awareness, cultural knowledge and the development of cultural skills is evidenced with increased focus on the internationalisation of higher education (Kortegast & Boisfontaine, 2015). Although the internationalisation of student affairs is relatively new, it has become well recognised (Gansemer-Topf, 2013). There is an increased focus on assisting U.S. students in graduate programmes to develop intercultural competencies in professional preparation and development (Haber & Getz, 2011). To this end, I developed a field placement to enable student affairs graduate interns to develop intercultural competencies through direct engagement in South Africa. The field placement also provides students with the opportunity to develop core student affairs competencies and skills that assist with developing and administering study-abroad programmes.

My interests remain focused on working with students who are engaged in study abroad in South Africa. I also found that students' experiences with multiculturalism and diversity from a global perspective were deepened with an international cultural exchange between South African and U.S. undergraduate student leaders. Students from the United States and South Africa attending the 2015 Global Leadership Summit at the University of the Free State and the 2016 Leadership-for-Change programme at Rutgers University reported that lived experiences and direct cross-cultural interactions on each respective campus increased understanding and appreciation of the college student experience. With the increased cultural diversity of students on college campuses, multiculturalism, diversity and social justice must be an integrated component of college student learning and development. Interacting with students at the various campus environments in South Africa and the U.S. has increased my own cultural competence and enhanced my understanding of socio-cultural and identity factors influencing student development.

Conclusion: Impact of Socialisation and Professional Identity

Student Affairs professionals play a critical role in developing the next generation of student affairs leaders. They are considered to be experts on student development and

the environments where students are educated (UNESCO, 2002). Socialisation into the profession can occur early in a college student's life, influenced by meaningful interactions with student affairs professionals. These experiences can begin the minute a student steps onto the campus. Our role includes recognising the students who might be able to contribute to the profession. Years ago, it was the dean of students who recognised that I might be a person who could contribute to the field of student affairs. It only took that one meeting for me to connect my interests to a career in student affairs. As the student affairs profession has become more formalised with pathways into the career, it may be easier to help students to identify the degree programmes and training that will prepare them with the appropriate knowledge, skills and depositions for effective work with students.

A professional identity as a student affairs educator has guided my work with students throughout my career in both student and academic affairs. My educational foundation and subsequent experiences in residence life prepared me with culturally relevant knowledge, skills and dispositions to work effectively in a variety of educational settings. These competencies and skills have kept me current with the changing developmental needs of today's college students. My lived experiences and lessons learned on my professional journey continue to guide my relationships with students and with colleagues in higher education. Along the way, there have been challenges, successes, and opportunities that allowed me to grow in my professional roles and take on increased responsibilities that support student learning and development. Although my professional titles have changed over the years, my student affairs professional identity continues to shape my perceptions of my role as "helper".

I used personal narrative in this article to provide an in-depth understanding of the ways I was socialised into the student affairs profession. My reflection is based on my perspectives of an American student affairs practitioner who has worked in higher education in the United States. I continue to work to increase my cultural awareness, knowledge and skills through study-abroad projects in South Africa and with international educational partnerships in higher education. While I have been able to make meaning of my experiences that have been relevant to my personal and professional development, I recognise that my subjective experiences may be biased based on my own limitations in interpreting my reality. My experiences and the way that I have made meaning from my interactions with others may not be generalisable to practitioners working in differing educational settings both locally and abroad.

As the foundation of student affairs has become more well defined, and the profession is now internationalised, it may be interesting to explore the lived experiences of students who more recently have chosen student affairs as their profession. What were the key socialisation processes and what factors contributed to the development of professional identity? Also, it may be interesting to examine whether there are similarities or differences in the lived experiences of student affairs professionals in different types of institutional settings. Exploring the relationship between dimensions of personal identity (race, gender,

sexual orientation, etc.) and socialisation into the profession may also help to identify how meaning is made from one's lived experiences.

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Professional Mentoring in Student Affairs: Evaluation of a Global Programme

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Abstract

In January 2016, the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) offered a global professional mentoring programme that would link student affairs leaders internationally with new graduates and early career professionals in student services. Protégé participants were primarily new graduates of preparatory programmes in student affairs, or practitioners with less than two years' experience in roles ranging from international services and admissions, academic success, student advising and career services, to new student services Directors. This paper presents the outcomes of the evaluation of the 2016 pilot programme, and recommendations for development of this mentoring initiative. It argues that the programme successfully contributes to advancement of the student support and enrichment components of higher education worldwide, and provides an excellent mentoring experience for the professionals who are shaping the future of student affairs globally.

Keywords

mentoring, professional development, student affairs, global programme, capacity building

Background

The International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) was officially founded in 2010, with the purposes of promoting international standards for student services, professional growth of practitioners, and development of students in higher education. It provides a platform for the global sharing of best practice, internships, conferences and research, and has assisted developing countries as they create their student services systems. IASAS was formally chartered in 2013, under the European Union in Belgium.

Towards achieving its aspirations to develop the student affairs profession globally, a multinational research report was released in 2014 profiling the educational backgrounds, functional roles and professional development of student affairs practitioners from 36 countries (Seifert *et al.*, 2014). Respondents across all regions reported that they primarily engaged in conferences and workshops, and utilised online resources to maintain currency with developments in student affairs. Also notable was the consistent reference to

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networking, the importance of connection with colleagues, and the role that professional associations play in providing those essential contacts and peer learning opportunities.

The practice of e-mentoring for continuing education and to facilitate global communities of practice and development is increasingly well documented (Botero, 2015; Hines, 2007; Singh, 2010). In 2015, the IASAS Board resolved to establish an international mentoring programme that would connect student affairs colleagues across the world, and overcome issues of practice isolation due to remote locations or few local professional peers. New and early career practitioners would be linked with established student affairs leaders internationally, utilising online mentoring, video chat, social media, email and/or telephone for regular connection that would enhance participants' experience and understanding of international issues in the global workplace.

Participation

The new Global eMentoring programme was broadcast on the IASAS website and via email to members, for commencement of a pilot programme which would run from January to June 2016. This was met with a positive response worldwide, and over 40 applications were received from prospective mentors and mentees, with 20 pairings achieved.

Tips for successful partnerships were included in a set of brief programme guidelines on the IASAS website, and the multiple mutual benefits of mentoring were promoted, including:

- Linking with an experienced and collaborative network of peers who are knowledgeable experts interested in developing the skills, capability and confidence of emerging student services leaders;
- Increasing personal effectiveness and success;
- Exploring career advancement opportunities and ideas;
- Accessing different perspectives around strategic issues based on the career experiences and professional insight of peers;
- Guidance in specialised fields or technical disciplines;
- Being challenged to develop or integrate new practice.

Although computer-mediated, the pilot programme was intentionally low-tech, informal and unstructured. It was guided by the diverse personal backgrounds, locations, expectations, digital resources and capacity of both individuals in the mentoring partnership.

Mentors were required to have at least five years' relevant experience, be interested in developing emerging student services leaders, and available to volunteer for regular mentoring communication. Over 20 mentor applications were received from student services professionals at higher education institutions in America, Australia, Canada, Egypt, England, Greece, Kuwait, Liberia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines and Qatar. The mentors came from a variety of top institutional leadership posts across the globe. Many mentors had over 20 years' career experience and were either past or current serving vice-presidents for Student Affairs, dean of students, or student services directors. This provided an exceptional resource of professionals to draw on, bringing rich experiences and perspectives to their mentoring partnerships.

Mentees were required to be new student services/affairs graduates or early career practitioners, typically with less than five years' related experience, and seeking personal and career development and growth through partnership with a professional mentor. Over 20 mentee applications were received from IASAS members in America, Cambodia, Canada, Lithuania, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines and Qatar. Graduate students comprised 35% of the applicants, with a further 35% having two years or less experience in their current student affairs positions. They ranged from roles in international services and admissions, academic success, student advising and career services to new student services Directors.

Evaluation

Following conclusion of the IASAS eMentoring programme in June, mentors and mentees were invited to provide anonymous feedback about their experience in the pilot programme and suggestions for future improvements. A brief online survey, with two free-text questions, was distributed via email link. In particular the two questions were:

- Questionnaire question 1: What were some positive outcomes for you?
- Questionnaire question 2: How can we improve the IASAS eMentoring programme in the future?

Responses were received from 16 participants in total (40%). Of these, the majority had initially heard about the eMentoring programme via email from IASAS, rather than other promotional avenues such as social media, the website, or print material.

Ten mentors, constituting a sample of 50% of the total mentors who had participated in the eMentoring programme, provided feedback about their experiences. While their responses were predominantly positive, it was apparent that some partnerships had experienced difficulty due to mentees being unclear about the outcomes they sought from the mentoring partnership. For around half of these respondents, where commitment to the programme was not strong, or time differences made synchronous connections difficult, the frequency of mentorship meetings was less than once a month. Only 40% of respondents felt that their mentees had clear goals in mind.

This can be illustrated by means of the following quotes from the survey.

> eMentees should be encouraged to have clear goals for participation; we should have guidelines for ending and or continuing the e-mentoring relationship.

> I suggest having more deliberate items to accomplish, that way both can feel they benefited from the programme.

> Have mentees identify as part of the application process what goals and outcomes they hope to accomplish and sharing these with the Mentor upon pairing.

Although mentees were asked in the application form to broadly articulate why they were interested in the global professional mentoring programme, key outcomes were not requested. In the future, determining specifically what a protégé would like to learn, and

how a mentor could best assist them, will also facilitate matching them with the ideal person for a successful mentoring partnership.

Mentoring is a mutually beneficial relationship, and its value through the exchange of objective insights and perspectives can be a key element to professional growth and job satisfaction for student affairs practitioners (Clifford, 2009). Mentors were asked to provide comment about how the programme provided value for them in their established careers. While the motivation for participating in the programme was to 'pay it forward' and support less experienced colleagues, what mentors learnt from mentees was also significant. Mentors felt that their skills in supervision were enhanced, they reflected on their own professional pathways and future, and they broadened their understandings of student services in the international context.

Six mentees (30% of mentees participating in the programme) completed the feedback survey. The lower response is likely a reflection of the varied levels of commitment of mentees (as noted by some mentors): only three respondents recorded that they had had definite goals in mind for their mentoring partnership. Half of the mentees reported meeting with their mentors more than twice per month, and these mentees also rated their overall experience of the programme a staggering 9.6 out of 10. They reported that they had achieved the following aspirations:

• Learning more about student services practices in other countries;
• Connecting with professional colleagues globally; and
• Gaining guidance in navigating the higher education sector and career opportunities.

One mentee reported that he had been invited overseas to shadow his/her mentor in the workplace.

The sometimes polarised experiences that were described by the protégés are consistent with assessments of other professional mentoring programmes. One of the key learnings for Hines (2007), in a review of Librarian mentoring, was the acknowledgement that (like mentors) protégés are busy people with complex lives too, and this can impact on their participation and commitment to the partnership.

