



# Journal of Student Affairs in Africa

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## The professionalisation of student affairs in Africa



# 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.

## 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 *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* 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.

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## EDITORIAL

# Preface by journal patron

Lullu Tshiwula\*

I recall the day the journal planners came to discuss the possibility of this journal with me. I welcomed it, because I was, and still am, convinced that this initiative will serve as a platform for student affairs in contemporary higher education to write about the scope, mandate and its focus, the idea being to look at the intersection between the curricular and co-curricular in the context of student learning and development. In Africa, there is still an opportunity for developing and sustaining a student affairs profession, and this idea whose time has come should be welcomed as part of the contribution to human development. Globally, this is a fully-fledged field where students pursue either a masters degree or doctoral studies. I would imagine that even though the journal's title is *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, this is not at the exclusion of others who might have valuable contributions to make as student affairs professionals in other countries.

As the journal infers, there is a dearth of student affairs professionalisation in Africa, as most student affairs leaders on the continent have come to this area through other professional routes and, if they have a qualification in student affairs, they have acquired such training from countries such as the US or through other training .

Some student affairs professional groups have sought to collaborate with US counterparts in developing student affairs capacity through lifelong learning short courses at given intervals, as well as sharing knowledge through conferences. There are also universities in the South, such as the University of the Western Cape (UWC), whose collaboration with California State University, Fullerton culminated in the introduction of the first PhD programme in student affairs at UWC since 2010, driven by the division of Student Development and Support, with academic coordination from the Faculty of Education.

Looking at contributions in this inaugural journal, it is worth noting that the theme is “the professionalisation of student affairs in Africa”. This should serve as part of knowledge creation, addressing some complex challenges and engaging in discussions about student affairs, its place in higher education and its contribution to a wider society. It is appropriate for the continent to examine its own position in light of the diverse population of African students who access higher education.

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This journal should provide a space for conversations on matters relevant to student affairs – for example, how different African regions respond to their contextual realities – and reflect on those lessons for others to learn from. It would be interesting, for example, to read about how policy influences higher education, specifically student affairs, and what students’ experiences are on the African continent. As citizens of this continent, there is a general awareness that resources are stretched very thin among each country’s priorities. And despite this reality, students show resilience towards their studies.

It is envisaged that this journal will contribute to a further development of theoretical frameworks that are informed by an African reality and an understanding of the myriad challenges facing students. The role of student affairs is to create spaces of enabling development and support, to produce a graduate capable of functioning globally without losing a sense of local and national realities and perspectives, specific to the advancement of the African continent.

The space for this journal in the theatre of ideas is long overdue, and its potential for growth in the intellectual space is immense. Planners and the executive committees are encouraged to move forward unafraid of any challenge.

Prof. Lullu Tshiwula  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Student Development and Services  
University of the Western Cape

## EDITORIAL

# Towards a professionalisation of student affairs in Africa

Thierry Luescher-Mamashela\*, Teboho Moja\*\* and Birgit Schreiber\*\*\*

On a global scale, the *1998 World Declaration on Higher Education (WDHE)* calls for national and institutional decision-makers to “place students and their needs at the centre of their concern”, particularly as higher education expands and improves in developing countries. In response to this call, UNESCO has begun to elaborate ways in which student affairs and services in higher education can give effect to the World Declaration with the publication of the manual *The role of student affairs and services in higher education* (UNESCO, 2002) and the best practice guide *Student affairs and services in higher education: Global foundations, issues and best practices* (Ludeman, Osfield, Hidalgo, Oste & Wang, 2009). This comes at a time when African higher education has been undergoing a continent-wide revitalisation and massive expansion, leading to the emergence of the first national systems of mass higher education on the continent (in a context where, however, most systems remain largely elite, with participation rates well below 15 per cent), much and widespread institutional massification, and in many countries a bifurcation of higher education into public and private universities and colleges, and government-sponsored and fee-paying students (Mohamedbhai, 2008).

In the introduction to UNESCO’s best practice guide in student affairs, Ludeman *et al.* (2009) argue that in addition to mainly classroom-based delivery of higher education,

There is increasing evidence that higher education also must address the basic personal needs of students by providing a comprehensive set of out-of-classroom student services and programmes commonly referred to as student affairs and services. These efforts should be designed to enable and empower students to focus more intensely on their studies and on their personal growth and maturation, both cognitively and emotionally. They also should result in enhanced student learning outcomes [and] help to assure students’ success in higher education and their subsequent contributions to the national welfare. (p. iv–v)

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Ludeman's reference to "personal growth and maturation, both cognitively and emotionally", to enhancing "student learning outcomes" and assuring "student success" as part of the purposes of student affairs, points to a notion of student affairs that goes far beyond a services model which in its scope and focus is limited to the provision of support services. It thus challenges the separation of student affairs staff from academic staff and the core mission of the universities, and suggests a model of student affairs which may best be conceptualised as "a scholarship of practice" (see Carpenter, 2013, in this issue). Thus, if there is an incipient process of professionalising student affairs in Africa, it would appear wise to consider models of professionalism that reflect the state of the discipline and best practice as well as a student development framework that embraces human development theories such as the holistic development theory. Systems of higher education in Africa need professionals who can help create an educational setting that would "address the individual's intellectual growth as well as her personal growth to enable the student to mature and become a full participant in civil society" (Gillepsie, Braskamp & Dwyer, 2009, p.446).

### *Scholarly and professional developments in African student affairs*

There is growing interest in professionalising student affairs in Africa. For example, in the last decade, academic programmes with a focus in student affairs have sprung up in a number of African universities. At Eduardo Mondlane University (EMU) in Maputo, Makerere University (MAK) in Kampala, and the University of the Western Cape (UWC) in Cape Town, programmes have been developed and are being delivered as part of successful North–South and South–South collaborations. This development of programmes in higher education studies and student affairs – and the demand that has been shown both by students and prospective employers (such as national ministries, regulatory bodies and university administrations) – reflect training needs that clearly go beyond the 'on-the-job-training' model that is otherwise so prevalent, and point towards specialised and high-level skills requirements entering the profession. This is supported by research conducted in new and existing centres, in research programmes focused on African higher education, and in a growing literature on higher education and student affairs in Africa.

The scholarly field of higher education and student affairs is clearly developing – if still only in pockets – on the continent. Concurrently, professional associations in student affairs are also developing. Among them are the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS), founded in 2010, the Association for College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I), the Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACHDHE), as well as national associations such as the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) and the National Association of Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV). Many of these associations hold annual or bi-annual conferences which include insightful presentations sharing professional reflection on good practices and research relevant to the profession more broadly. In addition, a first African Student Affairs Conference was held in 2011, which included student affairs professionals from countries across the continent such

as Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda. This was followed by a smaller conference of student affairs professionals and student leaders from across east and southern Africa in the same year. Most recently, some of the associations have ventured into new areas: publishing and training (with regard to the latter, see Dunn & Dunkel, 2013, in this issue).

### ***JSAA launch issue: The professionalisation of student affairs in Africa***

It is within this context that the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa (JSAA)* has been established as a platform for critically engaging with these developments by means of encouraging, supporting and disseminating high quality research and professional reflection from a diversity of national and institutional contexts. The *JSAA* is an independent, international, peer-reviewed, multi-disciplinary academic journal, established to serve the broad range of associations and professionals, institutions, centres and individual academics and researchers in the field. The *JSAA* publishes scholarly research and reflective-practitioner discussions about the theory and practice of student affairs in African higher education. It ultimately strives to become the foremost scholarly and professional journal dealing with the theory and practice of the student affairs domain in higher education on the African continent. As such it will be an indispensable resource for 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, academics and students focused on the field of higher education studies and student affairs.

In the call for papers for the launch double issue of the *JSAA*, contributors were invited to engage with questions around the incipient professionalisation of student affairs in Africa. Specifically invited were critical contributions engaging with the notion of professionalisation, professionalism, and their meanings in relation to the practice of student affairs; explorations of the nexus of student affairs theory, policy and practice in the African context; explorations of theory development, professional trends and academic programmes related to student affairs in Africa; conceptual discussions of student development, and key enablers and inhibitors of student development in Africa; as well as case studies of innovative practices in student affairs in African higher education and related relevant contexts, and high level reflective practitioner accounts.

The response has been both overwhelmingly positive and expectedly skewed. The skewness relates mainly to the institutional location of authors. Some of the authors are located in American universities, but have spent time in Africa conducting research on student-related issues, whilst others are located in Africa but mainly in South Africa. This has been expected not only due to the institutional location of most of the founding editors of the journal (and the invitation is for authors and editors from across the continent to join) but also because of the levels of development of the profession and scholarly field in the United States (as against elsewhere in the world). To balance the skewness, peer-reviewers were selected from the African continent as well as from the international community.

The responses received to the call for papers and in reaction to the establishment of the *JSAA* were overwhelmingly positive. One of the notes in support of the establishment

of the journal is published as preface to the launch issue: the letter of support by Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Lullu Tshiwula of UWC, who has also become a patron of the journal. Tshiwula writes that

the space for this journal in the theatre of ideas is long overdue, and its potential for growth in the intellectual space is immense. (p. vi in this issue)

This intellectual space has now become inhabited by a first set of contributors.

### *Conceptualisations of the student affairs profession*

The opening articles by Carpenter and Haber-Curran and by Selznick both engage with definitions of student affairs as a profession – and find that student affairs does not fit the strictures of traditional professions (such as medicine) very well. Nonetheless (and from different perspectives), both arrive at the intermediary conclusion that professionalisation in the African higher education context is both possible and desirable, and should not necessarily follow the American model. According to Carpenter and Haber-Curran, the traditional American service model has resulted in a conceptual separation of student affairs from the academic core mission of universities, which ought to be avoided in the African context. Rather, by asking a series of questions, they propose that “student affairs professionals should engage in what can be called the scholarship of practice” (p. 3 in this issue):

What if student affairs professionals fully embraced a role as practitioner-scholars engaging in practice in a thoughtful and intentional way that is both informed by research and informs research? (Komives, 1998)

What if the notion of scholarship expanded beyond just the scholarship of discovery to also include the scholarship of integration, application, and teaching and learning as argued by Boyer? (1990)

And what if student affairs practice were approached interdependently with academic faculties and departments rather than independently or dependently?

In elaborating their conception of what constitutes a scholarship of practice, Carpenter and Haber-Curran illustrate ways in which professional associations, professional preparation programmes (such as those mentioned above) and professional/scholarly publications like the *JSAA* can infuse scholarly values in professional practice.

Selznick’s focus on how best to professionalise student affairs leads him to a close examination of the work of Noordegraaf on professional development with reference to the notions of ‘constructed professionalism’, ‘practices-in-transition’ and ‘hybrid professionalism’. They conceive of professionalisation as a dynamic, evolving and contingent process that involves an intentional, flexible and reflective application of theory in practice, in a context of empirical and normative complexity and ambiguity. Selznick applies the

proposed professionalisation model in suggestive ways to career counselling and distance education, as two functional areas which respectively hold opportunities for adaptation and collaboration. He concludes on a high note:

African practitioners trained to be adaptive and collaborative may very well chart courses that will inspire the international student affairs community to reinvent practices in the name of greater student success and access. (p. 20 in this issue)

How to enhance the professionalisation of student affairs is approached in different ways by the articles of Gansemer-Topf, and Dunn and Dunkel. The former proposes assessment, i.e. the formalised process “to gather, analyse, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisional or agency effectiveness” (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996 in Gansemer-Topf, 2013, in this issue), as “a critical component in raising the stature of student affairs professionalism”. Thus, while practices such as assessment are performed in the first place as a means to show accountability and suggest improvements, they play an important role in establishing the legitimacy of the profession in the eyes of internal and external stakeholders.

The latter article by Dunn and Dunkel reports on the different models of competencies for student housing officers and the establishment of the Southern African Student Housing Training Institute. It demonstrates, by way of a very practical example, how the professionalisation of student affairs can be enhanced through competency development and international collaboration facilitated by a professional association, in this case the ACUHO-I.

As noted above, the professionalisation of student affairs in Africa comes in a context of the rapid expansion of access opportunities which poses additional challenges to student affairs professionals. The article by Yakaboski and Birnbaum elaborates on the variety of challenges higher education institutions face as they expand and try to provide access to masses of students in one particular country, Kenya. The challenges range from a lack of professional training to problems with leadership in the institutions, and therefore beg for more training and professionalisation of the services to be provided in order to address problems that are unique to a university located on the African continent and the country’s cultural and historical legacies and practices.

This issue’s thematic engagement with “the professionalisation of student affairs in Africa” is concluded with the reflections of a former student leader from the University of Cape Town, Thami Ledwaba, on the contribution of student affairs to student life, student leadership, higher education and society.

### *Beyond the profession: Researching student affairs in Africa*

Gyampo’s research article on student activism and its contribution to the quality of democracy in Ghana shifts the focus from looking inward at student affairs as a profession to the big picture of the relationship between higher education and democratisation in Africa. Gyampo’s article shows the changing dynamic between student activism and democratisation from confrontation to dialogue, and its changing organisational form,

which has become aligned to Ghanaian multipartyism. Research into students' political engagement on and off campus has come into focus in African higher education with the understanding that student engagement with democracy, diversity and social justice is an important part of the university's civic role and contribution to the attainment of graduate attributes related to citizenship.

The article by Gyampo is a good example of research conducted in the field of higher education studies which is relevant to student affairs. Its publication in the launch issue also illustrates our commitment as an Editorial Team to publish articles that fall within the journal's scope and that pass the journal's rigorous processes of editorial vetting and double-blind peer review as soon as they are ready, even if they do not directly relate to the thematic core of the issue. While the *JSAA* will typically have a thematic core, there will be articles in every issue – research articles, reflective practitioner accounts, and book reviews – that respond more broadly to the interests of authors and readers.

The book reviews chosen for this issue also reflect diverse themes. Fourie reviews Williams' *Strategic diversity leadership; Activating change and transformation in higher education* and emphasises the book's value in terms of straddling the theoretical domain of diversity while also engaging with practical challenges around implementation and experiences. Bozalek reviews *Beyond inclusion: The practice of equal access in Indian higher education*. She highlights the book's significance in terms of filling the "gap in knowledge about the intersection between social justice and higher education" (p. 81 in this issue). She highlights the critique of 'skills development' as a response to access issues, as seen in the chapter by Zacharias in the book, which is a chronic issue that student affairs needs to grapple with. Clearly, as Bozalek points out, levelling the ground regarding access issues is about social justice, and this book is a 'must read' for everyone concerned with its intersection with higher education. Lastly, Fouché, a seasoned therapist who focuses on the intersection of career and narrative therapy, provides a useful summary of Maree's book *Counselling for career construction* which illustrates a range of related interventions, theories and practices in student affairs.

Lastly, we would like to take this opportunity to thank all the contributors and peer-reviewers, our esteemed members of the *JSAA* Editorial Executive and the *JSAA* International Editorial Advisory Board, the layout editors from African Minds and the technical team from e-publications of the University of the Western Cape. Our thanks go also to the many supportive colleagues we spoke to in the course of the conceptualisation and establishment of the journal, and most especially to Ms Tonia Overmeyer who was a pillar of strength and a bundle of joy to work with in the initial development phase.

On behalf of the Editorial Executive,

Dr Thierry Luescher-Mamashela, Journal Manager

Prof. Teboho Moja, Editor-in-Chief

Dr Birgit Schreiber, Book Review Editor

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The role of research and scholarship in the professionalisation of student affairs

Stan Carpenter\* and Paige Haber-Curran\*\*

### *Abstract*

In this article the authors first explicate a particular conception of the occupational sociology term ‘professional’ and engage in a short discussion of how student affairs as a field conforms to the definition, and ways in which it might benefit from some intentional reframing. Attention is next directed to the definition of what the authors call scholarly practice and its interaction with scholarly outlets such as journals, conference proceedings and professional development. Reflecting the now longstanding call for student affairs and academic affairs professionals to unite in service of facilitating student development and learning, the authors propose a set of guiding values for student affairs administrators that promote data- and theory-based intentionality of practice. These guiding values also require continual professional reflection and renewal, including actively interacting with journals and other peer-reviewed professional outlets. Particular attention is given throughout the article to the pivotal role to be played at this time in the development of the student affairs profession by the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*.

### *Keywords*

*professions, professionalism, professional development, student affairs administration, intentionality, scholarly practice, student affairs professional competency areas.*

### *Introduction*

Great endeavours frequently spring from great beginnings! That certainly seems likely in the case of this initial edition of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa (JSAA)*. Professionally conducted, written and vetted research and scholarship are arguably the essential components of professionalism and professional development. Nothing could be more important at a time when higher education and student development as fields of study and practice come of age in Africa. The purpose of this article is to provide some foundation for the statements above in the already existing literature of student affairs.

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### *What is a ‘professional’ field or person?*

As used here (and in much of the occupational sociology literature), the appellation ‘professional’ has little to do with vernacular meanings. That is, a person who simply earns money for some job is not necessarily considered a professional. Similarly, a high level of performance is not enough to distinguish one’s status as a professional. Rather, professionals are those who are engaged in a profession. Distinct from other occupations, professions are described and delineated by either their particular traits, frequently including the “combination of expertise, collective organisation and collegial control, ethical standards, and work in a ‘public service’” (Brint, 1993; Friedson, 1986); some professionalisation process (Wilensky, 1964) involving a group of people engaging full-time in important work; the emergence of professional associations; the development of a formal, academic course of study and preparation; political maneuvering to establish turf and legal and other sanctions; and an enforceable code of ethics; or simply artifacts of history and convention (Veysey, 1988). Each of these conceptions, while flawed and failing to account for all related phenomena, does imply a measure of power and privilege surrounding professional status, as well as certain labour market implications (Brint, 1993). One model that mediates among these ideas is that of Pavalko (1971, p. 4), who suggested eight continua to classify occupations as either more or less professional. These eight areas are useful especially to young or emerging professions since they provide a road map for progress, as well as some directionality: specialised theory and intellectual technique required; relevance to basic social values and processes; nature of preparation in terms of amount and specialisation of training and degree of symbolisation and ideation required; motivation for work, meaning service to society as opposed to self-interest; autonomy of practice; sense of commitment or strength of calling to the profession; sense of professional community and culture; strength of codes of ethics.

For a job to be considered a profession, it would require a high degree of specialised knowledge and skill, a primarily service motivation, tasks crucial to society, an extended period of preparation, and so on (Carpenter, 2003). For an analysis of the professional status (or lack thereof) of the student affairs field, the reader is referred to Carpenter (2003) and Carpenter and Stimpson (2007). The former holds that “much of the literature and most of the practices of student affairs in hiring, in professional development and associations, and in many other functions so closely mimic those of [other] professions as to be indistinguishable” (Carpenter, 2003, p. 575). The authors of the latter piece concluded that:

Something even more interesting may be occurring with the student affairs profession. Trait or process, reality or construction, the strictures of traditional professions do not fit this occupation very well. [...] It may be that what seems like a poor fit from a trait standpoint is actually an evolutionary move to a new kind of profession, one that keeps the best of community and regeneration while eschewing more limited models of boundary setting such as licensure and preparation monopolies. Is student affairs a profession? For all practical purposes, yes. (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007, pp. 269–70)

Obviously, this should read “yes, for the US.” It remains to be seen if student affairs practice is able to sufficiently distinguish itself from the rest of university administration in Africa to become professionalised, and if it does, it should be able to progress quickly to profession-like status by using the example of the US.

### *The interaction of scholarly practice, scholarly outlets and professional development*

Having established at a minimum that student affairs as a field of endeavour may be sensibly examined as a profession, perhaps a useful discussion can be had around what might be called a meta-conceptualisation. For example, the field began in the US within a services model, eventually morphing to a more educational, developmental and learning role. The resulting conceptual (if somewhat artificial) separation from faculty and the core missions of the universities has never been satisfactorily overcome and remains a major issue in the US. If, as the call for this special issue of the *JSAA* suggests, higher education and student affairs practices are not quite as ‘frozen’ or hidebound yet in Africa, then it may not be too late to consider a very different kind of mindset. What if student affairs professionals fully embraced a role as practitioner-scholars engaging in practice in a thoughtful and intentional way that is both informed by research and informs research (Komives, 1998)? What if the notion of scholarship expanded beyond just the scholarship of discovery to also include the scholarship of integration, application, and teaching and learning as argued by Boyer (1990)? And what if student affairs practice were approached interdependently with academic faculties and departments rather than independently or dependently?

In a special issue of the *Journal of College Student Development*, Carpenter (2001, p. 304) asserted, “Our work should be nothing less than a combination of discovery, integration, application, and teaching, managed efficiently and evaluated rigorously. Hence, to be effective, student affairs professionals should be engaged in what can be called the scholarship of practice.” In the interest of suggesting that this is a fruitful conceptualisation for student affairs professionals in Africa (and elsewhere), what follows is a brief analysis of ways that professional preparation programmes, professional associations, and especially outlets such as the *JSAA* could contribute to the adoption of scholarly values by student affairs professionals.

Carpenter (2001) identified 11 core values of scholars that could constitute a scholarship of practice.

### *Scholarly practice is intentional*

Certainly, in student affairs, we intend our actions, but not always in a macro, mission and goal-focused way. We should do so transparently, overtly and publically. We should know as a profession and as individuals what it is we are trying to accomplish and endeavour to align every programme, budget and intervention to our larger purposes. But what are these purposes? That is where the professional community comes into play. Scholars in individual universities preparing new professionals inculcate values, teach skills and shape agendas.

Professional associations, conferences and professional development workshops similarly take on roles as opinion leaders and venues for discussion and refinement of thinking. A recent example of this in the US is the Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Professionals published by ACPA: College Student Educators International and NASPA: Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (2010), a document outlining 10 key competency areas capturing professional skills, knowledge, and attitudes of student affairs professionals. The Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (2012) also provides frameworks for intentional practice through establishing professional standards for various functional areas across student affairs. Eventually, one can conceive of adaptations or entirely new documents similar to these in Africa that address issues endemic to the region. For example, a short period of research into the websites of African universities quickly shows that dealing with tribalism is an issue on many campuses. This is not something that any US competency or research would address, certainly not in the same way. Hence, it must be dealt with in an African professional context.

But no vehicle is nearly as important as well curated, properly peer-reviewed professional journals, because they provide scholarly legitimacy, help to develop the field, and the published material in the journal ideally becomes much of the basis for preparation programmes and professional development workshops. It is easy to conceive of graduate programmes of study aimed at providing African student affairs professionals with theory and research that would allow them to practice at a much higher level, similar to those in the US, yet different in important ways indicated by the journal content. The same could be true of professional development workshops and conference presentations. Of course, the profession shapes the journal, but the large extent to which the journal shapes the profession should not be ignored, for the journal will ideally be an outlet for the best professional writing and thinking, the most forward-looking visions and the most innovative new practices. This function is especially likely in a journal that allows flexibility like the *JSAA*. Not every valuable piece is a research study, nor every new practice refined. The notion of the reflective pieces contemplated in future issues is noteworthy in this regard. Intentionality, like all professional motivations, should be shaped by many and vetted carefully, but it must be present.

### *Scholarly practice is theory-based*

Student affairs professionals should not only know what they are trying to do, but they should also know why. Good research and scholarship is available for many aspects of practice, including community development, identity development, involvement and engagement, retention, student success and other areas. But, by definition, such things are context- and culture-dependent, and the student affairs field is overwhelmingly situated within the US context and US culture. As such, much of the theory in existence may not transfer to the contexts and cultures of African higher education. As the focus of student affairs continues to grow beyond US borders across the world, higher education professionals are seeking ways to understand how existing theory can inform practice and in what ways existing

theories and models should be re-examined or adapted based on cultural and contextual factors. As just one recent example, student affairs professionals across the prominent higher education institutions in Qatar partnered with student affairs professionals, faculty members and professional preparation students from the US to proactively and intentionally address such issues. This was addressed in part through the Young Professionals Institute, a three-day professional development programme “focused on addressing the challenges facing higher education student affairs in Qatar through inquiry-focused learning communities [...] to increase the understanding of rigorous educational practice in a culturally diverse and organisationally dispersed setting” (Haber & Getz, 2011, p. 474).

