

**CAPACITY BUILDING AMONG STUDENT AFFAIRS  
PRACTITIONERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN  
SOUTH AFRICA WITH REGARD TO STUDENT GOVERNANCE**

BY

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## **DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the thesis entitled:

### **CAPACITY BUILDING AMONG STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTITIONERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA WITH REGARD TO STUDENT GOVERNANCE**

- Is my own work
- That all the sources quoted have been acknowledged by means of references, and that;
- This thesis was never previously submitted to any university for degree purposes.

.....  
**MADITSANE JOHANNES NKONOANE**

## DEDICATION

This is dedicated to my parents, David and the late Cornelia Nkonoane (*May her dear soul gain sweet repose*) who have instilled in me the love for education and the lifelong pursuit of academic excellence, as well as humility, gentleness, and respect for others. Above all, I remain indebted to both my parents for all the sacrifices they made to enable me to actualize my potential. I shall forever cherish those moments of inspiration and encouragement from both of you, especially when my academic journey seemed unbearable and arduous. You always stood by me because you believed in me.

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

- 1. ACPA- American College Personnel Association**
- 2. ACUHO-I- Association of College and University House Officers-International**
- 3. ANOVA- Analysis of variance**
- 4. CAMPROSA- Campus Protection Society of Southern Africa**
- 5. CHET- Center for Higher Education transformation**
- 6. CSUF- California State University, Fullerton**
- 7. DoE- Department of Education**
- 8. DVC-Deputy Vice Chancellor**
- 9. FAPSA- Financial Aid Practitioners of South Africa**
- 10. FET-Further Education and Training**
- 11. IASAS-International Association of Student Affairs and Services**
- 12. JSAA-Journal of Student Affairs in Africa**
- 13. NASDEV- National Association of Student Development Practitioners**
- 14. NASPA- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators**
- 15. NCHE-National Commission on Higher Education**
- 16. NPHE- National Plan on Higher education**
- 17. NUSAS- National Union of South African Students**
- 18. PALM- Policy Analysis, Leadership and Management**
- 19. Ph. D-Philosophiae Doctor**

- 20. SAACHS- South African Association of Campus Health Services**
- 21. SAASSAP- South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals**
- 22. SAPCS- Student Affairs Practitioners' Competency Scale**
- 23. SASO-South African Students Organization**
- 24. SASSU- South African Student Sports Union**
- 25. SGR- Student Governance Review**
- 26. SRC- Student Representative Council.**
- 27. UCT- University of Cape Town**
- 28. UKZN-University of KwaZulu Natal**
- 29. UNDP- United Nations Development Programme**
- 30. UWC- University of Western Cape**
- 31. VC- Vice Chancellor**

## ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to determine the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners with regards to student governance. As cited in the literature review chapter, minimal progress has been made in South Africa towards capacitating student affairs practitioners and this reality has led to the conception of this study. Pertinent questions were formulated and expressed for the qualitative section of the study. For the quantitative section of the study hypotheses were formulated to determine the relationship(s) between and amongst the independent variables of the study: which are *male and female* student affairs practitioners, *senior and junior* student affairs practitioners, and *professionally trained and non-professionally* trained practitioners. Finally, the researcher examined the views of student affairs practitioners regarding the professionalization of student affairs practice.

In the light of the foregoing assertions the researcher sought to solicit views of the different student affairs practitioners on the need to professionalize student affairs practice, with special reference to student governance. The qualitative design allowed the researcher a more interactive experience with the interviewees and thereby facilitated more in-depth and meaningful responses in pursuit of the goals of the study. The phenomenological method was identified as the most suitable research method for this study.

The quantitative research design allowed the researcher to specify phenomena being studied and to quantify the relationships between and within variables of the study namely: Gender (Male versus Female student affairs practitioners), Experience (Senior versus Junior student affairs practitioners), and Professional training (Professionally trained versus Non-Professionally trained student affairs practitioners) as Independent Variables (IV) and Student

Governance as a Dependent Variable (DV). The research method best suited for this research design was found to be the descriptive method.

This study used *Sequential Exploratory Triangulation*, where interviews were conducted first with a sample of convenience; and the adapted questionnaire was then administered to a wider pool of 150 student affairs practitioners conveniently sampled from the membership databases of both SAASSAP and NASDEV.

The approved questionnaire was further subjected to tests of statistical validity. In this manner *factor analyses* was conducted by subjecting the forty two items of the questionnaire to principal component analyses using varimax rotation of one (1) criterion to extract the categories or components of the questionnaire. Twenty seven (27) items which had an Eigenvalue of above .50 were extracted and dispersed into two factors namely *Personal Capability* and *Professional Competence*. Fifteen items below the Eigenvalue of .50 were, therefore, discarded from the final questionnaire which the researcher named *Student Affairs Professional Competency Scale (SAPCS)*. The *SAPCS* that was administered to the sample of 150 participants; yielded a 74,6% response rate for analysis.

The results of the study supported current research that there is a need for capacity building for student affairs practitioners responsible for student governance. However, the main limitation of this study is that the findings and results are not applicable to the Further Education and Training (FET) sector, who have since become part of higher education administration, and consequently student affairs practitioners from this sector have recently been accepted as members of NASDEV. Their exclusion from this study is mainly due to the fact that the conception of this study preceded these recent developments in the sector. More

inclusive research needs to be pursued in future and it is envisaged that future research in the field of student affairs in South Africa should be more representative and therefore include both qualitative and quantitative presentation.

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

The promulgation of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 and subsequent amendments set the agenda for the transformation of public higher education in South Africa. In the context of this study, the Act regulates the management and governance of higher education institutions by seeking to establish a single coordinated higher education system which promotes co-operative governance and provides for programme-based higher education (Higher Education Act 101, 1997).

Student governance at universities is couched in the student affairs departments. However, quality and effectiveness of service provision to facilitate for effective and efficient student governance has been a bone of contention recently. Pandor (2004:3) asserts that “there is often a lack of support to student leaders so that they are unable to manage their portfolios in an efficient manner. Heads of departments cannot take a hands-off approach to matters of student governance”. Central to the ubiquitous calls for a panacea to professionalize student administrators, regarding matters of student governance; is the recurrent outcry by all and sundry regarding the effete and decadent professional capacity of members of the Student Affairs Departments.

The researcher is of the view that effective involvement and participation of student leaders in institutional governance structures is largely contingent upon student affairs practitioners who are *au fait* with student governance and higher education legislation as well as international best practice in the field of student governance. Blimling (2001) states that to be a student affairs practitioner, one must acquire the disposition, philosophy, and [formal] and informal knowledge that unite student affairs to its fundamental purpose.

It is against this backdrop that the researcher sought to conduct this study to determine the competencies of student affairs practitioners to facilitate and develop student leaders' capacity in issues of university governance. The researcher surmises that any strengths and weaknesses of the student affairs practitioners need to be determined so that intervention programmes by way of capacity building of the student affairs practitioners could be established.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

In pursuing the goal of enhancing student experience at higher education institutions, student affairs practitioners have had to grapple with a number of impediments which require professional skills. Such skills draw heavily on dispositions and orientations towards student experience, which may either be novice or expert. Although Carpenter (2003) felt that the work of student affairs is a complex field that deals with human behaviours and so must rely on multifaceted theories, Burkard, Cole, Ott and Stoflet (2004) suggest that human relations, administrative/ management, technological and research competencies – as well as personal attributes- are crucial to the success of entry level professionals in student affairs.

While many professionals in student affairs are committed to continuing their professional development after completing formal schooling, there is currently no mechanism in place to ensure that professional development happens consistently among student affairs practitioners responsible for student governance in higher education institutions in South Africa. While there is general agreement that staying current is a professional necessity, the field of student affairs has no organized approach to doing so (Janosik, Carpenter & Creamer, 2006). Miller and Sandeen (2003) noted that there appears to be a clarion call for a professional entity, perhaps in a structured umbrella-type federation to speak for the profession as a whole, otherwise student affairs as profession will continue to be viewed as an immature profession.

The quintessence of the study was, therefore, to determine the competencies of student affairs practitioners, to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the practice, and to design a model that will assist in professionalizing student affairs practice in South African higher education institutions.

### **1.3 THE AIM, RESEARCH QUESTIONS, OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of the study was developed to answer research questions pertinent to the study. The questions were formulated and expressed for the qualitative section of the study. For the quantitative section of the study; hypotheses were formulated to determine the relationship(s) between and amongst the independent variables of the study, which are **Gender** (*male and female*), **Experience** (*senior and junior*), and **Professional Training** (*professionally trained and non-professionally trained*).

### 1.3.1 The aim of the study

The primary aim of the study is to establish the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners responsible for student governance in higher education institutions in South Africa. The objective for the attainment of this ideal is expressed in the following **research questions**:

- What is the international and national state of affairs regarding student affairs practice and capacity building of student affairs practitioners with special reference to student governance?
- To what extent are South African student affairs practitioners professionally prepared to effect sound student governance practice?
- How can student affairs professionals be better equipped to enhance student governance at South African higher education institutions?

In the light of the foregoing research questions, the secondary aim of the study was to develop a student governance model for higher education institutions in South Africa by addressing the following **objectives**:

- Analysing international and national best practices in student affairs capacity-building programmes.
- Analysing the current preparation programmes for student affairs practitioners.
- Evaluating current student governance models in higher education institutions of South Africa.

- Developing a capacity building programme or model in line with the required competencies of student affairs practitioners.

### **1.3.2 The hypotheses of the study**

The null hypotheses of the study which will be tested are the following:

- (1) There is no significant difference between male and female student affairs practitioners with regards to professional competencies pertaining to student governance.
- (2) There is no significant difference between senior and junior student affairs practitioners with regards to professional competencies pertaining to student governance.
- (3) There is no significant difference between professionally trained and non-professionally trained practitioners with regards to professional competencies pertaining to student governance.
- (4) There is no significant interaction between gender and experience with regards to professional competencies pertaining to student governance.
- (5) There is no significant interaction between gender and professional training with regards to professional competencies pertaining to student governance
- (6) There is no significant interaction between experienced and professional training with regards to professional competencies pertaining to student governance
- (7) There is no significant interaction amongst gender, experience, and professional training with regards to professional competencies pertaining to student governance.

## **1.4 PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW**

Student affairs practitioners are primarily assessed against the backdrop of their effectiveness in enhancing student experience at higher education institutions. Bodibe (1998) asserts that student affairs practitioners worldwide are always caught in a spiral of change, and adapt by negotiating successful pacts with adversity. They also survive by developing skills to manage paradoxical environments.

Furthermore, because student affairs professionals practice in a variety of institutions and perform increasingly complex functions, the field of student affairs may have to accept that there is neither a single way to prepare professionals, nor a definitive set of professional education standards (Cuyjet, Longwill-Grice & Molina (2009). Herdlein (2004) further argues that it is unclear whether graduate programmes in student affairs have been satisfactory in preparing student affairs administrators in the rapidly changing environment of higher education in the United States of America.

Currently in South Africa there is no articulated philosophical framework or explicit theory that informs practice in the field of student affairs. Unlike in the USA where the field of student affairs is a formal academic discipline to be studied for a qualification by those choosing students affairs practice as a career, in South Africa the field of student affairs has yet to evolve to the level of being a formal academic qualification. This assertion excludes those professional departments under student services such as counselling, nursing and social work, which are well developed professions in their own right (Mandew, 2003: 21).

