Journal of Student Affairs in Africa

Tinto's South Africa Lectures

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

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

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

Editorial team

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Tinto in South Africa: Student integration, persistence and success, and the role of student affairs

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

Prof. Vincent Tinto has been a most prolific and formative theorist in the domain of student affairs and has generated the most dominant sociological theory of student retention and student persistence. His most well-known and widely cited work is the 1975 research article "Dropout from Higher Education: A theoretical synthesis of recent research" which has inspired decades of research on student retention and success across the globe. Tinto (1975, 1993, 1997) developed a model of student attrition (or "dropout") which explains student retention and success behaviour in relation to the university context. Tinto suggested that the degree to which a student is integrated into the academic and social life of the university, and the degree to which a student is committed to her or his studies and the goals of the university, are predictive of student persistence (Tinto, 1975; McCubbin, 2003). He thus sought to explain the intra-institutional impact on the student in terms of a "longitudinal model of institutional departure" based on an environmental input–process–output model (Tinto, 1993, p. 114).

Tinto's revised Student Integration Model (1997) links the pre-university entry attributes of a student (such as family background, skills and abilities, prior schooling) to the institutional experience and ultimately to educational outcomes, student retention and success. Key explanatory factors in Tinto's revised model are the student's intentions, goals and commitments; students' institutional experiences linked to the academic and the social system; academic integration and social integration; and the quality of student effort and learning. Tinto described it as an "interactive model" of primarily "sociological" character (1993, p. 112). It is dynamic in so far as a student's goals and intentions are continuously reshaped through interactions with the university and its academic and social structures (see Figure 1).

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Figure 1: Tinto's revised model of student attrition

Source: McCubbin (2003, p. 11)

Key to understanding Tinto's theory is his definition of integration as the alignment of students' attitudes and values with the social aspect of student life (especially peers), the academic life (faculty/staff), and the institutional goals of the university. As integration increases, so do the personal goals which link the student to the institution; conversely, negative experiences distance the student from the academic and social community of the institution and reduce commitment to shared goals (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Persistence is thus a function of integration into the academic and social aspects of the university system, mediated by goal commitments.

The hypothesis that academic and social integration explain dropout has received some criticism mainly based on its generalisability across a range of non-traditional students in higher education. Critiques have argued that social and academic integration do not act as reliable indicators for persistence rates among non-traditional students, such as distance learning students, mature students, returning students and minority students (whereby the latter refers to African-American students, as well as Native Americans, Asian-Americans and Latinos in some states of the United States) (McCubbin, 2003). Conversely, Tinto maintained that a complementary relationship exists between social integration and academic integration, which positively influences persistence and retention (Mannan, 2007). Despite its critics, according to McCubbin, Tinto's Student Integration Model remains "the most influential model of dropout from tertiary education" (2003, p. 1).

In the course of the last few years, student engagement has become the buzzword in higher education research internationally (Klemenčič, 2013). The most recent theoretical

developments on student persistence and student success have therefore centred on the construct of student engagement which, in turn, has drawn extensively on Tinto's theory of social and academic integration as well as the works of Tyler on time on task, quality of effort by Pace, and on Astin's theory of student involvement (Kuh, 2009a, p. 6). Student engagement is defined as "the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college and what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities" (Kuh, 2009b, p. 683). In addition to the relevance of Tinto's work for student engagement, efforts at identifying a set of high-impact practices of student success following insights from the large-scale engagement surveys of the National Survey on Student Engagement (NSSE) and the South African Survey of Student Engagement (SASSE) have highlighted the significance of learning communities as noted in Tinto's work. He conceived learning communities as interdisciplinary peer groups that span the social and academic life contexts of students – from the curricular into the co-curriculum and thus, for example, into residences (Tinto, 1997, 1998). Furthermore, nuanced research areas have emerged with regard to styles of engagements, outcomes of engagements, and the short- and long-term effects of student engagement, focusing on surface and deep learning. Also, the discussion on student alienation related to student engagement have some scholars argue that indicators for student engagement on the one end of the continuum actually reflect as measures of alienation at the other end of the continuum (Case, 2007; Trowler, 2010).

At least since 2009, when the South African Council on Higher Education (CHE) commissioned the development and pilot implementation of a South African version of NSSE, i.e. the SASSE, discussions have started on the theoretical foundations of student engagement and its usefulness for addressing matters of student throughput and academic success in an African context (Strydom & Mentz, 2010; Wawrzynski, Heck & Remly, 2012). Most recently, the student engagement construct has also shown promise to explain the attainment of graduate attributes linked to citizenship competences in studies conducted in South Africa and Uganda by the Higher Education Research and Advocacy Network in Africa (HERANA) (Luescher-Mamashela, 2014). Moreover, Tinto's work continues to offer more than what is explicitly studied today as student engagement. In many developing and emerging country contexts, where colonialism and apartheid, civil wars and political and socio-economic mismanagement have fragmented social structures over decades and deepened social cleavages, Tinto's notion of integration offers a crucial theoretical construct to think about student persistence and success in higher education. In our context, where many students come from families in which they are the first generation to participate in higher education, the notion of alignment between personal, social and academic goals and the influence of external communities thereon, offers a focal point for further research. Lastly, Tinto's seminal "communities of learning" concept has also began to shift debates in student affairs and teaching and learning in Africa, to refocus on the contextual impact as being highly influential on academic development and learning (Tinto, 1997, 1998). Tinto's work remains crucial within a context where the notion of "communities" often reflects

exclusive ethnic or racially conceived groupings and where therefore Tinto's concept of inclusive "learning communities" is an ideal rather than a practiced reality. Where universities are embedded in socially fragmented contexts like our own, it is essential that universities present opportunities for students to immerse themselves into a learning community that transcends boundaries of multiple definition: social or disciplinary.

It is for these reasons that the Editorial Executive of the *Journal of Student Affairs* in Africa decided to dedicate its first anniversary issue to the work of Vincent Tinto and publish the transcripts of his four lectures which were given to higher education student affairs and teaching and learning professionals in South Africa in 2013. The four lectures provide an exceptionally accessible, contextually relevant entry into Tinto's work, respectively focusing on its theoretical underpinnings, key questions related to access and success as they arise in and out of the classroom and in institutional practices. The lecture transcripts have been edited by Vincent Tinto and approved by Tinto and the Council on Higher Education (CHE), which brought him to South Africa to deliver the lectures as part of its quality enhancement programme (see the article by Diane Grayson, in this issue). At the same time, the original video clips of Tinto's talks of August 2013 remain available from the CHE's website (www.che.ac.za). According to Grayson, since Tinto's CHE-sponsored tour, catchphrases like "access without success is not opportunity", and "student success does not arise by chance" have come to be part of the common vocabulary of student affairs and teaching and learning professionals in this context. Publishing Tinto's South Africa lectures is a way in which the JSAA seeks to contribute to continue the conversation and make Tinto's work available to student affairs professionals, academics and students across the African continent.

In addition to this introduction, Tinto's lectures are framed by two reflective contributions solicited specifically to contextualise and critically appraise the lectures. The first is published as a preface to this issue written by the CHE's Director of Institutional Audits, Prof. Diane Grayson, who was instrumental in conceptualising the Tinto tour of 2013 as part of the Council's quality enhancement project. The second is a paper of both personal and critical reflection on Tinto's South Africa lectures by Prof. Laura Perna, University of Pennsylvania. Added to the issue is a listing of selected publications of Vincent Tinto, spanning 40 years of scholarship, which will hopefully stimulate further reading.

The campus dialogue section in this issue publishes a report on yet another historic development in the student affairs profession in Africa: the establishment of the Southern African Federation of Student Affairs and Services (SAFSAS). It is authored by Dr Saloschini Pillay, SAFSAS inaugural President.

Two book reviews are included in this issue. Munyaradzi Madambi reviews the recently published book *Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa* edited by McGlory Speckman and Martin Mandew and published by African Minds in 2014. In Madambi's estimation, the book provides "a comprehensive exposé of the broad scope of how universities can create, facilitate and advance opportunities for student growth and success" (Madambi, in this issue). The second review, by Randall Lange, is meant to entice readers to tackle what is undoubtedly "one of the most authoritative and most cited publications in student

affairs", providing an indispensable theoretical and practical background to the work of student affairs practitioners and academics alike. The seminal second issue (2005) of *How College Affects Students* by Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini is the first in a series of 'classics' in student affairs literature with which the JSAA hopes to further contribute to building a theoretical foundation for student affairs in Africa.

Finally, as a peer-reviewed academic journal, all research articles and reflective practice articles published in the JSAA undergo a strict process of quality assurance, including an initial screening of manuscripts by two or more members of the Editorial Executive which is followed by a process of double-blind peer review. At the point of receiving a submission, the initial vetting process is considered as developmental and the practice of the editors has been to provide formative feedback to authors to encourage them to improve a manuscript, if necessary. Once a manuscript has successfully passed the vetting process, it is anonymised and sent for peer review to at least two reviewers with proven scholarly and/or professional expertise relevant to the subject matter of the manuscript. The suitability of articles is evaluated in terms of five criteria: originality; significance; scholarship; scope and interest; and accessibility. Review reports are then discussed in detail in the Editorial Executive and the recommendations of reviewers are followed in accordance with our review policy. The present issue is in this regard extraordinary. Given their nature, Tinto's lectures were not blind peer-reviewed; rather, the transcripts were vetted and edited by the editors, edited and approved by Tinto, and eventually critical reflections on the lecture transcripts were solicited from experts, parts of which are published alongside Tinto's work in this issue. This arrangement for this special issue is, however, not to detract from our editorial and peer review policy and rigorous practice designed specifically to adhere to the *ASSAf National Code of Best Practice in Editorial Discretion and Peer Review for South African Scholarly Journals*. In this regard we are proud to announce that the JSAA's commitment to following best practice in open access publishing has been recognised recently with the Journal's inclusion in the international Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). The DOAJ includes only "open access scientific and scholarly journals that use a quality control system to guarantee the content" (DOAJ, 2014).

This issue completes the second volume of the JSAA. We would therefore like to thank on behalf of the Editorial Executive the many peer reviewers who have supported the Journal over 2013 and 2014 by availing their expertise, time and dedication for evaluating the suitability of manuscripts. Reviewers are an indispensable part of the scholarly publication process; it is only with their expertise that we can hope to attain the aim of making the JSAA the foremost academic journal dealing with the theory and practice of the student affairs domain and an essential resource for the university leadership, student affairs professionals, institutional researchers and academics and students focused on the field of higher education studies and student affairs in Africa.

On behalf of the Editorial Executive,
Dr Birgit Schreiber, Dr Thierry Luescher-Mamashela and Prof. Teboho Moja

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REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Vincent Tinto's lectures: Catalysing a focus on student success in South Africa

Diane Grayson*

When I was appointed Director for Institutional Audits at the South African Council on Higher Education (CHE) in September 2012 a decision had already been taken that, after having completed one cycle of institutional audits, it would not immediately begin another cycle. Discussions with a variety of stakeholders had led to the conclusion that the most pressing need in higher education in South Africa was to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning. However, it was not clear how that could best be done. Moreover, there was a sense of urgency. We could not wait another eight years, the time it had taken to complete all of the institutional audits, before we saw progress. Cohort data published by the CHE (2013) showed that only about half of the students entering universities were completing their programmes, despite the fact that few students even made it to university. (In 2011 the participation rate of 20 to 24 year olds was 17%.) South Africa needed to find a way to produce more high quality graduates to drive and support economic and social development.

During the last quarter of 2012, after many discussions and much reading about both national challenges and international trends, the way forward began to emerge. In line with increasing requirements for accountability internationally, it became clear that our focus needed to shift from inputs to outputs, from what universities did to what students achieved. The focus needed to be on student success and how to enhance it. That meant shifting our orientation as a directorate for institutional audits and that of higher education institutions from quality assurance to quality enhancement, that is, from ensuring that standards are met, to improving the standards that need to be met. This new direction was given substance through the formulation of the Quality Enhancement Project (QEP). The QEP provides a framework (CHE, 2014a) for improving student success, where student success is defined as "[e]nhanced student learning with a view to increasing the number of graduates with attributes that are personally, professionally and socially valuable".

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By the end of 2012 a draft framework document for the QEP was widely circulated for discussion. But it was clear that the standard processes used in South Africa to formulate policies in higher education – sending out discussion documents, calling for feedback, perhaps holding a symposium – would not generate enough impetus for the radical change of mindset that would be needed to implement the QEP and implement it quickly. Moreover, the South African higher education sector was small, with only 23 public universities and a number of mostly small private institutions, and ideas tended to circulate round and round a rather closed system. And of course, most people are naturally resistant to change – fear of change evokes a thousand reasons for why something different cannot be done or will not work. We needed something that would inject fresh air into the system, something that would fire people's imaginations about what was possible, an event that would get people excited, enough people to form a critical mass for change. That is why I contacted Vincent Tinto.

On 4 January 2013 I sent Vincent Tinto an email, outlining salient aspects of the state of the South African higher education system and the focus of the QEP and asking if, in principle, he might be willing to engage with us in some way. He replied immediately – in principle, yes. As I thought more about how he could help us, it became clear that what we needed was for him to speak to people in South Africa, preferably from all universities and from all walks of university life. That would mean conducting regional symposia, one each in Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town (later changed to Stellenbosch). On 15 January I asked if he would be willing to do that. After a few more emails, on 29 January we had a conversation via Skype. Very early on in the conversation, Vincent said, "I'll do it. I'll come". About a month later we had agreed on dates for the symposia – the third week in August. In early June we sent out advance notice of the symposia. In our planning we imagined we might get a total of 600 people. In mid-July we sent out the call for registrations. The symposia were free but online registration was required, and was open for a limited period on a first-come, first-served basis. As registrations poured in we contacted the three venues to see if they could accommodate more people. In the end we had 820 registrations from all public and several private higher education institutions, ranging from vice-chancellors to deans, academics, and student affairs, academic development and support staff. The flood of registrations signalled that there was enormous interest in the topic of the symposia, "Conceptualising a coherent approach to student success".