New practitioners in resource-limited settings are keen for connection with the global student affairs community. This was demonstrated in a most telling comment responding to how the mentoring programme could be improved:

> By connecting aspiring members from developing countries more and more, and helping them to participate in international conferences.

This recognition of the capacity-building potential for the mentoring programme emphasises the value of the new initiative. It is making an important contribution to the core goals of IASAS, through fostering and enabling inclusive collaboration in the practice, scholarship and professionalisation of student services.

Notably, the mentor and mentee groups were in accord regarding two issues. The first, timing of the programme – both groups were equally divided when asked about the

ideal timeframe for a professional mentoring partnership. Half felt that six months was appropriate, with the remainder preferring an extended programme of twelve months. The second, both groups gave an overall rating of 6 on a Likert-type scale of 10 for the pilot programme – a positive experience but leaving room for improvements – with the highest scores (10) provided by respondents who had identified clear goals for their mentorship.

Mentorship for Enhancing Professional Development: Recommendations

The IASAS pilot programme attracted mentee applications from key target groups where IASAS seeks to build professional and community capacity: early career practitioners, and institutions developing their student affairs and services systems.

To enhance the eMentoring programme in its next iteration, the evaluation of the pilot programme suggests the following improvements as recommendations:

- The time period for the mentoring programme should be extended to eight months.
- Mentees ought to articulate clear goals for participation in their application form.
- A structured discussion guide should be provided to mentors and mentees for the initial meetings and goal setting.
- The Coordinator of the eMentorship programme should have regular contact with the programme participants in the first months of pairing.

Overall, both mentors and mentees indicated that the programme was valued and worthwhile; however, many participants felt that clear goals and greater structure were required for them to maximise the partnership. The requests for structure could indicate benefit in utilising a formal computer-based mentoring platform in the future. Overall, the enthusiastic international response to the programme, and feedback obtained from this initial mentoring experience, have provided valuable insights that will inform improvements responding to universal accessibility, and mentor and protégé aspirations.

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On campus

Global representatives flock to Stellenbosch for 3rd student affairs global summit*

Invited representatives from 19 countries working in the rapidly developing area of student affairs and services gathered in Stellenbosch to attend the bi-annual Global Summit on Student Affairs and Services. The Summit brought together key leaders in Student Affairs from around the globe to engage in dialogue around critical issues in Student Affairs.

Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA) and the International Association for Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) were the joint initiators and drivers of the event, and after a rigorous application process Stellenbosch University (SU) was granted the honour to host the event held from Wednesday to Friday (26-28 October 2016) at the Wallenberg Research Centre at STIAS in Stellenbosch, South Africa.

Prof. Adam Habib, chair of Universities South Africa (USAf), an organisation representing South Africa's universities, and Vice-Chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, delivered the keynote address on Thursday themed "Contextualising Higher Education within Emerging Democracies".

"The event is a very exciting platform for a global conversation to advance the role of higher education in general and student affairs and services in particular," said Dr Kevin Kruger, president of NASPA. It was the third event of its kind with the first event held in Washington in 2012 and the second in Rome in 2014.

According to Dr Birgit Schreiber, Senior Director: Student Affairs at SU, one of the main organisers of the Summit and representative of the host institution,

> Not only in South Africa, but the world over an emphasis is increasingly placed on what can be termed a global transformation project. Sharply coming into focus are issues such as how a global perspective meets local realities; activism and democratisation; access and gender and human rights. Although these issues are globally relevant, they are extremely relevant and topical in South Africa and other emerging democracies. It is thus very fitting that South Africa was chosen as host nation to these important discussions.

More than 50 selected thought-leaders of higher education from countries across regions and continents participated in the event. "Discussing Student Affairs initiatives with colleagues from around the world helps to enhance overall student learning and success," noted Achim Meyer auf der Heyde, president of IASAS.

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* Media release, Division of Corporate Communication, Stellenbosch University, 28 October 2016.

"The programme is usually focused on a particular theme," added Schreiber. "This year we used the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth (Medium Strategy 2014–2021 with focus on Access and Gender) as the basis for discussions. The focus is on translating the high-level objectives into local realities, addressing issues of global-local tensions, rising opportunities in youth access and the role of universities and Student Affairs in democratisation and transformation around race and gender inequalities."

According to Schreiber, the two-day conversations generated concrete outcomes:

> They focussed on regional collaboration and partnerships among the professional organisations and universities to further the work in Higher Education with special focus on accelerating the ideals of Social Justice. A position paper based on participants' contributions will be submitted to UNESCO.

Apart from dignitaries from NASPA and IASAS, Mr Yousaf Gabru, Chairperson of the South African National Commission for UNESCO, and those representing among others the European Council on Student Affairs, the Southern African Federation for Student Affairs and the Academic Association of Student Affairs (USA) were in attendance.

Also included in the programme was a student panel consisting of six students who shared how their experienced the impact of Student Affairs on their lives and studies, and how Student Affairs enabled them to promote values of human rights, equity and justice.

On campus

Student Leadership:
Challenges and Possibilities*

Willy Nel**

Abstract

In my attempt to adhere to the request that I provide an interpretation of the theme for the session, 'Critical Engagement, Innovation and Inclusivity', and cognisant of the primary audience, I weave student leadership responsibilities, challenges and possibilities into the address. Events since the plenary address have however necessitated adapting it and it has also been adapted to fit the journal prescripts for a campus report.

For all South African universities, the period October 2015 to October 2016 was, without a doubt, one of the most volatile periods for Higher Education in the post-apartheid state. Student Affairs practitioners, by virtue of their being the champions of students but also because some of them are members of senior management structures, would themselves navigate this period of uncertainty guided by differing sets of principles. Thank you to Stellenbosch's newly appointed Dean of Students for the warm welcome; I wish her good luck and lots of wisdom. Also, a heartfelt thank you to Student Affairs for the invitation.

I was asked to speak in broad terms about the theme of this plenary, namely *Critical Engagement, Innovation and Inclusivity*, to set the scene for the morning session**.** From the plenary brief and summary of sub-themes I drew the assumption that *Knowledge* firmly underpins this session. Therefore I will return, more often than not, to knowledge as I unpack the leading concepts in this plenary theme.

As student leaders, you are fully aware that this is a time of great uncertainty in higher education in South Africa. The sector's instability since early 2015 is the result of the two primary demands by students: for decolonisation of the university and for free higher education. Before the announcement on 19 September 2016 by the Minister of Higher Education, universities had their own trepidations about what another zero percent fee increase for 2017 might mean in real financial terms. Most universities were unequivocal; it would mean financial ruin if not accompanied by government coverage of the shortfall in income. The announcement of a zero percent increase in fees for students whose household income falls below R600,000 per year led to widespread student protests (Radio 702, 2016).

These protests were in line with students' fundamental call for free higher education. The relief on the increase in fees certainly did not appease them.

The conundrum of fee-free higher education is not an abstract concept floating outside of the sphere of student leadership, neither is it only a concern for top managers nor restricted to the realm of protests on the streets of the university. Your *Critical Engagement* around this issue of fees within your scope of leadership will be important to how the student body, in general, deals with the repercussions of the announcement by the Minister of Higher Education.

You can choose to engage with the issue by expressing yourself in many ways. You can choose to listen only to fellow student voices and try to forge your own sense of logic from what you hear. But could it be considered 'critical engagement' if only fellow voices confirming agreement are listened to? Obviously, you can listen to other voices. Mondli Makhanya, editor of *City Press*, put the question to students: What are you offering society in return for all these things you want? (Makhanya, 2016). As expected, in the great South African tradition of debate, Eusebius McKaiser, respected journalist and opinion shaper, challenged Makhanya robustly, even calling his column an example of what flawed argumentation looks like (McKaiser, 2016). This exchange is an example of critical engagement in action, where different views on the same matter are contested.

Student leaders can also choose not to engage with the issue and wait for others to make up their minds on their behalf. Such leaders should feel morally obliged to refund the university for the costs of their attendance of this conference. More seriously, by waiting for others to engage with an issue on your behalf, you run the risk of missing vital details. An example of how important issues get overlooked is the intersectionality of the many struggles that students go through. A persistent regret by many student leaders is that awareness of intersectionality was a big casualty in the early to even late stages of the protest movement since 2015 (Lujabe, 2016). The image accompanying the article by Lujabe (2016) portrays an LGBTIQ activist being restrained by fellow male activists from, apparently, sjambokking them. So, beware: the womanist sjambok is coming to a campus near you, very soon, if student leaders do not engage with the intersectional struggles deeply and critically. Our outgoing SRC President had, not very long ago, to call off the handing over of a memorandum on racism because women and LGBTIQ activists did not allow him to speak because he denied their request for a memorandum of intersectional issues. His interpretive schemes drowned out all other issues but racism. This is an example of how patriarchal tendencies silence the important matters raised by the LGBTIQ community and women. Student leaders will do well to heed the note of caution in this example.

The other two concepts in this plenary theme, *Innovation and Inclusivity*, will be thoroughly dealt with in the breakaway sessions. Hence, I will not say much about them.

It is a standard intuition of incoming leadership to want to do things better and more efficiently than the outgoing team of leaders. Therefore, *innovative* means to achieve the goal of greater efficiency become standard practice, even an obsession. Innovation without regard for an institution's strategic direction can be hollow. Innovation should not simply mean 'redesign' (Jacobs, 2016) of practices which do not fundamentally assist an institution in its transformation trajectory. So, student leaders, in your innovative zeal to do things

better and faster than the outgoing leadership, do not forget that continuous transformation of a complex space such as this university requires more than redesign; it requires strategic focus. It requires of you to read the times and sometimes to leave certain things as they are in favour of dealing decisively with a larger matter at hand. Student leaders should be very aware of institutional shifts and not wait to act until a cause is made fashionable by a well-known figure.

Inclusivity is an ideal which permeates through every vision and mission statement of all universities in our country. It would, therefore, be easy for the engaged and innovative student leader to translate mediatised struggles such as the debacle about black girls' hair at a Pretoria school (Timeslive, 2016) into an interrogation of policies and practices within the scope of your leadership. Again, not just to redesign for redesign's sake, but to effect inclusivity.

Shifting Gear

Zygmunt Bauman (2011:100) suggests that there is an increasing "divorce between power and politics". By that, Bauman (2011) means that the ability to *do* things is no longer really influenced by the ability of formal structures, such as the state, to *decide* on what should be done. This insight holds lessons for current-day student leadership. Your leadership position is firmly entrenched within the system of institutional politics personified by structures such as residence committees or student representative councils (SRCs). Hence, you have a demarcated area of responsibility; a scope of decision-making abilities, if you will. Compare this scope to the unfolding reality of protest leadership playing out during the wave of student protests we are experiencing currently. The student movement has shown numerous times how it organises outside of the formal structures such as SRCs. *Open Stellenbosch* serves as a forceful example of power that was loosened from the official structures of student politics. At the University of the Free State a student leadership collective called the *Free Education Movement* diverted power from the SRC. This movement is not a registered student association but arose because students were dissatisfied with the SRC's shift in position regarding the protest. Students are also familiar with the various leaders of this movement who come from different associations, which explains their authority. This is an important example as it illustrates that popular acknowledgement of leadership can be as strong a force as formal elections. Obviously, this observation does not declare formal structures obsolete. It merely serves as a source of knowledge that might be invisible to some amongst you who thought that the only way of gaining and exercising power is through a formal structure.