Theoretically, Kuh (1990) identifies four conventional models of governance. They are: *the rational model, the bureaucratic model, the collegial model and the political model*. The models illuminate prevailing practices and systems in higher education institutions, with special reference to student governance. What follows is a brief description of these conventional models:

- (1) ***The Rational Model:*** The key values that underpin this model are logic and order. According to Kuh (1990:215) what is ‘fatal in the rational model is the assumption that managers can and should anticipate, account for, or control all the possible contingencies that may come to bear on a decision, an expectation that cannot be met by any individual or organization’.
  
- (2) ***The Bureaucratic Model:*** A typical bureaucracy has seven key tenets, namely, hierarchical authority, limits on authority, division of labour, technical proficiency, standard operating procedures, rules for work and differential rewards (Hage, 1980). According to Kuh (1996) one major disadvantage of the bureaucratic model is resistance to change and the inappropriateness of the manner in which productivity is measured for higher education institutions.
  
- (3) ***The Collegial Model:*** Austin and Gamson (1983) state that the collegial view is based on two enduring values of the academy: professional autonomy and a normative compliance system. Mandew (2003) states that the collegial model is the basis of co-operative governance; and it is the preferred choice for the South African higher education system. The collegial model assumes that participatory governance is the most suitable approach in pursuing institutional goals (Chaffee in Kuh, 1990). The

collegial model has been found to be attractive due to its consistency with institutional values, such as informed debate and governance by peers.

- (4) ***The Political Model:*** According to Kuh (1996) the political model acknowledges the uneven distribution of power within an institution of higher education which challenges the “myth of organizational rationality. Mandew (2003) further states that this model acknowledges that higher education institutions are essentially political animals because of the various interests constantly vying for power and control. However, the downside of this model is that because of its recognition of the centrality of conflict and competition, it militates against long-standing practices of collegial decision-making and processes of governance.

What follows is a diagrammatic representation of the above-mentioned models to depict the advantages and limitations of each:

**Table 1.1: Advantages and Limitations of Conventional Models**

<i>Model</i>	<i>Advantages</i>	<i>Limitations</i>
<i>Rational-Bureaucratic</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Appeals to reason and logic</li> <li>❖ Clearly defined roles, functions, responsibilities, scope of authority, and relationships</li> <li>❖ Performance is standardised</li> <li>❖ Emphasises productivity</li> </ul>	<p>Incompatible with certain values of the academy (such as autonomy, multiple areas of expertise, decisions by peers).</p> <p>Expectations of goal consensus and control are often not met</p> <p>Oversimplifies complex Problems</p> <p>Resistant to change</p>
<i>Collegial</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Consistent with traditions of the academy</li> <li>❖ Responsive to persuasive argument of colleagues</li> <li>❖ Based on democratic principles</li> <li>❖ Ensures representation</li> </ul>	<p>Inefficient (labour-intensive and time-consuming)</p> <p>Insensitive to power differentials, resource availability, and policy implementation issues</p>
<i>Political</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Acknowledges importance of power and conflict resolution</li> <li>❖ Emphasizes policy making as a process for issue management</li> <li>❖ Encourages collaboration among disparate stakeholder groups</li> </ul>	<p>Incongruent with certain values of the academy (such as openness, fairness, self-governance)</p> <p>Reinforces the status quo</p> <p>Exchanges achievement and merit for influence in decision-making</p>

The conventional models have interesting implications for student affairs practitioners, especially those who are in leadership and management positions. The tendency for student services managers on the basis of the above models is to ‘believe they are responsible for

articulating what must be done and when, how, and by whom it must be done and are expected to measure, evaluate, and reward efficiency and effectiveness' (Kuh, 1990:220). The reality is that lower-level staff members in the division are more *au fait* with the situation regarding how matters of student governance should be approached. The challenge for South African institutions of higher learning is to devise means through which junior staff members can be empowered by instituting a formal academic knowledge-base to professionalise the student affairs practice.

According to Mandew (2003), the role of student services personnel is primarily that of coordinators of student development and learning with emancipatory aims. It should be noted here, however, that the influence of institutional types and contexts on what is under the purview of student affairs is strong (Dungy, 2003). Reason and Brodo (2011) further assert that recent work within the profession to identify essential competencies for all student affairs professionals, however, begins to provide some coherence to the skills necessary to be student affairs professionals.

Although the functions of student service personnel will vary depending on areas of specialization and key focus; Hurst and Morril (in Sharp & Grace, 1996) present the following roles of student services personnel:

- (1) ...to study and understand the student, the environment, and the outcomes of their interaction in order to identify potential mismatches and needed intentions;
- (2) ...to facilitate student resource development by providing students with skills, attitudes, and other resources they need to take advantage of and profit from the learning environment, and;

- (3) ...to promote environmental resource development by restructuring interventions designed to create the optimal enrichment within which human development may occur.

In the context of the problem statement of this study, the researcher asserts that the overall role of the student affairs practitioners is to ensure effective student participation and involvement in the governance of universities. Hence, conversely put, this study was prompted by the need to determine whether the student affairs practitioners were appropriately or inappropriately capacitated with competencies that would ascertain students' ability to participate and be involved in cooperative governance with the university administration.

## **1.5 METHODOLOGY**

This section of the study explains the research design, the research methods, data collection techniques and analysis, and the population and sample.

### **1.5.1 Research design**

This study used *triangulation* (often referred to as mixed method research design) with the purpose of applying and combining both qualitative and quantitative research designs. Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) contend that by using both the qualitative and quantitative research designs in the same study, the researcher can overcome the weakness or intrinsic bias and the problems that come from using either the qualitative or quantitative designs in a

study. Hence, Leedy and Ormrod (2010) state that triangulation is a powerful tool used by researchers to increase the credibility and validity of the results in a study.

Altrichter, Feldman, Posch, and Somekh (2008) have identified, *inter-alia*, three basic types of triangulation. These are the *concurrent triangulation*, *sequential explanatory triangulation*, and the *sequential exploratory triangulation*. For this study, the researcher used *sequential exploratory triangulation*. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that in sequential exploratory triangulation, the researcher administers the interviews (qualitative) first, then followed by the questionnaire (quantitative) as a follow-up to refine the qualitative views and opinions of the interviewees.

## **1.5.2 Research method**

### **1.5.2.1 Research Paradigm**

The research design employed in this study is sequential exploratory design. For the qualitative arm of the design, data collection commenced with the interviews and for the quantitative arm, questionnaires were administered. An Interpretive paradigm was pursued to solicit and analyse the responses of the participants. Mertens (2005:12) describes interpretive paradigm as an approach that “upon the participants' views of the situation being studied.” The researcher recons that the interpretive paradigm will enable him to reconcile the strengths and/or weaknesses of the quantitative arm of the triangulation design.

### 1.5.2.2 Phenomenological Method

For the qualitative section of the study, the researcher employed the phenomenological method using interviews as data collection instruments. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) the aim of phenomenological method is to transform lived experience into a description of its “essence” allowing for reflection and analysis. As explained by Leedy and Ormrod (2010), the phenomenological method attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives, and understanding of a particular situation. Thus the researcher used this method in order to understand the perceptions of student affairs practitioners regarding the need for capacity building.

### 1.5.2.3 Descriptive Method

For the quantitative design, a descriptive method was employed using questionnaires as data collection instruments. The descriptive research is done to depict people, situations, events, and conditions as they currently exist. It is primarily concerned with finding out ‘what is’ for the purpose of describing current conditions, the investigation of relationships, and the study of cause-effect phenomena (Gay & Airasian 2009).

## **1.5.3 Data collection and data analyses**

For the phenomenological method, the researcher used semi-structured interviews. A pilot testing of the study was undertaken at the resident university of the researcher to capture the views and opinions of the various categories of student affairs practitioners regarding the study. The interviewees’ responses were captured through tape-recording and note taking.

The results were transcribed and some questions were later restructured or omitted. Six interview questions were included in the final interview schedule.

A questionnaire was used to collect data for the quantitative design of the study (more about the questionnaire instrument in chapter three). A three-way analysis of variance (three-way ANOVA) was employed to determine an understanding of the relationship amongst the various categories of student affairs practitioners as independent variables. The *independent variables* were *gender* (male versus female), *experience* (senior versus junior), and *professional training* (professionally trained versus non-professionally trained practitioners). Their relationships and interactions were determined from the theoretical framework of *student governance* as a *dependent variable*. It was expected that when using the three-way ANOVA, the researcher would either accept or fail to accept the stipulated null hypotheses. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software package was used to generate statistical analysis from responses provided using a 4-point Likert scale.

#### **1.5.4 Population and sample**

The population of the study comprised all student affairs practitioners at all universities in South Africa clustered as academic universities, comprehensive universities, and universities of technology. Convenience and non-probability sampling was used to select the participating universities in the study. Creswell (2012) states that, in convenience sampling the researcher selects participants because they are willing and available to be studied. While the researcher cannot say with confidence that the individuals are representative of the population, the sample can provide useful information for answering questions and hypotheses (Creswell, 2012).

A final sample of the study was obtained through systematic sampling from two (2) Universities in each cluster. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) describe systematic sampling as selecting individuals according to a pre-determined sequence. According to Gay and Airasian (2009), in systematic sampling, every “Kth” individual is selected from a list. The “Kth” number varied in accordance with the staff complement of student practitioners at the sampled universities. A final sample of three hundred (300) was envisaged initially. All in all a hundred and fifty (150) participants were selected.

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Historically, student affairs work has always been that of taking the responsibility for the social, physical, moral and spiritual well-being of students. However, helping students has not always been the sole responsibility of student services professionals. With the advent of universities and colleges, university presidents and members of faculty were directly involved in the daily lives of students. Student affairs divisions were originally founded to support the academic mission of higher education institutions (Komives & Woodard, 1996).

The need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners is largely informed by the fact that practitioners appointed are largely drawn from academic staff members, who have not been professionally prepared to deal with the rigors of the practice. It is against this background that the study sought to engage the notion of professionalization of student affairs practice regarding governance. In this manner, student practitioners would be able to engage meaningfully with changes within the higher education sector.

As indicated earlier, the current legislation on higher education has had far-reaching implications for the transformation agenda of higher education in South Africa. Equally important, the researcher also observed that the subsequent implementation of the National Plan on Higher Education (NPHE) has also had an impact on student governance of multi-campus higher education institutions established through mergers and incorporations. In the light of the foregoing this study sought to develop a model of student governance within the new higher education landscape and also highlight the changing role of the student affairs practitioner by suggesting a relevant capacity building/preparation program to develop the necessary skills and competencies; and thereby contribute to the body of knowledge on the broader student affairs practice.

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS**

The main limitation of the study was that the findings could not be generalised to all higher education institutions due to the differentiated higher education landscape, especially regarding size and shape of higher education institutions. Consequently, the results could not be inferred to FET Colleges and secondary and primary schools.

## **1.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The study was undertaken with a clear understanding of ethical considerations in terms of maintaining a high level of confidentiality regarding participants and information supplied. The study was mainly undertaken to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding capacity building in student affairs by also adhering to the provisions of a research protocol.

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **(1) Capacity Building**

“Capacity building is a broad over-inclusive concept, amenable to many interpretations and utilizations. Capacity building has been commonly understood as a basic human resource issue; a matter of building institutional person-power to the point where there is an adequate skills base to fulfil the tasks of an organization (CHET Report: 2002). Linnell (2003) defines capacity building as activities which strengthen the knowledge, abilities, skills and behaviour of individuals and improve institutional structures and processes such that the organization can efficiently meet its mission and goals in a sustainable way.