By the time of the symposia four focus areas for the first phase of the QEP had crystallised: enhancing academics as teachers; enhancing student support and development; enhancing the learning environment; and enhancing course and programme enrolment management (CHE, 2014b). In the months leading up to the symposia Vincent and I exchanged many emails and spoke several times on Skype in order to arrive at suitable topics for his presentations. During this same period the focus, form and direction of the QEP were evolving as a result of many conversations with individuals, the advisory committee, senior management members from a representative sample of universities, other CHE senior staff, the institutional audits committee and colleagues at the Quality

Assurance Agency Scotland. The topics we finally agreed on for the four regional symposia talks were thus the collaborative product of an extended, participatory process.

Vincent's talks were designed to serve a dual purpose: to expose a large South African audience to key features of his lifelong work on student success, and as a precursor to the implementation of the QEP, to catalyse a change in mindset. Through showing what is possible, what can and has worked, we hoped to energise and inspire people to believe that things can change for the better and to want to work to make that happen. The talks were deliberately not structured according to the four focus areas of the QEP, because that would not have done justice to the first purpose, but they did speak to a number of aspects of the focus areas.

The first talk provided the theoretical foundations of Vincent's work. This was important for us because we needed participants to know that there is a substantial body of scholarly work on student success, and that the actions and interventions that he would speak about later were theoretically grounded and supported by evidence. In other words, promoting student success is not about being "touchy-feely" – it is a serious academic activity. In the next three talks Vincent spoke about promoting student success through support services, at classroom level and at institutional level. In each case he clearly articulated a general principle and then gave specific examples of what works. For the South African context, where we so easily despair of ever making headway in overcoming our seemingly intractable problems, it was tremendously important to see examples of what can be done to make the situation better, especially for academically- and economically -disadvantaged first generation students. For many in the audience, it came as a surprise that there were so many students like that in the USA, the richest country in the world. But the "can do" attitude with which Vincent approached the challenge of helping such students succeed was inspiring and energising. Just what we needed.

As I have travelled around the country in the year since Vincent's visit, there are people at every university who attended one of his symposia. That means there is resonance with a core of people around the country when I freely draw on one of Vincent's key phrases, phrases that are becoming mantras for us for student success: "It's not about us, it's about the students", "Access without support is not opportunity," and, most important of all for improving our higher education system as a whole, "Student success does not arise by chance." Long-term, large-scale student success in South Africa will require sustained will, effort, commitment, courage and imagination, monitored and coordinated within coherent, collaborative endeavours at both institutional and national levels.

While there are obvious and extensive differences between South Africa's and America's context, history and demography, there are theoretically sound principles and exemplary interventions that are applicable in promoting student success in both countries, especially among less privileged students. In the years ahead we will need to build our own theories and models for student success in South Africa. But Vincent Tinto has provided us with a firm foundation on which to build. And through his inspirational presentations and interactions with hundreds of South Africans he has been a critical catalyst for change.

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Tinto's South Africa lectures

Vincent Tinto

The following are transcripts of the four lectures given by Prof. Vincent Tinto, Distinguished University Professor Emeritus, Syracuse University, at the regional symposia "Conceptualising a coherent approach to student success" organised by the Council on Higher Education in Pretoria, Durban and Stellenbosch in August 2013.

Lecture 1: Theoretical underpinnings and research framework for student success

Let me start by saying what an honour it is for me to be here with you who are working to improve the success of your students. Writing articles and books on improving student success as I do is the easy part, being able to do something about an issue that is so critical to the future of South Africa is the hard part. Yet the issues you face are some of the same issues with which we also struggle in the United States. The gap between high- and low-income students in college completion in our country is large and has been increasing over time. Like you, we are concerned about the success of our students because, as it is for you, our future lies in our students' future. But in speaking with you today let me be clear that I am not here to tell you what to do. It is presumptuous for someone from another country working in a different educational system to tell you what actions you should take here in South Africa to promote student success. But as I have been working on this project of increasing student success for some 40 years, I have had the opportunity not only to write and carry out research on student success but also work with many institutions both in the United States and a number of countries in Europe, Asia and South America. I have worked with over 400 institutions over these more than a few years. I have also worked with foundations, with states and federal governments. Over that time, I have come to see some patterns of action that distinguish those universities that have improved their completion rates, especially among low-income students, and those that have not. In turn I have learned important lessons about what seems to characterise those institutions. This morning I want to share with you three important lessons that I have learned which frame our conversations in subsequent presentations.

First lesson: Providing students access without support is not opportunity. Without support, academic, social, and financial, too many students do not complete their programmes of study. It is my view that once an institution admits a student, it becomes obligated to provide, as best it can, the support needed to translate the opportunity access provides to success.

Second lesson: The classroom experience is central to student success. Most students commute to campus. Few have the privilege of living on campus. In the United States only 20% of our students do so. Despite the movies you may have seen about higher education in United States, most of our students work, many attend part-time and an increasingly large number are from low-income backgrounds who do not have the privilege, the time, or the resources to live on campus. For these students, indeed for most students, when they come to a campus, the first place they go is to the classroom. When class is over they leave, because they must. It follows that however we define student success, however we measure it, the one place success must arise is in the classrooms of our campuses. For most students, the classroom is the only place where they meet each other and engage with their peers and faculty in learning activities. Consequently however we think about the strategies of promoting success, our efforts must begin, but not end, with students' classroom experiences. Recall the object of our work is not simply that students are retained, but that they learn while begin retained. Student learning is the object of our work; retention is only a vehicle through which it occurs.

The third and final lesson: Improvement in institutional rates of student success does not arise by chance. It is not simply the result of good intentions; although good intentions are clearly a requirement, improvement in rates of student success requires more. It requires an intentional, structured and coherent set of policies and actions that coordinate the work of many programmes and people across campus; actions that are sustained and scaled up over time and to which resources are allocated. There is no magic cure to improvement. It simply takes time and sustained effort.

These lessons will serve as the basis for our conversation today. The goal is to begin what the Council hopes to achieve, namely that these conversations you have with your colleagues here today, with your colleagues in the universities in which you work, will form the basis of an ongoing conversation about the programmes and strategies you will implement in the future to improve the success of your students at your universities and across all of South Africa. It's not a short-term project. Once you begin you must stay the course even when faced with challenges. Your students and your nation need your effort.

Finally, on a personal note, I have long held the view that when we admit students to our universities we sign, in effect, a contract with our students that obligates both us and them to a series of actions. For their part, it is a contract that obligates them to take advantage of the opportunity that so many of their peers do not have; to take their studies seriously and exert the effort needed to complete their programmes of study. For our part, we take on an obligation that calls for us to translate, as best we can, through our actions the promise access provides into a meaningful opportunity to complete our students to successfully complete their studies. You are only too well aware that there are many things

that affect student success: personal lives, economic resources, etc. The unavoidable fact is that though we aspire to help all our students, there are many things that affect their success over which we have little control. But we do have control over their experience on the campus; experiences that are now shaped by decisions and actions we have made in the past. We can and should improve their experiences and in turn their success by changing our decisions and actions. It is to this end, a rethinking of what we do, that our conversation today is directed.

Let me now turn to the first of what will be four presentations today about improving student success. In doing so let me point out that it reflects the Council request that I first talk about the origins of my work, its theoretical propositions, and the research underlying it since it has long been shown to be an effective guide to the development of effective strategies to improve student success. It also reflects the Council interest in having you base your proposed course of action on sound theory and research.

Before I talk about these issues, you may ask why theory matters, in this case why we need to focus on theories of student success? We need to because theory allows us to move beyond empirical descriptions of behaviour, such as student success or the lack thereof, to an attempt to understand why those behaviours occur. The point of theory is to explain how those behaviours arise so that when something goes awry, that is when students do not succeed; you have a strategy, a way of thinking about what in turn you do to improve success. In this manner, theory becomes a guide to action. The Council wants your proposals to have some framework that provides a way of thinking about what you plan to do, why you do it, and what you need to do next. But it is important to understand that there are limits to what any theory can explain. Though theory can and does provide a useful guide to action, there is no substitute for experience and the learning that arises from experience. So while there is good reason to employ theory and prior research in the development of your projects, you should not do so in such a narrow way that you do not modify your proposals based upon your experience.

The need to do so is not only a reflection of the limits of any theory, but also of the social and cultural context from which theory springs. In this case it is important to see my theory as reflecting the issues about student attrition that were being debated during the late 1960s in the United States, a period of dynamic tensions that gave rise to the civil rights movement of the time. At that time, theories of student attrition, or what was referred to as "dropout", tended to blame the victim, namely the student who dropped out. Dropouts were typically seen as not sufficiently motivated, as not being able to defer immediate gratification, or simply not having values appropriate to the succeeding in university studies. No one questioned the role the university played in constructing the failure of its own students.

Yet like many others at The University of Chicago I was part of a vibrant anti-establishment movement that the focused on issues of inequality and its roots in existing power structures of society. We were intent on shedding light on the role of the "system" in the construction and maintenance of the prevailing patterns of inequality, in my case with patterns of dropout and its correlation with income and race. Together with other

graduate students, I focused on the role of the system – the university – in constructing patterns of "dropout" within the university. It is a perspective that continues to inform my work, namely that in exploring issues of student attrition and efforts to enhance student persistence and graduation, we have to ask about the actions of the university and what the university should do to change its practices and policies to promote greater student success and do so in ways that also address issues of inequality.

In the development of my work, I had sought to develop a way, through social theory, of explaining how the "system", the institution, works to shape the success of its own students. As I sought out a way of doing so, I participated in an interdisciplinary seminar with other graduate students and faculty – a common event at the university at the time – in which were presentations on psychology, anthropology, economics, history and sociology. One graduate student gave a presentation on Emile Durkheim, the first chair of sociology at the University of Paris, and his theory of suicide, when individuals choose in a real way to leave a human community. Durkheim wrote of the role of intellectual and social integration or the lack thereof as shaping an individual's decision to remain in the community or leave it. As soon as I heard the presentation I immediately saw the analogy between membership in a human community such as a village, and membership in the community of the university. It was an instantaneous flash of recognition. I am sure many of you in the audience know the experience. You are working with someone, discussing some issue, when a light bulb suddenly turns on. So too in my case. It immediately became apparent that I could translate Durkheim's work to an analysis of student "dropout". But let me observe, however, that while Durkheim, like other French intellectuals at the time, was concerned with the impact of immigration on French culture and therefore took integration to mean assimilation, that is not what we in the 1960s in the United States took the term to mean. For us, given our sad history of slavery and racial segregation, the term integration meant the opposite of segregation. In today's context, a more useful term would be the term "inclusion" as it contains no hint of assimilation.

In translating Durkheim's theory of suicide to a theory of educational suicide, namely "dropout," I employed the concepts of academic and social integration and developed a "theory" or more accurately described as a conceptual model that sought to translate how social and academic integration and the resulting membership in educational communities on campus arise. I sought to explain the impact of other people's behaviours and the organisations and structures they construct on students within the university; actions and polices that lead people and their constructed organisations to act in ways that knowingly and/or unknowingly include or exclude individuals from their communities and their institutions of university in which they are located. Thus the development of the so-called "Tinto's Theory of Student Attrition".

A confluence of a number of factors at the time led it to become the primary, but not only, way academics, practitioners and policy-makers approached the issue of student dropout and in turn student persistence. Over time, it helped shape the adoption of a range of actions, programmes and policies that I will soon discuss aimed at increasing student persistence and completion, not least of which is the emphasis on the need to involve all students in the academic and social communities of the university.

But like any other theory, my work has evolved over time. This resulted not only from what I learned from a wide range of visits to different colleges and universities, but also the work of other researchers who sought to apply my work to other situations and the resulting suggestions they made for improvements. For me the most important is the research of Hurado and Carter on the role of culture, values and perceptions of membership in students' decisions to leave an institution. They correctly pointed out that is not interaction or engagement per se that drives dropout, but the perceptions individual derive from those interactions that underlie student decisions to dropout. Not all interactions are positive. Those that are lead to retention. Those that convey the opposite, lead to withdrawal. My point is simple. People act on what they preceive. Therefore while we should measure engagement, as some engagement is better than none, we should ascertain whether engagement leads a student to see him/herself as a valued member of an academic and social community. The need to do so is particularly important when the student body is diverse.

Another change in my theory reflects my own particular autobiography. I went to The University of Chicago, and having received a fellowship, was able to live on campus and avoid the need to work. Yet most students in the United States do not live on campus, must work, often full time, are older, and have family obligations beyond campus. For these students, time on campus is limited, their engagement constrained by forces external to the campus. Consequently, I began to see the issue of involvement not so much as the presence of involvement per se but as the ways in which involvement in the communities of the campus can serve to keep students attached to the institution when external communities may pull them away.

The question then arose as to what types of involvement matter most for these students. Once I studied student patterns of behaviour on campus, it quickly became apparent that the answer to that question lies in the classrooms of the campus because those places of learning were very often the only place on campus where they spent time and engaged with faculty and other students. It follows that any discussion of enhancing student involvement/engagement and in turn student retention and completion must centre, indeed begin, with students' experiences in the classroom. It is not surprising then that over the last two decades my work has increasingly focused on the role of student classroom experience in student success and the types of policies and actions we must pursue to change classrooms in ways that promote greater student engagement and success. For me the point of theory is not merely that it helps explain what we see, but that it leads to actions that can change what we see.

As regards the issue that concerns us today, namely improving student retention and completion, change is occurring, albeit not as rapidly as many of us would prefer. One change is the development and use of surveys to measure and track student engagement. In the United States, the most widely used surveys are the National Survey of Student Engagement that is intended for four-year institutions, otherwise known as NSSE, and the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, typically referred to as CCSSE, that is used in two-year colleges. The former, NSSE, has been adapted for use in your country,

here known as SASSE, and in Australia and New Zealand where it is referred to as AUSSE. These have proven useful if only because they enable institutions to ascertain students' level and types of engagement and, when used over a number of years, ascertain how engagements change over time. Understandably there are limits to what such surveys can tell us, not the least of which reflects the fact that they often are plagued by low response rates. Nevertheless, they have served to focus our attention on the importance of student engagement and its role in student success.