The notion that theories need to evolve and be very carefully adapted across cultural contexts is not necessarily a new one. After all, most of the classic theories of student learning and development in the US were originally based on fairly traditional studies, using samples and populations of white male students. Our theories, research and practices have evolved far beyond these roots and we now know something about how to take culture, intersectionality, context, self-identification and many other factors into account. Similarly, scholars attempting to extend theoretical formulations across borders will need to take great care to assure relevance and inclusivity, but they will not be blazing entirely new trails.

The same sorts of roles as suggested in the above section on intentionality are necessary for theory development and testing, probably even more so. Presumably, a good journal will publish only the theoretical material that can pass muster with the most discerning of minds in the profession. There must be an arbiter, a gatekeeper of the discussion, not to restrict creativity or content, but to filter the conversation and limit it to the serious, eliminating the frivolous or poorly conceived.

### *Scholarly practice is data-based*

For centuries, medicine was practised intentionally, based on the best theory of the times, but was still ineffective. It was data analysis that changed the picture. Assessment should be second nature to student affairs professionals because there is no time to waste on activities that don't work. And yet, as Carpenter (2001, p. 306) puts it:

Perhaps this is because we in student affairs would rather do than prove, workloads are often high, planning time is minimal, and evaluation time is nonexistent [...] data-based decision making is the weakest link in the scholarly practice of our work. If student affairs is to join our faculty colleagues in a true learning partnership, we must get better at using data to buttress planning, evaluation, practice, and assessment. Most faculty use data in their work, and they are more comfortable with others who do the same. They will support ideas that work, but may not support those that do not or are not demonstrated to do so.

It should be obvious that the *JSAA* and other professional publications will be utterly critical in encouraging and vetting the empirical studies needed to check the applicability of the wide variety of theories and approaches from other parts of the world. Will theories

and practices developed with US students and US context work with African students and in African contexts? Can they be modified successfully? Only carefully collected, analysed and edited data will tell. More importantly, perhaps, only data will let the story(ies) be told and indigenous theories and practices evolve and develop. This will require funding, of course, as well as a fairly high level of sophistication with regard to research methodology. Student affairs practitioners will need to gain higher levels of education and/or partner with university faculty and researchers to do the theory and evaluation work necessary.

### *Scholarly practice is peer reviewed*

This idea almost goes without saying with regard to a professional journal, but the journal then has a responsibility to help create the ethos of peer review for all professional practice, led by professional associations, but reaching down to the institutional and unit levels. Student affairs practitioners are reluctant to criticise each other, perhaps because of the personal nature of the work. But it is work and it needs to be separated from personalities because the impacts on students are just too powerful. As in other professions, student affairs professionals must constructively evaluate and criticise each other, as this only enhances the work and thus the knowledge and improved practice that comes from the work. The *JSAA* has a crucial role to play in shaping the professional conversation in such a way as to demand accountability for personal practice.

### *Scholarly practice is tolerant of differing perspectives*

Rather than enshrining a narrow view of current convention or fashion, a proper view of scholarly practice provides ready access to new and diverse ideas or concepts. After all, every practice that we use now because it is the accepted way began at some point as an innovation. Just as many of the ideas of Albert Einstein were derided in 1905 and celebrated in 1927, there are nascent ideas, programmes, practices and theories about African college students that are just beginning to be understood or tried. Sadly, unless we use the mores of scholarship, the adoption of these ideas will be random and hit or miss, if they survive at all. Scholars systematically consider all data and thinking available before arriving at a course of action or an informed opinion. Scholars thrive on diversity of thought and practice.

### *Scholarly practice is collaborative*

In every discipline, faculty members understand the nature of the scholarly community. They understand and value the opportunities to consult and discuss approaches and ideas. In medicine, the dictum '*primum non nocere*' suggests that if one does not know what to do, then one should do nothing and go and find out what to do. This is equally true in student affairs. In novel situations, we should never simply forge ahead on instinct or just do what has always been done, but rather look for opportunities to refine our intentionality. Many minds working on a problem are better than just one, and in student affairs we are really very good at networking and consulting both within our own campus communities and across geographic and institutional lines. What better example of such collaboration can

there be than this very journal, calling as it does on a rich variety of international resources to assure professional best practices in scholarly use of information?

### *Scholarly practice is unselfish*

Of course, the wellspring of collaboration is sharing, and scholars share their work. Very little knowledge is proprietary among faculty members, and the same should be true among student affairs workers. Certainly, institutions compete in various ways, but our fundamental work is to facilitate the growth, development and learning of students. When we find better ways to do that, sharing is required ethically, just as it would be in medicine. This is not to say that professionals should not give credit where it is due, in informal and formal ways, such as literature citations and the like, but it is an ethical call to generosity. Again, this and other journals and professional publications, conference presentations and professional development workshops are prime examples of how professional sharing should be done. The very existence of the *JSAA* shows the importance of sharing with the professional community.

### *Scholarly practice is open to change*

“Scholars are eager for change, because change leads to new and better practice” (Carpenter, 2001, p.309). Diverse and novel ideas can be incorporated into current research conceptualisations or worldviews with greater or lesser facility, but true change shifts entire models or paradigms, ideally for the better. Scholars live for this – they love to apply their ideas to the new landscape. For decades student affairs professionals have been at the forefront of advocacy for social justice and appropriate representation of all segments of society in higher education. Now that these things are increasingly happening, it is clear that our institutions and our practices have to change. Scholarly practice is designed for this somewhat unstable environment. Student affairs professionals need to be able to systematically try out innovations and carefully and properly evaluate their usefulness. Sentiment and tradition must earn their way – scholars will change to new ways if they work better or add value. The role of the *JSAA* will increasingly be to report on the front lines of the change we seek – to identify what is working and what is not.

### *Scholarly practice is careful and skeptical*

Being open to change and diversity does not mean throwing out proven concepts and practices on a whim. There is little need to elaborate more on this concept since it is fundamental to much of the foregoing discussion and has been treated sufficiently therein. It suffices to call for systematic, peer-reviewed, data-based examination of new or innovative theories and practices. Again, this is exactly what a professional journal such as the *JSAA* is for, and indeed without carefully peer-reviewed publications such vetting is quite unlikely to happen.

### *Scholarly practice pays attention to regeneration*

Student affairs workers are notoriously devoted to students, so much so that other activities come to be thought of as peripheral or unimportant. But just as doctors and lawyers have



elaborate professional associations and continuing education requirements, there is a certain amount of what might be called professional infrastructure and overhead that needs to exist for student affairs to continue as a profession. In fact, since entry and continuation in our field are not formalised, “a larger (not lesser) obligation falls to knowledgeable practitioners to socialise the younger or less experienced to the values and practices of the field, and to encourage professionals to stay current” (Carpenter, 2001, p. 310). The future of our field depends on this regeneration. We will find a way to come to more agreement on the necessary initial preparation of professionals and what they need in terms of ongoing professional development or we will cease to be relevant on our various campuses. The *JSAA* has a critical role in this conversation in Africa, as do professional associations and professional preparation programmes. In this vein, reward structures in student affairs organisations and in higher education institutions must be modified to recognise that “teaching, publishing, presenting, editing, mentoring, supervising, and supporting colleagues to do so are critical aspects of professional practice, even though they ostensibly take time and energy away from practice with clients” (Ibid.).

### *Scholarly practice is autonomous, within institutional contexts*

In the US, this is where the listing of these scholarly values slightly diverges for student affairs professionals. Student affairs professionals by definition work in institutional contexts and have serious obligations to respect associated missions and values in ways that are quite different from their faculty colleagues, who can rely more heavily on academic freedom, especially when they are on disciplinary ground. On the other hand, institutions do not typically tell accountants, lawyers or doctors in their employ how to practise and they should not do so unnecessarily with student affairs professionals. If we really do have expertise and can demonstrate it in a straightforward, professional, systematic, scholarly fashion, then we should be allowed to put our professional opinions into play and be willing to be held accountable for the outcomes. Again turning to Carpenter (2001, p. 310),

Scholarly practitioners understand this complex interplay and learn to respect their boundaries. But they practice their craft as autonomously as possible by making decisions primarily for the benefit of students, relying upon theory and research, remaining accountable to peers, providing professional feedback, acting ethically, and enacting the values of the profession generally. Scholars exercise professional judgment.

Professional journals and associations certainly help to provide legitimacy to sometimes controversial actions and practices.

### *Conclusion*

The authors of this article have attempted to present one way of conceptualising professional practice, a particular way that privileges the role of professional journals like the *JSAA* and other professional norm-setting organisations and activities. In the US, the student affairs profession and professional practice evolved over time, in some ways for the better, in some

for the worse. In Africa, it seems that choices may be still open, that professionals there can learn from past missteps and intentionally forge the path ahead. In any case, the work that we do is so important that nothing should be left to chance. Perhaps thinking of ourselves as scholars at least gives pause for careful consideration.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

## A proposed model for the continued professionalisation of student affairs in Africa

Benjamin Selznick\*

### *Abstract*

This article presents a model that can inform the continued professionalisation of student affairs as both a field and a practice in Africa. After providing a brief overview of the African post-secondary educational climate and establishing student affairs as an internationally recognised profession, I analyse three pieces authored or co-authored by Mirko Noordegraaf (2003; 2007; 2011) that develop the concepts of socially constructed professionalism, management of practices-in-transition and hybrid professionalism. I then employ these concepts to create a professionalisation model that incorporates an awareness of the complex and diverse nature of African student affairs work. I next examine two key areas present across the modern African post-secondary environment – career education and distance learning – and discuss how the model can guide student affairs professionalisation and practice when working in these important educational spaces. I conclude by briefly commenting on the potential for practitioners in the African context to develop new pathways forward for the international student affairs community.

### *Keywords*

*student affairs, career education, distance learning, professionalisation.*

### *Introduction*

Post-secondary education in Africa, whether occurring on university campuses (Lindow, 2012), online (Simmons, Mbarika, Mbarika, Thomas, Tsuma, Wade & Wilkerson, 2011) or through other forms of open distance learning (Lephalala & Makoe, 2012), is on the rise. Recently, institutions across the continent have seen an increased demand for post-secondary education due to a multitude of factors. These include the further incorporation of higher education into national development strategies (Cloete, Bailey, Pillay, Bunting & Maassen, 2011; Kanyengo, 2009; Pillay, 2010), increased international investment (Lindow, 2012), and a rapid growth in population ages 15–24 termed the ‘youth bulge’ (Agbor, Taiwo

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& Smith, 2012). As African post-secondary education grows, the demand for individuals trained to provide comprehensive student services will increase. These individuals, described by Chickering and Reisser (1993) as the “mortar” to the teaching faculty “brick” (p. 427), are essential at a time when learning is encouraged outside of the classroom (Blake, 2007). They hold additional importance in educational climates where the emphasis is placed on holistic student development (Idogho, 2011; UNESCO, 2002) and student populations continue to grow and diversify (Lumadi & Mampuru, 2010).

In the African context, student affairs professionals can play vital roles in the daily lives of students and institutions. For example, Idogho (2011) argued that African tertiary institutions should utilise student affairs practitioners to implement an array of comprehensive initiatives. These consist of an orientation programme for all new students and their parents; an academic success programme encompassing residential education and the building of public/private partnerships with real estate companies; a counselling programme focused on interpersonal relationships, adjustment to college, study skills and career development; a student health and wellness programme aimed at helping students reach their optimum levels “physically, intellectually, emotionally, morally, socially and spiritually” (p. 274); and an academic advising programme specifically targeted at providing first-year students with individualised attention.

Of course, it is one thing to propose programmes in the name of greater student success and often entirely another matter to implement them. In scenarios of both economic challenge (Kayengo, 2009) and educational expansion (Ofori-Attah, 2010), post-secondary institutions may feel pressured to increase enrolments without necessarily providing additional support services to new and persisting students. As the call for papers for this publication illustrates, though, the tide is turning towards an increase in the education and support of student affairs professionals across Africa. I believe this growth is necessary as student affairs practitioners can serve as the ‘mortar’ of African higher education in three integrated areas across a wide variety of institutional contexts. First, professionals who develop shared bases of knowledge can collaborate to develop practices that best meet the needs of students (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007). Second, professionals can continue to conduct research on student learning and development in the African context that may directly inform institutional and national decision-making and resource allocation. Finally, they can aid in the utilisation of post-secondary education as a mechanism for career development (Watson & McMahan, 2009) and poverty reduction through upward social and economic mobility (Borode, 2011; Asmal & James, 2001; Gyimah-Brempong, Paddison & Mitiku, 2006) by emphasising professional development throughout the co-curriculum (Chan & Derry, 2013).

The purpose of this paper is to present a model that can inform the continued professionalisation of student affairs in Africa. I have chosen to build a model in the hope that it will provide those charged with training new practitioners, as well as those currently practising, with a tool to aid in the continued evolution of the profession as it crosses institutions and national borders. To create this model, I first situate African student affairs

within the context of recent scholarship surrounding professionalism. I then construct the model based around central themes of dynamism and flexibility. I next discuss two areas where African practitioners can translate this model into action: career education and distance learning. I close with reflections on how the African student affairs context may inform practice internationally.

### *A model for student affairs professionalisation*

Student affairs work can be broken down into three categories: entering services, supporting services and culminating services (Chickering & Reisser, 1993, p. 438). Each of these areas presents opportunities for researchers to better understand learners and institutions as well as for practitioners to assist each student in his/her academic and personal success (UNESCO, 2002). Working in these areas must also be cast against challenges that exist throughout African education such as lack of funding, historical inequality, political instability, disease and outdated technology (Lindow, 2012).

In a 2002 report titled *The Role of Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education*, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) emphasised the importance of student affairs in the international expansion and success of higher education. The report clearly stated that student affairs must be understood as a profession and that trained professionals be considered experts on student development and educational environments. In making this claim the authors also highlighted a need for professionals to develop standards of practice and behaviour through such measures as formalised education and preparation, ongoing professional development, assessment of student outcomes, and creation of management strategies (p.13). The debate surrounding professionalism, then, should not focus on whether student affairs is or is not a profession; it should instead focus on how to best professionalise practitioners (Evetts, 2011) in order to meet the needs of their students. I argue that a model of professionalisation sensitive to the three core dimensions of student affairs work (Chickering & Reisser, 1993) yet adaptable to the variety of contexts found within African higher education can guide the development of the profession called for by UNESCO.

### *Constructed professionalism*

Student affairs professionals operate in what Brint (2001) termed the professional services sector. In this capacity, Brint (2001) argued, they stand poised to make far greater contributions to the performance of their organisations than technology and other non-personnel factors. However, as members of a growing profession in a rapidly changing societal and educational landscape (Lindow, 2011; Milliken, 2004), emerging and current student affairs practitioners must develop themselves and their field (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007).

A starting point for the conversation surrounding this second, wider sense of 'professional development' at the field level can be found in the work of Schinkel and Noordegraaf (2011). In their paper, the authors developed a theory of professionalism anchored in the work of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and suggest:

Perhaps we should treat professionalism as a dynamic concept, as a verb instead of a noun – ‘professionalisation’ – and not a static concept with generic, fixed and universal features ... Changing societies will experience the continuous manufacturing of professionalism. That is, they will experience *process* in which ideals of professionalism are (re)constructed. (p. 84)

Interpreting Bourdieu, Schnikel and Noordegraaf (2011) argue in favour of understanding a profession as an entity existing in a state of constant construction by its stakeholders. In outlining this process of construction, termed professionalisation, the authors further claim that groups of professionals are capable of taking actions to further their social recognition and expand the practices that fall within their domain. The authors also advance the idea that professionalisation processes must incorporate an awareness of social histories and the value placed on professional actions in different societies (Schnikel & Noordegraaf, 2011).

The idea that professions are built and changed over time – which I label constructed professionalism – is certainly relevant to the African student affairs context. Lumadi and Mampuru (2010) argue that student affairs divisions must adapt as institutions change their missions, expand their programmes, and make decisions about resource allocation as institutions enter the 21st century (Milliken, 2004). I would further suggest that some of these changes may include, but are in no way limited to, deeper participation in policy development (Ibara, 2012), expansion of student-facing services (Idogho, 2011), and partnerships with faculty (Blake, 2007).

### ***Practices-in-transition***

The field of student affairs in Africa must constantly craft responses to complex issues that exist in the lives of students and educational systems. In their 2003 paper, Noordegraaf and Abma address the management of issues where professionals are asked to weigh in based on their experiences and where assessment of their work can be difficult to measure. The authors next develop a typology of practices for understanding how complex issues are addressed that I believe is useful for understanding student affairs professionalisation (Noordegraaf & Abma, 2003).

This typology describes three types of practices used when managing issues – termed canonical, practices-in-transition and non-canonical – and allows for movement between the three depending on context. Canonical practices refer to management in settings with low ambiguity where quantitative measurements can be applied to determine success. One such canonical practice present in post-secondary education is course registration due to its firm measurability and clear performance indicators. Non-canonical practices, on the other hand, exist in highly ambiguous situations and bring in a diverse variety of stakeholders. An example of these practices for our purposes may be the management of resources to answer larger-scale social questions such as: How can poverty reduction occur in sub-Saharan Africa? While student affairs practitioners may play a role in answering this large question, the management of this issue requires insight from multiple perspectives and responses may develop over a long period of time (Noordegraaf & Abma, 2003; Borode, 2011).



It is the middle ground, termed practices-in-transition, which may be most useful to the professionalisation of student affairs practitioners. As Noordegraaf and Abma (2003) explain:

Practices-in-transition may revolve around complex issues that are difficult to answer, but as such which are known and relatively uncontested. In that case, experts become active, finding out what issues are about, and they disagree about the nature of problems and the adequacy of solutions. (p. 866)

Many issues confronting management in the student affairs domain fall into this category. For example, issues surrounding how best to deliver services laid out by Idogho (2011) at the outset of this paper represent practices-in-transition. When asked at the institutional level, questions requiring the management of these practices may include: How does our university create an orientation programme that effectively meets the needs of incoming students? What programmes and environments may facilitate student wellness on our campus? What type of academic advisement services do our students need and how can these be optimally delivered? The answers to these questions are undoubtedly complex. However, understood through the framework of practices-in-transition, answers can be developed by experts able to formulate and test hypotheses as well as use quantitative and qualitative data to measure programme effectiveness. Further building on the concept of practices-in-transition (Noordegraaf & Abma, 2003), solutions can be conceptualised and implemented by teams of trained professionals able to ethically disagree on how to best manage resources and negotiate to determine the optimal measures of effectiveness.

### *Hybrid professionalism*

As an emerging field, student affairs in Africa must continually negotiate its relationship with the outside world and legitimise its work to external constituencies (Fournier, 1999; Evetts 2011). In a third paper, Noordegraaf (2007) focuses attention on different strains of professionalism that exist in the contemporary workforce. He suggests that in pure professionalism, notions of 'professional' are limited to traditional fields (e.g. medicine) and new professions are not considered in the same way because they lack explicit structures and controls. In hybrid professionalism, however, professionals are understood more expansively to be reflective practitioners who take into account service to the world beyond their domain. These practitioners establish linkages between their work and the world outside and search for an occupational identity with an awareness of the tradeoffs that exist between personal needs, professional claims and organised action both within and outside institutional parameters (pp. 779–780). In short, hybrid professionalism is less focused on creating firm structures that govern the control of who is and is not a professional and is instead geared towards establishing as professionals those who work in contexts where decisions are made based upon standards that are domain-specific yet subtle and interpretive (p. 779).

### *Proposed model for continued student affairs professionalisation in Africa*

Taken as a trio, I argue that these three constructs informed largely by the work of Noordegraaf – constructed professionalism, practice-in-transition and hybrid professionalism – can form a model for the continued professionalisation of student affairs in Africa (Table 1).

**Table 1: Proposed model for continued student affairs professionalisation in Africa**

Theoretical concept	Contribution to model
Constructed professionalism	Professionalisation as dynamic and evolving process Professions responsive to needs of changing societies
Practice-in-transition	Hypothesis testing to understand complex issues Negotiated measurement and ethical disagreement
Hybrid professionalism	Engagement with outside world for collective action Experts enabled to make informed decisions

As the demands placed on African post-secondary education by its stakeholders experience shifts, so too will the work required of student affairs. The requirements for data collection, as well as where responsibility falls for collection and interpretation of data, may also vary significantly. This model addresses these differences by maintaining a high degree of flexibility for institutions and individuals while also establishing a consistent backbone that can guide ongoing professionalisation. This flexibility is essential in an educational landscape marked by a broad range of student needs, institutional resources, political dynamics and state-level initiatives aimed at engineering change within post-secondary educational environments (UNECA, 2011). While what becomes termed ‘student affairs’ in different locales may not be precisely the same, the model will consistently provide guidance to emerging and current practitioners charged with facilitating student transitions into, through, and out of post-secondary education (Idogho, 2011; Chickering and Reisser, 1993) as well as to the field writ large as it experiences growth and change (Carpenter & Stimpson, 2007).

The model additionally recognises that student affairs practitioners utilise their professional competencies to create changes within their institutions while also encouraging them to partner with external stakeholders to generate broader social action. These internal and external partnerships can be directed, for example, towards serving the economic function of post-secondary education (Winch, 2002) by helping more students learn and then earn. Partnerships can also be directed towards measures that encourage retention and persistence when learning happens away from campus (Lephalala & Makoe, 2012; Ibara, 2012).

In the next section, I discuss how this model can be operationalised in the context of two challenges facing student affairs practitioners in Africa: providing effective career education, and engaging students in distance learning environments. I have chosen these

two because I believe they are the best examples of how the model may be incorporated into student affairs professionalisation in order to help practitioners provide services that are vital to students across the continent.

### *Practical implications: career education and distance learning*

#### **Career education**

The increase in Africa's youth (15–24) population prompts the question, asked by Agbor, Taiwo and Smith (2012), of whether this shift in demography presents a social dividend in the form of economic growth or a disaster marked by sharp unemployment. Higher education (Borode, 2011; Cloete *et al.*, 2011; Pillay, 2010; Maree, 2009) is frequently cited as a key ingredient in moving the needle away from unemployment and poverty and towards employment and economic development. Though steps in this direction certainly emerge from government planning (Cloete *et al.*, 2011) and more market-based curriculum alterations (Agbor, Taiwo & Smith, 2012; Borode, 2011), professional student affairs staff may play an essential role in the career education of students enrolled in higher education.

In their 2002 report, UNESCO clearly outlined career services as a functional area within student affairs charged primarily with providing career counselling and helping students effectively transition from school to work. In career offices, practitioners frequently serve both as career counsellors helping students navigate their own professional development processes (Watson & McMahon, 2009; Maree, 2009) and career educators providing students with the necessary information to make informed decisions about career opportunities (Chan & Derry, 2013). With specific regard to the African context, Borode (2011) argues that all institutions should “integrate [...] career counselling initiatives” and that “providing proper guidance to the students for helping them choose the right career cannot be over-emphasised” (p. 153). Borode (2011) further suggests that undergraduates be given a clear knowledge of how their degree fits into the marketplace in order to make the most immediate impact on their economies and participate in personal and communal wealth creation.

Understanding this relationship between higher education and employment (Pillay, 2010), how can African student affairs respond as a profession? I argue that there are two opportunities for continued professionalisation to take place with respect to this area based on the model (Table 2). First, professionals must be encouraged to develop career counselling strategies and career education models that meet the specific demands of their educational climates. While researching career development in South Africa, Maree (2009) reflects on the dilemma between adopting North American career counselling models versus generating models that may work better in developing countries. He concludes that, “the answer probably lies in a compromise: we need to build on what has been researched elsewhere, conduct our own research and develop an approach that is best suited to our own idiosyncratic needs” (p. 442). In terms of the model, trained practitioners need to be in a position to apply practice-in-transition management to career counselling and education.