### **(2) Student Affairs**

For the purpose of this study, the concepts ‘student affairs’ and ‘student services’ will be used interchangeably to denote both the practice and support offered to students at higher education institutions. Mandew (2003) defines the term student affairs as designating a specific integrated group of departments and units providing support and welfare services and programmes for students at higher education institutions.

Helfgot (2005) defines student affairs as a discipline practiced by all of those who work in the general field and its numerous specialities. It has a body of knowledge, a professional literature, a long established professional

philosophy, a theoretical base (student development theory), and a set of commonly recognised jobs and functions. According to Helfgot (2005) student services refers to those programmes, services, and activities provided or made available to students by the division of student affairs, such as, outreach and recruitment, financial aid, admissions and records, academic advising, health and wellness, academic support, etcetera.

### **(3) Student Governance**

The concept student governance is used to denote an enabling environment for students to participate in the decision-making process through co-operative governance. Within this framework, the researcher uses the definition of co-operative to denote, *inter-alia*, the university governing process that recognises students participation and involvement in the decision-making processes of the university.

Mandew (2003) describes co-operative governance as a model intended to redefine and reconstitute the nature and processes of the relationship between the government, higher education institutions and their internal stakeholders, and related agencies. The Student Governance Review (SGR) Report for University of Cape Town (2000) defines student governance as consisting of structures and processes implemented to facilitate student participation in national higher education policy development.

## **1.10 SUMMARY**

The purpose of this introductory chapter was to provide an overview of the study. This included the brief discussion of student affairs practice and the need to professionalise the practice at South African higher education institutions. The problem statement was stated, the aim of the study was rendered, the hypotheses were expressly formulated and stated, a review of the theoretical rationale was offered, and the methodological procedures were described.

## **1.11 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter I also contains the definition of relevant terms for the study, a discussion of the significance of the study and limitations and delimitations of the study.

Chapter II presents a review of literature relevant to student affairs practice.

Chapter III describes the methods and procedures for data collection employed in the study.

Chapter IV presents the results of qualitative and quantitative data analyses.

Chapter V presents a discussion of the results, their implication and recommendations for further research.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the evolution of student affairs practice within the historical development and advent of universities, in order to develop a more profound understanding of the current role of a student affairs practitioner in higher education. The specific role of concern is that of student governance. Focus on the role of the student practitioners is on the *historical and contemporary context of student affairs practice; professional foundations and principles of student affairs practice; theoretical bases of the profession; evolution of student governance; and the essential competencies for a student affairs practitioner.*

The chapter focusses on international, African, and South African perspectives on progress made to date regarding the professionalization of student affairs practice. An understanding of this evolution provides an essential context for understanding of today's student affairs programmes, services, events, and tensions. The following section highlights the historical and contemporary context of higher education

## **2.2 HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CONTEXT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE**

The first evidence of a student affairs professional role was incorporated into faculty duties through the philosophy *in loco parentis*, meaning “in the place of a parent” (Nuss, 2003). Thelin (2004) further argues that the doctrine of *in loco parentis* empowered colleges and universities to manage students closely, as students were viewed in those times as emotionally immature and requiring strict adult supervision.

Historically, student affairs work has always been the responsibility over the social, physical, moral and spiritual well-being of students. However, helping students has not always been the sole responsibility of student services professionals. With the advent of universities and colleges, university presidents and members of faculty were directly involved in the daily lives of students. Student affairs divisions were originally founded to support the academic mission of higher education institutions and to foster the development of the student intellectually, psychosocially, and emotionally (Nuss, 2003).

According to Rhatigan (2009) some writers (Bathurst, 1939) have pointed to antecedents of student affairs in Athenian education, others (Cowley, 1940; Haskins, 1940; Kibre,1948, Leonard,1956; Rait,1912; and Rashdall,1895) to universities in the middle Ages. However, student affairs is an American phenomenon as chronicled in seminal documents such as *The Student Personnel Point of View, 1937* (National Association of Student Personnel Administration [NASPA], 1989), and *The Second Student Personnel Point of View,1949* (NASPA,1989).

“The emergence of the oldest higher education institution, the university, as a distinctive institution can be traced back to the High Middle Ages (sometime between the years 40 and 1500). However, in terms of social development, it was only in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that universities began to admit women. Furthermore, it was only during the early modern period – between the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution - that the university adopted many of its present functions” (Mandew, 2003:2).

Mandew (2003) further highlights the fact that the establishment of the University of Berlin in 1810 ushered in a new approach to student services. This was precipitated by the shift to the exclusive emphasis on intellectualism in terms of which the University of Berlin approached traditional disciplines with new rigour and objectivity. Consequently, the latter resulted in the delegation of student services responsibilities to non-academic specialists, as academics focused exclusively on their disciplines (Allen & Garb, 1993; Fenske, 1990).

Theelin (2004) asserts that student affairs as a distinct profession within higher education- with graduate programmes, professional associations, journals, and scholarship- is a relatively new phenomenon. However, the roots of the student affairs profession reach all the way back to the colonial era and the earliest years of American education. Long (2012) asserts that in the 1960s and 1970s, the student affairs profession established a theoretical base as the framework for its knowledge and practice. Many theories that explained student development emerged in the fields of education, psychology and sociology, such as “psychosocial theory, cognitive structural theory, and typological theory, each of which examines student development through a different lens” (Evans, 1996).

Brown (1972) as well as the American College Personnel Association's (ACPA) 1972 report *Student Development in Tomorrow's Higher Education: A return to the Academy* argued that student affairs professionals could not have a significant impact on students' intellectual, psychosocial, or emotional growth without first understanding the motivations, abilities, and environments which drive, create and define students. Long (2012) further states that the student affairs profession matured in the 1980s and 1990s, with much professional practice grounded in student development theory. Many of the theories were developed with the "traditional" undergraduate student in mind between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two years, usually white, and most frequently male. However, the intervening decades challenged the student affairs professionals for a new definition of a student.

Love and Yousey (2001) assert that the globalization of higher education in the 1990s and 2000s has certainly affected the student affairs profession. The American model of student affairs practice and the organization of student affairs functions spurred great interest at colleges and universities in Europe, Latin America, and Asia. The Fulbright Scholar programme facilitated the placement of American student affairs professionals at colleges and universities abroad, and the Association of College and University Housing Officers and the Association of College Unions added *international* to their names to highlight the inclusion of colleagues at colleges and universities outside North America.

According to Love and Estanek (2004), student affairs professionals in North America also began to integrate international perspectives into their work. As the number of American students who participate in study programmes abroad has grown over the past twenty years, student affairs professionals have addressed the needs of their students abroad and have studied how students' experiences abroad have shaped their subsequent identity and learning.

Long (2012) further states that the heightened security in the years following the attacks on September 11, 2001, has also brought attention to international students studying at American colleges and universities. Student affairs professionals have delicately addressed the increased government scrutiny international students face but also recognized the need to educate themselves and their communities on the values and cultures the students bring to the campuses.

According to Lunceford (2010), throughout its history, higher education has changed along with student demographics, the job market, public policy, and societal trends. Although the type of student services provided shifted over time and student affairs continued to evolve alongside historical trends, two factors remained consistent: 1) student affairs' commitment to the development of the whole student and 2) student affairs' support of the academic mission of the institution, whatever the mission of the institution (Nuss, 2001). Nuss (2001) viewed these two factors as strengths and evidence of student affairs as a profession. What follows is the narrative account of international historical context of student affairs practice, with special reference to the United States of America.

### **2.2.1 The Colonial Period: Sorting Out the English Legacy**

According to Komives, Woodard and Associates (2003), the distinctively American tradition of an intense undergraduate education by which young adults are prepared for leadership and service, owes much to the example set by English universities of Oxford and Cambridge in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These came to be known for their unique practice of arranging several residential colleges within a university structure, all located in a pastoral setting and this became known as the Oxbridge model. Fried and Lewis (2009) further assert

that the very specialized profession of student affairs has developed most extensively within the borders of the United States of America. The tradition in the United States combines the English collegiate model, which emphasizes the development of student character within the Christian tradition, and the European university model which emphasizes the development of the student intellect, leaving character development, recreation, housing and most other areas of student life to the students themselves.

The British system is primarily residential and the European system has historically been non-residential, leaving students to find their own accommodation. With the exception of some tribal colleges in North America, most universities operate within the Eurocentric framework. According to Thelin and Gasman (2010), the importance of colleges to American colonial life is suggested by their proliferation and protection starting with Harvard, founded in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1636, and followed by The College of Williams & Mary in Virginia in 1693, Yale in Connecticut in 1701, and six more colleges by the start of the revolutionary War in 1775.

Although relatively homogeneous in its restriction to White, Christian young men, the student body still institutionalized the nuances of social class. College rosters listed students by social rank. Furthermore, following the Oxford tradition, academic robes reflected socio-economic position, delineating the “commoners” (those who dined at college commons) from the “servitors” (those who waited at tables). College attendance tended to ratify or confirm existing social standing rather than provide social mobility. Thelin and Gasman (2010) further argue that while colonial colleges were limited in their constituency and mission, they were at least remarkably effective in their education of an articulate and learned leadership group, as suggested by the extraordinary contributions of their alumni (including Thomas

Jefferson and James Madison) to the political and intellectual leadership of the American Revolution and the creation of the new United States. The next era to be discussed is what became known as “the new national period” for higher education in America.

### **2.2.2 Creating the “American Way” In Higher Education: The New National Period**

An undeniable fact of American life well into the late nineteenth century was that going to college was not necessary for “getting ahead” economically, although a college degree did confer some prestige. Also the fervour generated by the Second awakening seemingly caused every religious group to want to build its own college for propagating its doctrines and for reinforcing its distinctive orthodoxy among members who were growing from adolescence to adulthood. The interesting result was a boom in college buildings in the first half of the nineteenth century. Whereas in 1800 there were probably 25 colleges offering instruction and conferring degrees, by 1860 this number had increased almost tenfold to 240; not including numerous institutions that had opened and then gone out of business.

Although attending college remained impractical for most Americans, a gradual change in the socio-economic makeup of many student bodies occurred. A mix of students from a wide range of family incomes replaced - or, rather joined the more homogenous group in what has been called the convergence of “paupers and scholars”. Furthermore, the creation of a number of charitable trusts and scholarship funds helped colleges provide financial aid to able yet poor young men who looked forward to joining the clergy or teaching (Nuss, 2003).

Between 1860 and 1900, such historically excluded constituencies as women, African American and Native Americans gained some access to higher education. By the mid-

nineteenth century, women in particular had become formal participants in advanced studies. One educational innovation was the founding of “female academies’ and “female seminaries’ - institutions that offered a range of courses and instructional programmes beyond elementary and secondary schooling. Over time, especially by the 1860s and 1870s, many of the female seminaries became degree-granting colleges in their own right (Thelin & Gasman, 2010). In the late nineteenth century, a few colleges, such as Oberlin and later Cornell, pioneered co-education, and were enrolling both men and women- a policy that would soon gain a wide following in the Midwest and on the Pacific Coast (Gordon, 1990).

Although a few Northern Black colleges had been established by free Blacks and white abolitionists prior to the end of the Civil war, between 1865 and 1910, additional provisions were made for African American students to pursue higher education, with the founding of many small Black colleges in the South. Many of these institutions such as Booker T. Washington’s Tuskegee Institute began as combined elementary and secondary schools that eventually offered a college-level curriculum. Illustrative of the impediments the Black colleges and universities faced in the south was that they were not admitted to full membership in the Southern Association of College and Schools until 1957. Despite the double burden of not having large endowments or being able to charge more than modest tuitions, these colleges have been disproportionately effective in the enrolments and graduation of a large number and percentage of African American students (Nuss, 2003).