Another change, one that concerns us here today, is the growing recognition that classrooms matter and student success in the classroom is the building block upon which student retention and completion is built. That has led us to acknowledge the critical role academics play in student retention and completion. Their actions in the classroom are critical to student classroom success and in turn to student retention and completion. Yet unlike educators in elementary, middle and secondary schools, academics in higher education, including myself, are not trained to teach their students. I do not mean to suggest that there are not many gifted academics who have the ability to engage students in learning in powerful ways. There are. But as a matter of our prior training, we have not been trained to teach our students. I have a PhD from The University of Chicago. What did I learn about teaching methods? Little. What about curriculum development? Nothing. Student development theory and student learning styles? Again nothing. Assessment of student learning? Again nothing. What qualifies me to teach? I have a PhD that has trained me to carry out research and write research articles. Let me be clear. I do not blame the academics. Instead I fault the system from which we spring that prepares us for our work in the universities. Clearly this must change.

Fortunately, there are now movements in address the issue of the preparation of academics. For instance, Queensland University of Technology in Australia now requires all lecturers to be part of a two-year training programme before they get a position as a lecturer. Derby University in Great Britain does the same thing. Please visit their websites. Whatever model we adopt, it is clear we must all focus on the training of new academics for their important work in the classroom and ask in turn as to the skills academics must acquire to be effective in the classroom and actively engage their students in powerful learning activities. In this regard we need to heed the evidence that speaks to the power of collaborative pedagogies and interdisciplinary learning communities in promoting student learning to which I will speak later. Whatever reforms we adopt, we must ensure that our classrooms include all voices in our diverse societies.

Let me now turn briefly to issues of quality enhancement. Though we in the United States are also concerned about quality, our forms of accountability are somewhat different from yours. We do not have a national system of higher education. Our system is divided into separate states. Each state has its own policy. One state could have one policy and an adjacent state can have a very different policy. Nevertheless, an increasing number of states, most notably the state of Tennessee, now fund institutions not only on enrolment but on output as you do. But rather than count the number of graduates, as you do, these states are determining budgets based upon the efficiency of throughput, namely the proportion of

those who start who finish five years later. Such accountability makes it in the institution's interest, you would hope, to do something about improving graduation rates. Indeed we are beginning to see changes in institutional practice.

Fortunately, there is a good deal of research on the issue of improving student retention and completion. You can start by reading my books as well as those of George Kuh that stress the importance of student engagement to student success. What concerns us here is the research on the link between classroom engagement and learning. This is important because the object of our work is not simply that students stay, but that they learn while staying. Without learning, retention in my view is a hollow achievement.

Let me now speak to future directions of research on student retention and completion. One, not surprisingly, is online education and its impact on student enrolment, engagement, and retention. Though there is clearly promise in online education, as it provides students access to a range of much richer resources than available through textbooks, evidence and institutional experience tells us that that promise has yet to be fulfilled. While enrolments have increased, retention in online courses is lower, in some case, considerably lower than face-to-face courses. Understandably there is a good deal of variation among online and face-to-face courses, but on average online retention rates are lower. In part this reflects the fact that building meaningful engagement in learning is more difficult in online courses than in face-to-face courses. At the same time, we know that students from college-educated backgrounds, especially those from high-income backgrounds, are much more likely to succeed in online environments than low-income students who are first in their family to attend university. This reflects the fact that success in online education requires skills and resources that are not evenly distributed in our societies. Nevertheless, like any "new" strategy, there is a tendency for people to rush, pell-mell, to employ that strategy in the hope that it alone can solve complex problems. Unfortunately, there is no "magic bullet". My advice: wait and learn from the experiences of other institutions' use of online education before jumping into the pool.

My own experience tells me that blended or hybrid classrooms can be quite effective as they enable more students to participate without having to entirely distance themselves from their classroom peers. Similarly there is promise in the movement to translate massive online learning environments to what are called "flipped classrooms". Students do their reading and work online before class and then come to the classroom to apply what they learned online. This is important because deep learning arises not by reading or listening but by doing, that is applying what is read or heard. .

Another promising development is the increasing use of what is referred to as predictive analytics. Though you may not have heard the term, you already know what predictive analytics can do. How many people have made purchases on iTunes, Amazon, or Netflix? When you make a purchase, what happens next? Typically you will receive a message that says "People like you have purchased this…". That recommendation is the result of predictive analytics. Once a website has information about you, as they all do, they will make recommendations for additional purchases based on what they know of the buying habits of people like you and on your previous purchase. The more you purchase,

the more refined the recommondation(s). That's predictive analytics. What concerns us here today is that universities are beginning to use predictive analytics in providing feedback to students. For example, a number of universities in the United States have developed online advising systems that employ predictive analytics to fine-tune the advice they provide individual students to better meet their specific needs as reflected in students' response to a series of questions. Though such systems do not entirely replace advisors, it greatly reduces their work as it provides students with up-to-date, accurate information that does not have to be repeated by the advisor. Again a caution: predictive modeling for education is still in its infancy. In their current form, it tends to be better at "predicting" the needs of the "average" student than those who are "not average". Consequently, before you rush into using a product employing predictive analytics, pilot test it to ensure it is equally effective for the various groups of students you serve.

Another development that will soon shape your efforts here in South Africa reflects the recognition that it is one thing to successfully complete an individual course; it is another to successfully compete in a programme of study and earn a university degree. Completion of a programme of study requires completing a sequence of courses, one after the other over time. I make this often overlooked point because the strategies we now employ to help students successfully complete a course, will not, on their own, help students complete a programme of study. Though our current strategies still matter, other issues shape the completion of a sequence of courses over time.

One is the impact of curricular structure upon completion. For instance, consideration is being giving to move from what are called mainstream programmes to extended programmes in which students have more time and more options to complete their programmes of study. If you have not heard about it, you soon will. From my own distant perspective, I think it is a good idea. Why? Many students fresh out of secondary school often do not yet know what they want to study. They will be obliged to pick a major when it may not be the best choice. Being able to explore options in the first year can only help. At the same time, some students will have to repeat a course they failed in the first year. A constrained timeframe and course schedule will only make it more difficult to complete their programmes in the prescribed timeframe. In any case, the same things happen in the United States; we are asking the same questions. I should point out that we in the United States are also looking at the structure of our curricula and asking how we change them to increase the likelihood of programme completion.

Another issue concerns the role of student development. Though it is sometimes difficult to discern, students do change over time. Eighteen-year old students, who typically see the world as bimodal, become twenty-one year olds who tend to have a more complex and nuanced view of the world. In other words, they mature and their social and academic needs change. My point is simple. While we have understandably focused our efforts to help students succeed in the first year of university study, as that is the year when students' struggles are greatest, it does not follow that students do not struggle afterwards. Many do. To help students complete their programme of study, not simply their first year, we have to sequence our actions over time in ways that respond to their changing developmental needs.

One final issue. Much of the research on student retention has occurred in disciplinary silos; sociology, psychology, economics and so on. My own work, for instance, is primarily that of a sociologist who looks at the impact of the actions of other people and structures on individual behavior. A researcher in the field of psychology, however, is more likely to be concerned with the impact of individual attitudes on student success, while a researcher in the field of economics more with the effect of finances. At some point, however, we have to get out of our disciplinary silos to develop interdisciplinary theories of student success that combine these perspectives in ways that allow us to build more powerful strategies to promote student completion. My comments on the need to take account of theories of student development are but one such instance when combining different fields of research can further our efforts.

But there are other possible combinations. One lies in the use of network analysis and the role of networks of affiliations in student persistence. Specifically, one can conceive of persistence in a university as a process in which people form networks of affiliation that bind them to other people and in turn to the university. Students who establish such networks, especially during the first year, are more likely to stay in the university than those who are unable to establish those connections. Another lies in role theory, specifically in its view that being successful in any setting is akin to learning to play a role deemed appropriate in that setting. Much like as actor or actress who learns to a role in a play, a student seeking to be successful within a university has to learn to play a "student role" with its script, dress codes, interaction instructions, etc. From this perspective, it follows that strategies to promote student success have to be more intentional in helping students understand what is required to be successful in the fullest sense of the word. I need not remind you that many of your students, like myself, come from families with little prior educational experience and therefore have few ways of learning what is required to be a successful student in a university setting.

In closing, let me point out that the goal of theory is not simply that of explanation, but that of action. Your work as researchers in developing theories of student success appropriate to the South African context is to develop forms of explanation that lead to educational action, action which is not simply about helping student stay and finish their programmes of study, but do so in ways that lead to powerful learning.

In the final analysis our goal is student learning. Student retention is simply the vehicle for that to occur.

Lecture 2: Access without support is not opportunity

For too many of our students, providing access without appropriate support does not provide meaningful opportunity to succeed in the university. This is the case because many begin university ill–prepared for the academic and social demands of university study and are unaware of what university studies demand. Like a young lady I was talking to yesterday, many are from small rural villages and are the first in their families to attend university. She, like many other students, will likely need some support to be able to successfully navigate the often stormy waters of university life.

A variety of supports exist that can help students. One reflects the fact that new students, especially those who are first in their families to attend university, need to learn to navigate university. Unlike students who have parents who were university trained or brothers and sisters who are university trained – these students have no resources upon which to draw. This is why universities have orientation programmes.

Listen to the voice of this student who talked about his experience with orientation:

"I was kinda confused on everything … I was like, what about turnin' over here … and then I just ended up sittin' in a room, and then she just started givin' people papers. I'm like, where am I? She says you are in Orientation. I was, oh, I accidentally fell on Orientation! So I got that out of the way by accident, but I'm glad I did it, 'cause I learnt a lot of stuff I did not know. And as soon as I walked out of Orientation I knew exactly what I needed to go and do."
(Student video clip 1)

The challenge with the more common traditional orientation programmes is that they are voluntary and often too brief and as they occur prior to the start of university studies do not provide students with an opportunity to get answers to questions that arise only after they begin their studies. This is why many universities extend some orientation activities into the first semester most commonly in the so-called 'first year seminar' to which we will refer later.

Two points. First, he said it as by accident. That should not be the case. Do not leave it to the students to accidentally find orientation. Rather make it a requirement. Second, when he left orientation he knew exactly what he had to do. That is important. If do not know how to navigate the university, to find resources and support, it is much more difficult to succeed in the university.

This should also be the case for advising. Some students, again most often first-generation university students, don't have the requisite cultural resources to know how to think about university study, what to study and what courses to take. In fact many are undecided, though they might not admit that because they feel obliged to pick a field because their parents want them to. In the United States, nearly half of all students who begin in universities are undecided as to their major and many change majors during their studies. Even among those who finish in a major, research tells us that nearly half will end up working in other fields. Thus the challenge for advising is to help those who are unsure of their major as well as those who are.

Listen to what this low-income young woman says about advising:

"I think that is so, so important because the schools I am looking into now to transfer to, I have to see what classes I need to take to get to where I need to go. If I don't sit down with an advisor and take that time, what's the point? I'd be taking classes that'd be irrelevant. I won't use any of the credits. I mean, it is always good to learn, but we have a goal. It's like, what progress am I making towards that goal?"
(Student video clip 2)

Let me repeat some of the things she said. She said, "It is great to take courses, but if it doesn't lead to progress, I don't have the time". In fact, they often don't have the money.

Regrettably universities rarely have enough advisors, in particular those who are professionally trained, to address the advising needs of all students, especially those who are undecided. This is why the development of online advising systems that are based on the use of predictive analytics is so appealing. Such systems do not replace the importance of personal advising. But it does allow students to get some degree of advising 24 hours a day, seven days a week, if they have a computer and internet service to gain access to that information.

But as very few universities can afford such technologies, many have turn again to the first–year seminar to address advising needs by including some developmental advising and career counseling activities. If your universities move to giving students more options in the first year, you will find that the first year seminar can provide a forum to advising that is unlikely to be otherwise available to all students.

Given the proven success of the first year seminar in improving student persistence, it is little surprise that on many campuses it has become an academic "one stop" shop that has included in it a variety of academic support services. For instance, for students who are academically underprepared, the first year seminar will contain academic skill-building activities.

Again, listen to one student who talked about his experience in a first year seminar:

> "I was told it is an easy grade, and since I have never been to college before so I figured it could be helpful so I took the class, like study skills, writing, getting research – it is like everything, like built into like one class basically. It is helpful. It is."
> (Student video clip 3)

Increasingly, a number of universities now require all first year students to take a first year seminar. But as not all the first year students have the same needs, universities have begun differentiating their seminars such that different groups of students attend seminars that have different emphasis (e.g. skill-building vs. advising).
Students often need academic support as they are engaged in their studies, support that goes beyond the capacity of first year seminars. For that reason universities employed a range of academic support programmes for such as learning centres, tutorials, study halls, and so on. It is important to note that academic support proves to be more effective when it is contextualised to the course in which students need support. That is to say when it is linked to the course in such a way that the academic support students receive deals specifically with the issue of succeeding in that specific course. Simply put, the closer support is linked to the specific demands of the course, the easier it is for students to translate the support they receive to the practical problem of succeeding in that course.

There is a range of such techniques now being successfully employed to help students succeed in their courses. One is supplemental instruction where students who are struggling in a course will attend small tutorial sessions led either by a student who had a high grade in the course the prior year or a support person. In either case, the tutorials are directly

timed to the specific demands of the course, one class at a time. Research has shown that courses with supplemental instruction have higher average grades that similar courses that do not because there are many fewer Ds and Fs, and there is the rub. Another effective strategy are learning communities where students enroll in two or more courses together. As applied to students who need additional academic assistance, one of those courses will be a basic skills course. In this case the content of the course, let's say accounting, to which the basic skills course is linked will provide the content for the application of basic skills. In this way, students are learning basic skills as they are learning accounting.

Listen to what one student said about her experience in such a linked course learning community.

> "The relationship between accounting and ESL (English as a Second Language) is helping a lot because the accounting professor is teaching us to answer questions in complete sentences, to write better. And we are more motivated to learn vocabulary because it is accounting vocabulary, something we want to learn about anyway. I am learning accounting better by learning the accounting language better."

Support can also come from other people. It can come from counsellors, individual academics, individual staff members, and from peer mentors. For many of our disadvantaged or under-represented students, in the United States, having a mentor of similar backgrounds matters. It matters because a mentor can say to the person with whom he or she works, "If I have been able to successfully walk this path so can you, and I'm gonna show you how".