**Table 2: Practical implications of model**

Theoretical concept	Career education	Distance learning
Constructed professionalism	Career education further integrated throughout co-curriculum by student affairs practitioners trained with knowledge in this area	Practitioners develop new mechanisms for providing student support in non-place-based learning contexts
Practice-in-transition	Hypothesis testing utilised to determine optimal interventions and strategies that facilitate effective school-to-work transition	Practices for optimising learning in distance environments continuously discussed and measurement of interventions negotiated by experts
Hybrid professionalism	Practitioners work in concert with employers and governments in order to provide students with accurate and up-to-date employment information	Practitioners work with policy-makers and external constituencies to inform decisions regarding student support services and expansion of distance learning services

Hypotheses need to be tested and research conducted in order to arrive at practicable solutions to the complex problem of how to help students make the successful transition from school to work in African nations. Practitioners should also be prepared to work in concert with professionals beyond higher education in order to assess employer needs and provide students with the most up-to-date possible information on country-specific economic trends. These partnerships are especially important in ensuring that students are knowledgeable about the linkages between education, employment opportunities and employer expectations of post-secondary graduates in their home region (African Economic Outlook, 2012).

Second, the professionalising field of student affairs in Africa possesses the capacity to revamp the delivery of career education and chart a new course forward. A recent US paper advances the idea that career education can become a mission-centric focal point of post-secondary institutions not only housed in career services but also thoroughly incorporated into both the in-class curriculum and out-of-class co-curriculum (Chan & Derry, 2013). Speaking directly to career counselling practice in an African nation, South Africa, Watson and McMahon (2009) further argue:

The responsibility for addressing and redressing the limitations of career counseling in higher education does not rest with career counselors alone. In this regard, there is an opportunity for career counselors to show proactive leadership by initiating and coordinating a systemic response that involves higher education policy makers, professional bodies, practitioners, researchers, and those who train new professionals to the field. (p. 479)

In their role as collaborative educators (Blake, 2007), student affairs practitioners may become catalysts for change within their institutions as they both develop and implement professional practices that optimise the role higher education can play in economic development. Moreover, I believe that training of new practitioners must include education regarding career development to ensure that this knowledge is widespread rather than siloed.

### *Distance learning*

Distance learning, whether taking place online or through other forms of communication, is quickly being adopted as a key form of education delivery in Africa (Asunka, 2008; Lephala & Makoe, 2012; Simmons *et al.*, 2011). Furthermore, the use of distance learning is being championed as a primary method for increasing access to higher education to meet the demand brought on both by the booming youth population and the 21st century global economy (Agbor, Taiwo & Smith, 2012; Asunka, 2008; Lephala & Makoe, 2012; Simmons *et al.*, 2011).

Student affairs services and practitioners can certainly play an important role in the lives of learners as education increasingly leaves campus (Ibara, 2012). However, provisions for these services are not always made or resourced (Dare, Zapata & Thomas, 2005), often to the direct disadvantage of student learning and success (Lephala & Makoe, 2012; Asunka, 2008). A recent qualitative study on students pursuing distance learning through UNISA in South Africa (Ibid.) revealed deep concerns among students with regard to their learning environment, the socio-cultural aspects of their education, and educational costs. Central to these issues was a lack of institutional support to help students create communities of learning even if they were far from campus. As one learner from a rural area expressed, “It seems that we are forgotten by the institution. Nobody even knows that we exist. Living far from the university is a big problem” (p. 4). Perhaps the best people in the institution to ‘remember’ this student and others in her situation are student affairs practitioners.

One way to ensure student affairs practitioners are sensitive to the needs of distance learners is to hardwire this conversation into their training and continued development. I believe that the model for professionalisation as proposed meets this demand in two distinct ways (Table 2). First, the model provides the flexibility necessary to reconceptualise the delivery of student support services to better meet the wide variety of learning contexts present in Africa today (Ibara, 2012). In terms of distance learning, practitioners may develop ways to ensure students feel supported as part of the educational community even if they never set foot on campus (Dare, Zapata & Thomas, 2005). These services may include the creation of positions solely targeted at engaging distance learners, the development of modules that cover university culture and success, the use of modern technologies to facilitate communication between distance learners and college staff, and perhaps even the creation of remote learning centres staffed by student affairs professionals.

Second, as these services are implemented and resources managed to address the question of how to best engage distance learners, further research must be performed and the success of interventions evaluated. This research may, in turn, inform the development of practices that better meet the needs of students studying in online and offline distance environments, as well as students working in the variety of learning scenarios and cultures present in modern-day Africa. Research could also contribute to conversations taking place between institutions and external revenue sources regarding how to best leverage 21st century technologies to increase educational completion and provide more members of Africa's 'youth bulge' with the skills needed to compete in both regional markets (African Economic Outlook, 2012) and the global knowledge economy (Agbor, Taiwo & Smith, 2012).

### *Conclusion*

I have presented a model that can guide the continued professionalisation of student affairs in Africa. I believe this model, with its cornerstones of dynamism and flexibility, can assist both African professionals and the African student affairs profession in their work. I also hope that this model encourages new and veteran practitioners to see student affairs as an arena charged not only with addressing challenges that exist, but also one capable of creatively responding to the many robust opportunities present in 21st century post-secondary educational environments. Especially in the areas of career education and distance learning, African practitioners trained to be adaptive and collaborative may very well chart courses that will inspire the international student affairs community to reinvent practices in the name of greater student success and access.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Enhancing the professionalisation of student affairs through assessment

Ann M. Gansemer-Topf\*

### *Abstract*

The past decades have seen an increase in the attention and focus of student affairs work in Africa. As the profession works to strengthen its reputation and value within higher education through conferences, organisations and publications, student affairs professionals can also raise the stature of the profession through work on their individual campuses. Engaging in assessment may be one such opportunity. As a way to create a common language regarding student affairs assessment, this paper provides an overview of the definitions, types and purposes of assessment. The thought is that viewing assessment as an integral, rather than ‘extra’ aspect of student affairs and incorporating these activities within their work, student affairs professionals will not only improve the effectiveness of their work with students but also can help legitimise the field as a profession.

### *Keywords*

*assessment, student affairs, best practices, higher education.*

### *Enhancing the professionalisation of student affairs through assessment*

Describing the role of student affairs within higher education can be difficult. Whereas most individuals understand the role and importance of faculty and administration within an institution, student affairs professionals may struggle to articulate the role they play within institutions to someone unfamiliar with higher education or student affairs. Most could explain that faculty members are responsible for educating students and for creating new knowledge through research; administrators are responsible for the bureaucratic aspect of the organisation, providing leadership to the institution. Student affairs professionals, ironically, may be involved in all of these activities, yet because they may not be attached to an academic department nor directly reporting to chief administrators, their work may be misunderstood or overlooked. As Sandeen and Bar (2006) question “even in the earliest years of the profession, student affairs struggled with its identity on the campus. Was it

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part of the faculty, part of the administration, or did it occupy some ambiguous position between the two?” (p. 33).

The past 15 years have seen an increase in the attention and focus of the work of student affairs professionals in Africa. Documents such as the UNESCO-sponsored *Student affairs and services in higher education* (2009) also helped to communicate the important work of student affairs:

Student affairs and services professionals, along with teaching faculty, bring to the academy a particular expertise on students, their development and the impact of their learning environments ... They are closely aligned with the academic mission and serve as invaluable links between students and the institution. (Ludeman & Strange, 2009, p. 8)

The World Higher Education Declaration (1998), creation of the IASAS (IASAS, n.d.), and annual conferences of the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) and African Student Affairs Conference suggest an interest by students affairs professionals in becoming more recognised and valued within African higher education.

In addition to these large-scale organisational activities, student affairs professionals can also raise the stature of the profession through their work on their individual campuses. This paper posits that engaging in assessment activities may be one way to enhance the professionalisation of student affairs. This paper will focus on the definitions, types and roles of assessment in student affairs. The purpose of this paper is to develop both a common language of assessment and illustrate the versatility and flexibility within assessment. The purposes of assessment will be described as a way of demonstrating the value of assessment in enhancing the stature of and respect for the student affairs profession.

The title ‘student affairs professional’ implies that student affairs is a profession. What constitutes a profession? Greenwood (1957) listed five characteristics of a profession: a) basis in systematic theory, b) authority recognised by clientele, c) broader community sanction and approval of that authority, d) ethical code regulating relations with clients and colleagues, and e) professional culture sustained by professional associations. Klegon (1978) examined the evolution of professions from a sociological perspective and suggested there are two dynamics at play in the development of a profession. The internal dynamic is the “efforts of practitioners to raise their status, define services which they perceive only they can perform properly, and to achieve and maintain autonomy and influence” (Klegon, 1978, p. 268). The external dynamic relates to the larger social and institutional forces that either contribute to or detract from the view of the work as a practice or true profession. Larger social and organisations structures need to value and be enhanced by the work of the profession (Klegon, 1978).

These characteristics provide insights into student affairs’ evolution from ‘practice’ to ‘profession’. Within the United States, student affairs has developed in response to the expansion of higher education and increasing complexity of the universities. In many cases, student affairs professionals were called upon to take on work that faculty members were no longer able to do and, in other cases, were created to meet the increased needs

and expectations of students and the larger public (Nuss, 2003; Sandeen & Barr, 2006). Simultaneously, more formalised positions and organisational structures were created as the number of student affairs practitioners increased and a professional community composed of professional organisations, journals and other professional development opportunities developed to provide ongoing support, training and discussion (Nuss, 2003). The first professional organisation, now known as the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) was created in 1919 (Rhatigan, 2000).

Internationally, the formalisation of the professional student affairs organisation is more recent. Although initial discussions regarding an organisation started in 2000, the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) was officially founded in March 2010 (IASAS, n.d.). Student affairs professionals exist in many different departments across institutions and many have participated in other national student affairs organisations such as the Association for College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I) and the National Association of Student Affairs Administrators (NASPA). Other conferences have been specifically focused on African student affairs professionals. The South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) has hosted 14 yearly professional conference (SAASSAP, n.d.) and a national African student affairs conference was first held in Africa in 2011 (African Student Affairs Conference, 2011). The Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACHDHE), as a part of the Society for Student Counselling in Southern Africa (SSCSA), has existed since 1978 but is also entering its “professionalism phase” (Van Schoor, n.d.).

The need for student affairs work was legitimised in the World Declaration on Higher Education for the 21st century (1998). This document called for increased access for underrepresented groups, student involvement and “services ... to assist students in the transition to higher education” (World Declaration on Higher Education, 1998, p.1). Letseka and Maile’s (2008) report on high university drop-out rates also provides evidence that students affairs work – with its “consistent and persistent emphasis and commitment to the development of the whole person” (Nuss, 2003, p. 65) is needed to improve student success. In reflecting on the current context of higher education abroad, Ludeman *et al.* (2009) summarised, ‘there is increasing evidence that higher education also must address the basic personal needs of students by providing a comprehensive set of out-of-classroom student services and programmes commonly referred to as student affairs and services’ (p. iv).

Given the definitions of a profession listed above, it is evident that student affairs in Africa – with its development of professional organisations, legitimacy by internal and external stakeholders, and the larger society recognition of the need to improve college student access and success – is becoming more professionalised.

While the broader higher education community is demonstrating the need for student affairs professionals, how is this need perceived at the institutional level? Past research has verified the importance of student affairs work on student learning and success (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005) yet at the institutional level student affairs professionals may continue to struggle to articulate and demonstrate their value (Upcraft & Schuh, 1996). Since many

student affairs professionals are not teaching in traditional classroom settings, submitting grades for student's performance, or submitting manuscripts for publication, their impact on student success and student learning is less visible, and consequently often overlooked. The challenge, therefore, is to engage in practices and activities that do demonstrate learning and success. As mentioned previously, external organisations play a critical role in defining professionalism. If student affairs professionals are not seen as being integral in helping achieve the institutional mission, their value and status as a 'profession' may take longer to develop. Assessment – the practice of gathering and using data to make decisions and illustrate impact – is one way to achieve and maintain professionalism.

### *Definitions of assessment*

Within higher education, assessment has been defined in a variety of ways. Palomba and Banta (1999) defined assessment as “the systematic collection, review, and use of information about educational programmes undertaken for the purpose of improving student learning and development” (p. 4). Huba and Freed (2000) provide a more comprehensive definition of assessment, emphasising the content and application of learning:

The process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experience; the process culminates when assessment results are used to improve learning. (p.8)

In their book *Assessment methods in student affairs*, Upcraft and Schuh (1996) define assessment as: “any effort to gather, analyse, and interpret evidence which describes institutional, departmental, divisional, or agency effectiveness” (p. 18). Bresciani, Gardner, and Hickmott (2012), also writing from a student affairs perspective, offer a definition of outcomes-based assessment: “a systematic and critical process that yields information about what programmes, services, or functions of a student affairs department or division positively contribute to students' learning and success and which ones should be improved” (p. 16).

The similarities and differences among definitions provide insight into assessment work. All definitions view assessment as a formalised process: assessment requires intentional planning with an articulated purpose and a set of guidelines that should be followed to meet this purpose. The assessment process involves an investment of time, resources, and reflection and requires both action and patience. The definitions of assessment are also similar in their focus on gathering evidence and utilising this evidence. Assessment necessitates the collection of data, interpreting the data, and then acting upon the data. In other words, simply disseminating a survey and tallying the results is not assessment. The true usefulness of assessment is then utilising the results to provide insight or make improvements to the entity being assessed.

Assessment, similar to profession, has its own language, definitions and constructs. If student affairs professionals proclaim that they contribute to student success, assessment is the vehicle by which these claims can be substantiated.

### *Common types of assessment*

The differences in the assessment definitions acknowledge the multiple contexts in which higher education assessment is conducted and recognises the various ways assessment results can be used. Assessment can be focused at the individual, programme, department or university level. It can range from viewing the portfolios of a small group of students to measuring the university graduation rate of its students.

The definitions also imply that there are many different types of assessments that can be conducted. A few of the most common types of assessments are discussed below: measuring participation, needs assessment, satisfaction assessment, and outcomes assessment (Schuh, 2009).

#### **Measuring participation assessments**

Measuring participation – perhaps the least difficult type of assessment – is simply counting who may attend events, enrolment numbers, students who live in residence halls, join student organisation, apply for a specific scholarship, etc. This type of assessment can be useful when planning an activity, justifying the continuation of an event, or as in the case of enrolment numbers, provide a way to benchmark to past and future successes (Schuh, 2009).

#### **Needs assessments**

Needs assessment is the process of establishing if a need or problem exists and suggesting ways to reduce the problem or need (Fitzpatrick, Saunders & Worthen, 2011). For example, in the development of a new student centre or recreational facility, students may be surveyed to provide their opinions on the services or space that would best suit their needs. But, as Schuh (2009, p. 12) cautions, in doing needs assessment it is critical to remember that “needs are not the same as wants”.

#### **Satisfaction assessments**

Satisfaction assessment as it implies, is the process of understanding if participants are satisfied with their experience (Schuh, 2009). What did they like or dislike about a programme, a course, a leadership retreat? A caution applies here as well: measuring satisfaction is not the same as measuring learning. For instance, student members may be asked to participate in leadership training. In providing feedback they may suggest that the session on policy and procedures was “dull and boring” but the social events were “engaging and entertaining”. However, assessing what students learned as a result of these two sessions may provide different outcomes. While students may have mentioned that the policy and procedures session was ‘dull’ it may be the session in which students learned critical information to be successful in their positions. In conducting satisfaction assessments, professionals need to be cautious in interpreting results and be able to distinguish between what students like and what students learn.

### Outcomes assessments

Assessing what students learn is a form of outcomes assessment. Outcomes assessment involves examining the extent to which the outcomes of a particular programme, course, or intervention were met (Bresciani *et al.*, 2012). These assessments can be challenging for a number of reasons.

One, in many cases programmes or courses or interventions have not specified the outcomes they hope to achieve. Course instructors, for instance, may provide a syllabus outlining what students are to do in a course but may not articulate what learning should occur as a result of completing the work. Programmes or departments may be developed without clearly outlining what they hope to accomplish or how they benefit the larger institutional community.

Secondly, when outcomes are identified, many times they are too vague to be adequately assessed. This introduces another challenge for outcomes assessment: developing strong outcome statements. For instance, a department may state that their students, as a result of their programme, will be global citizens or develop critical thinking skills, but without operationalised definitions of these terms, assessment can be difficult. A strong outcome is one that is clear and measurable (Suskie, 2010) and is written in a way that can be properly assessed.

A third challenge arises in the interpretation of the outcome measure. There is a tendency as Astin and Antonio (2012) articulate to equate outcome with impact. In other words to infer a causal relationship between a programme or experience and the outcome. For instance, it is different to say that students who lived in the residence halls had a higher grade point average (GPA) than students who did not rather than it is to say that living in the residence halls caused students to have a higher grade point average. While living in residence halls may have positively influenced students' GPA, there may be other contributing factors.

However, by confronting these challenges, outcomes assessment, specifically those assessments that measure student learning, can be a powerful tool for student affairs professionals. In their article, "The role of student affairs in student learning assessment", Schuh and Gansemer-Topf (2010) concluded:

Student affairs staff members need to have more than programs, activities, and experiences they think would contribute to student learning. They need to have the empirical evidence to be confident that these programs, activities, and experiences actually do contribute to student learning. (p. 12)

While many times this notion is assumed, outcomes-based assessment requires staff, faculty and students to articulate what they hope to achieve and to measure these results (Dean, 2013). This process is especially critical when a programme has been taking place for several years. Outcomes-based assessment provides an opportunity to revisit why the programme was created in the first place and if it continues to be effective. With the turnover in positions and departments, the outcomes sometimes may be the consistency that continue to guide and direct.

The various types of assessments demonstrate the flexibility within which assessment can be done. Assessments that measure student learning may be most useful in communicating the role of student affairs in student learning, yet other types of assessments that evaluate need, gauge students' satisfaction or provide data by which to benchmark progress are also valuable. When communicated appropriately, assessment results can contribute to the institution's educational mission. Demonstrating their contributions to institutions' educational missions can be a critical component in raising the stature of student affairs professionalism.

### *Assessment as professionalism*

Given the many responsibilities of student affairs professionals, it is not unusual that assessment is often neglected. In a US based study of student affairs professionals, Bresciani (2010) found that even at institutions that were committed to assessment, a majority of student affairs were reluctant to engage in this work or "struggle with the logistics of designing and implementing such a culture at their institutions" (Culp, 2012, pp. 2–3.) Frequently cited reasons for not engaging included lack of time, resources, and expertise (Bresciani, 2010; Culp, 2012; Schuh, 2009). As student affairs professionals cite many reasons why they cannot afford to engage in assessment, Schuh and Gansemer-Topf (2010) offer a counter challenge, "How can we afford not to do assessment?" (p. 10). Writing primarily from a US context in which institutional and federal funding were closely tied to performance, departments and activities that were shown to improve student success were more likely to receive funding (Schuh, 2009). As student affairs professionals work to increase their recognition and elevate their status as a profession, this question is still worth considering: can you afford not to do assessment?

Successful student affairs professionals rely on the respect and support of others within the institution. Garnering this respect and support requires departments to demonstrate that they are stewards of resources, communicating how their work is critical to the educational mission and purpose of the institution and illustrating that continuous efforts are being made to reflect on one's work and improve.

Ewell (2008) concisely summarised two paradigms of assessment: accountability and improvement. Similar to Klegon's (1978) description of a profession, Ewell's paradigms have both an internal and external focus. The improvement paradigm is focused within the institution and its role is primarily formative assessment – assessment done with the purpose of improving. Data collected for improvement purposes can be quantitative or qualitative and can be used to track progress over time or compare individual units within an institution. Results are used to provide feedback to those most closely associated with the programme. Accountability is focused on those external to the institution – the public, government, policymakers. Data is primarily quantitative and used for reporting purposes or in benchmarked as a way to compare across institutions. Rarely, however, does this type of data get at the 'why' or make specific suggestions for improvement (Blimling, 2013).



These dual purposes illustrate the potential of assessment in enhancing the professionalisation of student affairs. In the US, student affairs professionals began to merge in the mid-1850s (Nuss, 2003) but the profession's focus on assessment is much more recent (Schuh, 1996). The call for assessment was in response to the profession's concerns that resources would be diverted away from student affairs unless the profession could more intentionally illustrate their value on college campuses. Heading this call and building this culture of evidence on campus has improved the stature of student affairs not only within individual intuitions but within the profession.

The African student affairs profession, even in its early development, has acknowledged the importance of assessment. Conference proceedings from the SAASSAP's (n.d.) annual conference (see, for example, Schreiber, 2012) and the UNESCO-sponsored, 'Student affairs and services in higher education' (Ludeman *et al.*, 2009), highlight assessment as a critical and integral role of student affairs professionals.

Nevertheless, simply acknowledging the importance of assessment is not enough. Engaging in assessment, while challenging, provides benefits not only for individual institutions and their students but also can enhance the reputation and respect of the broader profession.

Viewing assessment as an assumed expectation rather than 'add-on', student affairs professionals begin building a culture of evidence that illustrates how their work matters and how it contributes to the institution's mission (Culp, 2012). This approach, when based on a commitment to student success, can benefit those students for whom the work is intended. Assessment, when done well, encourages student affairs staff to improve their programmes and services and to demonstrate how their work develops well-educated and productive citizens. Assessment signals to both internal and external stakeholders that student affairs is a respected profession that plays a vital role in improving higher education and student success.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The challenges of student affairs at Kenyan public universities

Tamara Yakaboski\* and Matthew Birnbaum\*\*

### *Abstract*

Kenya is increasingly turning to the promise of mass higher education to help solve a range of economic and social issues. These efforts have had profound effects on university students, faculty and professionals who provide the vital student support services necessary for academic success. This case study explores the challenges that face Kenyan student services professionals within the context of the country's history and cultures. Kenya's student service professionals face four major challenges: the increasing costs of attendance, the resulting impact on student behaviours and actions, lack of training and senior leadership, and regular campus closures.

### *Keywords*

*student affairs, accommodation, student housing, student services, university environment, higher education.*

### *The challenges of student affairs at Kenyan public universities*

Kenya is increasingly turning to the promise of mass higher education, meaning a shift from an elite to an open system of access, to help solve a range of economic and social problems (Jowi, 2009; *Kenya Vision 2030*, 2007). The national government has made its commitment to post-secondary education evident through the addition of over 25 public universities and constituent colleges since 1994 and its adoption of policies encouraging rapid enrolment growth in nearly all post-secondary institutions. Between 2010 and 2013, Kenya made nearly 20 constituent colleges and branch campuses into stand-alone universities. Even with this growing capacity, Kenya's demand for access to affordable higher education far exceeds the system's ability to deliver quality instruction and student support (Ngolovoi, 2010; Owuor, 2012). While the Kenyan government has implemented numerous reforms intended to increase educational efficiency and degree production, far fewer resources have been provided for services to support enrolled students. This is problematic because

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admitting students to university without providing appropriate levels of support often results in a failed academic experience and wasted institutional resources.

Just as nations turn to higher education to solve societal problems, universities often look to the increasingly professionalised field of student affairs or student services to address issues of behaviour, housing, retention, health and career selection. Outside the US, many professionals performing student services work come from backgrounds without a formal curriculum in student affairs, such as faculty members, psychological counsellors or clergy. The field of student services or student affairs varies substantially around the world with the US model focusing on recruitment, retention, graduation and student learning outcomes, and with other models focusing more on services, such as financial aid, housing, food services, and counselling (Ludeman & Gregory, 2013).

This case study explores the challenges that face Kenyan student services professionals within the context of the country's history and cultures. Kenya's student service professionals face four major challenges: the increasing costs of attendance, the resulting impact on student behaviours and actions, lack of training and senior leadership, and campus closures.