The question before you is, probably, not how to regain regulatory authority but rather what the effects are of the divorce of power from politics on your leadership role. An immediate negative effect of the divorce is that communal bonds become more frail and very temporary (Bauman, 2007). A student leader of an immediate collective like a residence has bigger challenges at hand when the divorce between power and politics is complete. This observation rests on my lived knowledge that, simply, communal living depends on physical displays of regard for communal bonds, e.g. by not stealing from a pot cooking in a communal kitchen. For student leaders of larger collectives, such as SRC

members, the frailty of communal bonds holds a different challenge such as that posed by the power of internet-connected lives. The *Free Education Movement* at the University of the Free State, for instance, mobilises entirely through its Facebook page. In that case the combination of cyber-connectedness and a common cause, all linked to the weakened state of the SRC, is much more effective at organising large numbers of people than the SRC. Some people debate issues and negotiate entire struggles only in cyberspace e.g. #HandsOffPravin (2016); hardly a modality for real human contact but effective in raising awareness and serving as an outlet for collective frustration. Elsewhere, a co-author and I (Keet & Nel, 2016) found that student leaders in formal structures experience a deep sense of disappointment upon leaving office. They put so much faith in the ability of their structures to transform a university that this results in semi-depression when they do not succeed.

So, What to Do, Then?

Together with *Critical Engagement* with the challenges presented to your leadership position and *Innovation* for deep *Inclusive* change, it is also probably important to know the limitations that you are up against.

Be aware that "social reality itself has become schooled", as posed in the seminal work of Ivan Illich (1970:3). This means that, through education, we have become so used to having almost every aspect of our lives regulated that we no longer know what it means to operate outside of such regulation. Formal education as packaged by schools, colleges and universities is not free of the regulatory impulses implicit in many academic disciplines. These impulses are sometimes necessary professional standards that have to be attained so that graduates can comply with the basic measures of responsible practice. However, as acknowledged by critical scholars (Fricker, 2007; Keet, 2014a; Keet, 2014b; Zipin, Fataar & Brennan, 2015), the regulatory impulses of formal education can also serve other purposes such as governmental control over its citizens or re-inscribing of self-produced disciplinary truths – a very dangerous endeavour as illustrated by the initial uptake of scientific racism (Lack & Abramson, 2014). Even as various pathways to knowledge and skills exist in South Africa today, such as Recognition of Prior Learning (SAQA, 2004), we very much rely on formal education offered by schools, colleges and universities. We have been schooled to largely understand that health care different from that provided by a medical doctor is irresponsible, learning on your own is unreliable and community organisation outside of state-subsidisation (or university-subsidisation) is dangerous and subversive (Illich, 1970). You would do well as a student leader to challenge the social control mechanisms so intimately tied to formal education, otherwise you are your own drawback. Take note of the dulling effect of the general middle-class aspiration of just obtaining a degree to achieve good employment. This aspiration, if devoid of critical thought, is detrimental to the emancipatory urge so prevalent today in the student protests. Differently put, the docile student who just wants to obtain a degree and leave university is the perfect example of how certain governments would like their citizens to behave. Some forms of education outside the classroom, such as on the streets of the university whilst calling for free higher education, are terrifying to a state intent on keeping its citizens non-questioning.

Conscious student leaders would allow for extra-structural learning, such as through online courses and attendance of informal talks, so as not to be overly dismissive of potential allies from outside your structure who, for example, did not participate in this formal leadership conference, e.g. *Open Stellenbosch*. Opportunities for co-curricular learning are offered by your university, such as study-abroad, university exchanges, dual-institution degrees and internships. Such opportunities should be taken advantage of by student leaders but be mindful not to become domesticated into an uncritical, overly grateful state of being. Your task as a leader is to grow, not to seek out opportunities just to satisfy your own need for travel or pampering at the university's cost. Remain vigilant about the agendas that sometimes accompany the largesse of sponsors. It will be valuable to keep this argument in mind during discussions on decolonisation because colonisation itself relied strongly on the building of a servile class of educated people who would keep the regime intact.

Be aware that old institutions like universities have strong *habitus*; that invisible social power which directs the behaviour of people within that space without them even being aware of why they behave the way they do (Keet & Nel, 2016). An obvious example is the unquestioned wearing of jackets of office by most SRC members or the obvious absence of open car boots blaring music; all this in a concentrated space of young adults. Who told you to wear those jackets or who told you that it is not acceptable to play music in such a manner? This *habitus* will not change within your one year of office. A more sensible goal could rather be to use the system effectively for the improvement of your constituency's lives. At least you will be able to leave office with a tangible set of achievements and non-achievements, as opposed to a depressed feeling of general failure.

Be wary of identity politics. This is actually really simple: my own identity becomes more strongly defined the more I exclude certain characteristics (Manganyi, 1981). With such strong exclusionary identification comes less appreciation for the value that others might add. In higher education, which is one of the most diverse spatial concentrations of young people, such identity solidifications can only be toxic. A simple explanatory example will suffice: if you are not in the march against racism, you must be a racist (even if poor communication by the SRC did not allow you to change your schedule). In this example the identity of the activist is intimately tied to the ability to participate in all forms of activism such as a march. All those who do not participate in such actions fall outside of the identity marker of activism, and hence can be dismissed as opposed to the aims of the action, irrespective of valid reasons for being absent.

The last point I make is on *Decolonisation* of universities, a concept you will grapple with further in the break-away sessions. Getting stuck on the 1960s type of Africanisation, aptly criticised by Franz Fanon as a ruse for corruption and too much inward-looking, is not helpful (Mbembe, 2016). Unfortunately some of the calls for decolonisation today carry the same meaning. Mbembe (2016:34) traces Ngugi wa Thiong'o's concept of decolonisation as more productive since it defines decolonisation as "seeing ourselves clearly", or re-centering of our continent. However, this understanding does not exclude the rest of the world from the decolonisation project on the continent. In fact, Mbembe (2016) is open to dialogue amongst different systems of knowledge creation and knowledge usage. Narrow ethnocentric and ideological notions cannot serve the decolonisation project

well. Decolonisation must also mean out-of-country and out-of-continent experiences at the same time that intra-continental links are strengthened, especially by South Africa, given our apartheid-imposed isolation and our current-day superiority-complex-imposed tentativeness about intra-continental links.

With these few words I wish you a fruitful conference. Thank you.

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On campus

Global Summit on Student Affairs and Services: Prof. Adam Habib's keynote*

Munyaradzi Makoni**

The evolutionary growth of the university in the 21st century is affected by enormous challenges and the possibility of problems being addressed is constrained by national politics, bureaucracy and resource limitations that threaten the equality of the global academy, says Prof. Adam Habib, vice-chancellor of the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. The evolutionary growth of the university in the 21st century is affected by enormous challenges and the possibility of problems being addressed is constrained by national politics, bureaucracy and resource limitations that threaten the equality of the global academy, says Prof. Adam Habib.

He was a keynote speaker at the 2016 Global Summit on Student Affairs and Services held from 27–28 October at Stellenbosch University near Cape Town.

The gathering was organised by Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education or NASPA, and Stellenbosch University and the International Association of Student Affairs and Services, with 50 student affairs leaders in attendance.

To survive the 21st century, it is essential to come together as global citizens and a global academy, said Habib, who is also chair of Universities South Africa, the representative body of 26 public universities.

Major challenges such as inequality, terrorism, public health, climate change and renewable energy are transnational and require multinational teams that come together and comprehensively tackle them. This needs to be done in a calm and collected manner, and thoughtfully so as not to reinforce inequalities and polarise societies.

Inequality is a Common Problem
Habib noted that higher education could help to create a more equal society, by producing growing numbers of quality graduates and providing sufficient numbers of students from poor and marginalised communities with access to the best universities in society.

Another challenge is to provide sufficient numbers of high quality graduates in professions required by society, so that skills scarcity does not lead to undue escalation of remuneration.

"Both cases are easier said than done in South Africa," said Habib, acknowledging that as a university leader he is not a neutral analyst of the country's higher education situation.

"South Africa is a microcosm of our world, an acute manifestation of challenges that confront us. The struggle is a harbinger of what is likely to happen to us all."

Habib observed that the United States has experienced a rising number of social protests since 2015. The country is saddled with US$1.3 trillion in student debt, and young people were unhappy with the economic system.

Lack of stability in the United Kingdom following the Brexit vote highlights that many young Brits are alienated with the decisions of their parents.

A Noble Struggle

Inter-generational conflicts are playing out on campuses, as they are safe places where young people experiment with ideas.

Habib backed the student struggle in South Africa as a noble one, explaining that the issues in essence are the high cost of university education and the alienation many black students feel in historically white universities.

The government has expanded the higher education system from 420,000 students in 1990 to 1.1 million in 2015.

> As we expanded, the per capita state subsidy for students began to decline. Vice-chancellors and bureaucrats like me began to increase fees, often in double digits. When you do this for a 15- to 20-year period, the price of higher education is taken out of the hands of poor people and the middleclass.

In Habib's view, another major problem has been that universities have failed to come to terms with their diversity. Universities themselves have to change – but there is an expectation that students have to change for the university.

A powder keg for South African students was a statue at the University of Cape Town, of British imperialist Cecil John Rhodes, who donated the land on which the university is built. Last year the statue became a point of disaffection, with black students feeling it was not an appropriate symbol for the campus – the #RhodesMustFall movement achieved its aim.

This struggle is not unique to South Africa. For instance, the BlackLivesMatter movement has been taken up on US campuses because of the alienation black students have felt.

A Tactical Problem

As much as Habib is convinced students have genuine grievances, he said strong questions were not being asked about tactics used by the student movement. Some sections of the movement appeared bent on perpetuating the language of racism.

I worry about the politics of duplicity, where you say one thing in private and another in public. I've been accused for the last three to four weeks of refusing to meet students, yet out of seven to eight groups I've met six to seven of them, and every one of them says, "Please don't say publicly we are meeting you". I've got on my cell phone somebody saying, "HabibMustFall, you are a manifestation of liberalism". Then a minute later I get an sms saying, "We don't really mean it."

If students continued with the politics of duplicity, they would repeat the mistakes of political parties.

I worry about the politics of spectacle, where effectively what you want is to engage with the crowd, but use the crowd as a mechanism of silencing rather than opening up and democratising.