Listen to what one student said about mentors:

> "Each student, somewhere somehow, should be assigned to like a mentor. Sometimes kids do get demotivated and then they need a little push and they need a little encouragement. Sometimes their friends they want to help them, but they don't know exactly what to say. So sometimes I think we do need that mentor to keep us going."

But if you have mentors, as some of your universities do, they must be trained. Training is important because mentors have to possess skills that most students do not have. At the same time, mentors have to be able to access university resources (e.g. counselling, health) because they will sometimes discover personal problems that dwarf their capacity to respond.

Learning communities and cohort programmes where students travel through the curriculum together as a group can also provide support. So too can student clubs and organisations. The very process of staying together as a group and sharing common experiences can provide significant social support. Here's the quote from a woman I interviewed in New York. She was 37 at the time, had three children and worked two jobs to pay for the family. She had a history of struggle and was unable to finish college after several attempts. Finally she found herself in a learning community where students constantly meet each other in and outside class.

Listen to what she said:

"In the learning community, we knew each other. We were friends; we discussed everything from all the classes. We knew things very, very well because we discussed it all so much. We had discussions about everything. It was like a raft running the rapids of my life."

Without the support of her peers she said she would not have succeeded. This is not because the academics or support staff did not care for her. Rather it was her peers whose support helped her succeed. Whatever form social support takes, individual, group, or programme, what matters is that students gain a sense of belonging, that they matter to the university.

Though it is evident that most students need support sometime during their stay at the university, it is not always clear when they need support. That is why universities are developing "early-warning" systems that notify them when students need support, especially academic support in the classroom. To be effective, warning of students difficulties must be early. This is the case because students who struggle early in a classroom, or have problems in residence halls, will tend to get discouraged and begin withdrawing. The sooner you respond to their needs, the more likely it is you can help them out of those struggles. Here is where technological solutions, such as predictive analytics, can be helpful. So too can peer mentors. In many cases the first year seminar can also serve that purpose, especially those that have a peer mentor assigned to the seminar.

Speaking of the first year seminar leads to one final issue that is the focus of Diane Grayson's current work, namely the role of student development and the nature and timing of support. Given what we know about the developmental sequence that characterises the growth and maturation of traditional age students, it follows that support has to be timed to the changing needs of students as they progress through the university, not just during the first year.

A final thought. Effective student support does not arise by chance. It is not solely the result of good intentions. Rather it requires the development of an intentional, structured, proactive approach that is coherent, systematic and coordinated in nature.

Lecture 3: Promoting student classroom success

Student success, however defined and measured, necessarily arises in the classroom, one course at a time, overtime. Lest one forget, the object of student persistence is not merely that students complete their programmes of study, but that they learn while doing so. Learning is the object of our work, persistence is merely a vehicle to achieve that end. Though learning can occur in a variety of places outside the classroom, it is in the classroom experience that is central to student learning in their field of study.

Given our focus on student success, one can therefore ask what we know about the attributes of classrooms that promote success, especially during the critical first year of university. Not only do most dropouts arise in the first year, but the learning that arises in the first year is the foundation for subsequent learning in the years that follow. If students do not succeed in the first year courses, it is unlikely that they will succeed subsequently. This does not mean that learning in the second, third and fourth year do not matter. Rather it means that learning in the first year is critical to all that follows.

What then do we know about the characteristics of successful classrooms in the first year? First, expectations matter. Students need to know what to expect of their university studies and the courses in which they enrol. But not all students, in particular those who are first in their family, know how to navigate the university or navigate a university classroom. Though orientation may help as regards the university generally, student classroom expectations are framed not only by what instructors write in their syllabi, but also what they do in the classroom. Unfortunately, syllabi are not necessarily accurate portrayal of what is actually required. The result is that students have to discern what is expected during the course. Not all students are able to do so.

But while clear expectations matter, high expectations matter more. No one rises to low expectation. Yet many new students, in particular those who have had a history of academic struggle, do have high expectations of their capacity to succeed. Some are told they will never succeed; others come to have low expectation given their prior experience. Regardless, having or coming to have high expectations for oneself matters. Listen to this student as he talks about how an instructor's expectation affected his own:

> "When I came in a certain teacher that would tell me, 'You begin the first day in the class, you are starting out with an A; don't lose your A.' And that stuck with me. And even if I got a class where the teacher didn't tell us that, in my mind I'm starting with an A. And I'm gonna fight to keep this A. And when that stuck, I took every semester as a challenge and entered every class: 'I'm starting out with an A. And I'm not gonna lose it'."

It is important to note that expectations can also be shaped by students' early experiences in the classroom. As Yeager and Walton of Harvard University have demonstrated, even small successful classroom experiences early in the first semester can enhance students' expectations for their success in the university.

High expectations are one thing; being able to reach those expectations is another. Thus the second attribute of effective classrooms, namely the availability of support, in particular academic support. Universities, of course, have a range of academic support programmes. But as noted in my prior speech, academic support is most effective when it is connected to and/or contextualised to the specific course in which students require support. One of the most common forms of contextualised support, that I described earlier, is supplemental instruction. Listen to what one student says about her experience in supplemental instruction:

> "Well, thankfully, our college has a supplemental instruction programme in which a student who previously did the class and aced it, and knows this professor, this class, and you get together once a week, twice a week sometimes, and you go over the material that's been discussed in class and anybody can come to it. So I got to meet a lot of great people doing that and we formed our own study group on top of that one just to help us out a little bit more, but it has really saved me big time."

Not only did she get academic help, she and other participants formed their own groups. These often become little communities of their own in which students support each other. As you know, students working together typically do better than students working alone. The same phenomena occur in basic skills-teaching communities that we also discussed earlier. Students not only get academic support, they also gain social support from the peer groups in the learning community.

The two-year colleges in the State of Washington in the United States have gone one step further by embedding academic support within certain courses. Like many two-year college across the United States, a majority of students require some sort of academic support. In this case, technical and vocational courses are being co-taught by an academic support person and an academic. They work together so that the academic skills students have to acquire are embedded in their curriculum and are applied in the classroom.

A third characteristic of successful classrooms is the presence of assessment of student performance and its use to trigger academic support when needed. Universities have a range of assessments and that do sometimes trigger academic support. What matters, however, is not simply that support is available, but it's being provided earlier enough in the semester to make a difference. Thus the development of what are referred to as "early-warning" systems. The key term is "early." The earlier the better. This is the case because the longer students' confusion and problems in a course remain, the more difficult it is to help them catch up to coursework and succeed.

Given the challenge of getting faculty to provide early-warning, universities are beginning to explore technological solutions. Some of these are driven by predictive analytics as is the Signals system first implemented at Purdue University in the United States that relies on students taking their exams online. When they do poorly, the system generates a red light that alerts students, instructors and support staff that the student needs support. But such early-warning systems are not very useful if students do not avail themselves of support. Email warnings will not suffice. What is required is for instructors and support staff to be proactive in reaching out to the student urging them to get support.

Some academics are now doing in-class assessments of student learning. Eric Mazur at Harvard University, for instance, uses automated clickers to assess student learning during class. In this instance, an instructor who is, let's say teaching Physics, will stop during class and pose a question to students about the topic being covered in class. They will then have to choose one of several possible answers on their clickers, the result of which will immediately appear on the instructor's computer screen. Depending on the number of incorrect answers, the instructor will quickly review the material before going on. Other instructors, as I have, use the so-called "one-minute paper" technique that ask students, at the end of class, to identify writing, without identifying themselves, what was unclear during in the class, or what is referred to as the "muddiest point". After reviewing those papers, the instructor will identify three of the most often cited muddiest points. At the outset of the next class the instructor will review those points to make sure confusion does not continue. There is a wonderful book by Thom Angelo and Patricia Cross called

Classroom Assessment Techniques that is composed of multiple chapters each with a different assessment technique. It should be on the shelves of all instructors.

In either case, these techniques provide a very early warning to the instructor about learning in the class. More importantly, research has shown that such techniques, when used consistently, improve learning in the classroom. They do so for a number of reasons. First, students get immediate feedback so that confusion does not continue beyond that class to the next. Second, because, students do not identify themselves, they can honestly tell what they do not know. Third, if done consistently, students come to expect that they will again be asked what they do not understand. That in turn leads more students to actively question their learning during class, a reflective process we refer to as critical listening that also improves learning. Finally, the instructors get feedback about their teaching and therefore the opportunity to improve their teaching.

The fourth attribute of effective classrooms is engagement. Simply put, students who interact with faculty and students and indeed staff – when appropriate – in or around the classroom, do better in the classroom. Engagement matters. But some types of engagement matter more for learning than others. That which is most predictive of learning is active engagement with other students in the class in learning activities. It is, in part, because students who spend more time with their classmates in active learning also spend more time studying. But studying is not just sitting alone at one's desk, but also being actively engaged with others in trying to learn.

This is why increasing number of academics are turning to pedagogies such as cooperative learning, problem-based or project-based learning that require students to be actively engaged with their peers in classroom learning. The latter two pedagogies also require students to apply what they are learning together to solve problems or complete projects. More than anything else, application of what is being learned enhances learning.

Listen to what this student says about his experience in a classroom that employs cooperative learning:

> "They give us group assignments in the classes where we have to communicate with other students and we can connect with them online through discussion boards and stuff like that and we have to do different assignments together as a group which has helped me, otherwise I wouldn't probably communicate with anyone else in my class."

Notice that he said, "we have to communicate with other students". My point is that such engagements do not arise by chance. They have to be intentionally structured into the very fabric of the classroom that requires students to engage. Then he said, "Otherwise I may not have ever talked to anyone else". The same can be said of learning communities where students share two or more classes together and cohort programmes that require students proceed through the curriculum together.

Listen to another student:

> "You know, the more I talk to other people about our class stuff, the homework, the tests, the more I'm actually learning … and the more I learn not only about other people, but also about

the subject because my brain is getting more, because I'm getting more involved with other students in the class."

Notice that he equates learning to "getting more involved with other students in class". Given our knowledge of student development, it is not surprising that for many traditional-aged students social engagement is often a precursor to academic engagement. By contrast, students who are socially isolated often do not become academically engaged. Thus the power of pedagogies that require active learning with others.

He concludes his comment with, "I'm getting more involved with the class even after class." What he was referring to was that involvement in the class leads him and others in class to keeping talking about their learning even after class. They do so in part because social engagement is the glue that leads them to continue together after class. That is what he meant by "class after class". Study time expands because they have a social as well as academic reason to do so.

To summarise, classrooms that hold high expectations for their learning, that provide support for their learning, that use assessment and feedback to trigger support when it is needed, and require students to be actively engaged with their peers in learning, are classrooms in which students are more likely to learn and in turn succeed. And the more frequently students succeed in their courses, one course at a time over time, the more likely they are to persist and complete their programmes of study. Again, such classrooms do not arise by chance. It requires an intentional, structured and proactive course of action directed toward the goal of student learning, not simply course completion. It also requires collaboration among the academics and those support persons working with them. In the final analysis, though academics play the primary role in shaping classrooms, it proves that everyone's action, in particular support staff, can improve student learning.

Lecture 4: Improving institutional rates of student success

Student success does not arise by chance. Nor does improvement in institutional rates of student success. When you look at institutions or indeed programmes within institutions that are successful in graduating their students you will find they share one common characteristic, namely that they do not leave student success to chance. Their success is not a random occurrence. It is the result of an intentional, structured course of action that is systematic and coordinated in nature, involving many people across campus.

What does it mean to be intentional? First, it means an institution or programme has a long-term course of action with clearly-defined goals that can be measured so as to enable it to assess to what degree it is achieving those goals. It is too often the case that programmes are unable to clearly define the goals they are trying to achieve or the degree to which they are successful in doing so. My point is simple: before you begin, make sure you can clearly define the goals of your efforts, how you will measure those goals, and in turn determine whether you are successful in achieving those goals. There are many outcomes that are not easy to measure. Doing so may involve the collection of both quantitative as well as qualitative evidence.

This leads to a second point, namely the need for data. You need consistent, reliable data, quantitative and/or qualitative, to drive your decision-making. At the same time, you need to collect data to determine not only whether the programme is achieving its goals, what is known as summative assessment, but also data to inform you how the programme can be improved over time, which is known as formative assessment. As regards the former, you need to establish measures, typically quantitative, that are agreed upon by the various stakeholders whose support is needed for programme continuation. As regards the latter, formative assessment, you should establish a mechanism that allows you to hear the voices of students talk about their experiences in the programme. You should do so in a manner that would approximate, as best you can, what they would say about their experience as if you as an academic, support staff, or administrator were not present. In other words you need to need what they say about the programme, or institution for that matter, when they talk among themselves.

Being intentional also requires that you allocate the resources necessary to achieve the goals of the programme. Though resources are always limited, you still need to plan ahead and determine what resources, human, financial and educational, you need to ensure as best you can programme success. While doing so, do not underestimate the time and effort required for programme success.

What does it mean to be structured? It means that you establish a coherent organisational structure to guide your actions with clearly defined lines of responsibility and linkages to other parts of the university. In the case of a university action plan, institutions often establish an office, position (e.g. Dean of Student Success), or committee and assign to that entity the responsibility and resources to guide, coordinate and oversee the action of other programmes and people within the university. My point is simply this: you need to establish an office, position, or committee that has as its responsibility to oversee and bring structure to action. Without the assignment of responsibility and some degree of authority, structured action typically does not follow and coordination is very hard to achieve and maintain.

What does it mean to be systematic and coordinated? Systematic means that you attempt to address the various facets of student experience that shape the outcome you seek to achieve. Realistically you cannot address every facet of student experience. But you can and should attempt to shape those student experiences related to the sought-after outcome over which you already have some degree of control. As I argued earlier, if the intended outcome is greater rates of student success as defined by completion, it follows that you must address student classroom experience because classroom success is the building block on which student completion is built.

It follows that being systematic requires that you also bring together other offices, programmes, and/or people who are concerned with that part of the activity that you are not in order to coordinate their varying actions. Doing so requires having clear linkages of communication between the office, position or person who is charged with overseeing action with other offices, programmes or persons who have responsibility for related actions. Making institutional-level changes requires many offices, programmes and people working together for the same goal.