### *Kenyan higher education and student affairs background*

At the time of political independence in 1963, Kenya's Royal Technical College, with an enrolment of fewer than 600 students, was its single public institution of higher education. Kenya's economy was largely agricultural and the British colonial government had little interest in educating the indigenous population (Chege, 2009). The Royal College, which would become the University College of Nairobi and later the University of Nairobi (U of N) in 1970, was a source of national pride. It was charged with the critical task of educating Kenyans to fill the administrative vacuum created when English managers left their posts (Oanda, Chege & Wesonga, 2008; Wangenge-Ouma, 2008) and 'Africanising' government institutions (Willis & Gona, 2013). Once established as Kenya's first university, the institution quickly became the epicentre for political activity and government intervention (Chege, 2009).

Kenyatta College (later renamed Kenyatta University) was established in 1972 on the outskirts of Nairobi as a U of N constituent college charged with educating the nation's future teachers. Kenyatta University (KU) was granted university status in 1985 in a decade when Kenya established three additional universities: Moi (1984), Egerton (1987), and Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology (1994). Maseno University (2000) and Masinde Muliro University (2007) were added more recently. Table 1 lists all public universities including the ones that have recently been changed from constituency colleges or branch campuses, the date of their original founding, and the year in which they were given university status.

**Table 1: Kenyan universities**

University name	Area	Originally a constituent campus of	University status
University of Nairobi	Nairobi	n/a	1970
Moi University	Eldoret	n/a	1984
Kenyatta University	Nairobi	n/a	1985
Egerton University	Njoro	n/a	1988
Maseno University	Maseno	n/a	1991
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	Nairobi	n/a	1994
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology	Kakamega	Moi University	2009
Murang'a University College	Murang'a Town	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	2011
Machakos University College	Machakos Town	Kenyatta University	2011
The Co-operative University College of Kenya	Nairobi	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	2011
Embu University College (UoN)	Embu Town	University of Nairobi	2011
Kirinyaga University College (KU)	Kirinyaga County	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	2011
Rongo University College (MU)	Rongo Town	Moi University	2011
Kibabii University College (MMUST)	Bungoma	Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology	2011
Garissa University College (EU)	Garissa	Moi University	2011
Taita Taveta University College (JKUAT)	Voi	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	2011
Dedan Kimathi University of Technology	Nyeri	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	2012
Chuka University	Chuka	Egerton University	2012
Technical University of Kenya	Nairobi	University of Nairobi	2013
Technical University of Mombasa	Mombasa	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	2013
Pwani University	Kilifi	Kenyatta University	2013
Kisii University	Kisii	Egerton University	2013
University of Eldoret	Eldoret	Moi University	2013
Maasai Mara University	Narok	Moi University	2013
Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology	Kisumu	Maseno University	2013
Laikipia University	Laikipia	Egerton University	2013
South Eastern Kenya University	Kitui	Kenyatta University	2013
Multimedia University of Kenya	Nairobi	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	2013
University of Kabianga	Kericho	Moi University	2013
Karatina University	Karatina	Moi University	2013
Meru University of Science and Technology	Meru	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	2013

In the first decade following independence, Kenya, like many newly independent African nations, fully subsidised higher education, resulting in free tuition and a living stipend for most students (Wangenge-Ouma, 2008). This proved fiscally unsustainable and a loan programme was developed in the mid-1970s to provide funds for accommodation, books, subsistence, and travel while keeping tuition free. However, funds for this programme quickly were exhausted because no mechanism was established for loan repayment and recipients were simply expected to honour their obligation and regularly send the government an instalment (Ngome, 2003). Pressure from the World Bank to develop post-secondary education cost-sharing models resulted in modest tuition fee policies in 1991 along with a new loan programme available to all students regardless of economic need (Johnstone, 2002; Marcucci, Johnstone & Ngolovoi, 2008; Wangenge-Ouma, 2008). Students protested these fees by damaging university property and the government responded by sending all students home for the remainder of the semester.

### *Admissions policies*

Admission to Kenya's public universities is granted by the Joints Admissions Board (JAB), which determines which institution a government-funded applicant will attend and the degree programme to which they will be admitted. JAB's decisions are based on institutional capacity, the overall quality of the applicant pool, and national needs. This process helps ensure the most qualified and academically prepared students are admitted. The public generally supported this approach, as it appeared egalitarian, objective, and checked bribery (Ngolovoi, 2010). However, JAB-admitted applicants are required to wait a full year after graduating from secondary school to matriculate.

In 1998, Kenya adopted a dual track admissions policy that required universities to admit self-paying (Module II) students under a much more flexible set of academic criteria. Students admitted under this policy join those already admitted under the existing merit-based system. Although some institutions have reduced the number of vacancies for JAB students in high-demand programmes to accommodate more fee-paying students, the policy's net effect has been to dramatically increase the number of students attending public universities without requiring additional government expenditure (Kiamba, 2003). At U of N and KU, the number of these self-funded students actually surpasses the regularly admitted students ("More students in Module II courses," 2010), essentially doubling annual enrolments without providing additional infrastructure (Marcucci, Johnstone & Ngolovoi, 2008) or support for student welfare (Kiamba, 2003).

Ongoing tension exists between the regularly admitted and the self-paying students. Students admitted through the traditional process believe that they properly earned a seat while their self-paying counterparts simply bought their way into university, since 89 per cent of Module II students come from high and middle income families (Marcucci, Johnstone & Ngolovoi, 2008; Otieno, 2005). Adding to the insult, self-paying students can matriculate immediately following secondary school and, because many come from wealthier families (Ibid.) may have access to nicer accommodation near the campus.

### *Political influence of the government on campuses*

post-colonial Kenyan higher education has been defined by a strong symbiotic relationship with the national government, which frequently points to its universities as a source of national pride. Although institutional funding was not guaranteed and the process for determining resource allocation not transparent, the government always provided enough financial support to keep the universities operating. However, for decades universities and colleges were co-opted into regional and national ethnic politics (Wanzala, 2013). Kenya's president serves as honorary chancellor of each public university and appoints prominent individuals to serve in his place (Munene, 2013). Although these positions are honorary with limited statutory responsibilities, their powers can extend to the appointment of other key administrators (Sifuna, 2012; Wanzala, 2013). One result is that university leadership often has strong ties to the political party in office and has vested interests in local and national elections. These connections bring into question institutional autonomy and academic freedom as some university leaders take active steps to limit faculty and student criticism of the government and institutional policies (Sifuna, 2012). Another result is that university leaders may be appointed based on political affiliation and nepotism rather than experience and ability (Wanzala, 2013).

Student groups in particular have criticised the government for the mismanagement of public affairs and ongoing economic and social crises. Although unconstitutional, the most powerful of these student groups have been de-registered by the government and student newspapers censored. Instead of supporting these groups or providing them with alternative outlets for expressing their concerns, university administrators frequently work to find ways to silence and disband them.

### *Tribalism and ethnic conflict impact on campuses*

Tribal and ethnic affiliation is a defining aspect of post-colonial Kenyan society. While tribes existed before colonisation, identities and affiliations were fluid and based largely on language, geography, and kinships (Parsons, 2012). Post-independence, "ethnicity replaced social class as the platform by which to negotiate access to state resources and power" (Munene, 2013, p. 48) and members of the most populous tribes tended to win national elections because voters feared the consequences if another tribe came to power. Although there is not room to fully explore the role of tribal and ethnic politics in this article, it is important to note that tribal affiliation and national electoral politics result in the government's active recruitment and courting of each university's undergraduate student union or government. Electoral, state, institutional and student fee funds, along with private gifts, are often intermingled for political events supporting a candidate, creating immense tension between students from different tribes. The frustration and tension that can develop between the tribes was demonstrated following the disputed 2008 national election. Violence resulted in over 1 300 deaths and the displacement of 600 000 Kenyans (Kanyinga, 2009). Universities were closed and numerous faculty members and administrators resigned their positions fearing for their lives (Munene, 2013). Reforms



implemented in Kenya's 2010 Constitution prevent unilateral presidential decisions about resource allocation directly affecting tribal homelands, although it is difficult to believe that the role of ethnicity in resource allocation will be eliminated in the short term.

### *Early Kenyan student affairs*

Little is written about student services in Kenya's universities that does not focus primarily on student unrest. The earliest and one of the few accounts of Kenyan student affairs found it housed predominately in the academic realm of the university although somewhat decentralised (Hughes, 1990) and focusing mostly on basic student services such as accommodation, food, and counselling. Then, as now, most senior student service positions are staffed by faculty members appointed to administrative positions. A *de facto* philosophy of *in loco parentis* was generally accepted but is now less tolerated by students who must overcome numerous real-world obstacles to remain enrolled.

The literature that does exist is a combination of peer-reviewed manuscripts and dissertations focusing on guidance and counselling in areas of course selection and personal adjustment. Guidance and counselling offices were established at KU in 1984 and had the only staff specifically trained for student affairs (Hughes, 1990). Twenty years later, counselling offices exist at all public universities and are often the only student services professionals with specific training.

The vice-chancellor committee report, "Causes of Disturbances/Riots in Public Universities" (2000), implicitly suggests that a reason for emphasising guidance and counselling is to appropriately assist students' adolescent inability to cope with the freedoms of university life, which may lead to drug abuse, withdrawal, anxiety and demonstrations. It recommends that all academic and administrative staff be trained in basic principles of guidance and counselling, and that institutions establish mechanisms for effectively handling student complaints about teaching, accountability, unfairness, bias and sexual harassment. Largely absent are suggestions about involving students in campus decision-making, addressing the root causes of the riots, or recognition of students as independent thinkers.

The large amount of high quality scholarship addressing numerous topics in Kenyan higher education provides a comprehensive overview of issues facing faculty, administrators, government, economy and society. The lack of literature addressing the services that support students and their co-curricular activities is problematic because the acquisition of social and personal competencies is important to a high functioning democratic society.

### *Study methodology and methods*

Data for this study was collected over a six-week visit in 2010. We used intrinsic case study methodology to guide data collection for its ability to focus on a bounded system, which can be an "individual, a specific programme, a process, and institution" (Jones, Torres & Arminio, 2006, p. 53). Case study is generally ideal for exploring complex naturalistic social systems typically composed of multiple variables, especially when a study's goal is to expand the reader's knowledge of the particular case (Merriam, 2001). Intrinsic case study is used

when researchers have a personal interest in the case, are able to pre-identify the boundaries of the case, and are interested in understanding the particulars of a case (Stake, 1995; 2000).

### **Data collection**

After spending three weeks in Nairobi and a rural village acculturating to Kenya, we visited seven university campuses for between one and three days for arranged and impromptu meetings, learning about the various services offered to students and the challenges faced by the staff. The seven institutions, which appear first in Table 1, included each of the public universities established prior to 2010 and did not include any branch or constituent colleges. Prior to these visits, we spoke at length with several Kenyan student affairs professionals who work in the US, numerous Kenyans working in education-related NGOs, and former university administrators. During the visits we met with over 50 staff, faculty, and students including vice chancellors, deputy vice chancellors, deans of students, assistant deans of students, chaplains, catering managers, accommodation and housing managers, counsellors, student health managers, public relations officers, recreation managers, financial aid officers, deans of academic colleges or units, student leaders and alumni. On the recommendation of individuals we spoke to prior to visiting campuses, the meetings were conducted in a conversational manner and not recorded. We do not identify individuals by name and sometimes reverse gender identifiers in order to maintain their confidentiality and safety.

We collected numerous institutional documents from student services and the public relations offices at each institution. These documents generally included student handbooks, brochures, annual reports and strategic plans. We supplemented these documents with a review of institutional and departmental websites for each university if available.

### **Data analysis**

Data from the campus visits were analysed using open-coding to categorise themes that emerged (Gibbs, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). Based on African higher education literature, we expected certain themes to emerge, such as revenue pressures and funding decreases. However, the inductive nature of open-coding allowed new themes to emerge regarding how participants believed funding and revenue pressures impacted student affairs and students. We also analysed the documents using an inductive qualitative content analysis procedure to identify themes. To help ensure the trustworthiness of the analysis, we compared the campus visit data, documents, and existing literature (Gibbs, 2007; Whitt, 2001). We then discussed our findings with a key informant to ensure credibility and accuracy, a Kenyan-born student affairs professional who was educated in the US.

### **Researchers' perspectives**

Our perspectives are informed by a Western-centric worldview. We are both US-born scholars and former student affairs practitioners, having earned our degrees at US colleges and universities. Our initial conversations about this study concerned the appropriateness of two western professors collecting data and writing about higher education in a

post-colonial country. We proceeded only with the encouragement of a Kenyan-born gatekeeper and an understanding that we would conduct regular check-ins with Kenyan nationals and educators to discuss our observations and preliminary findings. We approach our data collection and analysis with an open mind and employ a variety of methods to help ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. However, readers should understand that our views and findings about what constitutes challenges come from a privileged position. Our intent with this study is to be critical but not to criticise.

It is important to note that throughout our data collection process Kenya was actively engaged in a national conversation about a new constitution, which was approved by voters in 2010. The new constitution formally separates branches of government to provide the checks and balances of power necessary in a democracy, and creates several commissions empowered to investigate ethics violations and government compensation. Statements we make regarding the government's role in higher education or ability to make unilateral decisions should be weighed in this context.

### *Challenges for Kenyan student affairs*

The data analysis finds that student affairs professionals in Kenya are presented with three overarching challenges that manifest uniquely at each institution depending on its history and geographic proximity to Nairobi. In general, because U of N and KU are located in the capital and share significant history, they tend to have similar issues compared to the newer institutions located in more rural parts of the county.

#### **Challenge 1: Increasing cost of attendance**

As the Kenyan government pushes for the massification of higher education, it has also adopted policies to shift the cost of attendance to individual students and their families during an era of weak economic performance (Fehnel, 2003). The resulting enrolment increases and pressure on students to afford higher education present the greatest challenges to student services staff and institutions. At U of N and KU, the most established and financially stable institutions, most of the student interviewees talked about ongoing frustration with tuition and fee increases that are seemingly never accompanied with an increase in services or the quality of education. Some government-funded students at these institutions discussed withdrawing from school because they could not afford basic necessities such as rent, transportation, and school supplies which have increased dramatically over the past few years, after paying their tuition and fees. One assistant dean of students explained, "Students are told the increases are necessary for all sorts of reasons, such as [faculty] raises or new buildings, but if you are from here [Kenya] you know that the money doesn't stay here." Students at the newer institutions also expressed concerns about their finances.

While nearly every student we spoke to believed that a degree was essential to gainful employment, a disproportionate number of women indicated having thoughts about returning home to assist with domestic income and work. While often citing the financial

cost of attendance, we also heard stories about the hardships students' families experienced due to their not being at home. For example, one female stated, "I know it is tough on my mother. There are two that are younger than me. I used to be responsible for caring for them and now that I am here, she is overwhelmed."

Dual-track enrolment policies were supposed to generate additional revenues for institutions and student welfare services but the latter never materialised (Kiamba, 2003). A few western graduate students studying at U of N stated that the full-paying students' use of services, when added to the existing load, stretches the resources available to front-line staff past a point of sustainability. One student stated, "It doesn't seem like the [student services] staff are able to help too much, because they feel like there is too much to do, too many students."

At each institution, students, faculty and student service staff expressed frustration about the cost increases because they are perceived as antithetical to the foundations of Kenyan higher education, which many reminded us was to produce individuals who would serve the nation. One KU faculty member said, "I think we have lost our way. This is a very good institution but we make it difficult for many students to have the education they deserve and we need in the country. Unless the economy improves many of these students will have no way to pay back their loans. It was not what was first envisioned for the university." A faculty member at U of N, who had close ties with the government, saw cost increases in a more practical light, stating, "What we had was unsustainable once we starting opening new universities. We should really only be subsidising the most needy undergraduate degrees and encouraging more private options. There are just too many other things the government needs to do."

## **Challenge 2: Impact on student behaviours and actions**

At Kenya's more rural universities, increasing costs and ongoing economic problems exacerbate existing social conditions in more profound ways. Hunger, prostitution, exploitive relationships and HIV/AIDS were identified as significant problems by student service professional at each institution we visited, although a few senior administrators downplayed the magnitude of each.

**Hunger and catering revenue.** Administrators and faculty at the non-urban universities reported that hunger, especially late in the semester, is an ongoing problem for students who mismanage their loans. After receiving their loans at the beginning of each semester, students dine at restaurants and order meat and alcohol. By mid-semester, they begin eating at the more affordable campus canteens. Near the end of the semester, many students are cooking in their rooms, a dangerous practice banned at universities because resulting fires and electrical blackouts have led to student unrest or rioting. For example, Egerton University experienced significant infrastructure damage following student riots over blackouts in 2009 (Mkawale, 2009). As final exams approach, deans report students not eating for days and begging for food money. As such, deans have developed budgeting workshops and offer small financial aid scholarships to cover basic food costs but with little success. Masinde Muliro University

proactively built kitchenettes into its new hostel (university apartments), but converted them to student bedrooms at significant cost due to space issues.

Catering is a significant revenue source at these institutions and, at least in concept, these funds are used to offset operating costs, although students questioned if this actually happens. Numerous administrators worry that as institutions move towards full cost recovery models and implement a “no fees, no registration policy” (Mwiria, Ng’ethe, Ngome, Ouma-Odero, Wawire & Wesonga, 2007), more students will be prevented from registering for classes. These market-oriented policy trends, it is believed, will result in more students engaging in unhealthy behaviours to afford tuition and basic necessities.

**Prostitution.** Prostitution among college women, and increasingly men, to pay universities fees has been reported in the popular media and was discussed at each campus (Ambuka, 2012; Genga, 2010; Ngira, 2009; Oduor, 2010; “Strange double life in a city hostel,” 2009). Several counsellors and deans observed that prostitution is increasingly a solution for students facing hunger or homelessness. One counsellor stated, “We have developed educational programmes explaining the dangers and the importance of safe sex but we have almost no power to intervene with the actual behaviour.” Of particular concern to administrators are pregnancy and the transmission of HIV/Aids. A dean stated, “We don’t have the resources to care for babies or ill students, so we must move them off campus or encourage them to go home until they are able to resume their studies.” Another dean lamented, “A few of our students resort to this [prostitution] because they believe so much in the degree, in the promise of education. We try to provide options, but with the pressure to stay in school, they sometimes see no other option.”

**Live-in relationships.** An alternative to prostitution, on-campus and off-campus live-in relationships, are based on an understanding that a woman will cohabit with a man in exchange for cleaning, meal-preparation and sex. Also known as ‘trial marriages,’ these arrangements require that the male student pay for the female’s fees and tuition. While this may seem like a pragmatic solution to increasing attendance costs, these arrangements often only last a year. Each fall, with the arrival of new female students to campus, the older men “rush” to break up with their current girlfriends and find a younger women for a live-in relationship in what is known as the “Gold Rush” (Lime, 2010). Nearly all the staff we spoke with stated they explain this to the women during new student orientation but the trend has increased over the past decade. A dean observed that, “Once a man has found a new girlfriend, there are not many options for the women who now need to find money for tuition and a place to live. Most of them came from single sex secondary schools and this was their first relationship [...] they thought it would last.”

While many of the deans we spoke to expressed concerns about the effects of these behaviours on students, few had the resources to develop large-scale, ongoing programming initiatives to educate students about the potential consequences of their behaviours or provide alternative accommodation. Instead, the general approach developed from a guidance and counselling model that focuses on dealing with the problems of individuals, or small groups of students, who present a specific problem.

### **Challenge 3: Lack of training and senior leadership**

It is clear from our data that Kenya's ruling political party directly appoints individuals to the public university's most senior administrative positions based on loyalty and a willingness to support its agenda. Appointees, who frequently began as faculty members and held advanced degrees from US or British universities, often view their positions as stepping-stones to more senior positions and an opportunity to demonstrate their administrative talents. Unfortunately, at several institutions, these individuals have little preparation for managing university resources or an understanding of student affairs. As one candid dean of students reflected, "I was approached by the vice-chancellor and told that I was going to serve as the dean of students. This was not the position I expected because I have never worked in the field. The vice-chancellor knows I will support him. I am still learning but I know it is a good way to demonstrate my administrative skills." Another dean explained he was excited by the prospect of providing the types of services he experienced at a US graduate school, although he had little supervisory experience and was still in the process of understanding his job functions. Several deans we spoke with approached their work as a series of never-ending administrative tasks that included balancing a constantly fluctuating budget, allocating resources "that only exist on paper", and ensuring student problems did not escalate. These deans usually had limited interaction with the student services staff they supervised or with students unless it involved some type of crisis. During conversations with various service units it became apparent that lower-level employees understood the limitations associated with these appointments but also accepted that patronage was the way Kenyan higher education operated.

Our interviewees who worked in frontline positions at these institutions discussed several challenges resulting from the appointment of underprepared, and sometimes uninterested, individuals into senior student affairs positions. Although few spoke directly about their dean's, they suggested that 'some' of their leaders were unconcerned with the performance of the unit or services it delivered but instead spent much of their time making sure students and staff were not engaged in activities that might publically embarrass the institution and vice-chancellor. This focus on avoiding embarrassment trickles down throughout the organisation. A career counsellor stated, "Even in our positions, this becomes part of how we work, thinking about how something we might do could become a problem. It doesn't matter how good you are at your job if you say anything critical of the government." An advisor who worked with the student government added, "I spend a lot of my time explaining to students how something might look to the vice-chancellor, but I don't think they care too much, which is the real challenge of my job."

Another issue with having unqualified senior administrators is that they are unable to provide training or professional development. At several universities, the staff discussed the need for training but realised that their dean had less experience than they did. When professional training opportunities have been made available through professional associations, participants explained that their deans forbid them from attending, even at their own expense. One professional staff member explained that, "There is a general concern

that attending professional meetings is a threat to the dean, that we will organise ourselves or say something negative about our dean. We are prohibited from attending [professional] meetings because he is worried about his reputation.” In one instance, a dean attempted to have a meeting with other university deans but the vice-chancellors thwarted this because they feared the deans would rally the students to protest or riot against administration and the government.

**Misappropriation of funds.** A longtime counsellor raised another issue associated with appointing senior professionals based on political patronage. She said, “It always takes a long time for a dean [of students] to adjust to the position and, well, finding out where the resources are.” It was clear to us, and later confirmed by a key informant, that she was referring to what US administrators would refer to as a misappropriation of university resources. We heard similar references to resource allocation at several campuses. Although no one stated that senior administrators were stealing directly from their institutions, it was clear that these individuals often have large extended families dependent on them for jobs. “It might mean someone gets a job driving the dean or working in catering, or a construction contract for a building that will never actually be used.”

#### **Challenge 4. Campus closures**

Kenyan universities are the centre of the country’s political activism and exist in a constant state of tension with the government. Student protests and riots, which can turn deadly, are usually addressed by the government closing the university. In fact, for much of the time we were in Kenya, U of N was officially closed and undergraduate students sent home following the involvement of senior administrators in the election of a new student union president. KU had also been closed the previous year after student protests over examination dates resulted in one student dead and the destruction of several building. The most significant closures occurred in conjunction with the 2008 post-election violence, which resulted not only in students being sent home but also some staff members being forced to resign their positions out of safety concerns.

Campus closures are obviously unpredictable and, at some universities, very uncommon. Closures may only last a few days while in a few cases they can last a semester. However, the violence and damage that precipitates closures result in additional community distrust, redirected resources and unfulfilled educational goals. At U of N and KU, many of the student service staff we met seemed to have accepted closures as unfortunate but inevitable. One observed, “You always think about what might happen, how students from one tribe or party will react to something and the others will respond to that.”

Once universities reopen, staff suggested that normal campus routines return relatively quickly for most students and staff. A faculty member stated, “The student instigators have been dealt with and someone from the administration will listen to concerns, but there is little effort to make up for missed coursework. Some students graduate having missed almost a year due to closures. But the best we can hope for is that it won’t happen again for a while.” At a few universities we were shown the damage caused by students during the last

protests, some of which is left intentionally unrepaired so that students could see the results of their behaviour.