In effect, Black colleges and universities are responsible for the education of the Black middle class as we know it today. Thelin and Gasman (2010) further state that the growing number and diversity of students and institutions illustrated the variety of American higher education. There were comprehensive institutions with diverse student bodies to special-

purpose colleges serving separate, distinct groups defined, for example, by gender, race, or religious affiliation. The next period between 1880 and 1914 was devoted to university building as discussed in the following section.

### **2.2.3 University Building and More: 1880 to 1914**

The continued popularity of higher education led to the emergence of the modern university in America. According to Thelin and Gasman (2010), at one extreme, the ideal of advanced, rigorous scholarship and the necessary resources of research libraries, laboratories, and Doctor of Philosophy programmes were epitomized by the great German universities. Mandew (2003) states that the establishment of the University of Berlin in 1810 ushered in a new approach to student services. This was precipitated by the shift to the exclusive emphasis on intellectualism in terms of which the University of Berlin approached traditional disciplines with new rigour and objectivity. The emergence of this intellectualist model led to institutions of higher education becoming increasingly complex and specialized, and this inevitably resulted in the delegation of student services responsibilities to non-academic specialists, as academics focused exclusively on their disciplines (Fenske, 1990).

The building of great universities in America contributed to the advancement of cutting-edge scholarship. At the same time, however, “this cutting edge” remained marginal to the central purpose of undergraduate education. Furthermore, in contrast to higher education in the twenty first century, American universities of 1910 remained relatively underdeveloped and small. Only a handful of institutions, such as the urban universities of Harvard, Columbia, and Pennsylvania enrolled more than five thousand students. In addition, by World War I, the move to increase the accessibility of study beyond high school was further signalled by the

founding of a distinctive American institution: the junior college (Nuss, 2003). What follows is the discussion of the expansion of universities between the two World Wars, in terms of size and shape.

#### **2.2.4 Higher Education after World War I: 1915 to 1945**

Many institutions regarded today as large state universities were still relatively limited in size and curricular offerings in the first half of the twentieth century. As late as 1940, many state universities had a total enrolment of less than five thousand students each and offered little in the way of advanced programmes or doctoral studies. Enrolments rose during the Great Depression due, in part, to widespread unemployment. Universities received little federal support, although some government involvement in selected scientific programmes existed. A few campuses, especially those with strong scientific and engineering departments, pioneered working relations with corporations and industry in contractual research and development.

Perhaps the greatest puzzle faced by American higher education in the early twentieth century is what may be termed the “dilemma of diversity”. Individuals at the most heterogeneous institutions often encountered the most glaring conflicts, hostilities, and discrimination within campus life. Co-education, for example, deserves to be hailed as a positive change in promoting equity and access for women.

In the 1920s some colleges enjoyed the luxury of choice. For the first time they had more applicants than student places, allowing administrators to implement selective admission policies. They looked to testing programmes of the United States military for models and inspiration of how to administer and process standardized tests. Ultimately the Education

Testing Service (ETS) was developed as an appendage of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB). Creation and refinement of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) gained both stature and infamy among education minded young Americans as a rite of passage from high school to college (Nuss, 2003).

Unfortunately these various admission tools and practices were used to exclude some students on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, or other criteria unrelated to academic merit (Thelin & Gasman, 2010). More often than not, American higher education achieved diversity through colleges dedicated to serve special constituencies, whether defined by race, gender, or religious affiliation.

### **2.2.5 Higher Education's "Golden Age": 1945 to 1970**

According to Thenin and Gasman (2010), student recruitment experienced dramatic change after 1945. The federal government intended that the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, popularly known as the GI Bill, provided a short-term measure by which the federal government could mitigate the pressure of hundreds of thousands of returning war veterans becoming job seekers in a saturated national labour market. The strategy was to make federal scholarships for postsecondary education readily available to veterans. However, the Bill's well-intentioned provisions to scholarship recipients, who had a wide range of choices of programmes and institutions, exposed the lack of standards or accountability in matters of institutional quality and legitimacy. The influx of new students on many campuses, including Black colleges and universities, caused great stress on the physical plant of the institutions, causing institutions to create makeshift classrooms and residence halls.

The emergence of the multi-campus university system also developed during this era of expanding enrolments. In place of one or two flagship universities, many states now joined numerous branches into a centrally administered network or system. Most of these added selected master's degree and graduate professional programmes over time to supplement their customary base of bachelor degree and entry-level professional course of study. Also, public community college systems often became partners with state universities. The compact or articulation agreement was that the junior colleges offered the first two years of undergraduate studies and provided students with a smooth transfer to the state university for upper level work and completion of the bachelor's degree.

#### **2.2.6 An Era of Adjustment and Accountability: 1970 to 1990**

Years of student unrest contributed to several negative effects on American higher education, not the least of which was declining confidence on the part of state governments and other traditional sources of support. During the same years new legislation prohibiting discrimination in educational programmes through the 1972 federal Title IX allowed women and other underrepresented constituencies to gain access gradually yet persistently to academic fields such as business, law, medicine and a host of Ph.D. programmes. By 1990, Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation act had further encouraged diversity and access by providing guidelines and advocacy for students with disabilities who sought admission to higher education institutions.

Due to a decrease in state funding, enrolment declines were muted as colleges recruited new constituents, including older students and more students from such traditionally undeserved sections such as women and minorities. Campus administration underwent managerial

revolution in two ways. First, administrators increasingly relied on systematic data analysis from national and institutional sources, which helped colleges, make informed decisions that promoted budget accountability. Second, new government incentive programmes prompted colleges to shift resources to marketing, fundraising, and student recruitment in order to seek and retain new student constituencies and to develop new programmes to serve them. Thus the period 1979 to 1989, which was supposed to be a grim winter for American colleges and universities, turned out to be an extended summer of unexpected recovery and abundance (Nuss, 2003).

By 1990, changing financial and demographic circumstances prompted educational leaders and critics to consider the need for a fundamental shift in attitudes toward higher education and the collegiate structure in the United States. The optimism which had emerged in the 1960s had waned. Higher education no longer necessarily aimed for unlimited diversity and choice.

### **2.2.7 The Twentieth to the Twenty First Century: 1990 to 2010**

Between 1990 and 2010 most colleges and universities were prosperous and had robust enrolments that erased the harsh memories of declining state appropriations and dismal endowment portfolios of 1989. This recovery, however, did not spare colleges including student affairs officers from persistent concerns about how to rethink the college campus and the college experience so as to acknowledge the qualitative and quantitative changes of the recent past. Patricia Cross (1981), a pioneering dean of students and renowned researcher, forewarned her colleagues of the presence of a generation of new learners and of another constituency, adult learners.

By 2000 the certainty and coherence of the undergraduate campus experience had been diffused and diluted. The diversity of students in American higher education eventually influenced the shape and structure of institutions. Also during this time women became a decisive majority of student enrolments at numerous independent and public institutions. Nowhere was this change reflected more than in the character and composition of women's intercollegiate athletics and other student activities. Within the campus at several state universities data indicated that first generation college students, including women and students of colour, participated in student government and campus elections. This participation had resulted in the emergence of new leadership groups among students and, in some cases, signs of decline of the influence of such traditionally powerful groups as fraternities in campus-wide activities.

The dilemma for student affairs leaders was not so much to accept and work with this change but rather how to embrace the changes in the nation's popular culture yet still provide a campus experience that was substantive and distinctive. One intriguing response of student affairs professionals was to advance by word and deed a new approach in which what had once been called the extra-curriculum (out of class experiences being viewed as supplemental) now came to be called the co-curriculum ( a seamless integration of classroom and out of class learning).

Any attempt to present a brief survey of American higher education over four centuries risks superficiality. A good resolution to carry away is to see the history of American colleges and universities less as a compendium of facts and more as a description of the lively process by which each generation of college students, administrators, donors and legislators has

wrestled with the issue of who shall be educated and how. Central to this is the idea of a useful past in which the history of higher education is understood as essential and applicable to student affairs work. The issues of access, accountability, social justice, equity, and excellence are pressing- but they are not completely new. Statistics and other compilations from the past, linked with present data, can be integral to thoughtfully analysing whether colleges are changing- and if so, how much in matters of efficiency and effectiveness. What follows is the exposition of the development of student affairs in selected African countries.

## **2.2.8 The Development of student affairs practice in Selected African Countries**

Student affairs and services in higher education vary depending on the country in which it is found. The delivery systems employed as well as the array of offerings available to students develops in accordance with historical, cultural, economic and social contexts that present themselves in the regions or countries in which they are employed. According to Bodibe (2009), Africa has been the recipient of tremendous influences through colonization by the English, French, Portuguese, Belgians, Germans and Dutch. In developing a more focused perspective within which student affairs practice developed in South Africa this section provides a broad review of student affairs and services delivery systems in Botswana, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, as part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

### **2.2.8.1 Student Affairs Practice in Botswana**

The University of Botswana is the main university in the country and the Division of Student Affairs at this university became operational in 1999. According to Nyati Ramahobo (2009), the division is responsible for creating a holistic environment that ensures that learning is the

central focus for student life. The division also collaborates with other divisions towards ensuring that the university fulfils its vision and mission by developing a student-centred, intellectually stimulating and technologically advanced teaching, learning and research environment.

In terms of the organizational structure, the division is headed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Student Affairs and has five departments: Careers and Counselling Services, Academic Services, Culture, Sports and Recreation, Student Welfare and Health Services. Services provided directly under the auspices of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor include Disability Support Services Centre, the Health and Wellness Centre, and the HIV/AIDS programme. Although there are no professional associations in Botswana, student affairs practitioners attend meetings and conferences in neighbouring countries, particularly in South Africa.

#### 2.2.8.2 Student Affairs Practice in the United Republic of Tanzania

According to Mara (2009), at the University of Dar-es-Salaam, all students' welfare is entrusted to the office of the Dean of students. The vision of this office is to create an enabling environment, to nurture and empower students to behave in a mature and responsible way. Likewise the mission of the office is to oversee and coordinate effectively and efficiently all student affairs and related policies formulated by the university. The office of the Dean of students has specific objectives for the personal growth and academic development of the individual student. These objectives include:

- ❖ to advocate for the provision of opportunities that respond to the needs of female and disabled students;

- ❖ to facilitate healthy and mutual communication that helps students utilize available opportunities;
- ❖ to supervise and ensure that students are provided with adequate health services, accommodation, sports and games, catering, individual counselling and guidance, as well as judiciary services (Mara, 2009).

As a public institution, the university relies on meagre government funding which makes it incapable of fulfilling its vision and mission. There is a national organization of university students, the Tanzania Higher Learning Institutions Student Organization (TAHLISO) which brings together all university students in public and private institutions. Its goal is to address issues that affect the academic lives of students in higher education institutions.

#### 2.2.8.3 Student Affairs Practice in Zambia

Zambia attained political independence from British rule in 1964. According to Chiboola (2009), at the time of independence Zambia had no university; it had a few colleges offering courses, mainly in teacher education. During the first ten years after independence, Zambia witnessed a heightened establishment of tertiary institutions of higher learning. The University of Zambia was established in 1966. The second and third public universities were established in 1987 and 2007 respectively; and in addition, seven private universities had been established by the end of 2007. Chiboola (2009) further states that there were close to 30 000 students enrolled countrywide in universities, and 10 000 of these were enrolled at the University of Zambia.