Let me share my own experience, some years ago, in directing a university-wide effort at Syracuse University to improve graduation rates overall and reduce the gap in graduation rates between white and African-American students. I was asked by the Chancellor of our university, president or rector in your system, to develop a committee to address the issue of university rates of retention and the retention of African-American students, most of whom with from low-income families. When I began, some 25 years ago, the overall graduation rate of the university was approximately 54% and the difference between African-American students and white students, primarily of European descent, was roughly 23% or approximately the national average. Currently our overall graduation rate is about 84% and the gap between white and African-American students is about 6% even though we continue to admit a sizeable percentage of low-income students. In fact, among private universities in the United States, Syracuse University now has one of highest proportion of low-income students. Our graduation rate improved even as we became more diverse. It is a noteworthy achievement.

But it took time and a long-term strategy that was structured and systematic in nature. My first step was to bring together all the key stakeholders in the university, those who were located at key leverage points within the university. Not just people who you know and like but those who have authority to get things done in different domains of action within the university (e.g. academic and student affairs, administration, residential staff, etc.). My goal in doing so was to establish trust and obtain their willingness to work together to achieve our common goal. It took over a year of meetings to do so before we moved to establish a plan of action. But once that trust was established, it was much easier to agree on a common course of action.

The first step was to obtain and in turn distribute across the university data on student progression and completion rates for students overall, for different groups of students, and for different programmes within the university. We had to establish a commonly agreed-upon set of facts that would serve as the foundation upon which all subsequent action could be judged. We shared information, we shared data, we exposed our dirty laundry. It was not easy, but that's a condition of collaboration.

We moved to implement a series of actions, often one at a time, and measure each year our progress in improving student success. Each year we would publish the same set of data. Each year we would host a meeting to share with the university community what was being done to improve student success. It was a slow process, but after 25 years of effort, we can say with some pride, we were successful. But, let me repeat, it took time and a willingness to keep working together. Too often initiatives start and stop and do not give themselves the time to see their actions take root.

I should point out that one of the important steps we took, very early in our efforts, was to address the traditional gap between academic and student affairs. We sought to break down the traditional silos that separated the two domains of action. We did not want to repeat the pattern where an action was lead either by one or the other, but not both. We were very conscious of the need for joint effort and the collaboration between academic and student affairs, especially those in academic and social support. Like a number of

universities, we sought to integrate the two within one office, one division so that they would meet together in the same space and over time learn from each other. In effect we recognised that significant improvement in university graduation rates also required some degree of reorganisation of our own efforts.

Implementing effective programmes

Let me know turn to the development of programmes to address issues shaping student success within the university. Once we identified a possible course of action, let us say a first-year seminar, we read as much as we could about them, we visited websites and, importantly, talked to other people who were running the same programmes at other universities that were like our own. Despite all we read, and all the websites we visited, it proved to be the case that talking to other people about their programmes was the most valuable. So let me urge you, if you are thinking about building a mentoring programme, for instance, like the one at Stellenbosch University, call them up and talk with them.

But when you talk to someone who is running a successful programme elsewhere, do not just ask them what they are doing; ask them how they got to do what they are doing now. The first question is about their current action. The second concerns how they implemented their programme in a way that allowed them to be successful. While it is important to know the attributes of a successful programme, knowing how to successfully implement it is more important. Poor implementation undermines any action however successful elsewhere.

Let me offer you several pieces of advice about successful implementation. First start small and pilot test. The larger the programme you start at initiation, the more managerial problems you have that may undermine the programme before it begins. Second, carry out both summative and formative assessment. The latter is especially important because you will invariably discover that regardless of how much you read and talk to other people about a programme, implementing a programme in your context will reveal issues that you did not consider.

Third, all programmes that succeed go through an initial three- to four-year period of slow growth as they assess and make changes before the programme "takes off." This is sometimes referred to as the "tipping point" in programme development when one observes increased outcome effect over time. Unfortunately too many efforts stop before they get to that point. They do not give themselves the time it takes to succeed.

It turns out most studies of change over time, whether it's revolutionary change, voting patterns, school participation or programme development reveal that most improvement over time takes on the forms of an S-curve over time or what is known as a Sigmoidal Curve. At the outset change is small, but once improvement takes hold, typical three to four years into programme development, outcome efforts increase. Eventually, you reach what is known as the "ceiling" to any programme, namely that no one programme can address all the issues that impact the goal of the programme. There is only so much any one action can achieve. Hence the need for a systematic approach that addresses a range of issues shaping student success.

One reason why I have spent time on the character of implementation and the time it typically takes to generate noticeable improvements is to urge you to make it clear to those whose support you need to develop a programme or course of action that they should not rush to judge the actions successful before it has time to fully develop. This is but one reason why many actions stop because those whose support is needed reach the premature conclusion that the action is not working.

If you are getting resources from a foundation for the programme like CHE, Department of Higher Education, or your own institution, make sure they understand the time it takes to develop an effective action and urge them not judge your programme after just one or two years. In the United States, for example, a major national project to improve completion in our two-year colleges, called Achieving the Dream, has taken five to six years before it reached a tipping point. Why? Because the project is working not just with one or two colleges, but with many colleges across the nation each of which has its own particular set of circumstance. It takes time.

Sustaining action

It's one thing to begin an initiative to improve student success; it's another to ensure that it endures over time after its initial implementation. This is not simply a matter of the issue that we just discussed. Rather it is a function of the fact that too many programmes do not plan at the outset for their continuation over the long term. To do so you should plan for your replacement at the very outset of your work and recruit others to join you who might replace you over time.

Several thoughts

First, evidence matters. Unless the programme can demonstrate in a convincing manner that its impacts outweigh the costs associated with its operation, it is unlikely that any institution would continue the programme over time. What one hopes to achieve is that the evidence is sufficiently convincing that the institution is willing to support the programme and build the cost of the programme into their ongoing budget. In other words, it becomes part of what the institution does each year. What type of support does a programme have to obtain? Clearly you need administrative support because they control the purse strings of the institution. You may also need the support of your colleagues in academic affairs or student affairs whose work is part of the programme. In any case, you will need the support of students who are willing to participate in the programme, that is if it is voluntary. The question then is what type of evidence do you need to gain the support of these groups? For administrators, numbers of programme impact matter. For academics like you, it is evidence that it is possible, given their work lives, to join your efforts and doing so will yield positive results. For students, it is evidence that the programme helps them and is possibly fun. Whereas the first set of data can be presented by programme and institutional research staff, the second is best delivered by other academics who participate in the programme. For students, other students in the programme are best conveyers of evidence.

Gaining long-term support is important, but not sufficient to ensure programmes continue over time. Eventually those who initiate a programme get tired and move on. Therefore those who initiate a programme have to plan, at the very outset, for their eventual replacement. But to recruit replacements, the initiators have to be willing to let those who assume responsibility for the programme have a voice in how it will operate in the future. This typically means that programmes that sustain themselves over time invariably change somewhat as new people take responsibility for the programme.

Scaling up action

But of the programmes that endure, only a very small proportion scale up to serve a large proportion of students. Most remain boutique programmes that serve a relatively small proportion of students, in part because many began as targeted programmes serving a specific group of students. Generating significant improvement in institutional rates of completion, however, requires that programmes scale up beyond their initial target group. Doing so requires that the programme demonstrate its usefulness to many different segments of the university. Typically this is most likely in the first year of university study before students become separated into their majors. Perhaps it is not surprising that the one initiative that has scaled up is the first year seminar. It has because the seminar, while serving the same function, can be adapted to serve varying student needs. Again, data matter. That is to say that to scale up the programme has to demonstrate that it can help students of varying fields of students succeed in the first year. In the United States the evidence of the effectiveness of the first year seminar, when properly implemented, is widespread. In fact a number of universities now require all first year students to take a first year seminar.
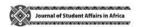
Closing thoughts

As we close our conversation, it bears repeating that student success and improvement in rates of student success does not arise by chance. It requires intentional, structured and proactive course of action that is systematic in nature and coordinated in application. It requires collaboration among many programmes, offices and individuals. And it requires time and the willingness to see programmes through to their maturation. As you are part of a national effort to improve graduation rates across South Africa, a goal which is central to your country's future, it is more important than ever that you see this initiative through. Doing so will take 10 or more years of effort. In the United States, we have been involved for over 20 years in an effort to improve our graduation rates and we are not yet done. There is still much to do.

A final note. These efforts will not be easy; you will sometimes disagree and no doubt become tired. Remember this is not about you. Nor, in the United States, is it about me. It is about our students. Their future is our future. Their future is our nation's future. As you go forward please do not be reluctant to contact me if I can be of help. Thank you.

REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

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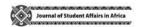
Reflections on Tinto's South Africa lectures

Laura W. Perna*

Providing reflections on Prof. Vincent Tinto's South Africa lectures is an incredible honour. Like countless other scholars and practitioners in the field of higher education administration, I have long relied on Tinto's work to provide a foundation for my own efforts to understand how to improve students' college-related outcomes. In his first lecture, Tinto reflects on the "flash of recognition" that occurred when he learned about Durkheim's theory of suicide. Similarly, I vividly remember reading the second edition of his book, *Leaving College* (University of Chicago Press), in my apartment in Ann Arbor when I was a doctoral student at the University of Michigan. The way that he used theory to inform his conceptual model of student departure was incredibly helpful to me, as I worked to understand how to conceptualise my dissertation study of the predictors of the choice of college that students attend. I am one of the many thousands who have cited this book – as well as many of Tinto's other incredibly useful publications – over the course of my career.

Through several decades of relevant and timely scholarship, Tinto has certainly defined the way that we, as a community of higher education practitioners, policy-makers and researchers, think about how to promote college student success. The impact of his work on higher education policy, practice and research cannot be understated.

Drawing on this body of scholarship, Tinto's four lectures offer many useful insights. In this essay, I first reflect on the theoretical and practical importance of Tinto's insights. I then summarise the three lessons that Tinto offers and pull from a recent study of the role of state policies in improving student outcomes to offer additional perspective on these lessons. I conclude with a brief statement about the benefits of cross-national examinations of a common question: How do we promote college student success?

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Theoretical and practical importance of Tinto's insights

Tinto's insights are useful to higher education policy-makers, practitioners and researchers because of their theoretical grounding, explicit connections to practice, and relevance to one of the most pressing issues facing higher education. Tinto's insights are derived from a theoretically-grounded understanding of the processes that produce college student success. As Tinto notes, theory provides an underlying explanation for student behaviours and why particular policies, programmes and practices influence college student success. Tinto's scholarship – scholarship that was developed primarily to understand the success of college students in the United States – is relevant to understanding college student success in South Africa (and other nations) because it is theoretically grounded. It is this theoretical grounding that permits the transferability of findings across national contexts.

Second, with his focus on identifying actions that higher education institutions can take to improve college students' success, Tinto's scholarship has tremendous practical value. He stresses that we – as higher education policy-makers, practitioners and researchers – have an obligation to improve college student success, given the many benefits of higher education for students and our societies. He also urges institutions not to "blame the victim", but instead to recognise the ways that an institution's structures and systems "shape the success of its own students". Tinto appropriately recognises that "more effort is required" to improve college student success, as too many students are not succeeding. There are clearly many "decisions and actions" that we can take to change institutional structures and systems and, consequently, improve students' college-related experiences and outcomes. Tinto urges us to make these decisions and take these actions.

Third, Tinto's scholarship is important because it centres on addressing one of the most pressing questions facing higher education in nations across the globe: How can we improve college student success? A review of the many benefits of higher education underscores the importance of addressing this question. With higher levels of education come countless benefits for both individuals and the societies in which they live. But, in the United States, educational attainment has stagnated and too many students who enter college do not finish. On average, only 58.8% of first-time, full-time students who entered a four-year college or university in the US in 2005 completed a bachelor's degree within six years (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013a). Completion rates vary considerably across different types of higher education institutions in the US, ranging from 31% at four-year institutions with open admission policies to 88% at selective four-year institutions (defined here as institutions that admit fewer than 25% of all applicants). Only 31% of first-time, full-time students who entered a two-year institution in 2008 seeking a certificate or degree successfully completed a certificate or degree within 150% of the expected time (three years for an associate's degree). These low completion rates represent substantial inefficiencies in the higher education system and translate into considerable costs in time and money to students.

Students who enrol in college but do not complete a degree lose the time and money that they invested in trying to obtain a degree and fail to realise the many benefits

that come with degree completion, including a higher-paying job, lower likelihood of employment and poverty, and better working conditions. Many of these students also have loan debt to repay. In 2011–2012, 53% of first-time, full-time undergraduate students attending public four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. received student loans (along with 63% of those attending private not-for-profit institutions and 83% of those attending private for-profit institutions) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). In the fourth quarter of 2012, 60% of those with outstanding education debt in the US had balances of US$10 000 or higher; 30% owed at least $25,000 and 4% owed at least US$100 000 (College Board, 2013). Students who successfully complete their degree programmes are more likely to obtain jobs that pay salaries sufficient to enable loan repayment.

Tinto's three lessons for improving student success
In the four lectures, Tinto draws from his scholarship to identify three lessons that should inform institutional actions for improving college students' success:

1. Colleges and universities must provide students with not only the opportunity to enrol, but also the academic, financial, and social supports that they require to complete their educational programme;
2. To promote student success, colleges and universities must ensure that students have the opportunity to engage in high-quality classroom experiences; and
3. Improvements in college student success will "not arise by chance".

Tinto's first lesson appropriately recognises that promoting college student success requires more than enrolling students; higher education institutions must also provide the supports that students need to persist and progress to degree completion. Clearly, college student success is the result of a longitudinal process that is influenced by multiple forces and factors. Tinto offers poignant examples to illustrate the advising and academic support that students from different backgrounds often require.

Tinto's second lesson stresses the centrality of teaching and learning to college student success. Although "success" is typically measured by degree completion, Tinto argues that what really matters to an individual's future economic and social well-being is learning. As such, he stresses the responsibility of faculty for promoting student success. He recommends that faculty promote learning by obtaining early assessments of student progress and by using these assessments to identify and provide appropriate learning supports, as well as by adopting pedagogical practices that actively engage students in learning.