### *Discussion and conclusion*

Kenya has spent the last 40 years trying to ‘Africanise’ a nation whose formal institutions, language and bureaucratic practices were inherited from colonial times (Williams & Gona, 2013). Its system of higher education was established in the belief that an educated citizenry was essential to a meritocratic, independent and prosperous nation. However, economic problems and market-based reforms have exerted tremendous pressures on its universities to produce the educated workforce needed to lead the country back to prosperity. Although Western universities are experiencing similar pressures, they tend to have many more resources to draw on and a much larger, trained support staff in student affairs to help manage the increase in students and demand.

Unlike many of their Western counterparts, Kenya’s universities largely approach student services as a set of discrete functions for students to use when needed. We did sense from several conversations that some vice-chancellors and dean of students educated in Westernised countries were actively working to adopt a more holistic and proactive approach to providing services. This will be challenging because of the resources required and the need to move forward from the guidance and counselling model currently used. One approach to addressing this could be the development of a degree programme at one or more Kenyan universities focusing on student affairs theory and best practices. This would help to create a group of skilled professional student services practitioners with intimate knowledge of Kenya’s unique history and traditions.

At the heart of the existing model of student services is the ever-present and legitimate concern that students will again riot. Because university leaders are so closely connected to the government, there is worry that the inability to control student riots reflects poorly on the president. However, this constant concern is anathema to working with students in a collegial, collaborative and holistic fashion. One of the functions of student services in Western countries is to actively engage students with their concerns and find constructive methods for expressing themselves and finding viable solutions. For this to occur requires a firm belief that students, although often still transitioning into adulthood, will most often participate in dialogue about an existing problem if they are engaged by institutional leaders.

The four challenges we identify facing student services at Kenya’s public universities are the result of competing pressures and are manifestations of its unique culture, history and traditions. They are not ‘problems’ solely for student services professionals to solve or overcome but issues for practitioners and policy makers to consider when planning for the future of Kenyan higher education. Given the existing concerns institutional leaders have about authority and centralised decision-making, the national government would need to renegotiate its relationships with the universities for this to evolve.

Kenya’s existing student services model developed to meet the needs of a modest enrolment of academically talented government-sponsored students. The addition of



self-funded students has strained existing student services resources beyond sustainable capacity. Although there is great variation in each institution's infrastructure, affordable and safe housing is a persistent issue at all campuses. The most entrepreneurial institutions are engaging in joint ventures with the private sector to build additional housing at little cost to the institution. It is too early to determine if these new housing efforts will curb the need for prostitution or live-in relationships but it seems likely they will at least provide affordable, safe housing options for some students. From our participants' perspectives, this is a critical missing piece at most universities.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Student activism and democratic quality in Ghana's Fourth Republic

Ransford Edward Van Gyampo\*

### *Abstract*

Student activism has been pivotal in Ghana's political and democratic history. Prior to Ghana's Fourth Republic, student activism was highly confrontational and entailed student support or opposition to the various regimes depending on the extent to which the regimes were accepted by all as being rightful or legitimate. After 23 years of uninterrupted constitutional democracy, Ghana has earned the accolade of being a successful electoral democracy. However, in terms of democratic progression, the mere conduct of periodic elections that sometimes lead to alternation of power is described as elementary and a low quality democracy. Given that Ghana's democratisation process since 1992 has not been static, some remarkable strides have been made in improving the nation's democratic quality. Using a purely qualitative research design and interviews with some former student activists, this study argues that the modest strides made in the quest for high quality liberal democracy in Ghana cannot be meaningfully discussed without acknowledging the invaluable contributions of student activism. The study further suggests a relationship between democratic quality and student activism. It postulates that the shift from the usually oppositional and sometimes violent student activism in Ghana's Fourth Republic could partially be attributed to the country's strides made in the drive towards democratic maturity. For students to continue their role as vanguards of democracy in Ghana, the study recommends an amalgamation of all tertiary networks and other student splinter groups under the National Union of Ghana Students; and a shift in the *modus operandi* of the Union from confrontation to the use of dialogue and other peaceful democratic means to achieve its objectives. This could contribute to the restoration of the Union's former glory as a united, national and independent mouth-piece of students in all national issues.

### *Keywords*

*students, activism, protests, demonstration, democratic quality.*

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### *Introduction and problem statement*

Students in Ghana, particularly those at the tertiary level, have played a critical role in Ghana's democratisation process. From Ghana's struggle for independence to the nation's current Fourth Republic's democratic dispensation, student activism has served as the fulcrum around which political action has revolved. This explains why, after the inception of the nation's Fourth Republic, the main political parties in Ghana established student wings on the campuses of the various tertiary institutions. For instance, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) has established the Tertiary Institution Network (TEIN) while the New Patriotic Party has established the Tertiary Education and Students' Confederacy (TESCON). The Convention Peoples' Party has also established the Tertiary Students' Charter (TESCHART). These student wings are expected to offer support and "win more souls" for the parties on the various campuses. The relevance of student activism is also seen in the run up to elections in Ghana. Since 1992, all political parties and political aspirants have thronged to the campuses of the various tertiary institutions to explain their programmes, ideologies, philosophies and manifestoes to students and to whip up their support during national elections (Asante, 2012, p. 222).

The question that ought to be posed however is whether the relevance of student activism must only be confined to its role of getting leaders elected and removing them from power. Indeed, the work of scholars like Oquaye (1980), Nugent (1996), Ninsin (1996), Chazan (1983), Shillington (1992), Tetteh (1999), Awoonor (1990), Kimble (1963), Austin (1964), Lentz (1995), Gyimah-Boadi (1993), and even recently, Nunyonameh (2012) depicts and unfortunately confines the role of student activism in democratisation to the arena of offering support through demonstrations, petitions and elections to regimes and agitating for their removal using the same channels when leaders of the regimes had either violated or failed to protect the fiduciary trust reposed in them. In terms of democratic quality, this role of student activism can only produce low quality democracy (Diamond & Morlino, 2005, p. 49). However, this paper posits that student activism has contributed immensely towards Ghana's journey to attaining a high quality democratic status. How has this happened in Ghana's Fourth Republic? This is the area that seems not to have been fully and extensively researched. Using a purely qualitative and historical approach, this paper attempts to fill the lacuna in the literature. Some key sources of data for the study include books, journal articles and newspaper publications about the subject matter. Efforts were made to interview some past and present student activists and leaders to validate the information captured in the literature and other historical records.

In the subsequent sections of the paper, terminologies used are clarified. This is followed by a discussion of the theoretical underpinning of student activism; the evolution of student activism; the contribution of student activism to Ghana's journey towards the attainment of high quality liberal democracy; concluding remarks; and policy recommendations.

At this juncture, some concepts ought to be clarified. First, 'Fourth Republic' simply refers to Ghana's fourth attempt at constitutional democracy that started in 1992 and is still

taking place today. Ghana's First Republic lasted from 1960 to 1966; the Second Republic lasted from 1969 to 1972; and the Third Republic spanned the period between 1979 and 1981. The second term that requires clarification is 'student activism'. According to Altbach (1992, p. 1444) "student activism is inherent in the nature of the academic community" and "will continue to be a powerful force", both on campus and in society. The term refers to all activities either in support of or in opposition to regimes and their leaders pursued by students of tertiary institutions. Such activities may be formal or informal; may occur both at the national level (oriented towards society) and local level (orientated towards academia, particularly in opposition to university management) (Luescher, 2005; Altbach, 1966).

Finally, 'High Quality Democracy' is the fusion of procedural (rule of law, participation, competition and accountability) and substantive (freedom, equality and responsiveness) democracy in a manner that ensures that the two interact and reinforce one another (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). High Quality Democracies are distinguished from Low Quality ones by the fact that the latter are merely electoral democracies, that conduct relatively free and fair elections without viable and credible opposition, and the institutionalisation of the basic tenets of democracy. Such democracies according to Diamond (1997, p. 18), provide a "sufficiently fair arena of contestation to allow the ruling party to be turned out of office". However, they are hollow and a wide gap exists between them and their High Quality counterparts (Diamond, 1997). The indicators of High Quality Democracy as can be deduced include: human rights protection; equality before the law; rule of law; accountability; responsiveness; competition; and participation.

### *Student activism in theoretical perspective*

An interesting question that has dominated the literature on student activism is the following: "What is it that makes students engage in political activity?" Related to this question is another question: "What accounts for students' radical, violent behavior?" Rubinson and Meyer (1972, p. 21) have concluded that student activism, even that of a violent nature, is determined by the extent to which the status of students is institutionalised within the national political and social systems. They argued that students as a social group achieve their political relevance by the extent to which "the authority of the educational system itself is institutionalised and regulated at the national level [...] so that educational institutions are not simply a market mechanism producing personnel for a variety of needs, but come to control as institutionalised status order whose rules help to symbolically define the personnel of the political society" (Rubinson & Meyer, 1972, p. 24). This status definition, they argue, provides students with both the moral and normative grounds to engage in political activism. As they explained, "because in most countries, the nation-building process and its difficulties led to a formulation of the student status as socially and politically central, students generally are more politically active than other groups" (Rubinson & Meyer, 1972). Consequently, "the variations across countries in the amount and nature of student activism result from differences in the incorporation of the status of the student".

It is thus impossible to consider student activism without reference to the educational system within which students develop that affects their self-conception and understanding of their role within the polity (Agyeman, 1988). Historically in Ghana, education was not only seen as key to improving one's mobility prospects; it was also seen as an indispensable tool for achieving parity with the former European colonial elite and represented a symbol of pride in the Ghanaian society (Finlay, 1971). It was fairly common, until recently, to find whole communities pool their resources together in order to send "one of their own" to school (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 5). Brammer's (1967, p. 254) observation of student status in other developing countries is an apposite description of the Ghanaian situation. "The student has a high social status and is generally revered by his elders because of the power of his knowledge and skill. He is often viewed as a champion of the people against the forces of exploitation and tyranny (p. 258). It is these implied responsibilities that naturally predispose students to political activity, as failure to 'deliver' on them is disapproved by society (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 6).

Altbach (1969; 1991; 1997; 2006) adds a socio-political dimension to the explanation of student activism and political behavior. According to him, the inherent characteristic features of educational systems, the transient nature of studentship, the macro-political level, the stage of political development, and responsiveness of the political system to political demands matter in shaping and influencing student activism. He further explains that students in developing countries earn a greater legitimacy for their political actions because in many such countries, the political system tends to be poorly institutionalised, and the public sphere characterised by poorly established civil society. Because such societies also have high levels of illiteracy, students are among the few groups in the society with both the knowledge and freedom to undertake political activity. Consequently, the rest of the society tends to see students as the 'conscience of the nation'. This explanation implies that any qualitative improvement in the degree of institutionalisation of the political system in these countries is certain to diminish the prominence of students in the political sphere. While this assertion may be valid in Ghana, it must be subjected to further analysis in order to establish other variables that are likely to undermine student activism. According to Luescher-Mamashela (2013), Altbach's framework involves a complex multi-level system of categorical classification as well as specific propositions regarding the emergence, outcomes and impact of student activism, response to student activism, and the characteristic features of student activists, organisations and movements.

### *Evolution of student activism in Ghana*

#### **The years of passive activism**

In tracing the evolution of student activism in Ghanaian politics, one cannot ignore developments in the then University College of Gold Coast (UCGC) in Legon, now University of Ghana, Legon, which was established in 1948. This is not just because it

is closer to the seat of government, but also because it is the oldest university in Ghana (Chazan, 1978, p. 8). According to Finlay, Kopplin and Ballard (1968), before the 1960s there was no tradition of student activism in student life at the UCGC. Students were somewhat aloof from national politics (Ibid.) This situation was not limited to UCGC. Indeed, according to Nunyonameh (2012, p. 6), there is little or no record of student activism prior to the 1960s in the Kumasi College of Technology (KCT), now Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, which was established four years after the UCGC.

Several explanations are proffered in discussing the initial years of inertia and lack of student activism and disinterest in national politics. First, the elitist educational system around the time tended to decrease the salience of student activism and national political activity for the individual student. According to Emerson (1968, p. 42), the educational system guaranteed the occupational aspirations of students and insulated them physically and intellectually from national politics and student activism. The high demand for skilled labour during the post-independence period and the high social status attached to university education made the acquisition of university degree a major priority for students (Agyemang, 1988, p. 69). As aptly noted by Peil (1969), students sought to rather maximise the disadvantages in their struggle for a university degree than confront the government, which incidentally was the main employer.

Secondly, the repressive political environment under the post-colonial Nkrumah regime, which made student activism a dangerous activity, could partly explain the years of inertia in student activism. Ghana's first head of state, Kwame Nkrumah, turned Ghana into a police state and under his notorious Preventive Detention Act (1958), he could detain suspected political enemies for up to five years without trial. As Goody (1968, p. 339) observed, "there was simply no community of dissent, as the network of paid informers, the preventive arrests, above all the desire for a peaceful life, meant that open discussion of disapproval took place only between foreigners or between very close friends, if at all". The right to criticise and freedom of young people and students to rebel were effectively silenced by the authoritarian regime of Nkrumah (Goody, p. 345).

Thirdly, the traditional value of respect and deference to authority also accounted for the weak student activism around the period under review (Ofosu-Appiah, 1967). Youth and student obedience and deference to authority were certainly much more relevant before and around the 1960s than is currently the case. According to Chazan (1978, p. 10), generally, obedience to political leaders among Ghanaian youth around the time was extremely high. This contributed to the weak student activism at the time. Finally, the lack of political experience and the consequent lack of clarity of political opinion or position on critical political issues in Ghana worked against student activism (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 4). For most students at that time, there were only two national issues: colonialism and the CPP government. While they would have decisively rejected colonialism, and while they were very dissatisfied with the Nkrumah regime, lack of clarity about the future meant that students would be more reactive than proactive to wider political developments (Nunyonameh, p. 8).



### The early years of activism

The period after 1960 marked the early years of student activism in national politics and the characteristic feature of the relationship between students and governments around the time was confrontation. Student confrontation with government arose principally between the university students in Legon and the government out of competing demands of nationalism and academic freedom (Emerson, 1968). The government clashed with students over the proper definition of the latter's role in national development. The university which was largely controlled by expatriates was unwilling to submit to partisan control because its authorities viewed it as independent of national partisan control and politics. On the contrary, the CPP government saw the university as a part of the broad nationalist machinery available for the fight against vestiges of colonialism and for national development (Ofosu-Appiah, 1967). The government interpreted the university's unpreparedness to submit to state control to mean that the university was committed to serving colonialist and imperialist rather than Ghanaian interests. Consequently, it undertook several measures including less constructive media criticisms, with the view to building popular discontent against the university (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 9).

Further, a number of steps that invariably infuriated both students and university administrators were undertaken, including an attempt to control the university and limit academic freedom through the passage of the Universities Act (1961) that made the head of state chancellor of the universities. This helped the government to exercise some control over the universities. Even though this act incensed the students, they did not revolt until an attempt was made by the government through the 1964 Amendment Act to bring the judicial arm of government under the control of the CPP-led government (Austin, 1964). Students of the University of Ghana issued a statement condemning the move by the president to interfere in the judiciary (Austin, 1964). Again, the government's decision to purge the universities of 'subversive elements', which led to the deportation of six expatriate faculty members of the University of Ghana, drew massive student protests (Austin, 1964). By asserting themselves and criticising the CPP regime at a time when it was considered dangerous to stand in the way of the president, student activism gained some credibility and students generally succeeded in establishing themselves as a force in Ghanaian politics (Shillington, 1992, p. 45). Realising the implications of the fledgling student activism on the legitimacy of the regime, the CPP-government sought to cripple them. Indeed, shortly after the 1964 one-party state referendum which the CPP won, five Legon student leaders and a faculty member perceived to have been backing student activism were arrested and detained (Shillington, 1992).

While student activism was emerging as a major political force, the Nkrumah regime was overthrown in 1966 by the National Liberation Council (NLC). Given the harsh treatment meted out to them by the CPP regime, students of the universities hailed the coup and were quite supportive of the military regime (Chazan, 1978). Even when the NLC issued a decree against rumour mongering, the students were initially hesitant to criticise the regime. It took several weeks before the National Union of Ghana Students (NUGS) in Legon drew the regime's attention to the threat posed by the decree to the right to free

speech (Chazan, 1978). Many students did not see the urgency in returning to civilian rule. They believed that the military regime needed time to master political administration in order to be more effective in solving pressing national problems. Therefore, the military nature of the regime did not appear to be a problem for students. Once it was not perceived to be oppressive, students did not appear overly worried (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 11). What mattered most in the view of Emerson (1968, p. 97) was that the military coup of 1966, at the very least, marked a total symbolic break with the period of inertia in student activism and the idea of student participation in shaping national decision-making was ingrained in the psyche of many students from the tertiary institutions.

### **Student activism in the Busia Regime: 1969–1972**

It must be noted that the fact that students were not very critical of the NLC regime, did not mean all was well with Ghana. Before Busia was elected prime minister, the country was plagued with a serious economic crisis including shortage of foreign currency, huge domestic and foreign debt, runaway inflation and high rate of unemployment. The political transition from the NLC regime to the Busia-led Progress Party (PP) was hailed by students as a solution to the economic crisis (Goldsworthy, 1973). Unfortunately, the economic hardships continued under Busia. Prices of basic goods kept soaring while the government imposed fees for medical treatment; reintroduced the payment of school fees (which had been abolished by the Nkrumah regime); and replaced the government bursary to students with a student loan scheme – a move that was sharply criticised by the students (Goldsworthy, 1973, p. 15). There were widespread student protests under Busia in a manner that compelled him to openly acknowledge in his 1969 First National Students' Day address that indeed, there was much for students to revolt about (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 16). Despite this open confession, the government resorted to desperate authoritarian measures in dealing with student activism. Following a cabinet reshuffle in 1971, Busia took personal charge over the ministry of information and strived to guard against negative media commentaries in a manner that undermined freedom of expression. Indeed, later that year, a law to permit the government to arrest anybody who insulted Busia was being seriously considered (Nunyonameh., p.18).

Sensing a similarity between the political environment under the Busia and that of Nkrumah, the NUGS issued a communiqué in 1971 demanding freedom of speech and of the press and immediate action to deal with the worsening economic crisis of the country. In response, the government resorted to verbal attacks, accused students of treason and also referred to them as “the little minds at the universities” (Goldsworthy, 1973, p. 20). These attacks accentuated students' anger against the government and as the economic situation worsened and attempts to silence the students heightened, student protest became more vociferous and attracted the support of Ghana's Trades Union Congress (TUC) (Goldsworthy). The two groups teamed up to against the government and formed a much dreaded alliance when in September 1971, the government further sought to dissolve the TUC by introducing the Industrial Relations Amendment Act (Ninsin, 1985a). It was their protests that ultimately laid the foundation for the military takeover by Acheampong in January 1972 (Ninsin, 1985a).

### **Student activism under the Acheampong regime**

The Acheampong-led National Redemption Council (NRC), which later became the Supreme Military Council (SMC), attempted to shore up its legitimacy by resorting to several public relations gimmicks. According to Chazan and LeVine (1979), the regime fully appreciated the influential role of students and sought to win their support by abolishing the student loan scheme and replacing it with government bursaries; increasing the salaries of workers; and revaluing the nation's currency. The regime introduced some initiatives which were supported by students. These include the national food self-sufficiency programme called 'Operation Feed Your Self' (OFYS) which enjoined all Ghanaians to venture into agriculture, particularly food production; the repudiation of all foreign debts popularly called the 'yentua policy'; and the construction of irrigation projects. Students responded positively to the food-sufficiency initiative by abandoning their studies to assist in the harvesting and transportation of sugarcane from Komenda in the Central Region, for further processing. They also assisted in the construction of several irrigation projects in Dawhenya, Afife, Tano, etc. and applauded the 'yentua policy' (Oquaye, 1980). As a sign of patriotism, the students recommended the establishment of a National Service Scheme that would mandate graduates from tertiary institutions who had benefitted from free education to render one year voluntary service to the nation. This suggestion was accepted and it led to the passage of the National Service Decree (208) in 1978 (Shillington, 1992).

However, the 'yentua policy' had alienated the regime from the donor community and as OFYS could not be sustained, this among others, led to mounting economic hardships with no assistance from the country's debtors. Consequently calls for a return to civilian rule were made and the pressure was led by the students (Hitchens, 1979, p. 171). The government responded to the calls in October 1976 by proposing a 'Union Government'—a concept that provides space for traditional authorities, military and police to co-rule the country almost permanently (Oquaye, 1980). As Chazan and LeVine (1979, p. 178) noted, "the government had made it abundantly clear that a return to civilian rule did not mean government without military participation". But the students viewed this proposal as an attempt by the soldiers to perpetuate themselves in power and therefore resorted to massive protests and violent demonstrations (Owusu, 1979). Nevertheless, the regime went ahead to subject the 'Unigov' idea to a referendum in March 1978 and claimed to have won the outcome. The referendum was marred by violent and extra-legal as well as confrontational forms of opposition, led by the students. This resulted in several clashes between students and the police in a manner that forced the closure of the universities for several days (Chazan & Levine, 1979, p.188).

It was this state of 'praetorianism' coupled with the serious economic hardships and corruption that led to a palace coup by General F.W.K. Akuffo to kick out Acheampong and to establish the Supreme Military Council (II) (Shillington, 1992). Perceiving political parties as ethnic and divisive entities, the Akuffo regime also proposed a 'National Government' under which it would rule for a transitional period of at least four years. But the students became suspicious of this intention and uncompromisingly opposed it

(Ninsin, 1985a). Perhaps terrified by the sustained student agitation, the regime abandoned the 'National Government' proposal in favour of multiparty politics (Ninsin, 1985a). It announced a timetable to return the country to civilian rule in July 1979. However, as preparations towards the 1979 elections slated for June were underway, Flt-Lt J.J. Rawlings led a group of junior army officers to topple the Akuffo regime in June 4, 1979 and established the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) (Ninsin, 1985a).

### **Students' first encounter with Jerry Rawlings**

The AFRC engaged in a 'house-cleaning exercise' aimed at purging the nation of corruption and announced a return to civilian rule in September 1979. The support offered the AFRC by students through the issuance of statements and demonstrations was unflinching and unprecedented (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 18). The regime sought to garner student ownership of its activities by appointing a representative on student affairs who collated student input into its programmes. Students supported the regime's bloody house-cleaning exercise by chanting in support of the execution, public flogging and ridiculing of those tagged by the regime as corrupt economic saboteurs (Shillington, 1992, p. 51). They also abandoned their studies and went to the hinterlands to help transport locked-up cocoa and foodstuffs to the city centres (Shillington, 1992).

The initial support of the regime notwithstanding, its brutalities and egregious human rights abuses began to cause some public disaffection. The Ghana Bar Association (GBA) and TUC openly criticised the regime for its ruthlessness. However, students described these criticisms as unwarranted and embarked on street protests to demonstrate their continuing support for the regime (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 19). To the students, the AFRC was the solution to the problem of political power and social justice. They were bitter against the Acheampong-led SMC because of the violence the regime unleashed against them and hence were prepared to defend the AFRC that ousted the SMC to the hilt. This also explains why they supported Jerry Rawlings again, when on December 31, 1981, he overthrew the civilian government he had handed over power to in 1979 and established the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) (Shillington, 1992).