Habib is also concerned about the propensity for violence, and in the South African context the propensity to arson that has destroyed R1 billion (US$74 million) in educational infrastructure.

No one can explain how you are advancing the cause of free higher education if you burn the very infrastructure required for that free education.

He is aggrieved about the intolerance of the movement and the failure to understand that it had failed. Reforms must be slow and consolidate an outcome that is accepted by society.

Habib recalled, after the #FeesMustFall struggle exploded on campus, the tension when he met with students for 24 hours to seek a solution, as he felt theirs was a legitimate struggle.

But as much as there is legitimacy, if you truly believe in the legitimacy of the ideal of fees must fall, then you must have the political courage to confront it when tactics are not conducive to realisation of that struggle.

Fixing the System

It has been calculated that funding South African higher education in its entirety – tuition fees, accommodation and subsistence – would cost R50 billion a year. The next question, Habib pointed out, would be: what of technical and vocational education and training, or TVET colleges. They could cost another R30 billion. "Why are you putting R80 billion in higher education and TVET when you have four million [youths] unemployed and are not funding early childhood development?" he asked. Research showed that quality early childhood education played a major role in achieving inclusive higher education.

Solutions on how to fund free education should be context-specific, Habib said. Looking at the issue as an ordinary citizen, a general call might be to tax the rich and put the money into higher education. But the money would not be generated immediately.

He said the student movement had come up with proposals including to increase tax rates for the corporate sector by at least 2% and add to the skills levy. All proposed taxes would end up an additional 15% burden on the rich.

While Habib knew there was tax avoidance, if increased taxes resulted in a 20% contraction in gross domestic product "you have effectively lost out, you have less money". It was important to operate based on a world that existed, rather than one people wished existed.

One way was to start thinking of progressive reforms that would make free higher education possible, for instance a grant system must be available, but the rich should pay for higher education, and possibly a financing mechanism should be created for the middleclass – bearing in mind the American problem of huge and mounting student debt.

These examples do not argue for an end to free higher education calls, said Habib, but for thinking about hard trade-offs – and such decisions should not only come from cabinet ministers or vice-chancellors or students, but from society as a whole.

On campus

Mental Health a Worry for Student Affairs Worldwide[*]

Munyaradzi Makoni[**]

Mental health has in recent years emerged as an issue of concern for university students globally, obstructing the completion of studies, according to delegates attending the 2016 Global Summit on Student Affairs and Services.

"We are seeing increases in mental health challenges worldwide – more stress, more anxiety, more depression and more suicides," Kevin Kruger, president of the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education or NASPA, told *University World News*.

He was unsure about what triggered the increases, but in almost every country mental health challenges were creating barriers for students to learn. "Our role is to see how we support students during this challenging period of life."

Kruger was at the third global summit, held at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Study, at Stellenbosch University in South Africa from 27–28 October. The first summit was held in Washington, United States, in 2012 and the second was in Rome in 2014.

Country Cases

Ming Qi, vice-president of Shangai University of International Business and Economics, said higher education professionals in China were equally concerned about the mental health of university students.

"We have about 10% of our younger university students suffering from psychology-related problems," he told *University World News*. Ming Qi attributed the problem among younger students to intense pressure to succeed.

To tackle the growing problem and promote the integrity of students, he said, many universities in China were offering courses, counselling and professional help.

Barbra Pansiri, director of the department of student welfare at the University of Botswana, said mental health issues varied, as students had different needs.

"Youths today live according to the demands of fast life, and if their demands are not met, they become frustrated and depressed," Pansiri told *University World News*. Research would help to understand the depth of the problem.

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Birgit Schreiber, senior director of student affairs at Stellenbosch University, said in South Africa students with mental health challenges tended to struggle to get through primary and secondary education, before the additional hurdle of getting into higher education.

"The university population has very few suicidal cases, depression issues, cases of substance abuse or psychological issues, compared to the general population in any country," said Schreiber.

Student Affairs Challenges

Student Affairs staff help students to be successful, to develop the skills needed to succeed in the job market, and to cope with academics and adjustment to universities and colleges –but the profession is fraught with challenges.

As NASPA's Kevin Kruger said: "We are a kind of a safety net. We help you when things don't go well."

Kruger said universities were grappling with making higher education accessible to students from poor backgrounds, creating pathways that help students receive more study support, and providing financial and academic backing.

"This generation of youth is much more socially active than previous generations," he added. Student Affairs needs to find a balance between the operation of student freedoms and responsibilities, and to identify ways university governance could be changed to be more responsive to student needs.

Pansiri of the University of Botswana said student affairs staff are often asked what their office does. "The work we do is not visible enough, and there is little awareness of student affairs as a profession."

Kruger agreed, and said there was an imperative for student affairs to be treated more as a profession, particularly in Africa. He praised South Africa for having among the most advanced student affairs worldwide, and for publishing a *Journal of Student Affairs*.

Book review

Eboo Patel (2012). *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice and the Promise of America.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Reviewed by Jon C. Dalton*

In his 2012 book, *Sacred Ground*, Eboo Patel, an American Muslim and President of the Interfaith Student Core in Chicago, Illinois, analyses the sources of contemporary interreligious conflict and offers educational, political and religious strategies for promoting more genuine and lasting interfaith cooperation. While *Sacred Ground* focuses on the United States, Patel's analysis of interreligious conflict and his prescriptions for promoting interfaith cooperation have broad relevance for international application in today's increasingly globally connected and religiously diverse world.

Patel argues that religious differences have become a major source of social and political conflict in today's world. Moreover, the types of conflicts arising out of deeply held religious beliefs and practices pose some of the most dangerous and volatile threats for today's world. Thus, he argues, there is great urgency to find ways to reduce religious conflicts and to promote greater interfaith understanding and cooperation.

Patel's book is part personal memoir, part historical analysis, and part theological exegesis. His writing style is highly personal and makes frequent use of personal stories, examples and observations that convey a compelling sense of urgency about the current state of religious hostility and interfaith conflict in domestic and international settings.

Patel has a lover's quarrel with America's historical promise of religious liberty and tolerance. America, Patel claims, is failing to deliver on that founding promise. The rise of Islamophobia, in particular, has sharply challenged America's promise of religious pluralism and Patel believes that it is important to stand up for the nation's promise of religious pluralism, especially when it is under attack.

Patel believes that one of the keys to reducing interreligious conflict and promoting interfaith cooperation can be found in the principle of religious pluralism. He wants to clearly differentiate between religious "pluralism" and religious "diversity". Although the concept of religious diversity affirms the existence of differences among religions, it does not go far enough in fostering positive understanding and cooperation across individual religions. The concept of religious diversity may thus be useful for promoting a general tolerance of religious differences but it does not, on its own, incorporate an active promotion, understanding and affirmation of these differences.

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The concept of religious pluralism, on the other hand, recognises the multiplicity of religious traditions and also encourages an active understanding and acceptance of religious differences in order to promote the common good. In short, Patel argues that religious diversity, by itself, conveys a simple recognition of differences while the concept of religious pluralism welcomes and incorporates the results or outcomes of interfaith efforts to understand and affirm religious differences. Implicit in the concept of religious pluralism is the active social engagement with individuals of other faiths in shared efforts to understand and respect each other's religious traditions.

Today, Islam and its adherents have become primary targets of religious hostility in the United States as well as in a number of other countries. This development is profoundly troubling in light of the tradition of religious liberty and freedom of religious expression in the U.S. Patel argues that one explanation for this development is that despite constitutional guarantees of religious liberty, religious identity in the U.S. is deeply rooted in personal religious faith. Consequently the entrenched nature of personal religious commitment requires committed and proactive efforts to bridge religious differences and create communities of interfaith dialogue.

Patel argues that authentic interfaith dialogue should be grounded in the genuine particularity of each different religion, and not in some watered-down version of religious identity. The heart of the matter, Patel claims, is how to articulate religious identity in a way that affirms both particularity and pluralism. Interfaith dialogue should also acknowledge reciprocity – the shared give and take of information and beliefs in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

One of the most important educational strategies employed by Patel for promoting interfaith dialogue among college students is the use of community service as a primary agent of interfaith contact and dialogue. Working together on projects that benefit the community helps participants build upon shared religious beliefs and common practices. Interfaith dialogue can thus arise in more casual and natural settings in which religious differences do not become the primary starting point for dialogue.

Patel believes that an important strategy for promoting a pluralistic view of religions is through the peer training of young people from different faiths. It was this conviction that led Patel to establish the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC). Central to Patel's view of interfaith training is the role of volunteerism and community service. Since compassion and service are common ideals in all major religious traditions volunteerism provides a powerful means of bringing young people together to practise interfaith cooperation.

Patel suggests that colleges and universities often do not take religious diversity as seriously as other student identity issues. While higher education institutions in many countries have done a great deal to recognise the importance of racial, ethnic and gender diversity, they have often devoted less attention to recognising and accommodating religious differences. Colleges and universities have done even less to actively promote the goal of religious pluralism. Consequently, interreligious conflict and misunderstanding on college campuses are likely to continue until greater efforts are made to engage students in embracing religious pluralism. Patel argues that achieving religious pluralism will require

more effort in recruiting a religiously diverse student body and creating welcoming environments for students of different faiths. Colleges and universities will need to invest more effort in programmes and policies that create and sustain ongoing interreligious contact, dialogue and understanding.

Sacred Ground provides a very persuasive critique of the importance of religious pluralism in educational efforts to help students to confront and accommodate interfaith differences. Moreover, it provides useful practical strategies for implementing religious pluralism in educational settings. This highly readable and passionate critique of the promise of religious liberty is a valuable resource in helping college students to understand and advocate for religious pluralism in our contemporary world.

Ratemo Waya Michieka (2016). *Trails in Academic and Administrative Leadership in Kenya: A Memoir.* Boston: Beacon Press.

Reviewed by Claudia Frittelli[*]

Trails in Academic and Administrative Leadership in Kenya: A Memoir (2016) by Ratemo Waya Michieka provides a historical footprint for African university leaders tasked with transforming constituent colleges into full-fledged public universities. Kenya's higher education enrollment reached 470,000 in 2015 from 184,000 in 2010, and the sector has expanded from five to twenty-three public universities since the 2000s (*ICEF Monitor 2016*, Commission for University Education, 2015). During this expansion, leadership at Kenyan public universities has fluctuated between politicised recruitment and decision-making, and autonomy of management to the detriment of university governance structures (Oanda & Jowi, 2012). According to his memoir, Prof. Michieka, although a political appointee, succeeds at strengthening the institutional governance structures he leads.

The book documents the author's founding of and/or contribution to pivotal higher education constituent organisations between 1994 and 2003 which have led to broader platforms for higher education decision-making. This includes his role in the origins of Kenya Education Network, The African Institute for Capacity Development, Inter-University Council of East Africa, Kenyan Commission for Higher Education, and re-initiation of Jomo Kenyatta University Students Organization at a time when Kenyan student unions were banned due to riotous behavior (Chapter 12).