Tinto's third lesson stresses that creating meaningful improvements in college student success requires an intentional, structured, systematic and coordinated approach. He argues that, at the foundation of any effort to improve college student success, must be clearly-defined institutional goals that are shared by key stakeholders, collection and use of data to monitor institutional progress toward achieving those goals, dedication of resources required for goal achievement, careful attention to implementation of programmes designed to advance institutional goals, passage of sufficient time to allow programme outcomes to be realised, and efforts to scale up successful programmes to serve larger segments of the

population. To promote college student success, higher education institutions must establish student success as a goal and then identify and implement strategies for intentionally and systematically achieving this goal.

Insights from a study of the role of state policy in promoting college student success

Tinto's lessons focus on what higher education institutions can and should do to promote college student success. This focus is appropriate, as higher education institutions have the most direct responsibility for improving college student success. Also important but recognised only in passing in these lectures is the public's responsibility – as manifest by the ways that the national and/or state government limits and promotes the opportunity for students to enrol and succeed in college. What higher education institutions can and should do to promote college student success is often mediated by public policies created and implemented by national, regional, state and/or local governments. While Tinto characterises a university as "the system" that influences college student success, the configuration and operation of this system is shaped by public policies established by government agencies and the actions of other stakeholders (e.g., foundations, philanthropic organisations, businesses and employers).

In the United States, the federal government influences college student success primarily through its authorisation and funding of several large student financial aid programmes (e.g., the federal Pell grant programme). In the United States, state governments also play a noteworthy role in promoting the educational attainment of their populations. Each US state has its own configuration of higher education institutions and its own structures for governing and coordinating its institutions. Each state has also developed its own policies for promoting higher education attainment.

In *The Attainment Agenda: State Policy Leadership in Higher Education*, Joni Finney and I draw from case studies of five states (Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Texas and Washington) to identify five cross-state conclusions about the ways that state policies influence higher education attainment. These cross-state conclusions have important parallels to Tinto's three lessons and productively enhance understanding of his three lessons.

1. Improving student success requires a comprehensive approach and leadership

Professor Tinto emphasises that there is "no magic cure" for improving college student success. With his attention to bridging academic silos and urging coordination between faculty/academic affairs and support affairs, he recognises the importance of a comprehensive and intentional approach to improving student success. Reflecting a similar orientation, Joni and I argue that there is "no silver bullet" that state policy-makers can adopt to improve higher education attainment or close gaps in degree attainment across groups. The challenges that limit college student success are too many, too complex, and too varied to be simply addressed with just one particular type of public policy (or institutional practice). To create meaningful improvements in college student success, we need a comprehensive approach that recognises the multiple forces that play a role.

Like Tinto, our cross–state model also highlights the importance of leadership for improving college success and, consequently, raising overall higher educational attainment. States and institutions have many policies and practices in place that may be related to college student outcomes. Making meaningful improvements in college student success, however, requires more than having a collection of policies and practices. Instead, these policies and practices must be orientated toward providing a comprehensive approach to addressing a goal that is shared by key stakeholders: improving success of all college students.

2. Improving student success requires attention to the context

In our study, Joni and I found considerable differences among the five study states, not only in terms of current and past higher education attainment, but also in terms of many other dimensions, including a state's demographic, historical, economic and political characteristics. Because of these and other contextual differences, it is difficult to simply apply lessons about the effectiveness of particular policies across states. Any effort to improve higher education attainment must recognise the characteristics of the state context in which the policy is being implemented.

As institutions seek to respond to Tinto's first lesson (and address the full range of supports needed to promote college student success), they should also consider the role of the relevant context. To identify the types of needed supports, a higher education institution should consider the demographic and academic characteristics of enrolled students, the forces that limit the academic progress and persistence of different groups of students at the institution, and the institutional resources available for providing necessary supports.

As Tinto notes, today's college students are increasingly diverse in backgrounds, goals, needs and life circumstances. At many higher education institutions, most students are not "traditional" – that is, transitioning into higher education immediately from high or secondary school and attending higher education full-time and with financial support from their parents. As illustrated elsewhere (see Perna, 2010), "non-traditional" students – particularly students who are older, working full-time, and/or supporting a family of their own – will need different types of supports if they are to make satisfactory academic progress and complete their degree programme.

Higher education institutions should also consider their particular characteristics when considering how best to address Tinto's call for institutions to encourage faculty to use more effective pedagogical practices. In the US, increasing numbers of faculty are employed in adjunct positions rather than in full-time, tenure-stream positions. For instance, just 50% of all faculty in degree-granting institutions were employed full-time in 2011, down from 65% two decades earlier (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013a). Even among full-time instructional staff, just 67% held "traditional" academic ranks of full, associate or assistant in 2011. Higher education institutions should consider the implications of faculty's employment status for the nature of teaching and learning on campus and the implementation and delivery of any intervention designed to improve pedagogical practices.

Clearly there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach for providing the supports that students need to succeed, given the diversity of higher education institutions and the students they serve. A higher education institution's approach must be tailored to reflect its institution-specific characteristics. What works at my current institution, a highly selective, research-intensive university enrolling primarily traditional-age students who receive rigorous academic preparation prior to entering and with a large percentage of faculty who are employed full-time in the tenure-stream, will be unlikely to "work" at other institutions (even institutions in the same state and metropolitan area) that enrol students with lower levels of academic readiness for college, fewer financial resources from their families, and different patterns of attendance, and who have other different institutional characteristics.

3. Improving college student success requires public policies that are targeted toward addressing the primary forces that limit higher education attainment

Prof. Tinto stresses the need for higher education institutions to provide the academic, financial and social support services that students need to promote academic progress and persistence. Along the same lines, Joni and I identify from our cross-state analyses three categories of state policies that promote the educational attainment of their populations. Each of these categories of policies has implications for the types of support that institutions can and should provide.

One category of state policies that influence higher education attainment, as well as the necessary institutional actions required to promote college student success, pertains to policies that ensure that students can move between educational entities without loss of academic credit. In the US many students who seek to transition from secondary school to post-secondary education are not adequately academically prepared for college-level work. These students are often required to participate in "remedial" or developmental coursework prior to entering college-level coursework. In 2007/2008, 24% of all first-year undergraduates attending public two-year institutions took at least one remedial course, along with 21% of all first-year undergraduates at public four-year institutions and 15% of all first-year undergraduates at private not-for-profit four-year institutions (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013b). Many students in the US also experience loss of academic credit as they endeavour to transfer from one higher education institution to another. Even in US states that have made some progress toward creating state-wide transfer policies, higher education institutions continue to have discretion about whether to grant academic credit for coursework completed at another higher education. The failure of state policy to ensure the smooth movement of students between educational institutions and sectors has important implications for the types of support that higher education institutions must provide.

A second category of policies that influence college student success pertains to policies that determine college affordability. In the US college affordability is determined by three fiscal policies: state appropriations (primarily to public colleges and universities but in some states to private colleges and universities as well); tuition; and student financial aid. In recent years, state appropriations to institutions per student have declined and many institutions

have responded by raising tuition. Institutions often have responsibility for deciding the amount of tuition and fees to charge to students. While financial aid is provided by the federal and state governments in the US, many colleges and universities also allocate institutional funds to providing student financial aid. Institutions make decisions about the amounts and forms of financial aid to award to students (e.g., grants, loans, work–study). Institutional decisions about tuition and financial aid influence the ability of students to enrol in higher education, stay enrolled until degree completion, and engage in coursework and other academic experiences directly and indirectly. For instance, students who engage in considerable amounts of paid employment while also taking classes – in order to pay tuition and other bills – necessarily have less time available to devote to their coursework (Perna, 2010).

A third category of policies influencing college student success pertains to the mechanisms a state uses to ensure the availability of high-quality higher education options. All five of our study states were struggling to meet educational needs within their own borders. Few states have enough money to meet educational needs by building new campuses. Some states are seeking to expand educational opportunity by allowing community colleges (public two-year institutions) to offer bachelor's degrees. Others are exploring the utility of online and distance education. The strategies that a state uses to expand the availability of higher education may have important implications for the strategies a higher education institution adopts to support the academic progress and persistence of its students.

4. Improving college student success requires orienting public policies toward improving equity in outcomes across groups

A fourth conclusion in *The Attainment Agenda* (Perna & Finney, 2014) is that state policies must be orientated toward closing the many gaps in educational attainment that persist across groups. Attention only to the average level of "college student success" at the institutional or state level masks tremendous variation in educational outcomes based on an individual's family income, race/ethnicity and parents' education, as well as the region, state and locality in which an individual lives. Higher education is believed to promote upward social and economic mobility, but variations in degree completion rates across demographic groups suggest unequal opportunity to realise these benefits. In the United States, educational attainment continues to be substantially lower for students from the lowest- than the highest-income families, students who are Black and Hispanic than for students who are white, and students who are the first in their families to attend college than for students whose parents have attended and completed college.

If we are to make meaningful progress in closing these gaps, public policies and institutional programmes and practices must be orientated toward leveling the playing field and ensuring equal opportunity to fully participate in and benefit from higher education. When state policies and institutional practices do not address the academic, financial and social issues that limit college student success, students with the most need for these supports are typically disproportionately negatively affected.

5. Improving college student success requires systematic collection and use of data and research

A final conclusion from *The Attainment Agenda* (Perna & Finney, 2014) is that states need to collect and use data to monitor progress toward achieving targeted goals and identify necessary adjustments. Tinto also stresses the role of data in constructing a deliberate institutional approach to promoting student success. Many types and forms of data are increasingly collected and available from many sources. The challenge is for states and higher education institutions to ensure that the data that is collected enables state and institutional decision-makers to assess progress toward achieving targeted student success goals and determine the effectiveness of the policies and programmes that have been implemented to achieve the goals. States and institutions must collect data to assess the effectiveness of various strategies and interventions for different groups of students and use the results of these analyses to identify needed modifications in policies, programmes and practices.

Benefits of cross-national examinations of how to promote college student success

Over the past few years, I have had the opportunity to expand my scholarship beyond considering higher education in the US to study higher education in several other nations, including Ireland, Hungary and Kazakhstan. Needless to say, these nations differ from the US and other nations in many ways. Each nation has its own unique system of higher education and structures for governing its system. Each also has particular historical, demographic, political and economic characteristics. These and other contextual characteristics influence the nature of the college student success "problem" that must be addressed, as well as the particular public policies and institutional programmes and practices that may be realistically adopted.

Even with the many different contextual variations, I have been struck by the remarkable similarity across nations in the types of questions being asked about higher education. Government officials and higher education leaders across the globe are seeking to answer the question: How can we best promote college student success? Leaders in many nations are also seeking answers to other fundamental questions, including: Who gets access to what kinds of higher education opportunities? Who should pay the costs of higher education? How can new and emerging technologies be used to improve teaching and learning, promote effective delivery of support services, and reduce the costs of higher education? Who (faculty, administrators, government officials) makes what types of decisions about higher education institutions and their operations? What is the appropriate balance between institutional autonomy and accountability to the government? How should curricula be structured to promote degree completion and workforce readiness? What types of education and training are required for national economic competitiveness?

Tinto notes in his first lecture that his insights are informed by his experience working with more than 400 higher education institutions in nations on three continents. Considering how other nations answer fundamental questions facing higher education has also greatly improved my knowledge and understanding of how to address these questions

within particular national and institutional contexts. While South African higher education institutions may learn from Tinto's critical insights and outstanding body of scholarship, policy-makers, practitioners, and scholars in the US and other nations would also benefit from a greater understanding of how institutions in South Africa are determining how to improve college student success as we (as a global community) seek to address shared fundamental questions.

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Report on the establishment of the Southern African Student Affairs Federation

Saloschini Pillay*

The launch of the Southern African Federation for Student Affairs and Services (SAFSAS) on 25 October 2012 in Mangaung with the signing of a memorandum of understanding among a number of affiliate associations, and the hosting of its inaugural conference from 4 to 6 August 2014, were historic events for student affairs and services (SAS) in southern Africa, as it was the first time in higher education in this region that the sector brought together under one roof a collection of student affairs associations and societies.
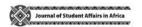
The formation of a South African federation was proposed in September 2007 by Ms Naledi Pandor, then South African Minister of Education, with the purpose "to explore the feasibility of single higher education student affairs and services practitioner's body and the establishment of a common understanding on quality student development and support".

It is envisaged that SAFSAS will provide a platform for engagement on SAS issues in the developing world; a united voice in responding to critical issues impacting students and SAS; as well as an opportunity to work towards a coherent, equitable and professional student affairs and services in the region. In this way SAFSAS hopes to move away from the current fragmented response to national imperatives and challenges and hopes to become a dynamic and cohesive voice for SAS in higher education in South Africa and beyond.

SAFSAS draws on the mandate and the diversity of its affiliates to become a leading voice for student affairs and services in southern Africa, with a commitment to the holistic education of students whilst integrating student life and learning communities. Further, its mission is to provide professional development of both the staff and students and increase research on student affairs. SAFSAS hopes to strengthen collaboration between stakeholders within the higher education and training sector, so as to enhance its contribution towards student support, development and success.

The ongoing transformation of the higher education landscape in Africa brings with it a multitude of opportunities and challenges that impact on the seamless delivery of student affairs and services and ultimately impacts on the holistic support and development of students.

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The 2014 inaugural SAFSAS conference focused on the theme "Enhancing student support, development and success in a transforming Higher Education: Implications for holistic, integrated service". It provided a forum for key role-players in the sector to discuss latest developments in student support and services, including exploring relevant case studies and sharing research and skills among its members. The conference provided the opportunity for hands-on learning, a fruitful exchange of ideas, the opportunity to network, discuss critical challenges, access new ideas and best practices and forge collaborative engagements leading to forward-looking strategies and solutions. Delegates presented papers on key areas on the SAS agenda, such as higher education transformation, models structures and strategies in SAS, knowledge production and management in SAS, student realities and the cross-cultural complexities of our current student populations, and preparing students for life beyond higher education. Panel discussions focused on key challenges currently impacting SAS, such as:

- professionalisation of student affairs and services;
- provisioning of student accommodation in higher education;
- student governance and leadership;
- the South African White Paper on Post-school Education and its implications for SAS; and
- the experiences and challenges of student funding.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr Roger Ludeman, President Emeritus of the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS).[1] Ludeman, who is from the United States, delivered a presentation on "Professionalising Student Affairs and Services: An International Perspective". He argued that the need to engage with the professionalisation of SAS is long overdue for South Africa.