### **Students' second encounter with Jerry Rawlings**

The support accorded the PNDC during the students' second encounter with Jerry Rawlings was momentary. The students, typically, demonstrated what is much known about them when they felt the fiduciary trust bestowed on the PNDC was betrayed. Even though the regime was provisional and was expected to return the country to a multiparty democracy, it lacked the political will to do so. Hence by 1983, students had joined other civil society groups to agitate for the handing over of power to a more democratic government (Shillington, 1992). The previous regime that Rawlings overthrew, led by Dr Limann, passed the National Service Act 426 (1980) that increased the number of years for students to do national service from one to two years, six months of which was to be spent on military training. However, students objected to this law which was about

to be implemented by the PNDC regime in the period around the end of 1983. Again, the 1983 budget contained austerity measures prescribed by the World Bank including cost-sharing in education at both secondary and tertiary level. In response to this, students under the aegis of the NUGS embarked on a nationwide demonstration, boycotted lectures and resorted to other acts of violence because, according to Haruna Idrissu, a former NUGS president (personal interview, May 7, 2013) they felt education was a 'right' and not a 'privilege'. The regime sought to undermine and weaken the student front by resorting to threats and intimidation including the disruption of the annual congress of the NUGS in May 1983 that resulted in the destruction of property and injuries to both students and cadres of the regime. This led to the arrest of some of the student leaders, including Kweku Paintsil, the then NUGS president. According to Gyimah-Boadi (1993), the PNDC, realising the threats posed to its security by students, did not hesitate to repress them. Unfortunately, the students could not secure the support of the public as they were subjected to harsh brutalities, ostensibly as a way of letting them taste the poison they assisted the regime in preparing through their open support for the AFRC/PNDC even when the rights of other Ghanaians were being violated (Nunyonameh, 2012, p. 9).

#### **Student activism and Ghana's transition to the Fourth Republic**

After holding on to the reins of power in its 'provisional status' for a period of 11 years, the PNDC regime eventually had to succumb to pressures to return Ghana to constitutional rule. These pressures were both internal, from students and other civil society groups, as well as external, through the application of political conditionalities for loans from the World Bank (Shillington, 1992). In calling for a return to constitutional democracy, the students argued that a democratically elected government would accommodate all shades of opinions and would not implement unpopular policies like the austerity measures introduced under the aegis of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). According to Ninsin (1996b), the PNDC was adamant about retaining its 'indispensable' hold over power and did not feel enthused to negotiate the transitional process with students and other civil society groups that had called for a return to constitutional rule. However, the groundswell of pressure for a return to multiparty democracy compelled the regime to put in place preparatory measures to usher the country into a constitutional dispensation (Ninsin, 1996b).

The preparatory processes were less consultative and in September 1990, students held a press conference to call on the regime to desist from controlling the process and open the political space for all groups to operate. According to K. Paintsil (personal communication, May 6, 2013) the students among others called for the repeal of all oppressive laws and decrees, and the unconditional release of political prisoners. However, these demands were ignored by the regime and in protest, the students also boycotted the activities of the Consultative Assembly that was tasked to draft the 1992 Constitution because its composition too, was packed with supporters of the regime (Gyimah-Boadi, 1993). As the draft Constitution became ready for a referendum, the students issued a statement to condemn the PNDC for the less inclusive manner in which document was drafted.

They also criticised the Consultative Assembly for allowing the regime to smuggle such “transitional provisions as would allow the PNDC and her cohort of appointees to go unquestioned about their performance” (Ninsin, 1996b, p. 141). Again, these criticisms were ignored by the regime as it went ahead to subject the draft Constitution to a referendum in April 1992 and secured approval for it; lifted the ban on political parties in May 1992; mutated into the NDC under the leadership of Jerry Rawlings; contested and won the November/December 1992 general election in which Rawlings was described as ‘the referee, footballer and linesman’ (Ibid.). Rawlings ruled for eight years and handed over power to J.A. Kufuor of the NPP after the NDC had been defeated in the 2000 general elections. Kufuor also ruled for eight years and handed over power J.E.A. Mills after the NPP had lost the 2008 general elections. J.E.A. Mills ruled for three years, seven months and departed to eternity. However, his party, the NDC under the flag-bearership of John Mahama, won the 2012 General Elections.

### *Student contribution to democratic quality in the Fourth Republic*

Since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992, the militant posturing of students seems to have subsided and the NUGS is not much heard commenting on national issues and criticising governments. Indeed, some former NUGS presidents like S.O. Ablakwah (personal interview, July 3, 2013) have even described the Ghanaian student movement as being in a state of coma. However, one thing that is being lost by those who are used to the militant posturing of students is that the Fourth Republic is the only period of democratic governance in the political history of Ghana that has been allowed to thrive for more than 20 years. Students, particularly during the SMC and PNDC rule, agitated for a constitutional democracy where there would be no dictatorships, and where freedoms and human rights and vibrant activism of other civil society would be institutionalised. The Fourth Republican dispensation seems to have guaranteed these democratic ideals, albeit at a low level. Again, knowing the role they played in making regimes unpopular, politicians under the Fourth Republic seem to have been proactive in infiltrating the camp of students, particularly the NUGS. Whoever emerges the NUGS president is of utmost concern to political leaders. Hence they have tried their best to corrupt and influence the election of student leaders to ensure that such leaders do not become overly critical of government. Such leaders have also encouraged the emergence of splinter groups and massive secessions from the NUGS (Gyampo, 2012b). These have contributed to weakening the leverage of the NUGS as the mouthpiece of students and dented its legitimacy (Gyampo, 2012b).

Notwithstanding attempts to influence and break their front by politicians and their generally less confrontational posturing in the Fourth Republic, students activism has somehow contributed towards deepening the quality of democracy in Ghana. Student activism since 1992 has mainly manifested on the various university campuses through the political party/tertiary student network. According to Asante (2012, p. 12), tertiary student networks evolved as a movement in tertiary institutions following the ushering of the country into constitutional democracy in 1992. On the campuses of the traditional tertiary institutions

like the University of Ghana (UG), University of Cape Coast (UCC) and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), students were encouraged by the various political parties to organise themselves along political and ideological lines. Students who believed in the traditions of the NPP formed a movement of the party on the campuses. Those who shared the ideals of Jerry Rawlings also formed a branch of the NDC on the campuses while the adherents of Nkrumahism launched branches of the CPP (Asante, 2012, p. 13). These branches of the NDC, NPP and CPP were later renamed Tertiary Institution Network (TEIN), Tertiary Education and Students Confederacy (TESCON) and Tertiary Students' Charter (TESCHART) respectively. The idea was later extended to polytechnics, training colleges, the University of Professional Studies, and more recently, private tertiary institutions throughout the country (Ibid.). According to A.M. Ayuba, president of TEIN (personal interview, May 7, 2013), the functions of these tertiary networks are to defend and support their political parties during elections; win more members and supporters for their parties on the various campuses; and educate students about the ideologies, manifestoes and policies of the political parties. In the discharge of their functions, these networks have created a positive image of student activism by contributing to the shoring up of democratic quality in Ghana in the areas of human rights promotion and protection, political equality, accountability, responsiveness and participation. These are discussed below.

### **Human rights**

In the area of human rights and freedoms, it is instructive that, since 2002, Ghana has been consistently rated high as a free country by Freedom House. Indeed, in their assessment of the quality of democracy in Ghana and South Africa, Mattes and Gyimah-Boadi (2005, p. 261) scored Ghana 2 for both political and civil liberties on a scale of 1:7 in 1996, and rated the country free in terms of press freedom. Yet, there are many challenges regarding human rights protection in Ghana. There appears to be growing intolerance and indiscipline, mob lynching of suspected armed robbers and the prevalence of vigilante justice, particularly in the urban and peri-urban centres of Ghana (Asante, 2012, p. 20). In this atmosphere, tertiary networks have been canvassing for tolerance of opposing views and the need to respect the rights of all. Indeed in 2011, both the University of Ghana branch of TEIN and TESCON issued statements to condemn the inhuman treatment meted out to a female suspect alleged to have stolen mobile phones belonging to some students of Akafo Hall of the University of Ghana (Asante, 2012).

There are even more serious deficits in socio-economic rights. The directive principles of state policy of Ghana's 1992 Constitution that assures all Ghanaians of their right to employment for example, is not justiciable and governments cannot be prosecuted for joblessness. Hence unemployment rates keep rising and efforts to deal with the situation by governments can be described as drops in the ocean. According to the 2012 Report of the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER) of the University of Ghana, 250 000 people enter the labour market annually, of which the public sector is able to absorb only 2%. ISSER further estimated that youth unemployment (in relation

to the active and legal employable population of 18–60 years) has risen from 14.8% in 1992 to 16.4% in 2000 and came close to 36% in 2012. This partly explains the formation of the Unemployed Graduates Association in 2011 by students who had completed their education at the tertiary level. Tertiary networks across the country have viewed the unemployment problem as a major human rights issue and made several calls on government to treat the issue as a national priority. Apart from the security reasons cited by the then national security coordinator, Sam Amoo as the main reason for the introduction of the National Youth Employment Programme (NYEP) in 2006, there is evidence to show that some of the calls and advocacy by student activists operating through the tertiary networks across the country also influenced the setting up of the NYEP (Gyampo, 2012b, p. 19). Even though the NYEP is described as an *ad hoc* and 'quick fix' solution with several challenges, it has assisted in lessening the burden of unemployment in Ghana by providing employment to over 100 000 young people by the close of 2012 (Gyampo, 2012b).

### **Equality**

Ghana's 1992 Constitution guarantees political equality. However what pertains in practice is different. The 2002 Afrobarometer survey conducted by the Ghana Center for Democratic Development (CDD-Ghana) revealed the heightened perception of inequality under the law. According to the survey, 28% of respondents complained about political inequality. Beyond political inequality, there is widespread gender as well as socio-economic inequality in the country with women participation in decision-making being relegated to the background; and income inequality among many Ghanaians (Asante, 2012, p. 22). Student activists operating through tertiary networks of political parties have played a crucial role as important advocates for political, socio-economic and gender equality. They have however been 'loud' in the area of political equality. They have constantly advocated for their inclusion in the selection of party officials and candidates including flag bearers of national election. As a result of this advocacy, the NDC for instance has a representative of the youth and student activists at all levels of the party, from the branch to the national level. According to L. Hlordze, national youth organiser of the NDC (personal communication, May 7, 2013), these young representatives now have voting rights in the selection of party executives and flag bearers. TESCON and TESCHART have also gained greater voting rights and recognition in party administration, decision-making and selection of party officials at congresses (Asante, 2012, p. 24). In addition, these student activists are now allowed to contest for elective positions in their respective parties. Indeed, according to E.A. Kissi, an Electoral Officer at the Electoral Commission of Ghana (personal communication, May 3, 2013), this explains why the number of student activists who contested for parliamentary primaries increased from 48% in 2008 to 66% in 2012.

### **Accountability**

Student activism has also contributed to promoting both vertical and horizontal accountability. In terms of vertical accountability, students are part of the majority of



the voting population who have either rewarded incumbent leaders or punished them by voting them out of power (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). It is instructive that the dynamics of vertical accountability go beyond the interplay between voters and their elected representatives. It also encompasses the efforts of civil society, mass media and social movements to hold governments accountable in inter-election periods (Diamond and Morlino, 2005). In Ghana however, the media's ability to promote accountability is limited by huge gaps in levels of professionalism and integrity (Asante, 2012, p. 17). Again, many civil society groups have failed to demonstrate high levels of internal accountability while others have weak capacity. As key political actors, students at the tertiary institutions vote massively during elections and passionately demand accountability from government and party officials. On various platforms, they express concern about how leaders handle national issues including cost of living, energy crisis and general state of the economy. On March 10, 2012, for instance, the University of Ghana branch of TESCON issued a statement calling on government to find an immediate and lasting solution to the nation's power crisis. This subsequently compelled the government to announce measures being put in place and the dates on which the crisis would end.

In terms of horizontal accountability, tertiary networks have been supportive of both legal and voluntary agencies committed to promoting accountability. They have collaborated with groups committed to observing and monitoring elections in Ghana like the Coalition of Domestic Observers (CODEO), the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA-Ghana), CDD-Ghana and the Christian Council of Ghana. Again, at the national level, they have advocated for accountability, fairness and transparency in electoral management. Indeed, both TEIN and TESCON have been actively involved in the monitoring of elections (Asante, 2012, p. 18). Student activists on the various campuses, particularly TEIN and TESCON members, serve as polling agents and registration officers in the rural hinterlands and in the strongholds of other parties. For example, in the 2000 elections, some members of TESCON demonstrated bravery and risked their lives for the NPP when they served as polling agents in the Volta Region, an NDC stronghold and a 'no go area' for the NPP. According to A.M. Ayuba and B.K.A. Asena, presidents of TEIN and TESCON respectively (personal interviews, May 7, 2013), TEIN members were also deployed to the Ashanti Region (which is also the "World Bank of the NPP") as polling agents for the NDC in the 2008 general elections. Some of the students were assaulted by their political opponents because of their vigilance in preventing rigging and other electoral irregularities (Asante, 2012, p. 21). Furthermore, tertiary networks have constantly opposed undemocratic ways of running political parties and have called for genuine accountability in the running of political parties including the nomination and selection of candidates for elections to all positions and party financial statements (Asante, 2012, p. 22).

### **Responsiveness**

The degree to which governments put in place policies to deal with the priorities and needs of the ordinary people show how responsive they are (Diamond & Morlino, 2005). In

the CDD-Ghana 2002 Afrobarometer survey, the majority of Ghanaians (51%) emphasised the need for governments to deal with unemployment as their top priority. However, the survey showed that only 22% believed governments are responsive to the needs of the people. This implies that there is a general deficit in terms of governmental responsiveness in Ghana. However, student activists operating through tertiary networks across the country have contributed to making governments somewhat responsive through their calls and insistence on more public involvement in the formulation and implementation of policies. In formulating Ghana's mid-term development plan – the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda, 2010–2013 in 2009 – tertiary networks on the various campuses called for broader consultations and participation in the planning processes to ensure that the development plan reflects the needs of the people (Gyampo, 2012c, p. 138). In 2006, the Accra Polytechnic branch of TEIN held a seminar on 'The Impact of Democracy on Nation Building'. Similarly, the University of Ghana branch of TESCHART organised a forum on March 6, 2007 on the topic 'Fifty Years of Economic Opportunities, the Lessons and the Drawbacks, What are the alternative Policies and Programmes needed for Ghana?' The University of Ghana branch of TEIN also organised a forum in 2007 on 'The Role of Undergraduate Students in Ghana's Democracy'. In 2008, the University of Professional Studies branch of TESCON also organised a series of symposia on the National Youth Employment Programme. Moreover in 2007, all the tertiary networks in the country joined forces to demand the abolition of a new residential policy that gave accommodation only to first year students. All these moves were aimed at making leaders responsive to the priorities and needs of the ordinary people (Asante, 2012, p. 18).

### **Participation**

Participation, a key attribute of high democratic quality, can be explained in terms of the deliberate involvement of people in a decision-making process in a manner that makes them capable of influencing and owning the process (Gyampo, 2012c; Verba, Schlozman & Brady, 1995). In Ghana, participation generally tends to be pseudo, as genuine participation in political party activities is weak and confined narrowly to only voting (Gyampo, 2012c). By virtue of their level of education, tertiary networks possess the skills needed to effect genuine participation. In this regard, it is instructive that student activists operating through the tertiary networks tend to work with other civil society groups to peacefully protest against policies believed not to be in the interest of the ordinary people. Indeed, between 2005 and 2007, members of TEIN and TESCHART were instrumental in the series of peaceful protests organised by the Committee for Joint Action (CJA), a pressure group, against some government policies such as increases in utilities, petroleum prices and the Representation of Peoples Amendment Bill (Asante, 2012, p. 23). Students of the various campuses have also been utilising their research skills, talents and knowledge to foster innovative research to support the activities of their parties. Most of the research work for the election petition filed by the NPP to challenge the declaration of John Mahama as the elected president in Ghana's 2012 general elections was done by TESCON members

drawn from the various tertiary institutions across the country. Generally, TEIN and TESCON have vibrant research committees which plan and undertake regular research activities for their parties, particularly during elections. This form of student participation and activism helps the parties to develop appropriate campaign strategies and to predict the outcome of elections with some degree of certainty (Asante, 2012, p. 26).

### *Conclusion and recommendation*

Clearly, the nature of student activism in Ghana has been as a result of the normative and moral grounds to engage in political activity as well as the status conferred on them by the educational system in line with the views of Rubinson and Meyer (1972). Again, that student activism generally appears to have subsided is partially due to the relative growth in Ghana's democracy and the fact that other independent civil society groups have emerged in Ghana to dilute the hitherto role of students as "the conscience of the nation" as argued by Altbach (1969; 1991; 1997; 2006). The point must however be made that even though student activism in the nation's Fourth Republic has almost been doused, it has made a contribution to Ghana's journey towards high quality liberal democratic status. Given that Ghanaians seem to have fully accepted democracy as the preferred form of government and democratic relapse seems impossible, it can be argued that the nation is not likely to witness the confrontational student activism that existed before 1992.

Nevertheless other challenges that undermine student activism must be dealt with. In this regard, political leaders who are committed to increasing the quality of Ghana's democracy must assist in resuscitating the NUGS from its current state of coma by refraining from intruding and interfering in the activities of NUGS. Of course the leadership of the NUGS must also reassert itself and strive to exist independent of the control of politicians as they used to be in time past. This would help rebuild their credibility in the eyes of political leaders. The various student networks are limited in the extent to which they can go in their contribution to democratic quality due to their sometimes partisan posturing and outlook. Given that the various vice chancellors, Rectors and Principals of these tertiary institutions have expressed grave concern about partisan activities by students on the campuses and have threatened to ban such networks, a renewed and credible mouthpiece of students that is more national in outlook instead of campus-based may be appropriate to champion the cause of students and contribute effectively towards Ghana's democratic quality. In this regard, a revival of the NUGS of the days Nkrumah, Acheampong and Rawlings regimes that was independent in its thoughts and actions, and an amalgamation of all tertiary networks and other student splinter groups under the NUGS, is recommended. The NUGS could serve as a forum for political dialogue and tolerance among the leadership of all partisan and splinter youth groups. In other words, the revived NUGS may not be necessarily confrontational as it was in time past but may resort to dialogue, peaceful protests and petitions to achieve its objectives. These recommendations would ensure that student activism continues to serve as one of the major fulcrums around which Ghana's continuous quest for democratic quality and maturity would revolve.

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REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

## Competency development of southern African housing officers

Munita Dunn\* and Norbert W. Dunkel\*\*

### *Abstract*

The Report on the Ministerial Committee for the Review of the Provision of Student Housing at South African Universities (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011) has provided a comprehensive review of residences across several housing functional areas. In one of the residence management and administration recommendations it stated, “The professionalisation of housing staff is an urgent priority” (p. 141). This coupled with the report’s estimated “current residence bed shortage of approximately 195 815 beds [...] with a cost of overcoming this shortage over a period of ten years is estimated at R82.4 billion” (pp. xvii–xviii) will mean the hiring and training of hundreds of housing professional staff to meet not only the demand of the additional residence beds but the training of current housing staff. In 2010 The Association of College and University Housing Officers – International Southern Africa Chapter (ACUHO-I SAC) initiated a Student Housing Training Institute (SHTI) first held in 2011 to meet the demands for professionalising housing staff. The SHTI was organised using a competency development model first used to develop the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I) James C. Grimm National Housing Training Institute (NHTI) held in the US.

### *Keywords*

*competency, development, housing officers, higher education, professionalisation.*

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### *Competency development of housing officers*

In order to develop a self-directed, intentional, professional development programme, one needs to understand the competencies necessary to be successful in one's functional area (Dunkel & Schreiber, 1992). Various studies have provided insight into housing staff competency development.

One of the earliest studies of professional preparation and sources for training chief housing officers was conducted by Taguding (1985). Taguding found on-the-job training (on-the-job competencies) to be the most common source of training compared to undergraduate and graduate school and workshops and seminars.

Campus housing competency development was identified over 20 years ago when Dunkel and Schreiber (1992) completed their 1990 study of housing competencies. They conducted a national study of US chief housing officers to determine the ranked importance of competencies identified as necessary to becoming successful chief housing officers. Forty-nine competencies were identified from a literature review. "The 50 competencies were categorised as (a) administrative including personnel management, planning and projection, and research skills; (b) developmental including communications skills, diversity awareness, and leadership and counselling skills; and (c) foundational knowledge of institutional organisation, the student, and current trends" (p. 21). Table 1 summarises the top 15 rank ordered competencies using the following Likert-type scale: 1 = Serious Importance, 2 = Moderate Importance, 3 = Slight Importance, 4 = No Importance. Of the competencies rank ordered in the top 15, 7 were in the administrative category, 6 were in the developmental category, and 2 were in the foundational category. Dunkel and Schreiber used the results from this study to formulate the curriculum for the ACUHO-I National Housing Training Institute, now in its 23rd year. This "curriculum addressed one of the two goals established early in the development of the institute: (a) To facilitate participants' competency development through the presentation of material that includes opportunities for interactive learning; and (b) To offer participants an opportunity for in-depth planning facilitated by a mentor relationship with an expert in the field" (Dunkel, Schreiber & Felice, 2005, p. 38). During the past 23 years, 770 housing professionals with three to five years of full-time experience have completed the National Housing Training Institute (NHTI). Anecdotally, many of these professional staff are now in senior housing or senior student affairs positions. Research is progressing to identify career advancement correlated with participation in the NHTI.

Brandel (1995) completed a descriptive study to investigate United States chief housing officers' perceptions of Dunkel and Schreiber's (1990) original competencies in relation to effective job performance. Respondents were asked to rate the level of expertise needed to effectively perform the competencies, and then asked to rate their own level of expertise on each competency. Brandel's findings identified 17 competencies that required the highest level of expertise by chief housing officers, as reflected in Table 2.

**Table 1: Top 15 rank ordered competencies as identified by chief housing officers**

Competency	Mean rating
1. Interpersonal communications skills	1.09
2. Work cooperatively and effectively with a wide range of individuals	1.11
3. Supervise staff	1.12
4. Engage in effective decision-making	1.12
5. Train staff	1.12
6. Crisis management	1.17
7. Select staff	1.19
8. Short-range goal setting	1.24
9. Mediating conflict	1.25
10. Formulate and interpret policy	1.26
11. Appreciate and internalise a professional set of ethics	1.27
12. Fair and effective discipline of student misconduct	1.27
13. Recognise legal implications of higher education administration	1.27
14. Motivation	1.27
15. Staff appraisal	1.30

Note: Competencies are ranked ordered according to mean ratings.  
(Dunkel & Schreiber, 1992, p. 22)

**Table 2: Seventeen competencies perceived to require the highest level of expertise**

Competency
1. Long-range planning
2. Recognise legal implications
3. Occupancy management
4. Strategic planning
5. Interpret and recognise special needs of ethnic, racial, religious and cultural minorities, gays, bisexuals, lesbians, women, and persons with disabilities
6. Develop and supervise a budget
7. Staff appraisal
8. Articulate characteristics of college students
9. Train staff
10. Formulate and interpret policy
11. Supervise staff
12. Engage in effective decision-making
13. Interpret goals, concerns, and problems of campus to students
14. Appreciate and internalise a professional set of ethics
15. Crisis management
16. Public relations
17. Interpersonal communication skills

(Brandel, 1995, pp. 153–154)



Porter (2005) continued to extend the research on housing competencies by applying Sandwith's Competency Domain Model to senior college housing officers in the United States. She identified 57 competencies which were then rated on a five-point scale (1 = No importance to 5 = Essential). Porter identified the top 15 competency items by rank in Table 3. Porter found "The interpersonal factor was the factor most represented by the top 15 ranked competencies (40%) [...] Leadership was the second most represented factor in the top 15 accounting for 27% of all leadership competencies. Thirty-eight percent of all conceptual factors were represented in the 10 competencies that were ranked least important" (p. 71). In comparison, "only five competencies were in Dunkel and Schreiber's top 15: decision-making, interpersonal communication, crisis management, staff supervision, and motivation" (p. 79). Porter's study results were used to revise the curriculum for the ACUHO-I National Housing Training Institute given the changes in the chief housing officer competencies and roles.

In September 2010, the ACUHO-I Southern Africa Chapter convened a forum of chief housing officers (CHOs). These CHOs completed a survey of the 57 competencies developed by Diane Porter-Roberts. The survey (ACUHO-I SAC, 2010) identified which competencies were most important to southern African CHOs to be successful in campus housing. Table 4 identified the top 10 competencies. These competencies were used to develop the curriculum for the ACUHO-I SAC Student Housing Training Institute first held in 2011 at Stellenbosch University.