The office of the Dean of students is responsible for the co-ordination of various student services which include student accommodation, personal counselling and career guidance, health and social welfare, student governance and judicial services. The primary goals of student services at the University of Zambia are:

- ❖ application of policies and guidelines on general counselling and guidance, career development, social welfare amenities, and student governance;
- ❖ participation in sport, recreation and socio-cultural activities for the enhancement of students' personal development and growth; and the
- ❖ promotion of information flow and communication between various structures of student organizations and the university management systems (Chiboola:2009).

The provision of student services is dependent on the university budget, largely through the Government grant and tuition fees. The budget is generally inadequate due to competing needs, including staff welfare and retention. Although the need to foster collegiate relationships with other universities and institutions of higher learning is apparent, inter- varsity associations and professional associations are lacking in Zambia. There is currently a move towards establishing a national students' union whose mandate draws on representation and membership from all registered tertiary institutions of higher learning in Zambia. It is anticipated that once this national students union is operational, greater benefits will accrue in areas such as student politics, student advocacy and militancy with national impetus.

#### 2.2.8.4 Student affairs Practice in Zimbabwe

The University of Zimbabwe in the capital Harare is the largest and oldest university in Zimbabwe. According to Mudavanhu (2009), it was formed through a special relationship with the University of London and opened its doors to its first students in 1952. This also marked the beginning of student affairs in Zimbabwe with proctors and senior proctors then responsible for what was called student welfare. Later on the Dean of Students title was employed to denote the person heading the division of student affairs.

Mudavanhu (2009) further states that the hallmark of student affairs in Zimbabwe is to create partnership and encourage interaction between students and faculty, students and administration, and among students themselves, without any form of discrimination at any level. Typical services and programmes offered include: clubs and organizations, accommodation, chaplaincy, counselling and advisory services, student health services, sports and recreation, student liaison, cultural affairs, and HIV and AIDS life skills.

Student affairs practitioners are expected to be holders of at least a first degree (bachelor's). The Dean of students should be a holder of at least a master's degree with relevant experience in administration. No specific training programmes for student affairs practitioners are available in the country at the moment. The student affairs division in Zimbabwe is greatly affected by under-funding that makes it difficult for student affairs activities to succeed. At the moment no established boards or organizations to deal with student affairs are available in Zimbabwe. Deans of students at times meet for workshops/seminars but without an established association.

### 2.2.9 Early Beginnings in South Africa

According to Lunceford (2010), the most recent and seemingly comprehensive source of written information on student affairs and services in South Africa was a joint effort by the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) and the Department of Education's Effective Governance Project titled *Guide to Student Services in South Africa* (Mandew, 2003). A limitation to this book is that Mandew (2003) described the history of student services in South Africa specific to the University of Cape Town. Services included residence houses, cafeterias, sport facilities, financial aid, and student governance.

The establishment of higher education institutions in South Africa was based largely on the British model, with the University of Cape Town (UCT) being the first such institution founded in sub-Saharan Africa in 1829. It was formally developed as a fully-fledged university between the years 1880 and 1900, during which time it also began to admit women, and it was granted university status on 2 April 1918. However, Mandew (2003) argues that it is important to note that in 1923 the Council of UCT confidentially admitted that it would not be in the interests of the university to admit native or coloured students in any numbers, if at all, despite the university's present claims of a long-standing liberal tradition. "By 1929, however, five coloureds had graduated for Arts or Education degrees, and the first Africans were awarded degrees in 1940 and in 1944. By 1945 five Africans, 26 Indians and 76 Coloureds were registered at UCT" (Mandew, 2003).

Apart from the labour movement, it was from within student services that the most vociferous and militant resistance to apartheid and its policies was to emerge, and this resistance emanated from students rather than from institutional or student services leadership. The

emergence of the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS) and the South African Students Organization (SASO) as important student formations of the 1960s and 1970s, laid the foundation for present day student activism and governance in the South African higher education milieu. The on-going transformation of the higher education field means that politics in education did not end in 1994 (with the establishment of a new, democratic dispensation), and that it is still not possible to be neutral. Student services professionals are still faced with tough challenges in the contemporary situation as new issues come to the fore.

Student Affairs in South Africa has historically served the role of conflict management, especially with the Student Representative Councils (SRCs), who were at one time seen as enemies of the state (Bodibe, 2009). Mandew (2003) asserts that in terms of student governance, the first Student Representative Council was set up in 1906, and in relation to institutional governance the role of the SRC was advisory. Generally, the SRC represented students' interests in all situations, and it had authority over all clubs and societies. During these early days, the composition of the SRC was dominated by males, with few females occupying lower rank positions within the structure (Mandew, 2003). Sadly, to this day SRCs continue to be dominated by males, with very few females occupying influential executive positions, despite campus demographics reflecting more female enrolments at various universities.

It is at the level of student services that apartheid education and resistance to it played itself out in the most palpable manner. Though the segregationist policies of apartheid were conceptualized and engineered at the government level and endorsed at governance level by many institutions, especially at Black Universities that were established along tribal lines, such as the Universities of Fort Hare, North, Zululand, Western Cape, and Durban-Westville,

which became “mockingly referred to” as Bush Colleges”. It was at student services level that these policies had to be implemented and defended. Effectively student services practitioners became de facto gatekeepers for apartheid higher education policies (Mandew, 2003). This led to increased student activism and lengthy periods of unrest resulting in suspensions and expulsions of various student leaders who ended up being ‘blacklisted’ and could not further their studies at other universities in South Africa.

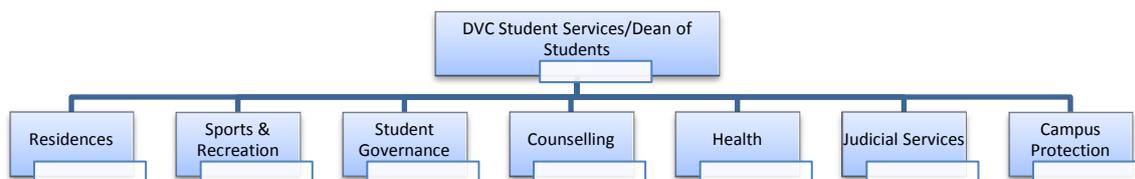
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Typical services and programmes offered at South African universities include residences, sports and recreation, student government, counselling services, health centres, campus protection services, students with disabilities, and student judicial services. While most upper level managers have advanced degrees, entry-level staff members seldom have degrees related to the practice of student affairs. One master’s level programme in student affairs exists at the University of KwaZulu- Natal in Durban and the Master of Arts degree in Higher Education Studies is offered at the University of the Free State. However, the fact that there is currently no relevant undergraduate offering/qualification in student affairs practice has led to

the conception and pursuit of this study towards professionalizing student affairs practice in South Africa.

Most senior student affairs positions are entitled executive Dean of students, and in some cases institutions have Deputy Vice-Chancellors for student affairs. The Vice-Chancellor/Principal/Rector is the senior executive in South African institutions. Effectively the organizational chart of student affairs on many South African campuses will look as follows:

**Figure 2.1: Student Affairs Organizational Chart**



In the light of Figure 2.1 above, the different categories of student services, such as residences, sports and recreation, student governance, counselling, health, judicial services, and campus protection are headed by managers referred to as directors or heads of departments. These middle managers report to the divisional executive entitled either the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Executive Dean of Students, and they manage a group of student affairs practitioners commonly known as Student Development Officers (SDOs). Apart from counselling, health, and judicial services, the rest of the practitioners are not professionally qualified due to the dearth of undergraduate preparation programmes. They are drawn from academia and the latest trend is also to draw from among former student leaders in response

to the notion of “*growing our own timber*”. However, these recruitment practices have not adequately mitigated for the need for professionalization of student affairs practice.

The primary challenges facing South African student affairs include student financing, institutional budgets, funding of student affairs, HIV/AIDS and other health issues, governance and management, student retention and graduation, professional development, racism and crime/security. The following associations are operational within the South African student affairs movement:

- ❖ Association of College and University Housing Officers-International (ACUHO-I)
- ❖ Campus Protection Society of Southern Africa (CAMPROSA)
- ❖ Financial Aid Practitioners of South Africa (FAPSA)
- ❖ National Association of Student Development (NASDEV)
- ❖ South African Student Sports Union (SASSU)
- ❖ South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Practitioners (SAASSAP)
- ❖ South African Association of Campus Health Services (SAACHS) (Bodibe,2009)

These associations convene annual conferences and seminars where best practices are shared among delegates. According to Bodibe (2009), SAASSAP published one issue of its journal, *Thuso*, in 2003. However, more still needs to be done to convert scholarly discourse and conference proceedings into publications that will add to the body of knowledge regarding the professionalization of student affairs practice, with special reference to capacity building among student affairs practitioners. The launch of the Journal of Student Affairs in Africa (JSAA) in 2013 has heralded a renewed platform for the publication of scholarly and didactic articles that seek to contribute to the professionalization of student affairs practice in African higher education.

Gansemer-Topf (2013) states that the World Higher Education Declaration (1998), the creation of the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) in 2010, and annual conferences of the South African Association of Senior Student affairs Practitioners (SAASSAP) and African Student Affairs Conference suggest an interest by student affairs professionals in becoming more recognised and valued within African higher education. The following is an exposition of the evolution of student services in South Africa over different epochs up to the contemporary context and its compliance with the Higher Education Act of 1997.

#### **2.2.10 Student Affairs Practice In South Africa (Contemporary Context)**

Education White Paper 3 (1997) pointed out that South African higher education recently underwent intense restructuring. In 1997 the first democratically elected South African government issued an official report and framework for the transformation of the higher education system as “planned, governed, and funded as a single national coordinated system” in an effort to create a learning society which releases the creative and intellectual energies of all South Africans towards meeting the goals of reconstruction and development. Lunceford (2010) further states that in 2002 the national restructuring plan called for mandatory mergers between institutions of higher education in an attempt to help even out the fragmentation and unequal distribution of resources. What was a system of 36 institutions since the 1980s was then reduced to 23 institutions through a systematic process of restructuring the higher education landscape. This resulted in three university types, namely, traditional universities offering degree programmes, universities of technology offering former technikon programmes, and comprehensive universities offering the mixture of academic and

technological programmes. The number of public higher education institutions has since increased to twenty five (25) with the launch of two additional universities in Mpumalanga and Northern Cape at the beginning of 2014.

According to Lunceford (2010), in 2003, the Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET) and the South African Department of Education (DoE) emphasized that student affairs and services should play a key role in the transformation of South African higher education and provide a means to rectify imbalances developed under apartheid, create equity, and de-racialize individual post-secondary institutions and higher education as a system. During the *Effective Governance Project*, CHET and DoE reported that student services were central in the life of campuses, not primarily for political reasons but for contributing to the core business, namely, student development, student learning and student success.

Lunceford (2010) further states that in the past decade there has been a major shift in the presence of student affairs and student services in South African higher education. Most South African institutions have designated student affairs divisions or units within their universities. In addition discussion about and action towards professionalizing student affairs (e.g., the leadership and management of practitioners, and the delivery of programmes and services) began at the national level in 1996 with the National Commission on Higher Education (Harper, 2004). Also in this time the establishment of the South African Association of Senior Student affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) and the National Association of Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV) (Bodibe, 2009) occurred. The need to professionalize student affairs practice continues to be part of discourse at annual national conferences of the aforementioned associations.