In 1989, President Moi seconds Michieka from his position as associate professor and chairman, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Nairobi, to become deputy principal of academic affairs and subsequently vice-chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture and Technology (JKCAT). Michieka's mission is to transform JKCAT into a science and technology-based public university which involves lobbying the agenda; staff recruitment and release; development of academic programmes and staff; improving gender equity; increasing research funding, infrastructure and publications; maintaining quality; and managing outreach services and public relations (Chapter 10). While the book lacks data indicators of what was achieved, the vice-chancellor's decision-making procedures are well documented.

Thirteen years later, following a political transition, President Kibaki abruptly appoints Michieka as director-general of the National Environment Management Authority

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(NEMA). On arrival at NEMA (Chapter 17), the appointee receives a list of environmental, pollution and degradation issues and no budget. Neither appointments were Michieka's choices, but his ability to transform a university college into Kenya's fifth public university, and subsequently modernise a heavily controlled government parastatal while maintaining integrity and independence from political machinations is exemplary. The memoir demonstrates his leadership adjustments and approaches among multiple constituencies – gaining the confidence of and retaining academic staff; building long-term relationships with external funders like the Japan International Cooperation Agency; representing rural community voices to protect national parks; and influencing nation-wide public attitudes through pioneering anti-litter campaigns.

This leads to his conclusion in Chapter 19 that good leadership "includes the following aspects:

- Vision – framing the organisational character and pursuing it;
- Planning and generating potential solutions to the issues at hand;
- Deciding and making a commitment to a course of action;
- Explaining the rationale that led to this commitment and presenting the legitimate expectations;
- Executing the objectives to realisation;
- Continuous evaluation of the progress with modifications as necessary;
- Integrity and accountability;
- Responsive public relations;
- Good sense of time management."

In both establishing Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) and transitioning to NEMA, Michieka starts with a clean slate, charts a course, consults with governance bodies, and rallies staff and external stakeholders. The memoir's chronological account of his merit-based decision-making in a context of ethnic cleavages, nepotism and sycophancy provides practical examples for decision-makers in similar contexts. The author self-admittedly reports on rather than critiques the political regime which some may find lacking. However, the personal anxieties he describes, like facing discrimination on an apartheid-era South African Airways flight, validate his integrity and character. In 2006, he returns to his tenure at the Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, University of Nairobi where he had never stopped conducting research and supervising postgraduate students, demonstrating his commitment to scholarship and the Kenyan academy.

The book was supported by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) Higher Education Leadership Program which documents challenges and trends of university leadership over the past several decades. The Program aims to better understand the various changes taking place with regard to governance and leadership of higher education institutions in Africa, the nature and forces at play in constituting leadership and governance, and the extent to which changes in governance and leadership of African higher education have contributed or not to changing the general perceptions of the mission and roles of institutions (CODESRIA, 2012). Kenya is expected to have one of the world's fastest-growing populations of 18- to 22-year-olds through 2024,

along with a steady decline in the percentages of undergraduates studying abroad (*ICEF Monitor*, 2016). The Kenyan Commission for University Education has recently been given a mandate to collect, disseminate and maintain data on the country's sixty-eight higher education institutions (The Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2014). Concerns about quality due to massification are attributable to the sector's leadership and governance, particularly the effectiveness of university senates and councils. By documenting historical governance practices, *Trails in Academic and Administrative Leadership in Kenya* contributes to equipping the next generation of higher education leaders.

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Book review

J.C. van der Merwe & D. van Reenen (2016). *Transformation and Legitimation in Post-apartheid Universities: Reading Discourses from 'Reitz'.* Bloemfontein: Sun Press.

Reviewed by Thierry M. Luescher*

What is the fuss all about? A storm in a tea cup! In August 2007, four boys prepare a video clip for the cultural evening of their university residence. It's a prank! The students get some residence staff to play the part of new students who undergo the initiation process of their residence. It's a dumb initiation; a humiliating one, for sure; but hey, that's the residence tradition. You piss in the food of the first–year students, make them drink revolting concoctions till they throw up. It's a dumb initiation; a humiliating one, for sure; but hey, that's the residence tradition; we all went through it. Now you're a Reitz man.

The authors of the book *Transformation and Legitimation in Post-apartheid Universities*, published in 2016 in the new series Critical Studies in Higher Education Transformation (Sun Press, Bloemfontein), clearly do not see the video as just a prank; the problem runs much deeper, and neither did the South African Minister of Education. In March 2008, only a few days after the video became public, she announced the establishment of a Ministerial Committee on Progress towards Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions as a way to investigate discrimination and particularly racism in South African public higher education. The official reading of 'Reitz', offered by the Ministerial Commission led by Prof. Crain Soudien, goes as follows:

> In February 2008, a video made by four young white Afrikaner male students of the Reitz Residence at the University of the Free State (UFS) came into the public domain. It showed the students forcing a group of elderly black (cleaning) workers, four women and one man, to eat food into which one of the students had apparently urinated. Predictably, the public was outraged. The video, which won first prize in a cultural evening competition at the residence, ostensibly sought to portray an initiation ceremony. However, its real intent was to protest against the University's recently introduced policy to integrate the student residences. […]. The public anger and condemnation that followed demanded that action be taken. The University swiftly instituted disciplinary proceedings against two of the students who were still registered (the other two had graduated at the end of 2007 when the video was made). However, it was clear that, while welcomed, the disciplinary proceedings in

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themselves were not sufficient. The incident brought to the fore the bigger question of how an event of such intense insensitivity could have happened after 1994. Moreover, the question was posed as to how an institution of higher education, which is supposed to be about broadening young people's minds and preparing them for engaging with social and intellectual differences in people, could produce this level of narrow-minded mean-spiritedness?   (Soudien Commission, 2008: 23)

Clearly, the official reading prompting a national Ministerial investigation into discrimination and racism in public higher education, did not see 'Reitz' as a simple 'prank', a 'storm in a teacup'. Why? Because 'Reitz' is fundamentally about resistance to transformation in higher education, based on racism. The evidence supporting this conclusion can be generated relatively easily by means of a discourse analysis.

The analysis of discourse has become an important way of identifying the deeper meaning, the ideological content, of text and talk (and the attitudes and behaviours they reflect). Critical discourse analysis uncovers "the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Van Dijk, 2003: 352). Discourse analysis examines a discourse in depth against the context of its production; it analyses the power relations infused in discourse from the point of view of different role players involved in the discourse, and considers the meaning and implications of the discourse. A few years ago I taught a way of doing critical discourse analysis to a third-year political science class that majored in my 'politics and ideology' module at the University of the Western Cape. We then critically considered Van Dijk's understanding of ideology as "the foundation of the social representations shared by a social group" (2006: 729). Ideologies are belief systems shared by specific collectivities of social actors; they involve an in-group, that is 'we', and an out-group, i.e. 'them'. Ideologies provide the members of the in-group with identity, guidelines for action (or inaction), shared beliefs, etc. and this is evident by means of four typical strategies of in-group/out-group polarisation or what Van Dijk calls "the ideological square" (Van Dijk, 2006: 734). Evidence for the ideological square can be found by analysing the main topics in a discourse; what is stressed and what is silenced; what is emphasised or de-emphasised; how social groups are depicted; various other linguistic strategies (like sarcasm, irony, hyperbole, misrepresentation, generalisation, and appeal to authority), as well as the actions that are involved in the text: consensus seeking, resistance building, indoctrination, etc. (*ibid*.). Doing textual analysis of this kind it is possible to unearth the ideological content of a discourse. The ideological square then involves identifying constructions of 'us and them', and 'good and bad' in a discourse. A successful ideological text does the following: it will emphasise 'our good', de-emphasise or omit 'our bad'; emphasise 'their bad', and de-emphasise 'their good'. Do that well and you have a perfectly working ideological text. Xenophobia works like that; racism works like that; sexism works like that.

Van der Merwe and Van Reenen's book provides an in-depth analysis of the 'Reitz incident' that goes far beyond the reading of the Reitz video as text. Yet, who are the 'us' and 'them' in the discourses of the Reitz video itself? Well, it so happened that the Reitz residence at the time the video was made in 2007, was a segregated, all white,

male Afrikaans student residence at the University of the Free State, and the UFS was a typical post-apartheid university that grappled with 'transformation pains' (as the UFS management would have it). A typical post-apartheid university? Well, maybe the UFS was a bit different. At the time, the South African higher education quality committee, in its external audit report of the university characterised it as a rather strange institution; indeed one in danger of becoming two universities: "one that is black English-medium and operates at night, and another that is white, Afrikaans-medium and operates during the day" (CHE, 2008: 39). This 'parallel mode' of operating had developed over a decade and a bit, since the UFS in the early nineties started admitting black students in numbers and introduce English-tuition classes. Before that, the UFS was one of the exclusively white, Afrikaans universities, characterised by "a determinable white, conservative, Christian, Afrikaans cultural grounding" (p. 34); it was a racially, ethnically and linguistically separate *volksuniversiteit*, developed specifically to reflect "Afrikaner nationalist conceptions of a university […] established specifically for the assumed needs of particular racial and ethnic groups" (Welsh, 1972: 32; Degenaar, 1977). It looked as if the *volks* university model was being maintained by splitting the UFS on the inside into two 'parallel' institutions operating from the same campus, at a time when post-apartheid higher education policy did away with the separate institution model.

The students who made the video for their cultural evening were all white Afrikaans boys in a campus residence well known for its conservative, exclusive, anti-black stance. In their imagination, the residence was an exclusive, 'private' space – not an academic facility, but a cultural institution. In this private space, the only 'black presence' tolerated were black workers, cleaners, as in the homes where the boys came from: nannies, cleaners, gardeners. The privileged social background of the students is pitched against that of the staff members which the white boys tricked into participating in making the video. They were from the historically most marginalised and exploited social group of South Africans: black staff members, custodial staff; working class, and all but one were women. The 'us' for whom the video was made were privileged white Afrikaner students residing in Reitz who were used to order around black servants; the 'them' in the video were black students (played by the staff) who, under the residence desegregation policy of the UFS, would start joining the Reitz residence from the 2008 academic year.

The power dynamics involved in the making of the video is one aspect of racism evident in the discourse on 'Reitz'. When the black staff members asked to see the video that they participated in making, the most humiliating parts (like the scene were a senior white student in the movie looks like he urinates into the food that the new black initiates were served), were removed; meanwhile at the closed-function residence cultural evening, these episodes were the real show stoppers. The main topic of the video, however, was even more overtly racist (if there are degrees of racism): 'We' are opposed to desegregating 'our' residence; 'we' don't want 'them' – that is black students – in 'our' residence: Just look how ridiculous it would be to have them. The fact that these privileged white boys would go as far as calling the grown-up, middle-aged black staff members 'whores' in the video, just adds insult.