**Table 3: Competency items sorted by rank**

Competency
1. Decision-making
2. Interpersonal communication
3. Budget development and resource allocation
4. Crisis management
5. Cooperation and collaboration
6. Personal characteristics
7. Staff supervision
8. Ethics
9. Staff selection
10. Strategic thinking and planning
11. Motivation
12. Organisational culture
13. Interpretation of institutional goals, issues and concerns
14. Networking
15. Assessment of student needs and interests

In 2010, ACUHO-I initiated the Core Competency Project as part of their annual strategic initiatives. This project led to the publication of the *ACUHO-I Core Competencies: The Body of Knowledge for Campus Housing Professionals* (Cawthon, Schreiber & Associates, 2012). The ACUHO-I set of core competencies “is presented using a number of knowledge domains, many of which are further delineated by subdomains. The twelve domains are: (a) Ancillary Partnerships, (b) Conference Services, (c) Crisis Management, (d) Dining, (e) Evaluation and Planning, (f) Facilities, (g) Fiscal Resources and Control, (h) Human Resources, (i) Information Technology, (j) Occupancy, (k) Residence Education, and (l) Student Behavior” (p. 2). The primary purpose of the publication “is to assist the association in planning strategically the educational services it offers members” (p. 3).

**Table 4: The 10 competencies of southern African chief housing officers**

Competency
1. Application of technology
2. Budget development and resource allocation
3. Facilities management
4. Personnel management
5. Strategic thinking and planning
6. Policy development and interpretation
7. Professional development
8. Assessment of student needs and interests
9. Knowledge of student affairs functions
10. Knowledge of student development theory

### *History of southern Africa leading to the Student Housing Training Institute*

In an issue of the *Talking Stick* (2009), Dunkel and Jackson describe the commitment of ACUHO-I to respond to needs in the global housing arena they said this: “Student affairs and housing offices increasingly understand the value of a global perspective for staffs and students. This global perspective brings more knowledge and more viewpoints to the table, which leads to better decisions, programmes and services for all students. It is especially important for student affairs offices to work closely with one another to provide for the needs of students from other countries” (p. 44). Additionally, they add, “When a campus president mentions the word ‘international’ or ‘global’, that should be a sign to act quickly, without hesitation” (p. 44). ACUHO-I endeavours to do just that: positively impact the experiences of students across the globe, acting quickly, without hesitation.

During 2005 two South African student housing professionals, Marcelle Rabie and Eric Sebokedi, attended the ACUHO-I annual conference in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA. This was the start of the discussion surrounding collaboration and the establishment of a possible chapter within southern Africa. The Southern Africa Chapter of ACUHO-I (the first ‘chapter’ of ACUHO-I) was established in 2006. The core purpose of ACUHO-I SAC is: “To

collectively transform Africa through student housing communities” and its goal statement is: “Intentionally creating opportunities with value-driven student and staff development, as well as enhancing institutional synergy, through safe student-centred listening, living and learning spaces and facilities, where diversity is celebrated” (ACUHO-I SAC, 2006).

Beginning in 2006, ACUHO-I began sending delegations of ACUHO-I members to southern Africa to work with the ACUHO-I Southern Africa Chapter to share experiences and educational practices. A delegation in 2008 traveled to South Africa to serve as trainers for students and professionals at 17 institutions across southern Africa and to attend and present at the annual ACUHO-I SA conference. Additionally, in 2009 ACUHO-I sponsored the first Global Housing Summit in Hong Kong, China where chief housing officers from around the world gathered to share ideas, experiences and knowledge to enhance what has become our global profession. At the 2010 African Student Housing summit held at Stellenbosch University, attended by a US delegation as well, one of the outcomes was the establishment of a Student Housing Training Institute within South Africa. It was later agreed upon that Stellenbosch University would host for the first three years after which it would be transferred to another tertiary institute within South Africa (Pieter Kloppers, personal communication, May 31, 2013).

### *Student Housing Training Institute structure and purpose*

The first Student Housing Training Institute was held in Stellenbosch, South Africa from April 3–8, 2011. The Institute was hosted by Stellenbosch University at the picturesque Boland College campus. The hosting of the SHTI 2011 was a culmination of three years of research and planning between ACUHO-I Southern Africa Chapter and ACUHO-I. Through the facilitation of the ACUHO-I Executive Director, Sallie Traxler, and the support of the ACUHO-I Executive Board and ACUHO-I Foundation, the hosting of the first SHTI on the African continent became a reality.

The SHTI is a flagship staff development and training programme designed to empower student housing staff with skills and competencies to provide a quality development and service to the student housing community. The Institute aims to address the need for the professionalisation of student housing to contribute to student learning and development, and the increased output of graduates in South African colleges and universities. The training at the SHTI needs to prepare housing staff to develop into deputy directors of housing at South African universities, responsible for the following: financial management; facilities management; student life management; management of services; and contributing to the design of facilities (ACUHO-I SAC, 2010).

The SHTI should therefore be an intense professional developmental opportunity for those who have at least three years’ housing experience and who are looking to enhance and continue a career in housing. In South Africa there is no degree preparing professionals for the management of student affairs. A specific course to equip housing professionals is therefore of vital importance within the South African context. The Institute is presented in an intensive block-week format requiring participants to attend daily from 9am to 5pm as

well as extending into the evening for discussion groups, feedback sessions and professional networking. Participants are expected to be committed to the SHTI regime and to attend all sessions without exception (ACUHO-I SAC, 2010).

The Institute is co-presented by a combination of South African and US-based faculty members under the leadership of one of the founders of the National Housing Training Institute, Norbert Dunkel from the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida, USA. The faculty is constituted by selected practitioners and faculty who have held leadership positions within ACUHO-I; ACUHO-I SAC; NASPA; and ACPA and/or are senior student housing or student affairs professionals, both in the US and on the African continent.

After the first year of having the SHTI, it was evident that the need for more advanced training within the southern African student housing was needed. The SHTI was therefore divided into a Basic SHTI, as well as an Advanced SHTI. First time participants may apply for the Basic SHTI. The Advanced Student Housing Training Institute is a more in-depth workshop for those who have completed the Basic SHTI. Both are conducted simultaneously.

### *Faculty and participant experiences*

SHTI faculty from the US and South Africa (SA) were selected from an application process. Those selected possessed the appropriate levels of experience and knowledge of campus housing. US and SA faculty team presented topics during the 2011 SHTI. In 2012 and 2013 SA faculty began to individually present topics which will continue in future years. Faculty experiences can best be summed up by their testimonials.

Faculty lives were changed from the experience with SHTI.

“For me, this experience was life changing [...] it was the students and staff who stole my heart...the thirst for knowledge about student affairs and housing they expressed was overwhelming [...] their level of commitment to the student and making their institutions better is something we could all learn from and emulate” (Tony Cawthon, personal communication, May 20, 2012).

“One of the expressions that continues to come to mind when individuals ask me about my experience is incredible and life-changing” (Alma Sealine, personal communication, May 20, 2012).

“SHTI was an incredible opportunity to partner with professionals from across the globe. I am confident the housing professionals in South Africa will do exactly that [...] as they transformed my life in less than two weeks” (Lyn Redington, personal communication, May 20, 2012).

“After having experienced SHTI I know that all of us individually and collectively will make positive strides towards civility, kindness and justice for and through the students we serve” (Cathy Bickle, personal communication, April 12, 2013).

“What I never expected was the depth of the experiences I encountered and the profound impact that this has had on my life, both professionally and personally” (Laetitia Permall, personal communication, May 20, 2012).

Faculty presented sessions that challenged and advanced participant thoughts and knowledge.

“The combination of theory and practice; personal and professional mentoring; social and work related experiences will enable one to flourish holistically” (Charmaine January, personal communication, May 20, 2012).

“My colleagues [...] were dedicated professionals who provided effective teaching, collegial care [...] that gave such focus to their presentations, ensuring that the attendees would leave with new knowledge and inspiration” (Cathy Bickle, personal communication, April 12, 2013).

Participant experiences were exclusively positive over the past three years. Comments from the 2011, 2012 and 2013 SHTI participant evaluations (ACUHO-I SAC, 2011, 2012, 2013) included:

“thanks for taking my professional development to another level [...] the realisation that we are transforming housing in SA and that we can make a meaningful difference in our students’ lives makes this a landmark experience.”

Another participant stated:

“All the materials presented were amazing, especially the competency model and the personnel management [...]”

Another stated:

“I have learned a lot and managed to identify some of the competencies that matter the most to performing my duties”.

Participants also voiced their observations and feelings regarding the community development that was integral in the SHTI. “It was fantastic networking, relaxing, laughing, eating, and brainstorming with colleagues – to be part of the SHTI family.” Another stated, “Great to be among professionals, like coming home – a place where I belong”.

Participants indicated whether the SHTI met their expectations. “It exceeded my expectations. I pushed myself and learned more than I could have imagined.” One participant stated, “Yes, I wish that my boss could have been here.” Another stated, “Yes, when I came here I was blank, confused in some way of my roles, but now I can see that there is light at the end of the tunnel.” Finally, one participant stated, “Yes, I acquired new knowledge on the things that I had no interest in and have developed an interest, i.e., budgeting, facilities management and technology.”

Faculty and participant experiences have been overwhelmingly positive during the past three years of the SHTI. Their comments and feedback are used to continue to make adjustments to the schedule and curriculum for future years.

### *Looking to the future*

The 2011–2013 SHTIs have provided excellent experiences for faculty and participants through their evaluation ratings, comments and through their testimonials. Conducting research on the participants to identify levels of competence gained, retention of housing staff and the like will be necessary in the future to understand the impact of the SHTI on participants.

Following the success of the 2011 Basic SHTI with 40 participants, an Advanced SHTI was developed for 2012. As increasing numbers of basic participants complete the SHTI a long term plan will be necessary to accommodate for the higher numbers of participants wanting to return to the Advanced SHTI. In 2012 there were 10 returners and in 2013 that number was capped at 16. For 2014 there is a cap for 25 advanced participants. The content and delivery method for the Advanced SHTI is different from the Basic SHTI along with growing numbers of Basic SHTI participants wanting to return for the Advanced SHTI. For those reasons, future years may need a stand-alone Advanced SHTI held at a different time from the Basic SHTI.

It will be important to continue to invite Advanced SHTI participants to return as faculty for future Basic SHTIs. Maintaining a steady stream of participants and faculty will ensure the viability of the overall programme while increasing the faculty availability.

With the estimated dramatic increase in residence hall beds over the next 10 years a comprehensive, national plan for training of the new staff will need to be undertaken. Housing staff participating in the various institutes will possess the knowledge and experience to advance campus housing in South Africa, but will need national assistance in an organised manner to train close to 100 additional campus housing staff each year just to keep up with new staff managing the new residence halls.

### *Conclusion*

The professionalisation of South African housing staff will remain a top priority of the South African Department of Higher Education and Training and the ACUHO-I SAC. The Student Housing Training Institute has created a South African faculty capacity to provide a professional level of training to housing staff for South Africa using a competency-based model. The research is further bolstered by the personal testimonials from faculty and participants on the positive outcomes of such an approach. The SHTI has become a cornerstone to the professionalisation of South African housing staff.

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INTERVIEW WITH THAMSANQHA LEDWABA

## The contribution of student affairs: A student leader perspective

Thierry Luescher-Mamashela\*

**Ledwaba:** I grew up in the ranks of the African National Congress Youth League and the South African Students Congress (SASCO). In the early years of my university career I got exposed to comrades on campus and became involved in student politics. In my second year I decided to run for the House Committee of my student residence and I made it in. I became aware of many issues in higher education and all the issues that surrounded being a student activist. It was the time post the mergers in higher education; it was a very charged atmosphere I think on both sides, on the management side and on the other side as a student leader. So I decided to run for Students' Representative Council (SRC). I got in as vice-president and in the second year I ran again. I was supposed to become the SRC president but "politics happen" and it happened and I stayed as Vice-President (VP).

**Luescher-Mamashela:** How did you get involved in the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) as a student leader?

**Ledwaba:** I was a member of the extended national committee of the South African Union of Students. Over my two terms as VP, I attended and participated in a couple of symposiums and colloquia where academics, politicians and senior officials of the department of education and the council on higher education were there and I was a panelist on one of them. It was during my years of participation in these national structures and meetings that my nomination to serve on the HEQC came from. In my second term as VP the term of office of the board then came to an end, and I was nominated to form part of the incoming board. I have now served the Council four years and then at the end of 2012 my term of office was renewed.

It took me about two years to truly understand how our national quality assurance system works. It's really difficult, you can imagine, the various aspects of programme accreditation and things like that. I came from a political activist background and that does not really prepare you to go into the depth of

**I think the reach of student affairs at UCT does not actually go enough into academic affairs**

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quality assurance. We rarely deal deeply with national issues around funding, governance and planning per se, but it's all about quality assurance and it gets very technical and focused.

**Luescher-Mamashela:** Were you involved in quality assurance as a student leader at university level?

**Ledwaba:** Only on a policy level, because as SRC vice-president I sat on the Senate and some subcommittees of the Senate that deal with quality assurance and I also sat on the University Strategy Forum for two terms which was very key because we dealt with quality assurance but from a governance perspective. This was a disadvantage to be quite honest, because I was not necessarily involved in the institutional machinery itself, but I did grow because of having colleagues from the institution, such as the director of institutional planning who also served on the HEQC Board, who helped me to grow much quicker. I think being in the machinery would make my inputs a little more legitimate to a certain cohort of the board, but let's be honest, here you are a masters student among quality assurance professionals, ex-vice-chancellors and academics, professors. They are professionals and you have to respect them.

**Luescher-Mamashela:** In your interactions as a student leader with officials in the university's department of student affairs, did you get the same impression that you were dealing with professionals who commanded respect for their expertise?

**Ledwaba:** The first interaction I had as student leader with student affairs officials was when I was in student residence. In particular, it was the dean of students and the director of student housing. They were very professional. There were issues that had to be dealt with because University of Cape Town (UCT) over-allocates residence spaces every year. What do you do with students who were allocated residence but when they arrive on campus all the residences are full? How do we make sure that students are well taken care of when the academic calendar is about to start? I think at that time the director handled the situation very well. They know where the institution has gone wrong and they are doing their best to alleviate the problem. That was my first interaction.

I also had a lot of interaction with the Orientation Office because I was an orientation leader. And as SRCVP, I interacted with most student affairs officials in different capacities, in particular also the executive director of student affairs. We would disagree with Moonira Khan (the Executive Director: Student Affairs), but it was purely in terms of policy, not her operational work and where it mattered most I think she performed well. We inherited some politics from the previous SRC where she had gone wrong on a key issue that we cared about and as a result the relationship was difficult at some point. But as an SRC she supported our budget, our objectives, taking care of certain issues and delivered to the students.

**Luescher-Mamashela:** How did your SRC and the department of student affairs share responsibility for students and student life?

**We must ensure that we are producing graduates who [...] have attributes that constitute them as whole citizens.**

**Ledwaba:** UCT may be considered in many respects not a representative case because of the type of institution that it is and the type of student body it has. In other institutions, SRCs have a different role to play in relation to student affairs. Our focus on an institutional policy level was a lot about academic matters, such as ensuring that the academic calendar was not hostile to students; we had a focus on academic development programmes and academic support staff; and academic exclusion of students. Another, perhaps more generally applicable issue would be our engagement to ensure that fees don't necessarily go up.

There were many organisational issues around student life that we left the department of student affairs to handle because they did it well. And I guess for us we had an advantage at a political level, because there were a number of progressive members in the university management who could be trusted.

**Luescher-Mamashela:** How would you characterise the relationship between student leaders and student affairs officials?

**Ledwaba:** We had a collegial relationship with the officials, the professionals in student affairs at UCT. But their role is limited. I think the reach of student affairs at UCT does not actually go enough into academic affairs where I think it should go. I think the student affairs should actually have a working relationship with academic development because then you tie in the whole student experience.

**Luescher-Mamashela:** Considering that academics have a core role to play in the student experience, what do you see as the contribution to be made by student affairs professionals? Is that contribution part of the core function of the institution or rather an additional and perhaps peripheral matter?

**Ledwaba:** I think next to your core academic matters I think that student affairs is in that position to develop attributes which address the question of how students fit into the

society that they live in. What does it mean to be an accountant in Dar es Salaam? What does it mean to be a citizen for us in the developing world? This is what student affairs has a key role to play in because what you find is that we produce graduates who are academically competent but there are other personal and social developmental issues that need to be tackled. In addition, I think if one was to expand the role of student affairs it would be related to those functions at faculty level that are centred around academic support.

**Luescher-Mamashela:** If you look beyond UCT and at our flagship universities across the continent, how realistic is what you propose considering the current role and status of most student affairs departments?

**Ledwaba:** I think student affairs departments are given very little credit, very little recognition. Meanwhile there is a significant role they actually can and do play in relation

**It all comes together from being exposed to, to be engaged at, various levels of student life and thus to learn how to translate classroom and academic experience and bring it together in your life on campus and beyond campus.**

to student leaders, and those are the people who have involvement in the field of higher education, and the students in general.

**Luescher-Mamashela:** You earlier referred to student affairs officials as well as student affairs professionals. Is there a distinction between the two?

**Ledwaba:** I think you have the administrators who are mainly in clerical positions and then you have the professionals who apply themselves at many different levels to issues concerning students. It is, I think, more about and attached to rank one would say qualification and responsibilities. I think that's how I would divide it. But my perspective is also politically biased: I think you want student affairs to be professionalised because you want to legitimise, to entrench, a student focus within higher education, and one way you do it is to professionalise student affairs in a coherent way. I mean in our own focus at the Higher Education Quality Committee now with organising the lectures by Prof. Vincent Tinto; you can see the focus is shifting. It is not so much regulation and compliance; rather the discussion is quite forward looking. You see, at government level and in the labour market there is a high expectation on graduates.

## BOOK REVIEW

**Deshpande, Satish & Zacharias, Usha (Eds.) (2013). *Beyond inclusion: The practice of equal access in Indian higher education*. New Delhi: Routledge**

Reviewed by Vivienne Bozalek\*

This edited collection provides a much-needed contribution to the gap in knowledge about the intersection between social justice and higher education in India. As the editors of this collection note, it is important to document and disseminate knowledge not only about policies which have been developed to address issues of access and social inclusion in higher education, but to understand how these policies are implemented and experienced on the ground. The particular contribution of this collection is that the authors have poignantly documented the actual lived experiences of students who have entered higher education through the system of reservation that is used in India. In addition to these experiences, the challenges and achievements of affirmative action in the Indian higher education system are made apparent through both quantitative and qualitative studies and discussion of epistemological and ontological issues. Engstrom and Tinto's (2008, p. 50) mantra "Access without support is not opportunity" reverberates across this collection of essays. That institutions do not intentionally exclude students from college does not mean that they are including them as fully valued members of the institution and providing them with the support that enables them to translate access into success is brought to life vividly in this edited collection. Thus, while appearing to give physical access, but not making it possible for students to succeed through a responsive institutional culture which causes alienation and further marginalisation, higher education is further entrenching inequities.

The collection of essays in this volume was commissioned by a grant to the Institute of Higher Education, to investigate the successes and failures of the implementation of quota policies in higher education institutions and the expectations and experiences of students and academics from marginalised groups who had been accommodated in the institutions. The book is divided into four parts addressing the following themes: Part I offers essays which broadly cover the history and philosophy of higher education inclusionary policies in India; Part II focuses on how inclusion plays out in different types of universities – from

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liberal to medical and engineering education; Part III consists of two essays written by members of marginalised classes and provides an insight into the struggles of students against the injustices they still face in the higher education system; and Part IV provides examples of three programmes which have started to address issues of social inclusion.

Social justice in India began with the Government of India Act 1935, which created schedules to name the castes and tribes (known as Scheduled Castes [SCs] and Scheduled Tribes [STs]) to be eligible for reservations of places in higher education. Since then reservation quotas have been used as constitutional safeguards to ensure the inclusion of students from marginalised castes and tribal identities, and more latterly extended to economically disadvantaged students – known in the system as Other Backward Classes (OBCs). Chapter 1, “Caste Quotas and Formal Inclusion in Indian Higher Education”, written by one of the editors of the book, Satish Deshpande, gives an useful overview of the history of the reservations policy in Indian higher education. This chapter explains how protective discrimination policies actually work and the implicit or explicit rationale behind these interventions. The caste quota reserves or sets aside a specific number of seats or places – usually expressed as a proportion of the total available – for eligible members of particular caste-groups legally recognised as legitimate claimants. In higher education, this takes the form of reserved seats for the SCs, STs and OBCs (and other groups such as the disabled or some other region-specific categories of entitlements) in educational institutions. The chapter also outlines changes which have taken place in the past two decades and makes explicit the hostile environment of resentment from those who are entitled towards incumbents of affirmative action.

The book also deals with other forms of marginalisation such as the rural/urban divide and Chapter 5 documents the ways in which Yadindra College of Engineering successfully redresses this by providing the resources and opportunities for rural students to secure places in the institution. The essays document best practices in institutions on how to accommodate diversity and practice social inclusion. In Chapter 3, “Affirmative Action in Three Dream Institutions”, for example, Devy critically examines the founding missions which were created to deal with diversity in three higher education institutions in western India which were established particularly to address social inclusion and the relevance of their present position. He concludes that it is not enough to merely grant access to marginalised groups, but that the subjugated knowledges and experiences of these groups should be incorporated into institutional knowledge and classrooms. If institutions were to do this, he asserts, this would add to rather than diminish the quality of these institutions.

The two chapters in Part III of the volume provide a ‘view from below’ of the experiences of Delhi and Adivasi students who are enabled to enter higher education because of reservations, but are faced with numerous challenges on arrival here. In Chapter 6, Singh highlights the contempt and opposition that these students face, especially in elite institutions. The success stories and tragic instances of suicide provide lenses to the realities on the ground, which are often elided in discussions about reservation policies. Chapter 7 “Quota’s Children: The Perils of Getting Educated” explores how first-generation learners

from marginalised communities face humiliation and prejudice in academic, residence and extra-curricular activities, whilst at the same time having to struggle to gain epistemological access to new knowledges.

The concluding section of the volume includes a set of three chapters on different kinds of support for skill enhancement programmes for the marginalised. What I found most interesting was the final chapter, “To Race with the Able? Soft Skills and the Psychologisation of Marginality” written by Usha Zacharias, which provides some critique of merely providing skills programmes for disadvantaged students. The author aptly notes that slogans of access, equity and excellence are based on the assumption that disadvantaged students can ultimately compete with elite students in academic excellence, without acknowledging the different sets of opportunities open to them. It is both necessary to decolonise knowledge itself and to make students critically aware of the social origins of marginal identity, to prevent the burden of reform being shouldered by the marginalised student.

As one of the first full length texts about social inclusion in Indian higher education, this is a must read for any scholar, practitioner and policy-maker interested in the field of social justice and higher education.

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## BOOK REVIEW

### **Williams, Damon A. (2013). *Strategic diversity leadership: Activating change and transformation in higher education*. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus**

Magda Fourie-Malherbe\*

Worldwide, the composition of the student population in higher education has over the past two decades changed dramatically. With larger numbers of previously underserved groups gaining access to higher education, universities and colleges have become more diverse, creating new challenges for management and administration of these institutions. In South Africa, increasing participation by historically disadvantaged population groups has over the past twenty years similarly changed the ‘face’ of higher education. Yet, equal access has not resulted in equal success, as illustrated by the difference in throughput rates between African (16%), Coloured (22%), Indian (24%) and White (44%) students (CHE, 2012, p. 51). In addition, allegations of racial discrimination at several institutions led to the appointment of a ministerial committee on transformation and social cohesion and the elimination of discrimination in public higher education institutions by the previous minister of education in 2008, and the appointment of a transformation oversight committee by the current minister of higher education and training in 2013. Managing diversity in South African higher education institutions is clearly presenting huge challenges.

Even though the diversity challenges at higher education institutions in other African countries may not exactly mirror those of South Africa, these institutions too are grappling with challenges arising from student populations that are becoming more diverse, with more women, mature students and members of various ethnic groups entering higher education.