## **2.3 PROFESSIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND PRINCIPLES OF STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE**

Student affairs researchers and practitioners continue to recognize the need for professional development of staff (Barr & Upcraft, 1990; Komives & Woodard, 2003; Ludeman, 2001). According to Lunceford (2010) the International Association of Student Affairs and Services (IASAS) emphasized that effective student affairs and services placed students at the centre of higher education by supporting students in their academic endeavours and enhancing their social, cultural, and cognitive development. Ludeman (2001) further argues that student affairs must be intentional in design and must take the lead in addressing the personal and developmental needs of students as human beings.

In pursuing the goal of enhancing student experience at higher education institutions, student affairs practitioners have had to grapple with a number of impediments, such as organizational bureaucracy and the creation of professional identity, which require professional skills. Such skills draw heavily on dispositions and orientations towards student experience, which may either, be novice or expert (Carpenter, 2001). Although Carpenter (2003) felt that the work of student affairs is a complex field that deals with human behaviours and so must rely on multifaceted theories, Burkard, Cole, Ott and Stoflet (2004) suggested that human relations, administrative management, technological and research competencies – as well as personal attributes are crucial to the success of entry level professionals in student affairs.

In order to promote effectiveness, current research calls for student affairs professionals to be cognizant of their personal bias and mind sets in their work. In the double launch issue of the

*Journal on Student Affairs in Africa* ( JSAA), Carpenter and Haber-Curran (2013:3) assert that “Our work should be nothing less than a combination of discovery, integration, application, and teaching, managed efficiently and evaluated rigorously. Hence, to be effective, student affairs professionals should be engaged in what can be called the scholarship of practice”. Guido, Chavez, and Lincoln (2010) emphasize the importance of appropriately identifying the individual’s thought paradigm, advocating for student affairs professionals to note how they view the world in order to impact the world. Student affairs practitioners and scholars have a responsibility to know from which paradigm(s) they are working and to consider how their practice may be impacting those they serve (Guido *et al.*, 2010).

According to Ludeman and Strange (2009: 5- 8), the following tenets, which have universal appeal, apply to the creation and on-going assessment of student affairs functions and services in higher education:

(1) *Purposes and partnerships*

- (a) Student affairs professionals, as integral partners in providing services and programmes, must be student-centred and acknowledge students as partners and responsible stakeholders in their education. Students have the right and responsibility to organize, to participate in governance, and to pursue their personal and social interests.
- (b) Student affairs functions and services must be delivered in a manner that is seamless, meaningful and integrated with the academic mission of the institution.

(2) *Access and diversity*

- (a) Every effort should be made to attract a diverse student body and staff.
- (b) Programmes must be established and resources allocated for the purpose of meeting the ultimate goal of student affairs functions and services: enhancement of student learning and development.

(3) *Learning, research and assessment*

- (a) Student affairs functions should assume leadership in addressing personal and developmental needs of students as holistic human-beings
- (b) The delivery of student services and programmes is based on a number of critical values, including diversity, pluralism, inclusiveness, ethical living, the inherent worth of the individual and the idea that students can and must participate in their own growth and development
- (c) Student affairs functions and services must subscribe to high standards of practice and behaviour, including professional preparation, assessment of professional qualifications, continuing training and development, evaluation of services, programmes and staff performances, assessment of student outcomes, adherence to codes of ethics and use of effective management practices

According to Lunceford (2010), the importance of effective management in student affairs entails having an “overall manager” responsible for coordinating student programmes and services within the context of a student affairs department’s vision and mission, allocating appropriate resources and budget, providing regular assessment and strategic planning, human resources, and professional development of staff, recruiting and retaining diverse

staff, technology infrastructure and training; and marketing. An increase and diversification of specialization areas in the field of student affairs have led to an increased need for student affairs professionals and administrators to pursue higher degree studies in student affairs administration. Many student affairs professionals find that involvement in professional associations serves to enhance their administrative and professional skills (Mueller, 2002).

## **2.4 THEORETICAL BASES OF THE STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSION**

The profession of student affairs was founded within a frame of reference that assumed the universality of ethical principles and principles of good practice (Fried, 2003). The various developmental theories that guide student affairs and the management principles that many have adopted are in reality based on Western understandings of both human and organizational behaviour (Komives & Woodard, 2003). Student affairs as a profession is grounded in and guided by student development theory (Guido-DiBrito & Chavez, 2002; Hamrick *et al.*, 2002; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Upcraft & Moore, 1990). It is a tool that helps individuals explain, predict, and explore student development and provides a framework for the maturation of an individual that leads to complexity over time (Guido-DiBrito & Chavez, 2002). It is important that student affairs professionals understand student development theory to “proactively identify and address student needs, design programmes, develop policies, and create healthy college environments that encourage positive growth in students” (Evans, Forney & Guido-DiBrito, 1998: xi).

As higher education and student affairs professionals around the world organize the delivery of services to students, the kind of student services available and the manner in which they are delivered are strongly influenced by the purpose of education in that society and by the

philosophy that underpins higher education. As student affairs in countries other than the United States develop professional identities, it is essential that they develop a body of knowledge that is grounded in an understanding of their students and their own cultural context. This includes identifying values and ethical standards, and developing a theoretical base that describes and explains student needs and development designs, implements programmes and identifies good practices that promote student success (Fried & Lewis, 2009).

According to Evans (2010), the first theorist to examine the psychosocial development of college students was Arthur Chickering (1969). His theory expanded upon Erikson's (1968) notion of identity and intimacy and suggested that the establishment of identity is the central developmental issue during college years. This theory was further revised in 1993 to incorporate new research findings. Chickering and Reisser (1993) proposed the following seven vectors of development that contribute to the formation of identity:

- ***“Developing Competence*** - focuses on tasks of developing intellectual, physical and manual, and interpersonal competence
- ***Managing Emotions*** - students develop the ability to recognize and accept emotions, and appropriately express and control them
- ***Moving Through Autonomy Toward Interdependence*** - students develop increased emotional independence, self-direction, problem-solving ability, persistence, and mobility
- ***Developing Mature Interpersonal relationships*** - acceptance and appreciation of differences, and capacity for healthy and lasting intimate relationships

- ***Establishing Identity*** - issues of comfort with body and appearance, gender and sexual orientation, sense of one's role and lifestyle, sense of social and cultural heritage, comfort with one's roles and lifestyles, secure self in light of feedback from significant others, self-acceptance, self-esteem, personal stability and integration.
- ***Developing Purpose*** - clear vocational goals, making meaningful commitments to specific personal interests and activities
- ***Developing Integrity*** - progressing from rigid, moralistic thinking to a more humanized, personalized value system that respects the beliefs of others" (Evans, 1996:168-169).

The interdisciplinary nature of student affairs requires the integration and application of theories pertaining to higher education, management, and psychology. Each discipline offers a theory that can be synthesized by utilizing the following four frames of Bolman and Deal (2008):

- ***Structural Frame*** - Organizations exist to accomplish established goals
- ***The Human Resource Frame*** - this frame examines the interplay between organizations and people
- ***The Political Frame*** - this frame asserts that in the face of enduring differences and scarce resources, conflict among members of a coalition is inevitable and power inevitably becomes a key resource
- ***The Symbolic Frame*** - this frame assumes that humans create and use symbols to make meaning out of chaos, clarity out of confusion and predictability out of mystery" (Zolner, 2010).

The interdisciplinary nature of student affairs practice can make managing and leading particularly difficult. Leaders in student affairs must integrate and apply knowledge from multiple fields in order to survive, let alone thrive (Lovell & Kosten, 2000). A lack of knowledge concerning the complexity of higher education will impede desired results. Therefore, student affairs professionals must be students and masters of higher education (Sriram & Hines, 2011).

While most attention goes towards the impact student affairs professionals have upon students, administrators must first get their staff members to come together under a common vision and work as a team before they can begin to develop undergraduates. Therefore, student affairs professionals must be students and masters of management and organizational theory. Staff members come with a range of backgrounds and personalities, and student affairs leaders must navigate those relationships in order to accomplish objectives. Therefore student affairs professionals must be students and masters of psychology (American College Personnel Association & National association of Student Personnel Administrators, 2004; Evans, 2003). Komives and Woodard (2003) assert that effective student affairs professionals must integrate and apply knowledge of higher education, management, and psychology in order to have the kind of impact on students that positively affects their learning, engagement, and development. Accordingly, the natural question arises: *How do student affairs professionals understand and integrate theories from these diverse disciplines and apply them to their complex work environments?*

### **2.4.1 A Theory from Higher Education: Four College Models**

Birnbaum (1988) identifies four models of institutions and their specific functions. While any particular college will be a blend of two or more of these models, understanding them in their extreme versions will help student affairs professionals navigate their own institution. Birnbaum's four college models are the *collegial, bureaucratic, political, and anarchical* institution.

The collegial institution provides the student affairs professional with a work environment where equality and debate are embedded in the culture. The campus could be small in size, fostering frequent face-to-face interactions that are critical for the life of the college. These regular interactions allow for departments to work collaboratively; there are no silos (Birnbaum, 1988). On the other hand, a bureaucratic institution – where structure and hierarchy are foundational- esteems an organization's structure and chain of command. There is constant emphasis on efficiency and rational decision-making. This institution highly regards position; therefore, a promotion up the organizational chart is a key power move for a student affairs administrator (Birnbaum, 1988).

Birnbaum's (1988) third model, the political institution, thrives on influence within the organization. Administrators may find themselves in fierce competition with one another for additional funding, the hiring of a staff member, or to retain a particular programme. Departments form alliances in order to ensure necessary resources and power is multiplied when collaborating with other influential individuals.

While the first three models are each unique, they at least possess a sense of order in their respective structures. However, student affairs professionals could find themselves in an institution so large that there is more anarchy than order, but somehow enough stability is maintained in order for people to function (Sriram & Hines, 2011). In the anarchical institution (Birnbaum, 1988), with departments too numerous to track and multiple events occurring simultaneously, student affairs professionals must focus on their *small town* in order to survive in the *large kingdom*. Individual and departmental agendas are pursued in hopes of somehow properly connecting problems, people, and solutions in a manner that creates change (Kuh, 2003). The size and complexity of this type of institution is so great that attention is diffused based upon subgroups, common interests, or environmental factors. Birnbaum (1988) refers to these random, spontaneous, and sometimes temporary collections of problems, people, and solutions as *garbage cans*, also known as *committees* to those who work in student affairs.

#### **2.4.2 A Theory from Management: The Five Dysfunctions of a Team**

The challenges of working toward the learning and development of college students are so demanding that integration of student affairs management and leadership issues is underemphasized in research (Lovell & Kosten, 2000). However, senior administrators are required to form teams and manage staff as higher education institutions and seek to foster supportive campus environments. Supervision cannot fall into other duties as assigned category for administrators in student affairs. Managing is a core component of the job, and utilizing theory is necessary for effectiveness (Sriram & Hines, 2011).

Lencioni (2002) describes five common dysfunctions that often plague teams in the workplace, namely, *absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, avoidance of accountability, and inattention to results*. Each dysfunction ties into a broader framework of management, leadership, and organizational theory. Therefore, by understanding and applying the concepts and tools to prevent these dysfunctions, student affairs professionals are able to translate theory into practice.