Ludeman examined the history and evolution of student support services in the United States and cited examples of best practices in professionalising student services. He stated:

"The difference between being just a civil servant and being a professional is that you don't accept your lot in life. You try to improve it in the interests of your students and your profession […] Using your agreed upon principles, values, theories, skills, you continually act for everything you believe in to try and enhance the learning and development of every student who comes through your university."

Prof. Crain Soudien, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Transformation and Student Affairs at the University of Cape Town looked at the "Transformation of Higher Education – Realities, Challenges and Opportunities", whilst Prof. Ahmed Bawa, Vice-Chancellor of the Durban University of Technology examined the "Current Realities Impacting Students and Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education". In her presentation, Prof. Nan Yeld, Director of University Teaching and Learning Development at the South African Department of Higher Education and Training, outlined the challenges facing student support staff. Yeld's

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1   Ludeman's reflections on the establishment of IASAS were published in the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*, Vol. 2(1).

presentation noted, that while universities recognise their core business as teaching and learning and research, the role of student affairs and services seemed to be overlooked. Further she indicated that universities should consider acknowledging the good work done servicing this crucial area by awarding student support professionals.

The establishment of the SAFSAS will certainly enhance communication, collaboration and consultation between the various SAS-related associations nationally in South Africa and in the wider region. Whilst SAFSAS will be unified by a common strategic vision and mission, it remains distinguishable from the individual associations, identities and roles. Each of the national or regional affiliate associations operates and impacts at different phases and in different spaces of a student's journey. SAFSAS will serve to enhance the holistic support to students as well as the core business of higher education, i.e. teaching and learning, research and community engagement. The federation is made up of the following associations:

- South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP)
- Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE)
- Association of College and University Housing Officers – International – Southern African Chapter (ACUHO-I-SAC)
- Financial Aid Practitioners of South Africa (FAPSA)
- Higher and Further Education Disability Services Association (HEDSA)
- National Association of Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV)
- South African Association of Campus Health Services (SAACHS)

Back row (from left to right): Ms Laetitia Permall, Ms Yanga Futshane, Dr Ian Lange, Ms Nobuntu Rabaza, Mr Andries Slinger, Sr Antionette Goosen, Mr Gugulethu Xaba
Front row (from left to right): Mr Mark Seale, Dr Roger Ludeman, Dr Saloschini Pillay (SAFSAS President), Dr Birgit Schreiber, Dr Sibusiso Chalufu.

The inaugural conference allowed SAS to strengthen collaboration both within and across institutions. SAFSAS is committed to meaningful engagement and has made great strides in understanding its role in embedding SAS in the higher education agenda. The conference deliberations helped shape the strategic objectives and deliverables for the currently elected national executive council (see picture above). The creation of SAFSAS offers the opportunity to harness the strength of a South African national and regional Southern African voice in ensuring a student-centred SAS and enhancing student engagement. In achieving its mandate SAFSAS will draw on the knowledge and experiences of SAS practitioners, academics, university leadership and it is envisaged that it will contribute to the development of a research community on SAS.

The SAFSAS website can be accessed at: http://safsas.ukzn.ac.za.

BOOK REVIEW

Speckman, M. & Mandew, M. (Eds.) (2014). *Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa*
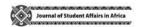## Cape Town: African Minds

Munyaradzi Madambi*

There is an aphorism that I often share with my students, as Dean of Students at the University of Zimbabwe, which quickly came to my mind as I read *Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa*. The aphorism says, "Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up, it knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up it knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn't matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle … when the sun comes up, you better be running." This aphorism is used to assure students that the student affairs division is there to support them in all their noble and constructive endeavours; and that their success, whether 'running away from danger' or 'running after prey' is our ultimate goal. Consistent with this aphorism as it applies at the University of Zimbabwe, *Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa* is a comprehensive exposé of the broad scope of how universities can create, facilitate and advance opportunities for student growth and success in South Africa.

This volume of articles from seasoned and well-accomplished South African student affairs practitioners is a must-read for student affairs practitioners, heads of colleges and universities, scholars and researchers in the area of higher education. The volume has eight well-researched and painstakingly written articles, paying rapt attention on student affairs practices in South Africa, invariably comparing and contrasting these with best practices elsewhere in the developed and developing countries.

Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa is a remarkable demonstration of absolute limits of excellent research, mastery and specialisation in the student affairs discourse, a passion for the profession, and an insatiable knowledge-based zeal to see student affairs transformed into a vehicle of not only student growth, but also for the development of Africa. The clarion call that echoes through and transverse the whole volume is the need for a proper understanding of the place and role of student affairs, its philosophical foundations in education, which then inform the ethos and practices in student affairs, as well as its possible professionalisation. Student affairs management efficiency, effectiveness and relevance in pursuit of student development and success receive appropriate attention in the volume.

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What makes this work great reading for all student affairs practitioners and educational administrators is that it is written by scholars and student affairs practitioners who come from a complex and fascinating working environment: South Africa. This is a country that has a fair share of socio-economic and political dynamics with a very high propensity to keep student affairs practitioners busy. Dynamics in South Africa require student affairs practitioners that are creative, innovative and inventive. South African universities' catchment areas for students are characterised by interesting bipolar extremes: peace and violence, opulence and poverty, health and pandemics, social systems breakdown against a backdrop of the first world in sections of society, etc. South Africa boasts of some of the best universities on the continent, yet it also has universities that Julius Malema labled "glorified high schools". The "rainbow" nature of South Africa also poses serious cultural challenges to student affairs practitioners because it is not always easy to come up with a student affairs model and intervention strategies that can satisfy the diversity of cultures therein. Handling student affairs issues in a country where violence has become endemic and drug abuse prevalent is not a stroll in the park. This background makes *Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa* imperative. And the authors do not disappoint.

Among the major issues articulated in *Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa*, the need for a clear philosophical framework for student affairs is one of the highlights. It is true that without clear metaphysical, epistemological and theoretical foundations underpinning the ethos and practices of student affairs, it is difficult to even conceptualise and articulate the institutional vision, mission, values and mandates. Benchmarks and outcomes of educational goals in general and student affairs in particular have to be informed by the institution's philosophy of education. The lack of a normative metaframework for student affairs, which is not peculiar to South Africa alone, creates a plethora of challenges. As Birgit Schreiber rightly notes, the lack of a proper philosophical foundation for student affairs leads to a lot of second order-level problems. Without an appreciation of the philosophical and educational foundations of student affairs, it is hardly possible for macrolevel administrators in educational institutions to adequately plan and budget for student affairs-related issues. Deployment of adequate and appropriately qualified human resources to student affairs is also highly unlikely when top administration does not understand the role, place and significance of student affairs.

The volume, however, rightly concedes that, as much as we want clear philosophical foundations for student affairs, it is not always easy to have a universally accepted position on what constitute educational goals, values and best practices. The work under review posits that failure to reflect on local best practices or produce new knowledge can open up gaps for the proliferation of foreign models and theories of student affairs management. Reflection on this aspect as presented in the work under review shows that cultural diversity in a "rainbow nation" like South Africa, can lead to paradigm paralysis and/or ambivalence in student affairs. Cultural relativism, a view that "moral or ethical appropriateness of a belief or practice depends on cultural contexts", has serious implications for many aspects in student affairs. For example, the cross-gender student housing model in South Africa, America, Europe and Australia would not appeal to strongly conservative countries like Zimbabwe and Botswana. Counselling, therapy and a host of student advisory services are

new to some parts of Africa, and students sometimes shun them because, culturally, seeking therapy is a sign of weakness, especially to a man. More work needs to be done on these culturally specific, sensitive issues with the view to engendering tolerance and adaptability, if we are to achieve the goal of nurturing global citizens through education.

Another area of utmost importance raised in the volume is the issue of student governance. The question as to whether universities are doing enough to nurture student leaders is pertinent. Are institutions happy with the emerging of prolific, dynamic and critical student leaders? Are legal frameworks and ordinances for student conduct designed to promote growth or to stifle student development? Can student politics be divorced from national politics? Do we have good examples for our students who can provide examples and benchmarks for democratic leadership in Africa and beyond? Can African students admire and/or adopt Western democracy without their leaders accusing them of succumbing to neo-colonialism? It is not only in South Africa that such questions are raised and where relationships between administrators and students may come to be characterised by suspicion, malice, vengeance and contempt. Student leadership and student governance require more attention because this is where the future leadership of nations is nurtured.

The volume also alludes to three phases of development in student affairs, i.e. the *parenting phase*, the *student development phase* and the *integrated support phase*. In my view, the "integrated support phase" needs greater attention in many African institutions because this is the model closest to many philosophies of education, be they African, European, American or Asian. Several features are common about education regardless of background, but the following tend to be very conspicuous when we look at the philosophy of student affairs: firstly, that education is a value-laden, axiological concept; and secondly that students tend to take the character traits and value systems of their professors (people that they admire) and those who spend a lot of time with them. Martin Mandew's calls for collaboration and cooperation between academics can, therefore, not be overemphasised. I fully agree with the notion that there is a very thin line between the academic development and the social development of students. Classical philosophers and educational sociologists such as Socrates and Immanuel Kant, and contemporary scholars such as Richard S. Peters, Lawrence Kolberge and Jean Piaget, present compelling arguments to the effect that intellectual and social development take place concurrently.

Another message that comes out strongly in this volume concerns the need to come up with relevant student affairs methodologies that respond to the needs of certain specific conditions and cultures. There is a strong argument for home-grown resources for counsellors to "strike the right code". The volume also rightly advocates the need to design systems, mechanisms and strategies for specific target groups, appreciating that "human behaviour is often influenced by material conditions in a given environment". What this then means is that student affairs practitioners at universities like Stellenbosh and those at the University of the Limpopo may need to vary their approaches and contents of student development. For example, the range of lifeskills and soft skills required by students at these two institutions may differ quite significantly because the areas of focus and levels of engagement will differ depending on students needs' and past experiences.

Another talking point raised in this work is the issue of synergies, not only between student affairs and academics, but also with other institutions designated for youth development. In the case of Zimbabwe where I come from, we have organs such as the Zimbabwe Youth Council; the Ministry of Youth, Gender and Indigenisation; the National Youth Service, etc. The question here is, "How does the national youth development policy influence student affairs development in universities? How are student affairs practitioners influencing national youth development policies?" The need for student affairs practitioners to spread their wings wider cannot be overemphasised.

The issues of material support to, and access into, universities by people from poor and disadvantaged areas are areas of serious debate especially in developing countries. Apart from grappling with issues of paternalism, dependency and entitlement, there are also issues of dehumanisation, confidence and self-efficacy. What intervention strategies are necessary and effective for students who survive through university on handouts? Does the quality of handout really matter to students who have no options? How should a government disburse resources to underprivileged students where there is no accurate means test? Do students on government support have any obligation to the state upon completion? Are governments that benefit from poor countries' brain drain obliged to compensate the country of origin for the investment made in the graduates?

Perspectives of Student Affairs in South Africa is a must-read. Its literary impact will certainly be felt as it makes its way into libraries and offices of student affairs practitioners. Authors and editors of this volume deserve commendation and appreciation for a job well done. Their efforts have gone a long way in expanding frontiers of knowledge in this area where not much research has been carried out.

BOOK REVIEW

Pascarella, T. and Terenzin, P. (2005). *How College Affects Students, A Third decade of Research* (2nd ed.)
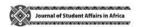## San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Randall S. Lange*

How College Affects Students is one of the most authoritative and most cited publications in student affairs. It is authored by Ernest T. Pascarella and Patrick T. Terenzini. At the time of writing, Pascarella served as professor of educational psychology at the University of Illinois, Chicago and as an associate director for research at the Center for Instructional Development at Syracuse University. The main focus of his research deals with the impact of college on students and student persistence in higher education. Terenzini served as professor of higher education and senior scientist at the Center for the Study of Higher Education at the Pennsylvania State University. He was also professor of higher education at the Institute of Higher Education of the University of Georgia from 1986 to 1989 and an assistant to the president for planning and director of institutional research at the State University of New York, Albany. He has received the Sidney Suslow Award and two Forum Best Paper Awards from the Association for Institutional Research.

In 1991 Pascarella and Terenzini published a first volume of the book entitled *How College Affects Students*. The original publication reviewed a vast and complex body of existing literature – from the 1960s through to the late 1980s – that focused on trends in college student development in American higher education. In the American context, "college" refers to undergraduate studies at university level and does not refer to technical and vocational (further education) colleges as is the case in South Africa.

In 2005 Pascarella and Terenzini released an updated and expanded second volume of the book, which reviews what has been learnt in the last decade and introduces more theories involving the overall effects of college on students. It also provides a more detailed view concerning the factors that may play a role in how life at university affects students' development. The structure of the second edition does not differ much from the 1991 edition; the sections of the original have been retained. It builds on existing knowledge obtained in the first edition and looks at various kinds of effects of college focused on the same six questions that were posed in the 1991 version. These questions deal with change during college, the net effects of college (which deals with how changes in students can be attributed to the college experience), between–college effects, within–college effects,

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conditional effects of college (which deals with how the effects of college vary among different types of students) and the long-term effects of college. However, provided that higher education has changed since 1991, the focus of the research in the second volume has also been adjusted; key among those changes is the composition of the student body in undergraduate education, which has become more diverse. Research was also done focusing on aspects such as teaching and learning; and how students' out-of-class involvement impacts on their development, and this is reflected in the second volume.

It would be impossible to discuss the wealth of knowledge contained in the book. Generally speaking, the book provides an expanded view of how student learning takes place within higher education and is therefore invaluable. Within each chapter, the authors provide a brief summary of the findings in the 1991 work and thereafter provide the new findings, which is helpful to the reader as it assists both in making comparisons and identifying how trends have changed since 1991. Each chapter ends with a summary dealing with the six questions mentioned above and places the new findings in context.