Against this backdrop, *Strategic Diversity Leadership: Activating change and transformation in higher education* by Damon Williams is a welcome contribution. The author is the vice provost and chief diversity officer at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and his experience ‘at the coalface’ comes across clearly in this publication.

This is an authoritative and encompassing text. Even though it is written from and for the US context, much of it is relevant for every higher education institution facing

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challenges around diversity, not least African higher education institutions. Importantly, the author's definition of diversity includes not only race, but also gender, sexual preference, disability and other matters related to identity.

The publication addresses two challenges simultaneously and in an integrated manner, namely engaging profoundly with the theoretical issues concerning diversity, and secondly, providing practical advice on mechanisms and tools that higher education institutions can adopt and employ to manage diversity more strategically and effectively. The text is organised around three major questions:

- Why is diversity important in the new millennium?
- What is diversity from an individual, organisation and administrative capabilities perspective?
- What is strategic diversity leadership?

This publication has a companion volume by the same author, co-authored with Katrina Wade-Golden, called *The chief diversity officer*. The latter publication focuses on questions of diversity leadership and management, particularly on the emerging role of the chief diversity officer in universities and colleges.

Both publications are underpinned by a mixed methodology research study that was undertaken into diversity policies and programmes in US higher education, as well as the diversity leaders implementing these policies and programmes.

Part I explores the reasons why diversity is important in the new millennium. Although the well-known arguments around the emergence of a knowledge-based economy, changing demographics, persistent societal and educational disparities and political and legal dynamics emerge, the author also makes a strong educational and business case for diversity, particularly with regard to the need for higher education to produce culturally competent graduates. This is both refreshing and useful.

Part II, on a 21st century definition of diversity, offers arguments around what the author terms the *diversity idea*. For Williams, the diversity idea framework should help campus leaders to develop the type of cultural intelligence needed to become strategic diversity leaders. In this section the author also discusses three models of organisational diversity: the affirmative action and equity model, the multicultural and inclusion model and the learning, diversity and research model. He identifies the drivers, dynamics and strategy of change of each of the models, and looks critically at the limitations of each model. He also provides an analytical and useful comparison of the three models.

The last section of the publication – Part III: What is strategic diversity leadership? – is, in my opinion, the most intriguing part. It contains chapters on why diversity efforts fail, the artful science of strategic diversity leadership, being accountable, developing and implementing successful diversity plans, activating the diversity change journey and diversity committees. In this section, the author's own experience of diversity leadership and those of colleagues from whose inputs he draws, is expertly illuminated. The organisation planning expertise of the author is particularly apparent in the very useful chapters on

being accountable and on developing and implementing diversity plans. The chapter on diversity plans is one of the best that I have come across, and should be compulsory reading not only for diversity officers, but also for every higher education leader and manager who is interested in building excellence in his/her institution in an inclusive manner.

The order in which chapters are presented in this section may have been more logical if the planning chapter came before the accountability one, and the chapter on diversity committees before the one on the diversity change journey. That said, this is a small point of criticism.

The text is interspersed with boxes containing vignettes of practical examples to illustrate the relevant theoretical exposition. There are also a considerable number of tables and figures which provide useful summaries and overviews of the main points discussed in the text.

Even though this is a US text (and does not pretend to be anything else), this well-informed and well-written publication deserves to be widely read, and to become the daily companion of diversity/transformation officers/managers in higher education institutions in Africa.

### ***References***

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## BOOK REVIEW

### **Maree, J.G. (2013). *Counselling for career construction. Connecting life themes to construct life portraits: Turning pain into hope.* Rotterdam: Sense**

Nordlind Cazimira Fouché\*

In his new book *Counselling for career construction*, Prof. J.G. Maree, an internationally acknowledged author and researcher in the field of career counselling, advocates the need to develop a career counselling practice that is located in the 21st century. To become relevant in a world that changes four times faster than the educational system, the central goal of career counselling will have to shift from assisting clients making occupational choices for a “world that does not exist any more” (p. 4) to assisting clients in designing successful lives, negotiating career transitions and finding meaning through social participation and contribution.

*Counselling for career construction* supports career construction theory by adding self-reflection and reflexive self-construction to the existing Savickian postmodern perspective. The debate revolves around the limitations of the positivist and purely quantitative career counselling approach in the light of contextual diversity, globalisation, IT developments and rapid changes in the world of work. This book inspires the idea that even the smallest person can make a contribution to the world by not letting themselves remain defined by their circumstances and turning a condition into a victory. This is a major reason I find this book a must for those practising career counselling in developing countries.

The book is divided in two parts. The first part uses the first six chapters to provide a platform for theoretical discussion and to promote a new conceptual framework for career counselling. The second part of the book (Chapters 7 and 8) explains the use of Career Interest Profile (CIP) and how the Career Construction method developed by Mark Savickas can be applied with the use of six case studies. The final chapter deals with a few recommendations for theory and practice.

The rationale of the book is examined in Chapter 1 where the author explores what would make a career intervention successful. A journey of psychological transformation seems essential, together with contextual adaptation of career counselling practice, inclusion of different career counselling methods and on-going reflections. A short personal

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account of an early experience related to loss and healing has inspired his lifelong research into proposing a more humanising and integrative career counselling approach.

Chapters 2 and 3 expand on the rationale for developing a career counselling approach relevant to this century. The dramatic changes in the world of work described in Chapter 2 question the contextual relevance of theories, practice and assessment tools still used in career practice. To respond adequately to these fast changes and repeated career transitions of their clients, career counsellors need an up-to-date theory to guide their practice. Chapter 3 provides a detailed description on the effect of changes in the world of work on psychological theories and career counselling in particular. The end of the chapter calls for more research into the application of North American and Eurocentric career counselling theory in developing countries contexts.

The book proposes a postmodern approach to career counselling and the use of a qualitative method of enquiry. For those readers interested in the theoretical underpinnings of career construction and related concepts there is a whole chapter dedicated to it. Chapter 4 starts with a discussion about the existential–phenomenological theory as a cornerstone for meta-reflection and the ability of clients to become their own agents of change. The use of a narrative framework as basis for facilitating a story approach in career counselling is explained in detail. In the second part of this chapter career construction theory (pioneered by Mark Savickas) and some of its key concepts like self-construction, life designing, career adaptability and facilitation of self-advising and their implication for career guidance are discussed.

For those new to the postmodern approach to career work, Chapter 5 elaborates on career construction features that need to be understood and mastered such as holding and continuity, eliciting life stories, identifying life themes and the necessity of a client's intention to find meaning. While listening is central to any counselling work, new methods are brought to light such as the importance of body language, 'seeding', verbalising a client's observations and the use of metaphors as valuable and unique features of a career construction approach. The chapter ends with some general hints to guide counsellors that are unfamiliar with postmodern careers work.

I particularly enjoyed the 'three early recollection technique' described in Chapter 6. This technique is based on Mark Savickas' Career Construction Interview (CCI) provided in an earlier chapter (Chapter 4, p. 38) of this book. The questions are used in identifying a client's central problem or a major life theme to help counsellors identify a career problem and interpret it within the larger pattern of a client's life. An example of analysis of a client's early recollections is provided at the end of the chapter to help integrate all of them in a major life theme.

The second part of the book is dedicated to the Career Interest Profile developed by the author over a period of many years and tested extensively with different populations. The idea of such a questionnaire is to provide material for patterns to emerge, to engage clients to identify main themes and subthemes and thus promoting an active participation of clients in their own counselling.

Chapter 8 discusses Savickas' eight steps for crafting a client's life portrait, the developing of a vision and mission statement, and six case studies provide the reader with ample opportunity to experience the value, flexibility and resourcefulness of the Career Construction Interview.

This seminal book is the beginning of new developments in career counselling theory and praxis worldwide. By questioning the thin identity of present career counselling approaches it invites counsellors, students and academics to participate in the construction of an innovative and reflexive practice with has the unique quality of turning pain into hope.



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## Author biographies

### **Matthew Birnbaum**

Matthew Birnbaum is associate professor and programme coordinator of higher education and student affairs leadership at the University of Northern Colorado. He earned an MA and PhD from the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Arizona. Matt has published on the experiences of international graduate students in the US, undergraduate student use of technology, affirmative action, and the use of photographs as data. Matt has previously served as the director of career services at Colorado College and counsellor at Rock Valley College. He also has experience working in residence life, student programming, and institutional research and planning. Matt currently serves on the faculty council of the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) in the US.

### **Stan Carpenter**

Stan Carpenter is dean of the College of Education at Texas State University. He earned a BSc degree in mathematics from Tarleton State University; an MSc in student personnel and guidance from Texas A&M–Commerce; and a PhD in counselling and student personnel services from the University of Georgia. Prior to joining the faculty at Texas State in 2003 he held academic and administrative positions including that of dean of students at the University of Arkansas at Monticello. Carpenter currently serves on the Board of the NASPA Foundation. He has previously served as executive director of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE) from 1987 to 1997 as well as various other professional associations in key capacities. He has an outstanding record of scholarship and professional achievement which have earned him several awards. Dr Carpenter authored or co-authored over 100 journal articles, book chapters and other professional publications and reports focusing on professionalism, leadership and professional development in student affairs. He is a past member of editorial boards of the *Journal of College Student Development*, *NASPA Journal* and *College Student Affairs Journal*.

### **Norbert W. Dunkel**

Norbert Dunkel is associate vice president for student affairs, auxiliary operations at the University of Florida, where he serves concurrently as the chief housing officer. He also holds an adjunct faculty appointment in the Department of Educational Administration and Policy. He has previously held administrative positions at South Dakota State University and the University of Northern Iowa. He holds BSc and MSc degrees from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. Dunkel is the author, co-author and editor of over 90 publications, including *Campus housing management* (six volume set edited with James Baumann), *Campus crisis management* (edited with Gene Zdziarski and Mike Rollo), *Advice for advisers: Empowering your residence hall association* (3rd edition)(edited with Cindy Spencer),



*Foundations: Strategies for the future of collegiate housing* (edited with Beth McCuskey), *Advising student groups and organizations* (with John Schuh), and *Campus housing construction* (with Jim Grimm). He was editor of the *Journal of College and University Student Housing* and associate editor of the *College Student Affairs Journal*. Dunkel has served as president for the Association of College and University Housing Officers – International (ACUHO-I), and co-founded and co-directed the ACUHO-I James C. Grimm National Housing Training Institute. He is the current founding co-director of the Student Housing Training Institute in South Africa.

### **Munita Dunn**

Munita Dunn is a registered counselling psychologist and currently serves as the deputy director of the Centre of Student Communities at the University of Stellenbosch (South Africa). Her work involves managing activities regarding co-curricular development, student leadership, transformation and integration of different cultures on one campus. Munita obtained her masters degree in counselling psychology *cum laude* at the University of Stellenbosch. She completed her doctoral degree, DDiac in play therapy at the University of South Africa. She has published nationally and internationally and has presented at several national and international conferences. As she is fond of research and studying, she recently submitted her dissertation for a MPhil in higher education. She is passionate about the development of students and enjoys working irregular hours, drinking litres of coffee and having challenging discussions.

### **Ann M. Gansemer-Topf**

Ann M. Gansemer-Topf is assistant professor in the School of Education at Iowa State University, USA. Prior to becoming a faculty member she had 20 years of student affairs professional experience in the areas of residence life, admissions, student financial aid, campus ministry and academic advising. She also has experience in institutional research, coordinating assessment efforts at the programme, departmental, and institutional level. Her research focuses on micro- and macro-level factors impacting student success and retention. She currently teaches graduate courses in programme, evaluation and assessment, campus environments and culture, and students in higher education.

### **Ransford Edward Van Gyampo**

Ransford Gyampo is one of Ghana's young and astute contemporary political scientists. He holds a PhD in political science from the University of Ghana. He is a senior lecturer at the Department of Political Science, University of Ghana, and a visiting scholar at the Department of Government and International Relations in the University of South Florida, Tampa. His research interests are in the areas of youth, political participation and development. He has written and published extensively in reputable African and international journals such as *Africa Today*, *Politikon*, *Current Politics and Economics of Africa* and *African Development*.

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### **Paige Haber-Curran**

Paige Haber-Curran is assistant professor and programme coordinator for the Student Affairs in Higher Education programme at Texas State University. Paige earned her PhD in Leadership Studies from the University of San Diego, her masters in college student personnel from the University of Maryland, and undergraduate degrees in business management and German studies from the University of Arizona. Her research interests include college student leadership development, emotionally intelligent leadership, and gender in higher education. Her work is published in several academic journals including the *Journal of Leadership Education*, *NASPA Journal About Women in Higher Education* and *Educational Action Research*. She has also published a number of practitioner-focused chapters in books including *The handbook for student leadership development*, *Emerging issues and practices in peer education*, *The SAGE handbook of leadership and emotionally intelligent leadership for students facilitation and activity guide*. Paige is actively involved in ACPA: College Student Educators International and the International Leadership Association (ILA). She also serves as a lead facilitator for the LeaderShape Institute.

### **Thierry Luescher-Mamashela**

Thierry Luescher-Mamashela is senior lecturer in higher education studies and extraordinary senior lecturer in political studies at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town (South Africa) where he coordinates the masters programme in higher education and development and the doctoral programme in student affairs. Thierry leads the HERANA research project “Student Engagement with Democracy, Diversity and Social Justice” for the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET). Prior to joining the University of the Western Cape, Thierry was researcher at the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (2002–2007). He holds a PhD in political studies from the University of Cape Town. Thierry is the main author of the monograph *The University in Africa and Democratic Citizenship: Hothouse or Training Ground?* He has published on student and youth politics, higher education governance, citizenship education, and research methodology in journals, including *Journal of Higher Education in Africa*, *Perspectives in Education*, *Studies in Higher Education*, and *Tertiary Education and Management*. He is guest co-editor of the *New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy*, *Special Issue on Youth and Students* (2013). Thierry Luescher-Mamashela is journal manager and member of the Editorial Executive of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*.

### **Teboho Moja**

Teboho Moja is clinical professor of higher education at New York University. Her teaching experience includes high school and university levels. Moja has held key positions at several South African universities including being appointed chair of the Council of the University of South Africa (UNISA). She has held positions as professor extraordinaire at the University of Pretoria and the University of Johannesburg (South Africa) and has been visiting professor at the University of Oslo (Norway) and University of Tampere (Finland).

Teboho was instrumental in setting up the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) in South Africa and is currently serving as the 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. Moja 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. Teboho is editor-in-chief and member of the Editorial Executive of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*.

### **Birgit Schreiber**

Birgit Schreiber is currently director of the Centre for Student Support Services at the University of the Western Cape (South Africa). She holds a PhD from the same university. She has worked within student affairs with focus on development and support for the past 17 years at various higher education institutions. She has published in national and international academic journals on student support and development and has presented research papers and key notes in national and international conferences and given lectures at the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Leuven (the Netherlands) and the University of Oslo (Norway). She was a visiting scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, where she was involved in their student affairs department. Birgit Schreiber 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 and on the national executive of various national professional organisations including the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP). She serves as member of the Editorial Executive of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*.

### **Benjamin S. Selznick**

Benjamin S. Selznick is a PhD candidate in higher and postsecondary education at New York University. He holds a masters in higher education and student affairs from New York University and a BA in religion from Dartmouth College. Prior to doctoral study, Benjamin was a staff member in career services and student affairs at Marymount Manhattan College in New York City. Benjamin is a member of the Association for the Study of Higher Education and the American College Personnel Association where he works closely with the Commission for Career Development. He has written or presented on a variety of topics in higher education including online learning environments, student affairs in South Africa, and the school-to-work transition.

**Lullu Tshiwula**

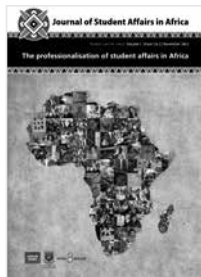
Lullu Tshiwula is deputy vice chancellor: student development and support at the University of the Western Cape. She has a PhD and MA in social development and planning from the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (formerly University of Port Elizabeth) and a BA Hons from Fort Hare University. She has undertaken research and supervised research at honours, masters and doctoral levels as well as produced and edited various publications in her career. She has also served on key committees and boards including the African Union's The Rights and Welfare of the Child, Centre for Justice and Crime Prevention. Prof Tshiwula serves as the first patron of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* and is a member of the JSAA International Editorial Advisory Board.

**Tamara Yakaboski**

Tamara Yakaboski is associate professor of higher education and student affairs leadership at the University of Northern Colorado. She is a graduate of the University of Arizona's Center for the Study of Higher Education, earning a masters and PhD with a minor in sociology. She has teaching and research specialties in higher education organisation and administration, international higher education, women's issues and student affairs. Much of her international research and service interests developed out of her experiences living in India, teaching in South Korea and co-leading a service learning and study abroad trip to Kenya. She was a student affairs administrator at the University of Arizona in the Arizona Student Unions prior to joining the faculty in 2007. She has just completed editing and co-writing an issue of *New Directions for Student Services* on the college union (to be published in 2014). In addition Tamara has published in both higher education and student affairs journals.

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## Call for papers



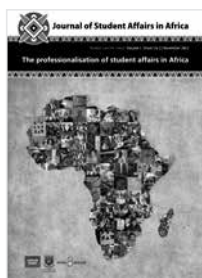
### *Vol 2(1) (2014): “Recontextualising the profession”*

The *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* is calling for papers for its next issue Vol 2(1) 2014. This issue will address student affairs as a profession in the context of Africa, therefore paying special attention to the context within which the profession has developed. For this purpose, theoretical, practice-relevant, and reflective contributions are welcome, including: case studies, conceptual discussions, and high level reflective practitioner accounts. In particular, articles should engage with the following questions:

- How has the student affairs profession developed in the African context?
- What are the key issues – enablers and disablers – that have emerged within respective national and institutional contexts?
- How is the field emerging as a profession, both in terms of professional associations, training programmes, etc. as well as the research and theories that frame it and make it relevant in the African context?
- Any other related issues, cases, research, evaluations and exploration of ideas and reports on topics related to the theory and practice of student affairs.

Manuscripts should be sent by March 31, 2014 to [JSAA\\_editor@outlook.com](mailto:JSAA_editor@outlook.com) and mention in the subject line “Recontextualising the profession”. Manuscripts on related topics can be submitted at any time to [JSAA\\_editor@outlook.com](mailto:JSAA_editor@outlook.com) provided that final articles of between 3 000 and 5 000 words are received by March 31, 2014 for this issue.

There are no processing fees or page fees. No costs accrue to authors of articles accepted for publication. We welcome submissions on the theory and practice of student affairs that are relevant to the African higher education context from experts and practitioners from across the globe, but especially from emerging countries and practitioners, researchers, academics and students in African universities. The *JSAA* is supported by African Minds and the University of the Western Cape Library E-publishing. Detailed author guidelines can be found on the website under “Submissions”.



*Vol 3(2) (2015): “Special issue: Student representation in African higher education governance”*

**Guest Editors:**

**Thierry M. Luescher-Mamashela** (University of the Western Cape, South Africa)

**Manja Klemenčič** (Harvard University, USA)

**James Otieno Jowi** (Moi University, Kenya)

The overall objective of this issue is to map out and compare across the African continent recent changes in the higher education landscape overall and the different models of how students as a collective body are organised at both institutional and national levels; how their interests are aggregated, articulated and intermediated into institutional and national policy processes; and to examine the role of political parties and other organised social groups in student representation.

In particular, the featured papers will engage with two specific questions:

- How has the expansion of higher education, the massification of existing public institutions, the admission of private students (and in some institutions the creation of ‘parallel’ student bodies) and the mushrooming of private higher education institutions affected student representation in different countries at both a systemic and institutional level in Africa?
- How do campus-based and national student representative organisations relate to political parties and/or social cleavages in society (e.g. regional, religious, ethnic)? How do they uphold their legitimacy to represent the student voice? How do they maintain their organisational autonomy? Who are their members? Where do they get their financial and other resources from? What resources do they have? How do they fare in managing these resources to the benefit of students?

Proposals for manuscripts containing an outline of the intended article (max. 400 words) should be sent by February 28, 2014 to [JSAA\\_editor@outlook.com](mailto:JSAA_editor@outlook.com) and mention in the subject line “Special Issue: Student Representation”. Final articles of between 3 000 and 5 000 words are due by July 31, 2014. Author guidelines can be found at: [www.JSAA.ac.za](http://www.JSAA.ac.za).

It is planned that authors will be invited to a special 3-day author workshop in Cape Town, South Africa, to present their pre-final papers in May/June 2014. Other events (e.g. book launches) may be offered if funding permits. Final papers may be selected either for the 2014 African Minds book on student representation in African higher education or the Special Issue on student representation of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*.



The European Council for Student Affairs (ECStA) is an independent non-profit organisation aiming to promote the social infrastructure of higher education in Europe. In order to do so, ECStA works for improved cooperation between student services organisations aiming to increase the understanding of the differences regarding the provision of services such as student housing, dining services, counselling and health issues, supporting international students and student mobility. The foundation of ECStA is a result of growing cooperation of student services organisations in Europe. Its members have been working together for a long time, building stronger and stronger links. The vision of the European Council for Student Affairs is a European higher education area with strong student services organisations, providing quality services for the social and economic well-being of all students, respecting diversity and learning from each other.

Website: [www.ecsta.org](http://www.ecsta.org)

## INTRODUCING THE



**INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS AND SERVICES**  
**OFFICIALLY FOUNDED ON 1 MARCH, 2010**

**The Purposes of IASAS are to:**

- a) Strengthen and diversify cooperation among individuals and organizations in the student affairs and services field worldwide.
- b) 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 highquality preparation and professional development programs.
- c) Provide a platform for the improvement of multi and intercultural communication and understanding.
- d) Promote the welfare of students in higher education worldwide through collaboration with international governmental and non-governmental organizations and addressing such issues as access, retention, quality, student rights, and the cost of higher education.

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

IASAS Website: <http://www.iasasonline.org>

**Membership** is open to higher education student affairs and services practitioners and retirees, associations, organizations, and students. Current members come from 50+ countries. At the present there are no membership dues. Contributions are welcome.

**For more information** contact any of the following IASAS officers:

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# CriSTaL

CRITICAL STUDIES IN TEACHING & LEARNING

## OPEN CALL FOR PAPERS

Critical Studies in Teaching and Learning is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes scholarly articles and essays that describe, theorise and reflect on teaching and learning practice in higher education. The editors welcome contributions that are critical and well-researched, whether they are analytical, theoretical or practice-based, as well as contributions that deal with innovative and reflective approaches to teaching and learning. We are particularly interested in articles that have relevance to the South African educational context.

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For more information, or to submit a paper for consideration, please go to:

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Submission deadline for June 2014 issue: 1 February 2014

Submission deadline for Dec 2014 issue: 1 July 2014

## African Higher Education Research Online: AHERO

AHERO is an open access archive of texts that focus on the study, practice and governance of higher education in Africa.

The collection includes research reports, journal articles, conference papers, book chapters, working papers, booklets, and policy documents. All the resources have been submitted by the authors and are reproduced with their permission.

Practitioners, researchers and scholars are invited to contribute their texts to AHERO. Depositing a paper takes only a few minutes. Please go to [ahero.uwc.ac.za](http://ahero.uwc.ac.za) for more information.

## Submissions

Please register as an author and read the Author Guidelines at [www.jsaa.ac.za](http://www.jsaa.ac.za). Submissions must be made online and by email to the Journal Manager at [jsaa\\_editor@outlook.com](mailto: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, research-based and make a significant conceptual (or empirical or normative) contribution relevant to the scope and focus of the *JSAA*. 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 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 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 off 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.
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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 Review must have been followed.
7. If submitting a proposal for the Dialogue section, a Call/Notice, or a Comment/Critique 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 Team.

### 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

#### *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 Committee 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.

## 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 *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* 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.

[www.jsaa.ac.za](http://www.jsaa.ac.za)

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