Absence of trust is the first and most foundational dysfunction of a work team. Absence of trust leads to other symptomatic problems, such as a staff's unwillingness to confide in others in a group. If team members cannot share mistakes and weaknesses openly with one another, an environment of trust will be unattainable and miscommunication will occur. Therefore, instead of sharing the situation and immediately seeking advice, the student affairs administrator gambles with whether or not the problem will disappear or amplify.

Following absence of trust is fear of conflict. Lencioni (2002) advocates for conflict as an essential ingredient to any healthy team. Conflict allows team members to engage in the unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. Only when staff members are able to come together in an environment where equality is esteemed and hierarchy is deemphasized can they approach problems with creativity, care, and a sense of adventure.

The next dysfunction, lack of commitment, pertains to the level of buy-in staff members have with decisions. To ensure security in the organization, team members may feign commitment to the ideas presented from leadership. Student affairs professionals like all workers, desire to be persuaded towards a direction rather than ordered to follow necessary steps for

implementation. Too often managers use their authority to force follow-through, with little attention paid to the hearts of their followers.

The final two dysfunctions- avoidance of accountability and inattention to results- fit well together. Those who work in student affairs know that results matter (Schuh, 2009). One can have a team that trusts each other, disagrees openly in meetings, and is committed to the vision of the department and subsequent decisions, but if these vital components do not lead to results, then the purpose is severely compromised. As Lencioni (2002) notes, teams that are willing to commit publicly to specific results are more likely to work with a passionate, even desperate desire to achieve those goals. Understanding and avoiding Lencioni's five dysfunctions, provides foundational organizational wisdom for those in student affairs to lead well (Sriram & Hines, 2011).

### **2.4.3 A Theory from Psychology: The Big Five**

Norman (1963) found a recurrence of five personality traits in his research, which later became known as *Norman's Big Five*. Concurrent research in the past twenty years has shown the validation of these five factors (Costa & McCrae, 1987; Goldberg, 1990; Digman, 1989). The five-factor model consists of: Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism, also referred to as the acronym OCEAN (McCrae & John, 1992). An individual can be scored high in some dimensions and low in others, and personality then comprises the combination of the varying degrees of the five factors.

Those high in *Openness to Experience* express an interest in creativity, intellectual interests, differentiated emotions, aesthetic sensitivity, need for variety, and unconventional values (McCrae & John, 1992). Such individuals are seen as intelligent and imaginative (Barrick & Mount, 1991). The second trait, *Conscientiousness*, is seen as a trait governed by self-control. Those individuals high in conscientiousness are dutiful.... Hardworking, ambitious (McCrae & Costa, 1987) and are also highly organized, attentive, precise, and high achieving (McCrae & John, 1992). People high in conscientiousness are aware of all the various tasks associated with a particular situation.

The third personality dimension, *Extraversion*, refers to how an individual relates to others. Those who are high in extraversion are outgoing, open, and talkative (McCrae & Costa, 1987). *Agreeableness*, the fourth factor, is also known as likability or friendliness (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Individuals high in this dimension focus on being courteous, nurturing, and supportive, but those, by contrast, who are low on agreeableness may demonstrate “self-centeredness, spitefulness, and jealousy of the other (McCrae & John, 1992). Agreeableness can also be seen in the forms of sympathy and tolerance.

The personality dimension of *Neuroticism* is the last of the big five. However, this dimension is reversed: A higher level of neuroticism yields negative or inflexible characteristics. Neuroticism is the opposite of emotional stability and is demonstrated through negative emotionality and high distress (McCrae & Costa, 1987). Barrick and Mount (1991) describe those high in neuroticism as depressed, angry, worried, and insecure. In addition, individuals who are neurotic may seem nervous and anxious. McCrae and John (1992) associate neuroticism with irrational thinking and low self-esteem. On the opposite end of the spectrum, those low in this dimension will be composed and calm. The Big Five provide

student affairs administrators with a framework with which to understand the colleagues and students they interact with on a regular basis.

## **2.5 STUDENT GOVERNANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

### **2.5.1 Evolution of Student Involvement in Higher Education Governance**

Different models of the place of students in university governance can be traced historically to the birth of universities in 13<sup>th</sup> century Europe (Verger 1992 et al. Perkin, 2006). The university established in Paris came to be known as a ‘university of masters’, where the guild of professing teachers shared control over the university with a student rector, who was usually a young master elected by students. The Bologna University, in contrast, represented the rival model of a ‘student university’ where students organized in a federation of student guilds (constituted by subject and nations), were in control of the organization of their studies (Perkin, 2006).

Towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century the so-called ‘doctors colleges’ appeared also in the Bologna University, even though the dominance of students and marginalization of professors continued in institutional terms (Verger et al, 1992). Over the centuries, however, the southern European model of the student university established first in Bologna and eventually in other Italian cities gradually converged with the Parisian model (Perkin, 2006). Thus, the pre-modern experience of the student university gradually faded into distant memory. By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, students did not play a prominent role in university governance in most countries (Luescher-Mamashela, 2011).

The perceived rise of managerialism in higher education has sparked the greatest academic interest and most fruitful debates on matters of university governance since the experience of the university democratization. Luescher-Mamashela (2010) defines managerialism as a ‘set of beliefs or an ideology that legitimizes the authority of university executives as professional managers; it involves, and is typically described in terms of, the application of leadership styles and management approaches developed in the business world to the academic context of university governance. The rise of managerialism was described first with respect to changes in university governance in the UK in the 1980s, in Commonwealth universities and South Africa, and eventually in Continental Europe and Latin American universities (1990s and early 2000s) (Trow 1994; Amaral *et al.*, 2003; Cloete *et al.*, 2006).

While the involvement of students in university decision-making was the key issue in the scholarly debates on university democratization of the late 1960s and 1970s, in more recent debates about managerialism, students hardly ever feature, except as clients (Luescher-Mamashela, 2011). However, the demise of the university as a ‘representative democracy’ (Olsen, 2007) through the post-1990 higher education reforms and the rise of managerialism does not imply that staff and students no longer formally participated in university decision-making. For example, a cross-national survey of student participation in university governance conducted by the Council of Europe in 2002, shows that legal provisions for formal student involvement in European public higher education at national, institutional and to a lesser extent at faculty and departmental levels remain close to universal (Persson, 2004).

The survey also indicates that student influence in university decision-making is perceived to be strongest in the area of social issues, including the domain of student affairs, and on educational and pedagogical issues, but their influence is considered weak and or even absent

in matters of university finances, employment of teaching staff, degree and admission requirements (Persson, 2004). Studies from other higher education systems (US, Canada, Africa) also suggest a continuation (or even extension) of student participation in university governance (Luescher-Mamashela, 2011). The foregoing historical account provides a helpful guide to understanding variations in the formal involvement of students in university decision-making.

### **2.5.2 Status of Student Governance in South Africa**

The 1997 White Paper on Higher Education and the Education White Paper of 1997, make it clear that the student body is a major stakeholder in a public higher education institution, and that student governance is central to the concept of co-operative governance. The participation of student leadership is essential to the operation of the university as a whole, and legitimate student leaders are key participants through direct representation on appropriate structures and committees in the co-operative governance of the institution. The Institutional Forum has an important role in developing the principles, and advising Council on the implementation, of co-operative governance.

Unfortunately, South Africa's unfolding higher education transformation process has paid little direct attention to student governance to date. There is insufficient clarity on how student governance should play a role within the national policy framework. The form and even the name of student governance structures, such as Students Representative Councils, have not yet been aligned with the co-operative governance environment. This time lag between policy and practice means that student governance structures in South African universities are to some extent acting in a 'philosophical vacuum'. A number of local

universities are currently contemplating restructuring their student governance systems, which gives further indication of the complexity involved in the South African student governance landscape at the moment. What follows is a schematic typology of student governance structures at different universities, using the key determinant of the electoral system used:

**a) *SA Student Governance Type I***

In this cluster are universities such as the University of the Western Cape and some historically black institutions, such as Fort Hare and Zululand. These universities tend to have small SRCs (approximately 15 members). To be elected, a candidate must belong to a political organization and hence the SRCs tend to be issues driven, rather than project-based. The threat of partisanship, sabotaging the structure or compromising its effectiveness is quite significant.

**b) *SA Student Governance Type II***

Universities in this cluster include the University of Pretoria and the University of the North. Such universities have large SRCs (in the order of 50 members), elected on a party basis. They form a kind of parliament, from which an executive committee is elected as a cabinet. Given that representatives are elected on the basis of popularity and ability to articulate issues, rather than on the basis of competence, capacity for running projects becomes questionable, as is the case with Type I universities. This calls for the need for capable student affairs practitioners who can navigate the rigours

of capacitating student leaders on the tenets of student governance, such as co-operative governance as articulated in the higher education legislative framework.

*c) SA Student Governance Type III*

Universities in this cluster include historically Afrikaans-language universities, such as the University of Stellenbosch. They have small SRCs elected on a portfolio basis. These SRCs are generally competent with respect to key projects, but can lack capacity to represent students adequately in complex policy matters. Student affairs practitioners operating in such environments require skills to capacitate student leaders on issues of diversity and a clear understanding of the transformation agenda as articulated in the higher education legislative framework.

## **2.6 ESSENTIAL COMPETENCIES FOR THE STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTITIONER**

While many professionals in student affairs are committed to continuing their professional development after completing formal schooling, there is currently no mechanism in place to ensure that professional development happens consistently among student affairs practitioners. While there is general agreement that staying current is a professional necessity, the field of student affairs has no organized approach to doing so (Janosik, Carpenter & Creamer, 2006). Miller and Sandeen (2003) noted that there appears to be a clarion call for a professional entity, perhaps in a structured umbrella-type federation to speak for the profession as a whole, otherwise student affairs as a profession will continue to be viewed as an immature profession.

Helfgot (2005) states that in a professional world characterized by change, uncertainty, and increased pressure to demonstrate that what they do really matters, student affairs professionals need clear definitions, a shared understanding of critical professional values that are consistent and congruent. Blake (2007) further argues that professionals with responsibilities for student affairs can play a major role in the increasing emphasis on academic achievement, student learning, and retention; as keys to a creative and efficacious future for the profession.

According to Burkard, Cole, Ott and Stoflet (2004), in an examination of any given profession, one may ask “What principles, knowledge, and skills provide the foundation for defining our profession?” This question has been an important area of query within student affairs (Lovell & Kosten, 2000), and the focus of several empirical investigations. Despite these investigations, Pope and Reynolds (1997) noted that the literature reveals no consensus about core competencies for student affairs practitioners, a perspective recently echoed by Herdlein (2004) and Lovell and Kosten (2000), who conducted a comprehensive meta-analysis of 30 years of research on skills, knowledge, and personal traits of student affairs administrators, and were able to identify two investigations relevant to entry-level professionals (Newton & Richardson, 1976; Ostroth, 1981). Although findings from these studies are over three (3) decades old, they do offer some initial insights into competencies believed to be important at that time. Participants in both studies identified the importance of human relation skills; and they specifically identified interpersonal relations, individual and group counselling, the ability to work with students, and the recognition of and services to minority students.

In a recent study not included in Lovell and Kosten's (2000) meta-analysis, Herdlein (2004) surveyed 50 chief student affairs officers' perceptions regarding the relevance of graduate preparation for new professionals. In relation to skills participants perceived as essential to student affairs practice, participants endorsed management skills most frequently, particularly those skills of budgeting, collaboration, leadership, and writing abilities. Human relations skills were the second most frequently endorsed competencies; and participants specifically identified work with diverse populations, communication, interpersonal skills, empathy and firmness, and caring.