Transformation and Legitimation in Post-apartheid Universities: Reading Discourses from 'Reitz' is an incredibly interesting, in parts traumatising, book to read. It is fascinating to know that it was written by two white Afrikaans academics at the UFS. JC van der Merwe and Dionne van Reenen are both working in the UFS Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice (IRSJ), which was established in the wake of the 'Reitz incident' to drive the academic and social transformation process at the UFS with academic activities and social interventions. Overall the book makes for diverse reading. In the different chapters, different kinds of conceptual frameworks are used to analyse the various discourses from 'Reitz' that the authors uncover from the analysis of media articles, institutional policies and plans, institutional correspondence, interviews with various role players, including institutional management, students, staff, and members of university governance structures. In order to understand the place of the video, which sparked off the 'Reitz incident', the authors make the important point in the Introduction: "'Reitz' is analysed metonymically […] as a stand-in for larger and more harmful narratives. For these purposes then, we undertook a critical philosophical analysis of discourses and practices that, either explicitly or implicitly, reproduce resistance towards transformation" (p. 34).

The book tells the story of 'resistance towards transformation' over six chapters, always coming back to 'Reitz' and its significance and role in these narratives. For those who are unfamiliar with the 'Reitz incident', Chapter 1 provides a transcript and analysis of the Reitz video itself, and introduces the main protagonists in the incident: the Reitz students and workers. In Chapter 2, the book analyses the higher education transformation process in South Africa and at the UFS in broad strokes. The focus, especially when it turns to the UFS, is on institutional culture and residence cultures, and the failures of the university – the mostly white management, white academics, white students, and white alumni – to come to terms with the reality of the UFS being a *public* rather than *volks* university. The scope of analysis is wide enough to show that the dominant white group had both black and white detractors, as well as black staff and students that were ready to accommodate themselves within the hegemonic institutional culture. At its core, the chapter tells the story of the university's failed post-apartheid residence policy in three moments, along with other milestones in the UFS post-apartheid 'transformation', like the incorporation of two campuses of historically black universities into the UFS, as well as the adoption of various transformation charters, policies and plans. The authors' assessment overall is one of leadership failure: a lack of consistent and valid conceptualisation of transformation, a lack of decisiveness in implementation; flawed conceptions of the university and its relation to its social environment; all of which appears captive to the 'old'.

Chapter 3 is perhaps the most traumatising part of the book: the in-depth, highly insightful analysis of residence cultures using an analytical framework that focuses on ways of understanding social relations between students, between students and residence workers, and residence traditions and initiation practices. Against the background of Van der Merwe and Van Reenen's analysis of the history of the Reitz residence, and student resistance to residence integration in particular at the UFS, the 'Reitz incident' gains a specific, historical-political context. Moreover, the intersectional analysis of student residence

cultures is particularly enlightening, as the authors identify the dominant characteristics of the typical white Afrikaner male residence culture:

> Some of the dominant characteristics of a typical white Afrikaner male residence can be listed as follows: a culture of seniority characterised by absolute authority; a shared, homogenous identity; clearly designated roles and intolerance towards non-conformity; an unconditional loyalty to the residence and its occupants; clearly articulated codes and punishments for violations of those codes; a commitment to being present and participating in residence life; curbing individuality and honouring traditions.   (p. 117)

At the core of this utterly unacademic residence culture is the 'pa-seun' (father-son) system: new students would have a 'pa' who takes the role of a strict father figure on campus. More often than not, and more so in Reitz' case, the 'pa' became a sadistic-militaristic authoritarian. This system was upheld with day-to-day practices of humiliation and punishments for non-conformity and would culminate in the initiation ceremony, not unlike the one depicted in the video. The extent of this shocking culture is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 then steps back and considers the 'Reitz incident' and its context in terms of different notions of legitimacy and strategies of legitimation. Particularly interesting is the part dealing with various ways in which the UFS management sought to save the reputation of the UFS in the wake of the public outcry over the Reitz video. The story of the aftermath is continued in Chapter 5 but now focuses on the strategies that go beyond 'saving the reputation', mainly those that occurred during the term of the first black UFS vice-chancellor and rector, Prof. Jonathan Jansen: reconciliation, restoration, and social justice. While a lot of good is said about Jansen, this is not a praise poem to the man who was appointed shortly after the Reitz crisis. It shows, however, a break in the way the UFS did things, and how it approached the students and staff involved. It also shows the wider circles the 'Reitz incident' continued to produce: the court cases against the students; the complaint with the SA Human Rights Commission; the process of reconciling the students and staff members, with the university as the third party involved; and the debates the 'Reitz incident' sparked off far beyond the UFS.

After a brief revisiting of the meaning of 'Reitz', the final chapter entitled 'Rethinking Transformation at the University of the Free State' looks closely at the way forward. What can be learnt towards addressing transformation challenges such as diverse student and staff demographics; institutional culture; curriculum transformation and enhancement of democratic practices? Van der Merwe and Van Reenen do not propose a blueprint; more of a roadmap for thinking through key points, and considering certain practices is laid out. They are discussed in relation to five points: (1) changing the institutional culture; (2) instituting a rights-based approach; (3) creating space for 'being political' on campus; (4) doing anti-racism work; and (5) establishing pre-conditions. In this manner, they argue, universities will eventually become "havens of democratic habits" (p. 270). Their conclusive call is for the universities – for governing structures and the academy – to remember that they ultimately are there to serve the public.

Overall this is a very interesting and important book, particularly for academic and Student Affairs staff involved in university residences and university transformation more broadly. While the 'Reitz incident' at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein provides the core, the book shows its parallels and reverberations in the South African higher education sector in such a way to make it highly relevant to Student Affairs professionals across the continent and beyond, as Student Affairs grapples with ways of 'managing' socio-cultural cleavages of various kinds on university campuses. In the South African context a dominant issue remains racism and the whiteness of institutional cultures; in other countries very similar dynamics of discrimination are evident, including sexism, homophobia, ethnicity, religious intolerance, party-political strife, and so forth.

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Author biographies

Dr Darren L. Clarke is the Senior Director Strategic Alliances and Outreach at Rutgers Graduate School of Education (GSE), New Brunswick, NJ (USA). He is responsible for strategic planning and advancement of GSE relationships, the development of joint Master's degree and certificate programmes, oversight of online graduate programmes and eLearning at GSE. He developed and implements GSE's South Africa Initiative (SAI). He earned a Master's degree in Student Personnel Administration from New York University and a Doctor of Education degree in Social and Philosophical Foundations of Education from Rutgers University. His research interests in diverse learners and multicultural learning environments has focused on the development and implementation of cultural immersion and service-learning programmes with United States students and diverse educational learners and leaders abroad. In March 2016, he co-edited an international volume entitled *Social justice and transformative learning: Culture and identity in the United States and South Africa*, published by Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group.

Dr Jon C. Dalton is Emeritus Professor of Higher Education and former Vice-President for Student Affairs at The Florida State University. He retired in 2010 after 44 years of teaching and administration in higher education. He is a graduate of Franklin College, Yale Divinity School, and the University of Kentucky. His research and writing focus on the impact of higher education on college student moral and civic development. Dalton is a former Senior Scholar of the American College Personnel Association, a former President of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) and a recipient of NASPA's *Outstanding Contribution to Literature and Research Award*. Jon and his wife, Beverly, have two children who live in Chicago and two grandchildren, Charlie and Alexandra. He currently leads an ESL English class for migrants and enjoys sailing and travelling. Dalton continues to serve as Co-Editor of the NASPA *Journal of College and Character* and to assist with the annual Institute on College Student Values which he helped to found and which is hosted by the Student Affairs Division of Florida State University. He is also a member of the International Editorial Advisory Board of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*.

Mr Gobena Daniel is a Lecturer and Student Dean at Addis Ababa University (AAU), Ethiopia. His research focuses on higher education learning communities and children-related issues and he has presented nationally in this regard. He is deeply involved in the Ethiopian Psychologist Association. As a member of the research team for Higher Education Studies at the AAU School of Psychology, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, he supervises postgraduate students who are doing research within the different functional areas of Student Affairs. He has a BA Hons (Psychology) and an MA (Measurement and Evaluation), both with distinction. He is currently busy with a research project focusing on counselling for students at different levels of education. He has also written fiction books.

Ms Claudia Frittelli is Programme Officer, Higher Education & Research in Africa, an international programme at Carnegie Corporation of New York. She develops the programme's higher education research, policy and governance initiatives to sustain higher education reform through external regulatory bodies and non-profit advocacy organisations. As part of the Corporation's investment in strengthening African universities and developing the next generation of academics as a means to national development in Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa and Ghana, her work has included supporting university strategic priorities in research and graduate studies, staff development, information and communication technology (ICT) and e-learning, gender mainstreaming and community engagement. Prior to joining the Foundation, she held management positions in the global telecommunications and internet private sector in Paris and New York, and served as an advisor to international not-for-profit agencies. She holds an MBA from the American Graduate School of International Management, Thunderbird, and an MA in Linguistic Studies from Syracuse University, USA.

Mr Abera Getachew is a Lecturer at Ambo University (AU), Ethiopia. Previously he was student counsellor and lecturer at Madda Walabu University. He is a member of the research team for Higher Education Studies in the AU Department of Psychology, Institute of Education and Behavioral Sciences. He teaches and supervises undergraduate students who are doing research within the different functional areas of Student Affairs. He holds a BA Hons (Psychology and Sociology, 2007) and an MA (Counselling Psychology, 2012, with distinction). He is currently conducting a research project that focuses on student counselling at different levels of education. In addition, he conducts research on learning communities, presents in national symposia, and has published on HIV/Aids. Currently, he has a manuscript on substance use and mental health disorder among university students under review.

Dr Mpho Priscilla Jama started her career as a professional nurse and holds a degree in nursing BA Cur (Nursing Education and Community Health). She ventured into higher education in 2000 as a lecturer in the Division Student Learning and Development (DSLD) in the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) at the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein, South Africa. She has since obtained a Masters in Higher and Further Education Studies and a PhD in Higher Education Studies. Presently she is the head of DSLD and is primarily responsible for the academic development and support of undergraduate students in the FHS. Part of that responsibility includes teaching in the MBChB and B Med Science undergraduate programmes. She also teaches in and supervises postgraduate students in the Health Professions programme.

Her research expertise is intertwined with her work in the DSLD. This follows from doctoral work (completed in 2009) on the design of an academic support and development programme to combat attrition among medical undergraduates. Her current research

explores the academic environment, with specific focus on the manner in which humane values are modelled in curricular and co-curricular teaching and learning practices and activities. She places a particular emphasis on practices that often subject students to inordinate stress resulting from hostile teaching and learning environments.