In particular, chapters 1 and 2 provide an introduction, conceptual framework and overview of the volume. Chapters 3 to 9 address student outcomes, whereby each chapter focuses on a specific college outcome. The outcomes that are addressed include students' personal growth and change; their cognitive skills and intellectual growth; verbal and subject matter competency; moral development; career and economic impacts; psychosocial change during college; educational attainment and persistence; as well as attitudes and values. These chapters focus on students' overall development as well as the interconnectedness of students' in- and out-of-class experiences as part of this development. One of the most important conclusions drawn from these chapters is that students have to be fully engaged in college life in order to gain the most benefit from the college experience. This engagement refers to ways in which students are involved in various activities during the undergraduate experience, especially the time and effort they put into their education; it deals with how they interact with their peers and teaching staff and to what extent the university provides a conducive environment. It also looks at innovative teaching approaches that move away from the idea of simply having teacher–centred lectures and instead support active engagement of students in the learning and teaching process. Chapter 10 deals with the quality of life of students after college, while chapter 11 provides a summary of how college affects students. Chapter 12 discusses the implications that there may be for policy, practice and research. It looks at new directions for research, research designs, analytical approaches, as well as to the implications of research for public policy and institutional practices and policy.

There are many sections in this book that are relevant to African higher education. These include diversity issues, new information technologies, access to higher education and programme completion, teaching and learning issues as well as the impact of organisational structures and institutional policy. A number of universities in Africa have started to conduct student engagement/student experience surveys. This volume provides the theoretical underpinning for it while outlining how these theories were arrived at in the first place. However, a potential weak point of the book lies in its organisation. The

book is organised in terms of the different types of college outcomes (such as cognitive development, values and career). Instead, it could have focused on what it is in the college experience that may have an influence on these outcomes, such as a students' choice of major subject or particular sets of activities and best practices. Another disadvantage is that the book focuses on colleges in the United States that offer liberal, undergraduate degrees. Insofar, it is bound to ignore the contextual issues and the fact that the book attracts an audience beyond the borders of the United States where, as is typical in most African higher education, students enrol in career-specific undergraduate degree programmes which do not necessarily offer the same potential for developing the general student attributes and skills mentioned in the book.

Overall, Pascarella and Terenzini's second volume is a key reference for those wanting to learn more about how undergraduate education impacts student development. The findings of a large number of studies are synthesised and discussed and the book thus provides an important contribution to the field of higher education studies and student affairs. Moreover, for professionals involved in student affairs and others responsible for student learning the book provides a starting point to decide how and where to focus their attention and practice in relation to improving the attainment of particular college outcomes.

Author biographies

Diane Grayson

Prof. Diane Grayson is Director: Institutional Audits at the South African Council on Higher Education and is responsible for the Quality Enhancement Project, which aims to improve student success at all South African higher education institutions. She has an MSc in physics from the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, a PhD in physics from the University of Washington, USA, with specialisation in physics education, and an honorary doctorate from Umeå University in Sweden in science teacher education. Over the past 24 years she has worked at several universities in South Africa and abroad and has been involved in promoting the teaching and learning of science, technology and mathematics through teaching, research, curriculum development, academic development, coordinating extended degree programmes and serving on both national and international committees.

Thierry M. Luescher–Mamashela

Dr Thierry Luescher-Mamashela is the senior researcher and Assistant Director: Institutional Research of the University of the Free State in Bloemfontein/Mangaung (South Africa). He was previously senior lecturer in higher education studies and political studies at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town where he coordinated the master's programme in higher education and development and the doctoral programme in student affairs. Thierry leads the HERANA research project "Democracy, the University and Student Development" for the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) in Cape Town. Thierry was the first researcher of the Council on Higher Education in South Africa (2002–2007) where he participated in various studies, including *The Governance of Higher Education in South Africa* and *Merger Governance in South African Higher Education* (with Martin Hall and Ashley Symes), the *MBA Review* (with Lis Lange and others), and the project to develop a monitoring and evaluation system of South African higher education. 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?* (published by African Minds). He has published on student governance, student and youth politics, higher education governance, citizenship education, and community engagement, in various journals and books, including the *Journal of Higher Education in Africa, New Agenda, Perspectives in Education, Studies in Higher Education* and *Tertiary Education and Management.* He is a task team member of the Council on Higher Education's 20 Year of Democracy in Higher Education Review. In addition, he is currently editing the book *Student Representation in Higher Education Governance in Africa* (with Manja Klemenčič, Harvard University, and James Otieno Jowi, Moi University, to be published in 2015). Thierry is journal manager and founding member of the Editorial Executive of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa.*

Teboho Moja

Prof. 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*.

Laura W. Perna

Prof. Laura W. Perna is James S. Riepe Professor and founding Executive Director of the Alliance for Higher Education and Democracy (AHEAD) at the University of Pennsylvania, USA. She is also chair of the Higher Education Division of the Graduate School of Education, faculty fellow of the Institute for Urban Research, faculty affiliate of the Penn Wharton Public Policy Initiative, member of the advisory board for the Netter Center for Community Partnerships, and member of the Social Welfare Graduate Group of the School of Social Policy and Practice. She holds bachelor's degrees in economics and psychology from the University of Pennsylvania, and she earned her master's in public policy and PhD in education from the University of Michigan. Laura has held leadership positions in the primary national associations in the field of higher education administration and has received several awards, honours and prestigious fellowships over the course of her career.

Laura's research examines the ways that social structures, educational practices and public policies promote and limit college access and success, particularly for individuals from lower-income families and racial/ethnic minority groups. Her scholarship is published in a variety of outlets, including books, journal articles and policy reports. Recent books include *Understanding the working college student: New research and its implications for policy and practice* (2010, Stylus), *Preparing today's students for tomorrow's jobs in metropolitan America: The policy, practice, and research issues* (2012, University of Pennsylvania Press), *The state of college access and completion: Improving college success for students from underrepresented groups* (with Anthony Jones, 2013, Routledge), and *The attainment agenda: State policy leadership for higher education* (with

Joni Finney, 2014, Johns Hopkins University Press). In addition to her own writing, Laura also served on the editorial boards of leading journals including *Academe, Journal of Higher Education, Review of Higher Education, Journal of College Student Development, Journal of Women in Higher Education,* and *Research in Higher Education*. She is the associate editor of *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research.*

Saloshini Pillay

Dr Saloschini Pillay practises in the field of Clinical Social Work. She has an honors degree in Social Work, masters in Medical Science (Social Work) and a doctorate in Public Administration and Business Management. She has gained extensive experience in the higher education sector, since 1995, as the Director of Student Support Services, focusing on Counselling, Careers, Disability, HIV/AIDS and Academic Development, at the former University of Durban-Westville and the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa and, since 2012, as the Manager: Student Support Services in the UKZN College of Health Sciences.

She is the past President of the Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE) and currently serves on its national executive committee. As part of the executive management team she served on the task team that developed the *SAACDHE Guidelines for Structuring and Developing Counselling and Development services in Higher Education Southern Africa* and *Professional Ethics for Student Counsellors in Higher Education*. Saloschini was actively involved in the task team initiated by the South African Department of Higher Education and Training that led to the establishing of the Southern African Federation for Student Affairs and Services (SAFSAS). She served as the conference chair of the SAFSAS inaugural conference in August 2014 and has been elected as the inaugural President of SAFSAS.

Birgit Schreiber

Dr Birgit Schreiber is Director of the Centre for Student Support Services at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town, South Africa. She holds a PhD from the same university. She has worked within student affairs with focus on student development and support for the past 18 years at various higher education institutions. She has published in national and international academic journals on student support and development, has presented research papers and keynotes in national and international conferences and given lectures at the University of California, Berkley, the University of Leuven in 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 Scheiber has also been involved in various quality assurance panels reviewing student affairs at South African universities and has taken part in the national review of the South African Student Engagement tool (SASSE). She has been a member of the national executive of various national professional organisations including the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP). She currently serves on the Executive of the

Southern African Federation of Student Affairs and Services (SAFSAS) and is the Africa Regional Coordinator of the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS). Dr Schreiber is a founding member of the Editorial Executive of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa*.

Vincent Tinto

Dr Vincent Tinto is a Distinguished University Professor Emeritus at Syracuse University and the former Chair of the Higher Education Program. He has carried out research and has written extensively on higher education, particularly on student success and the impact of learning communities on student growth and attainment. His most recent book *, Completing College*, lays out a framework for institutional action for student success, describes the range of programmes that have been effective in enhancing student success, and the types of policies institutions should follow to successfully implement programmes in ways that endure and scale up over time. He received his BSc. from Fordham in Physics and Philosophy, his M.S. from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Physics and Mathematics, and his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in Education and Sociology.

Vincent has received numerous recognitions and awards including the Council of Educational Opportunity Walter O. Mason 2012 Award for his work on the retention of low-income students. Most recently, he was named recipient of the 2015 President Harry S. Truman Award for the American Association of Community Colleges for his work for community colleges across America. He has some 50 notable publications, including books, research reports, and journal articles, to his credit and has lectured across the United States, Australia, Canada, Europe, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, and South America. From 1990 to 1996 he was associate director of the National Center for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment. He has worked with a number of organisations, foundations and government agencies on issues of student success and sits on a number of advisory boards including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Community College Survey of Student Engagement, and the Lumina Foundation.

Thank you to our reviewers

The JSAA Editorial Executive would like to thank the peer reviewers of Volumes 1 and 2 of the *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* for availing their time and expertise to help select and improve the submissions received for this Journal.

Kate Baier

Umesh Bawa

Laurie Behringer

Cecil Bodibe

Amy Conger

John Dalton

Tom Ellett

Monroe France

Colleen Howell

Manja Klemenčič

Patrick Love

Christina Lunceford

Henry Mason

Llewellyn MacMaster

Martin Mandew

Kobus Maree

Lisa Bardill Moscaritolo

Cora Motale

Taabo Mugume

Gerald Ouma

Jesús Enrique Ramos Reséndizh

Don Hugh Smith

Joshua Smith

Malvinia Turner

Nan Yeld

Call for papers

Vol 3(2) 2015
Open call

Submissions are invited from student affairs practitioners and researchers in student affairs and higher education studies. The *Journal of Student Affairs in Africa* is seeking contributions for its Vol. 3 Issue 2 (2015). The Editorial Executive of the *JSAA* welcomes theoretical, practice-relevant, and professional-reflective contributions from across the scholarly field and professional domains of student affairs and services that are relevant to the African higher education context. Details of the scope and focus and editorial policies of the Journal can be found under "JSAA About" on the Journal's website www.jsaa.ac.za. Particularly welcome are:

- Case studies of innovative practices and interventions in student affairs in the context of African higher education (e.g. in career development, citizenship development, community engagement and volunteering, counselling, leadership development, residence management, student sport, teaching and learning, student engagement, student governance and politics, as well as all aspects of student life);
- Conceptual discussions of student student affairs and development, and key enablers and inhibitors of student development in Africa;
- High-level reflective practitioner accounts of empirical, normative or conceptual nature. By this we refer to both critical-reflective accounts of practices as well as personal reflections, which can provide the building blocks for future case studies and grounded theory approaches;
- Explorations of the nexus of student affairs theory, policy and practice in the African context and beyond; and
- Syntheses and explorations of authoritative literature, theories, and professional trends related to student affairs in Africa.

The journal also publishes relevant book reviews and professional and conference reports and notices from scholarly associations and institutions.

Please email the journal manager, Dr Thierry Luescher-Mamashela, with any queries or suggestions for contributions (Email: jsaa_editor@outlook.com). To send us a manuscript

for consideration, please register as an author and consult the submission guidelines on the Journal's website. Manuscripts can be submitted directly to the journal manager via email. The *JSAA* is a peer-reviewed publication and adheres to the ASSAf Guidelines for best practice in scholarly publishing. The journal is committed to assisting emerging scholars and professionals in developing promising manuscripts to the point of publication.

The **closing date** for receiving papers to be considered for Vol. 3 Issue 2 (2015) is 31 May 2015.

Please note: There are no processing fees or page fees. No costs accrue to authors of articles accepted for publication.

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

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

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

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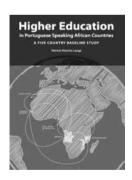IASAS website: http://www.iasasonline.org

Latest publications by African Minds

The goal of the book *Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa* is to generate interest in student affairs in South Africa. The chapters contained herein are based on best practice, local experience and well-researched international and local theories. The chapters deal with matters pertaining to international and national trends in student affairs: academic development, access and retention, counselling, and material support for students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds. They are linked to national and international developments, as described in the first two chapters.

This publication will assist both young and experienced practitioners as they grow into their task of developing the students entrusted to them. All contributors are South Africans with a great deal of experience in student affairs, and all are committed to the advancement of student affairs in South Africa. The editors are former heads of student affairs portfolios at two leading South African universities.

Perspectives on Student Affairs in South Africa is edited by M Speckman and M Mandew and published in May 2014 by African Minds. It is available in print from the publisher's website www.africanminds.org.za at R150. The full PDF can be downloaded free of charge from the same site.

Higher Education in Portuguese Speaking African Countries provides an authoritative overview of higher education in the five lusophone countries in Africa: Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Sao Tome and Principe. It focuses on the background and historical context of higher education, the establishment of public and private institutions, related trends of expansion, diversification and differentiation, the current institutional landscape and programmes, governance, quality assurance, funding and financing, access and equity, and ICT.

Higher Education in Portuguese Speaking African Countries is written by Patrício Vitorino Langa and published in 2013 by African Minds. It is availble in print from the publisher's website www.africanminds.org.za at R150. The full PDF can be downloaded free of charge from the same site.

Submissions

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

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

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

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

- **Research articles:** Contributors are encouraged to submit research-based manuscripts. Research articles must include an extensive consideration of recent literature and relevant theory. Research-based articles must be original, 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.
5. The Journal uses the APA author–date referencing system.
6. If submitting to a peer-reviewed section of the journal, i.e. as a research article or reflective practioner account, the instructions in Ensuring a Blind Review must have been followed.
7. If submitting a proposal for the Dialogue section, a Call/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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Authors are permitted and encouraged to post their work online (e.g., in institutional repositories or on their website) prior to and during the submission process, as it can lead to productive exchanges, as well as earlier and greater citation of published work.

Open access policy
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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.

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