Her research and expertise has earned her international and national recognition and awards. She was awarded a Golden Key International Honour, a Fulbright scholarship in 2013 and subsequently hosted as a visiting research scholar for almost a year at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA). She was invited to participate as part of a panel of experts at a *Student Access and Success conference* funded by the USA Kresge foundation. She also serves as a reviewer for the *National Resource Centre (NRC) for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition* located at *the University of South Carolina in the USA*. Nationally, she has served on the executive of the *Higher Education Learning and Teaching Association of South Africa (HELTASA)*. She serves as a reviewer for the HELTASA conference abstracts and research articles. Furthermore, she is a co-founder of the *First Year Experience (FYE) Special Interest Group (SIG)* which was awarded a *Teaching and Learning Grant* by the *Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHET)* to establish a *South African National Resource Centre (SANRC) for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition*.

Apart from her involvement in these activities and research in the above areas, as well as the pursuit to publish articles in journals, her main focus presently is writing a book which was drafted during her Fulbright scholarship at UCLA. The tentative title of her book is *Towards a humanistic pedagogy: teaching students in complex and demanding academic environments*.

Dr Thierry M. Luescher (Luescher-Mamashela) is Assistant Director of Institutional Research at the University of the Free State, South Africa. Prior to this he was Senior Lecturer in Higher Education Studies, extra–ordinary Senior Lecturer in Political Studies at the University of the Western Cape and a Senior Researcher in the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET), Cape Town. He obtained his PhD in Political Studies from the University of Cape Town. He researches, teaches and consults on matters of international and comparative higher education, with particular interest in the nexus of higher education with politics in Africa, higher education policy and governance, student politics, the student experience, and higher education development in Africa. He has published in local and international scholarly journals, including *Studies in Higher Education*, *European Journal of Higher Education, Journal of Higher Education in Africa, South African Journal of Higher Education, Tertiary Education and Management* and *Perspectives in Education*, along with chapters in internationally edited books. He is an editor of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa,* and member of the editorial boards of the *Journal of College Student Development*, *Makerere Journal of Higher Education* and *African Higher Education Dynamics.* Thierry recently edited the book *Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism* (with M. Klemenčič and J.O. Jowi, 2016, which is available open access). His publication list and links to open access downloads can be viewed at www.thierryluescher.net.

Mr Munyaradzi Makoni is a Senior Journalist for *University World News* based in Cape Town, South Africa, where he reports on higher education and science. He has been a journalist for more than 15 years. Some of his stories are published by Thompson Reuters Foundation, SciDev.Net, and Intellectual Property Watch and The Tablet among others.

Ms Razia Mayet is a Learning Development Facilitator in the Academic Development and Support Unit at the University of Johannesburg (UJ), South Africa. Students who are failing and finding it challenging to cope with university studies are referred to the unit by their departments and are offered interventions and support to assist them to cope with the requirements of learning at university. Razia has over 30 years of experience in teaching in primary, secondary and higher education. She is involved with the research project Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Social Justice at UJ and in the strategic reflections around the decolonisation debate. Currently she is also part of the University of Johannesburg staff group reflecting on the role of the engaged academic in times of student struggle. The blog can be accessed at http://sotlforsocialjustice.blogspot.co.za/2016/12/the-role-of-socially-engaged-academic.html.

Prof. Teboho Moja is Clinical Professor of Higher Education at New York University. Her teaching experience includes high school and university levels. Teboho has held key positions at several South African universities, including being appointed Chair of the Council of the University of South Africa. She has held positions as Professor Extraordinaire at the University of Pretoria, the University of Johannesburg and the University of the Western Cape, and has been Visiting Professor at the University of Oslo (Norway) and University of Tampere (Finland). She was instrumental in setting up the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) in South Africa and is currently serving as Chair of its board. In addition, she has served on the boards of international bodies such as the UNESCO-Institute for International Education Planning and the World Education Market. She has also served as Executive Director and Commissioner to the National Commission on Higher Education (1995–1996) appointed by President Mandela. Before joining New York University, Teboho served as a special advisor to two ministers of education in post-1994 South Africa. She has authored several articles on higher education reform issues in areas such as the governance of higher education, policy processes, and impact of globalisation on higher education, and co-authored a book on educational change in South Africa. She is Editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa.*

Dr Willy Nel serves as Head of Discipline: Educational Psychology in the Faculty of Education and as Associate of the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice at the University of the Free State, South Africa. His research interests in higher education transformation and transformative autonomy of teachers are pursued through a critical community psychology lens. He publishes in national and international journals and has contributed chapters to national and internationally published books. However, he does not measure his work in academe only through the usual routes of peer recognition, important as it is for others, but rather in how much he can do to advance transformation in higher education.

Dr Birgit Schreiber is Senior Director of Student Affairs at Stellenbsoch University, South Africa. Prior to that she was the Director of the Centre for Student Support Services at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town. She holds a PhD from UWC. Birgit has published in national and international academic journals on student support and development, has presented research papers and keynotes in national and international conferences and given lectures at the UC Berkley, the University of Leuven (Netherlands), and the University of Oslo (Norway). She was a visiting scholar at the UC Berkley, where she was involved in their student affairs department. She has also been involved in various quality assurance panels reviewing student affairs at South African universities and has taken part in the national review of the South African Student Engagement tool (SASSE). She has been a member of the national executive of various national professional organisations including the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP), and currently serves on the Executive of the Southern African Federation of Student Affairs and Services (SAFSAS). She is also the Africa Regional Coordinator of the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS). She is a founding member of the Editorial Executive of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa.*

Dr Eva-Marie Seeto is Director of Community Engagement (and previously Director of Student Life and Learning) at the University of the Sunshine Coast, Australia. With over 25 years' experience as a practitioner and manager in health and disability services, she has also served as a leader in Student Affairs since 2005. She received her doctorate from the University of Queensland, Australia, School of Social and Behavioural Sciences. With research interests in health promotion and student mental health, she is a review board member for the international journal, *Review of Disability Studies*, University of Hawaii. She has extensive governance and leadership experience with community services organisations and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She was elected to the Board of the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) in 2013.
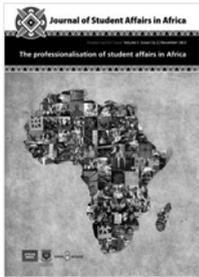
Call for submission of papers for the Special Edition of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* (*JSAA*)

The *JSAA* (which is currently under review for accreditation) plans to publish a Special Edition which creates a platform for debate and engagement on the tutorial and mentoring support provided to higher education students in South Africa, within and linked to the academic and disciplinary domain.

The *JSAA* is an independent, peer–reviewed, multi–disciplinary, open access academic journal that publishes scholarly research and reflective discussions about the theory and practice of student affairs in Africa. Authors publish free of charge; there are no processing or page fees.

Submission Process and Important Dates

Manuscripts due: 13 February 2017
Review process: 1 March to 7 May 2017 (including return to author/s for amendments or adjustments)
Final re-submission date for accepted and reworked articles: 17 July 2017
Envisaged publication date: 1 November 2017
For further information, contact: Lucy Alexander, alexan054@gmail.com

Overview of the *JSAA* Special Edition – Tutoring and Mentoring – Key Strategies for Tertiary Educational Development in South Africa

Student support through tutoring and mentoring as understood in the academic mainstream, as well as in the Student Affairs domain, are demonstrations of an ethics of care in higher education. Such strategies, integrated or embedded in mainstream teaching and learning practices, have been supported by the Department of Higher Education and Training through Teaching Development Grants to facilitate a more effective transition for students into academe, to achieve better learning, retention, as well as increased academic success rates. Through this Special Issue, we hope to promote a broader exploration and interrogation of these strategies within Teaching and Learning at universities, thereby

contributing to strengthened scholarship and debate, which might lead to further research, insights and questions, and ultimately the strengthening of practice.

Published research on these topics from South Africa and Africa have contributed to engaging scholarly approaches to educational development: however, as an emergent field of research and scholarship, educational support and development, requires evaluative, descriptive and analytic research approaches to share best practices, theorise the field and consider the role of contextual factors unique to the South African context.

The diverse roles played by different forms of educational support, as well as terminology variations contribute to challenges around the coherence of research on tutoring and mentoring in South Africa, and comparative analysis. Frameworks, implementation, theory and practices for tutoring and mentoring strategies also vary across the diverse disciplines in any one institution. Interesting debates are being held across institutions, in faculties, in Student Affairs, and Teaching and Learning Units, regarding discipline specific versus generic approaches; also under debate is who best plays these support roles, as well as issues of embedding or differentiating such support strategies. More theorising is required to understand and conceptualise these issues towards more effective practice.

Papers are invited which move beyond the specifics of programme application and outcome evaluations to exploring factors which could form the basis of student support theory and practice, without losing the specificities of discipline and context, so critical to making sense of an intervention. The issues of social justice and transformation underpinning such interventions are also pertinent, as are specific manifestations of these values.

We invite papers that engage critically with questions such as these or introduce additional questions for the 5th volume (November 2017) of the *Journal for Student Affairs in Africa*. Papers can be conceptual or empirical but must address the concerns of the Special Issue clearly.

Papers on the following topics are invited:

- Tutoring and mentoring as strategies for transforming higher education:
    - key educational development and transformation strategies for equity in higher education
    - the policy and funding landscape in HE influencing tutoring and mentoring
    - is responsibility for student educational support optimally distributed?
    - institutional–systemic versus programme support strategies
    - tensions around remediation and development
    - social justice and the ethics of care in higher education support strategies
    - educational development strategies for retention and integration of students
    - alignment of academic and personal social engagement
    - attaining graduate attributes within and outside the classroom through tutoring and mentoring
    - the role of formal and informal student groups in supporting each other towards social justice and equity goals.

- Tutoring and mentoring theory and development in Higher Education in SA:
    - theoretical underpinnings in tutoring and mentoring for South African Higher Education
    - the implications of context for tutoring and mentoring
    - articulation of support and development with mainstream curriculum
    - generic versus disciplinary tutoring models
    - capacity development and professionalisation of staff with reference to a wider conceptualisation of support and development
    - training and development, and valued attributes of mentors and tutors.

- Successful models of tutoring and mentoring:
    - systemic reviews and meta-analysis of theory and practice of tutoring and mentoring in South Africa
    - evidence of strategies which bring success in tutoring and mentoring in higher education
    - educational support via supplemental media, multimedia/curriculum pathways/ frameworks.

JSAA: Submission Preparation Checklist

Authors are required to check their submission's compliance with all of the following items, and submissions that do not adhere to these guidelines may be returned to authors.

1. The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration (or an explanation has been provided to the Editor).
2. The submission file is in MS Word, OpenOffice, or RTF document file format.
3. The text is double-spaced; uses a 12-point font; employs italics rather than underlining (except with URL addresses); and all illustrations, figures and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end.
4. The text adheres to the stylistic and bibliographic requirements outlined on the Journal's website.
5. The Journal uses the APA author–date referencing system.
6. If submitting to a peer-reviewed section of the Journal, i.e. as a research article or reflective practioner account, the instructions in Ensuring a Blind Review must have been followed.
7. If submitting a proposal for the Dialogue section, a Call or a Notice, or a Comment/ Critique, this should be emailed directly to the Journal Manager.
8. The final text of the article has been professionally edited and proofread prior to submission.
9. The front page of the manuscript indicates the Section under which it is proposed that the article be published, i.e. Research Article (peer-reviewed); Reflective Practice (peer-reviewed); or Book Reviews/Dialogues/other contributions.
10. Permission to reproduce any copyrighted material has been obtained and can be produced should this be requested by the Editorial Excecutive.

Please submit manuscripts by email to Lucy Alexander, Email: alexan054@gmail.com with cc to email: jsaa_editor@outlook.com

IASAS
International Association of
Student Affairs and Services

The International Association of Student Affairs and Services was officially founded on March 1, 2010. The purposes of IASAS are to:

- Strengthen and diversity cooperation among individuals and organizations in the student affairs and services field worldwide.
- Promote the student affairs and services profession at the international level through advocacy with governmental and higher education organizations, networking and sharing information among practitioners and student groups, and encouraging high quality preparation and professional development programs.
- Provide a platform for the improvement of multi and intercultural communication and understanding.
- Promote the welfare of students in higher education worldwide through collaboration with international governmental and non-governmental organisations and addressing such issues as access, retention, quality, student rights, and the cost of higher education.

IASAS utilizes technology for conducting most of its activities. This includes such applications as the IASAS website, email, internet and video conferencing, and social networks, etc. Occasional face-to-face meetings are held in various locations around the world and in conjunction with existing meetings of international, national, and regional groups whenever possible.

IASAS Africa Regional Coordinator:
Dr Birgit Schreiber (South Africa), Email: africaregion@iasasonline.org
IASAS website: http://www.iasasonline.org

Publications by AFRICAN SUN MeDIA
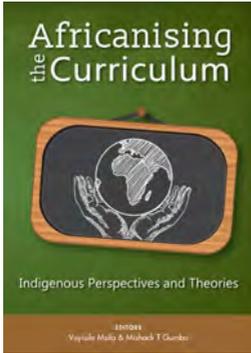
Africanising the Curriculum: Indigenous Perspectives and Theories by Vuyisile Msila & Mishack T. Gumbo (Eds.) (2016)

The alienating nature of the dominant curriculum in African schools and universities is an issue which simmered just below the surface in the 2015 student protests that swept through the South African higher education sector. The collection of essays found in this timely publication, offers compelling arguments for the deliberate embrace of the African culture to advance African knowledge and enhance African lives. It proposes fresh perspectives on what shape and form a decolonised curriculum should take on.
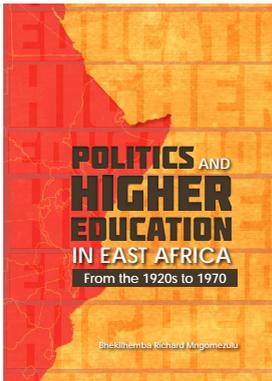
Politics and Higher Education in East Africa from the 1920s to 1970 by Bhekithemba R. Mngomezulu (2012)

The main objective of this book is to establish the salient reasons why higher education was developed in East Africa and specifically why the Federal University of East Africa was constituted. The author identifies the factors responsible for the collapse of this regional institution in June 1970.

He also demonstrates how the history of the University of East Africa sheds light on colonial and post-colonial policies on education, especially higher education, as a contribution to educational planning in contemporary Africa.

Latest publications by African Minds
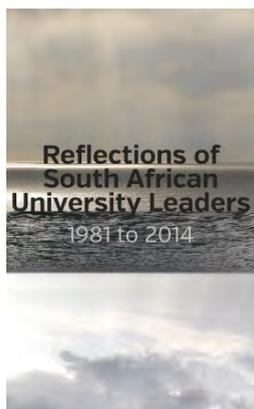
Reflections of South African University Leaders: 1981 to 2014 edited by Council on Higher Education African Minds Publisher, South Africa (2016)

Much has been written about the ever-growing demands on university leadership worldwide in the face of increasingly complex changes and challenges from within the academy and beyond. According to Johan Muller in the Introduction to this book, "there are particular features of time and place that also throw up unique problems". It is precisely 'time and place' that make this set of reflections by a range of vice-chancellors and senior academic leaders who had completed their terms of office quite remarkable and distinguishes it from the many biographies to be found in the literature on higher education leadership. How did they see the main changes that needed dealing with? What challenges did these changes pose and how were they successfully overcome? In the main, this collection spans two decades, the 1990s and 2000s, of unprecedented levels of change in South African higher education. [ISBN 978-1-928331-09-4]

Student Politics in Africa: Representation and Activism by T.M. Luescher, M. Klemenčič and J.O. Jowi (Eds.) (2016)

The second volume of the African Higher Education Dynamics Series brings together the research of an international network of higher education scholars with interest in higher education and student politics in Africa. Most authors are early career academics who teach and conduct research in universities across the continent and came together for a research project, and related workshops and a symposium on student representation in African higher education governance. The publication includes theoretical chapters on student organising, student activism and representation; chapters on historical and current developments in student politics in Anglophone and Francophone Africa, and in-depth case studies on student representation and activism in a cross-section of universities and countries. It provides a unique resource for academics, university leaders and student affairs professionals as well as student leaders and policy makers in Africa and elsewhere. [ISBN 978-1-928331-22-3]

All publications by African Minds can be downloaded free of charge as e-books (PDFs) from www.africanminds.org.za. Print copies can be ordered from the same website. For international orders, please contact www.africanbookscollective.com or www.amazon.com.

Submissions

Please register as an author and read the Author Guidelines at http://www.jsaa.ac.za. Submissions must be made by email to the Journal Manager at jsaa_editor@outlook.com.

The *JSAA* typically has themed issues. However, submissions that fall within the general scope and focus of the Journal can be made at any time and may be published irrespective of the overall theme of the Journal. Particularly encouraged are open-theme manuscripts that address the following:

- Case studies of innovative practices in student affairs in the context of African higher education (e.g. in teaching and learning, residence management, student governance, student counselling).
- High-level reflective practitioner accounts.
- Explorations of the nexus of student affairs theory, policy and practice in the African context and beyond.
- Conceptual discussions of student development, and key enablers and inhibitors of student development in Africa.
- Explorations of authoritative literature, theory and professional trends related to student affairs in Africa.

Please note that there are different requirements for different types of manuscripts:

- **Research articles:** Contributors are encouraged to submit research-based manuscripts. Research articles must include an extensive consideration of recent literature and relevant theory. Research-based articles must be original and research-based and must make a significant conceptual (or empirical or normative) contribution relevant to the scope and focus of the *JSAA*. The length must be approximately 5 000 words, including all references, notes, tables and figures. Manuscripts should be accompanied by an abstract of approximately 150–300 words.
- **Reflective practitioner accounts:** High-quality reports on professional campus practice are screened and reviewed according to the same criteria as for research articles, albeit with a different emphasis. Unlike a research article, they do not need to include an extensive consideration of recent literature and theory, but they must nonetheless comply with standard academic convention and scholarly practice. Reflective practitioner articles must be original, must make a significant empirical contribution, and must significantly enhance our understanding of student affairs practice within their respective scope and focus. Typical length should be 2 500–5 000 words. Manuscripts should be accompanied by an abstract of approximately 150–300 words.
- **Book reviews** should be between 800 and 1 000 words in length. Competent reviews of key student affairs books are published at the discretion of the Editorial Executive.
- **Comments and critique**, of no more than 2 500 words, are also welcome.
- **Proposal for the Journal's Dialogue/Interview section and Calls and Notices** should be emailed directly to the Journal Manager. The publication of calls and notices (for conferences, vacancies, etc.) may incur a nominal fee.

Authors are required to check their submission's compliance with all of the following items, and submissions that do not adhere to these guidelines may be returned to authors.

1. The submission has not been previously published, nor is it before another journal for consideration (or an explanation has been provided in Comments to the Editor).
2. The submission file is in MS Word, OpenOffice, or RTF document file format.
3. The text is double-spaced; uses a 12-point font; employs italics rather than underlining (except with URL addresses); and all illustrations, figures and tables are placed within the text at the appropriate points, rather than at the end.
4. The text adheres to the stylistic and bibliographic requirements outlined on the Journal's website.
5. The Journal uses the APA author–date referencing system.
6. If submitting to a peer-reviewed section of the Journal, i.e. as a research article or reflective practitioner account, the instructions in Ensuring a Blind Peer Review must have been followed.
7. If submitting a proposal for the Dialogue section, a Call/Notice, or a Comment/Critique, this should be emailed directly to the Journal Manager.
8. The final text of the article has been professionally edited and proofread prior to submission.
9. The front page of the manuscript indicates the Section under which it is proposed that the article be published, i.e. Research Article (peer-reviewed); Reflective Practice (peer-reviewed); or Book Reviews/Dialogues/other contributions.
10. Permission to reproduce any copyrighted material has been obtained and can be produced should this be requested by the Editorial Excecutive.

Section review policy and process

The *JSAA* publishes research articles (peer-reviewed); high-quality reflective practitioner accounts (peer-reviewed); dialogues/interviews (non-reviewed); and book reviews (non-reviewed). The Journal is committed to assisting emerging scholars and professionals in developing promising manuscripts to the point of publication.

Editorial commentary
☐ Open submissions   ☑ Indexed   ☐ Peer reviewed

Research articles and professional practitioner accounts
☑ Open submissions   ☑ Indexed   ☑ Peer reviewed

Campus dialogue/interview section
☑ Open submissions   ☑ Indexed   ☐ Peer reviewed

Book reviews
☑ Open submissions   ☑ Indexed   ☐ Peer reviewed

The editorial and peer-review policy adheres to the *ASSAf National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review for South African Scholarly Journals* (ASSAf Council, 2008). All submitted manuscripts undergo an initial careful examination by the Editorial Executive to ensure that authors' submissions fall within the mission, scope and focus of the *JSAA* and conform to scholarly best practice. Qualifying scholarly research-based articles and high-quality, relevant reflective practitioner accounts are blind-reviewed by at least two peer reviewers, who would typically be members of the International Editorial Advisory Board of the *JSAA*. Peer reviewers have proven scholarly and/or professional expertise in the subject matter of a manuscript. Reviewer reports are assessed by a member of the Editorial Executive and form the basis of any decision by the Editorial Executive on how to proceed with a manuscript. The suitability of a manuscript is evaluated in terms of originality, significance, scholarship, scope and interest, and accessibility.

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Journal of Student Affairs in Africa

The *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* (*JSAA*) is an independent, peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary, open-access academic journal that publishes scholarly research and reflective discussions about the theory and practice of student affairs in Africa.