Although the information garnered from the Newton and Richardson (1976) and Ostroth (1981) studies provides valuable insights into skills identified as important to student affairs, colleges and universities have significantly changed since the late 1970s and early 1980s. Technology has influenced campus life, often transforming how students, staff, and faculty communicate, interact, and even teach (Barrett, 2003). Finally, legal issues, ethical standards, and ethical decision making models have progressively been emphasized in student affairs practice (Fried, 2003). These recent developments in student affairs practice may have influenced common knowledge about the professional practice of student affairs, and competency as conceptualized in the profession.

If these findings represent the expected essential competencies of entry-level professionals, then these results have important implications for graduate preparation programmes and curriculum development. Graduate preparation programmes must examine the training offered in human relations, administration/management, technology and research. Graduate programmes may include instruction on advanced counselling or human relation competencies i.e. collaboration, consultation, group facilitation, conflict resolution/mediation,

supervision, and crisis intervention (Burkard *et al.*, 2005). Finally these results have important implications for graduate students and new professionals, and they may serve as guidelines for professional development programmes.

In the summer of 2009, the College Student Educators International (ACPA) and Student Affairs Administrators in higher education (NASPA) committed to work together to establish one set of professional competency areas that both associations would endorse for the broad field of student affairs. According to the ACPA-NASPA Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards (2010) the following professional competency areas have been identified:

**a) *“Advising and Helping***

The Advising and Helping competency area addresses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to providing counselling, support, direction, feedback, critique, referral, and guidance to individuals and groups.

**b) *Assessment, Evaluation, and Research***

The AER competency area focuses on the ability to use, design, conduct, and critique qualitative and quantitative AER analyses; to manage organizations using AER processes and the results obtained from them; and to shape the political and ethical climate surrounding AER processes and uses on campus.

**c) *Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion***

The EDI competency area includes the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to create learning environments that are enriched with diverse views and people. It is

also designed to create an institutional ethos that accepts and celebrates differences among people, helping to free them of any misconceptions and prejudices.

**d) *Ethical Professional Practice***

This competency area pertains to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to understand and apply ethical standards to one's work. Focus is further on the integration of ethics into all aspects of self and professional practice.

**e) *History, Philosophy, and Values***

This competency area embodies the foundations of the profession from which current and future research and practice will grow. The commitment to demonstrating this competency area ensures that our present and future practices are informed by an understanding of our history, philosophy, and values.

**f) *Human and Organizational Resources***

This competency area includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes used in the selection, supervision, motivation, and formal evaluation of staff; conflict resolution; management of the politics of organizational discourse; and the effective application of strategies and techniques associated with financial resources, facilities management, fundraising, technology use, crisis management, risk management, and sustainable resources.

**g) *Law, Policy, and Governance***

This competency area includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes relating to policy development processes used in various contexts, the application of legal constructs,

and the understanding of governance structures and their impact on one's professional practice.

***h) Leadership***

This competency area addresses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required of a leader, whether it be a positional leader or a member of the staff, in both an individual capacity and within a process of how individuals work together effectively to envision, plan and effect change in organizations, as well as respond to internal and external constituencies and issues.

***i) Personal Foundations***

This competency area involves knowledge, skills and attitudes to maintain emotional, physical, social, environmental, relational, spiritual, and intellectual wellness; be self-directed and self-reflective, maintain excellence and integrity in work; be comfortable with ambiguity, be aware of one's own areas of strength and growth, have a passion for work; and remain curious.

***j) Student Learning and Development***

This competency area addresses the concepts and principles of student development and learning theory. This includes the ability to apply theory to improve and inform student affairs practice; as well as understanding teaching and training theory and practice” (ACPA-NASPA Joint Task Force on Professional Competencies and Standards, 2010: 8-28)

According to Lunceford (2010), the shift in the nature and scope of student affairs divisions across South Africa, has led to a need to increase training and development, and more specialised competencies for student affairs practitioners. Many scholars have expressed the need of formal education and training for South African student affairs practitioners (CHET, June 2006, SAASSAP & NASDEV). The researcher is cognizant of limited research within the sector on the needs of and interests of South African student affairs practitioners, and through this study, the researcher will contribute to on-going discourse on the subject, such as the 2010 National survey of South African Student Affairs Practitioners, whose primary purpose was to 1) determine the needs and interests of student affairs practitioners in terms of formal education programmes, and 2) determine the current level of education of student affairs practitioners.

Shea and Baghirova (2009) state that the importance of a comprehensive and professional approach to student services within post-conflict/disaster institutions of higher education has been a missing element of reconstruction efforts to date. They state that the future directions to build the profession in these institutions and to support the reconstruction efforts should include “1) support from international student affairs professional associations, 2) professional development for student affairs practitioners, 3) research on the role of student affairs in rebuilding efforts, 4) the utilization of technology to support professionals in the field, 5) an international forum to ‘explore the issues and highlight the importance of student services in reconstruction efforts’, and 6) work with international partners to explore future opportunities” (Shea and Baghirova, 2009: 62). Lunceford (2010) argues that the current system of South African higher education is very new, when viewing the country’s history; it is still working to rectify outcomes of an unequal society and educational system. Key areas need to be addressed when considering a model for systematic change in student affairs.

Lunceford (2010) finally asserts that the professionalization of student affairs in South Africa as a sector should involve systematic change and community development as well as a strong agenda for professional development and capacity building in staff. A model for professionalizing student affairs should include 1) systematic change across the country, 2) verified documentation on the history and foundation of the sector, 3) creation of national standards and guidelines, 4) capacity building in professional associations, 5) creation of culturally and context relevant frameworks and theories, and appropriate ways to translate theory and frameworks to practice, 6) building a foundation of student affairs research and a culture of using research in practice, and 7) formal preparation programmes (Lunceford, 2010: 11).

## **2.7 SUMMARY**

Chapter II had the purpose of reviewing literature on important aspects of student affairs practice by focusing on the following: *Historical and Contemporary Context and Student Affairs Practice in institutions of Higher Learning in South Africa, Professional Foundations and Principles of Student Affairs Practice, Theoretical Bases of the Student Affairs Profession, Student Governance in Higher Education, and Essential Competencies for Student Affairs Professionals*. The following chapter will present a discussion of methodological procedures to be employed in the pursuit of the goal of professionalizing student affairs practice in South.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The preceding chapter presented a literature review on the development of student affairs practice as well as the requisite competencies for student affairs practitioners. This study was specifically pursued to establish the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners at higher education institutions in South Africa with regard to student governance.

This chapter of the study explains the research design, the research methods, data collection techniques and analysis, and the population and sample. The following, however, recapture the purpose and research questions and hypotheses that underpins this study:

#### **3.2 THE RESEARCH PURPOSE**

The aim of the study was developed to answer research questions pertinent to the study, which was to determine the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners with regard to student governance. As cited in the literature review chapter, minimal progress has been made in South Africa towards capacitating student affairs practitioners and this reality has led to the conception of this study. Pertinent questions were formulated and expressed for the qualitative section of the study. For the quantitative section of the study, hypotheses were formulated to determine the relationship(s) between and amongst the

independent variables of the study, which are *male and female (Gender)* student affairs practitioners, *senior and junior (Experience)* student affairs practitioners, and *professionally trained and non-professionally trained (Professional Training)* student affairs practitioners. Finally, the researcher examined the views of student affairs practitioners regarding the professionalization of student affairs practice.

### **3.3 RESEARCH FOCUS**

The primary aim of the study was to establish the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners responsible for student governance in higher education institutions in South Africa.

#### **3.3.1 The Qualitative Research Focus**

As measured by the interview schedule, the following research questions were the primary focus of the qualitative design of the study:

- To what extent are student affairs practitioners professionally prepared to effect sound student governance practice?
- How can student affairs professionals be better equipped to enhance student governance in higher education institutions?
- Do student affairs practitioners endorse an establishment of professional competencies in student affairs?
- What are the perceptions of student affairs practitioners regarding the relevance of participation in a continuing professional development system?

- What are the views of student affairs practitioners regarding the current employment practices of student affairs practitioners in South African higher education institutions, especially with regard to student governance?
- What is the nature of the discourse on the need to professionalize student affairs practice, especially in student affairs organizations such as National Association of Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV) and/or South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Practitioners (SAASSAP)?

### **3.3.2 The Quantitative Research Focus**

The quantitative research focus sought to determine statistically significant relationships between and within the three dependent variables of study viz. *gender, experience, and career*. Consequently, the following hypotheses were designed for the purpose. The following null hypotheses state that there is no significant:

- difference between male and female student affairs practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance.
- difference between senior and junior student affairs practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance.
- difference between professionally trained and non-professionally trained practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance.
- interaction between gender and experience with regard to professional competencies.
- interaction between gender and career practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance

- interaction between experienced and career practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance
- interaction amongst gender, experience, and career practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance.

### 3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used *triangulation* (often referred to as mixed method research design) with the purpose of applying and combining both qualitative and quantitative research designs. According to Johnson and Christensen (2008) triangulation is the term given when the researcher seeks convergence and corroboration of results from different methods studying the same phenomenon. Fraenkel and Wallen (2010) contend that by using both the qualitative and quantitative research designs in the same study, the researcher can overcome the weakness or intrinsic bias and the problems that come from using either the qualitative or quantitative designs in a study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) further argue that the best approach to answering research questions is to use both quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study or when using solely a quantitative or qualitative method would be insufficient to provide complete answers that meet the goal or purpose of the study.

Altrichter, Feldman, Posch, and Somekh (2008) have identified, *inter-alia*, three basic types of triangulation. These are the *concurrent triangulation*, *sequential explanatory triangulation*, and *sequential exploratory triangulation*. Creswell (2012) explains *concurrent triangulation* as the simultaneous collection of both quantitative and qualitative data where data is merged and the results are used to understand a research problem. *Sequential*

*explanatory triangulation* consists of first collecting quantitative data and then collecting qualitative data to help explain or elaborate on the quantitative results (Creswell, 2012).

For this study, the researcher used *sequential exploratory triangulation*. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that in sequential exploratory triangulation; the researcher administers the interviews (qualitative) first, and then follows up by administering the questionnaire (quantitative) to refine the qualitative views and opinions of the interviewees. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) further state that an exploratory design typically encompasses two phases where qualitative data, gathered through interviews in Phase 1, provides a basis for a more systematic quantitative study in Phase 2. In the light of the foregoing, the results of the interviews conducted for this study, have been used to develop appropriate questions for a questionnaire administered to a larger sample of student affairs practitioners

Leedy and Ormrod (2010) state that triangulation is a powerful tool used by researchers to increase the credibility and validity of the results in a study. This study focused on the establishment of the need for the professionalization of student affairs practice, due to the changing role of the student affairs practitioner. The mixed method research design was chosen in a pragmatic effort to capture the widest range of participants' perspectives on the need for professionalization of student affairs practice.

### **3.4.1 The qualitative design**

When employing the qualitative design, the researcher took note of the assertion by Heppner and Heppner (2004) that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to

them. Gay and Airasian (2000) further indicate that qualitative research seeks to probe deeply into the research setting in order to obtain understanding about the way things are, why they are that way, and how the participants in the context perceive them.

In the light of the foregoing assertions the researcher sought to solicit views of the different variables of student affairs practitioners on the need to professionalize student affairs practice, with special reference to student governance. The qualitative design allowed the researcher a more interactive experience with the interviewees and thereby facilitated for more in-depth and meaningful responses in pursuit of the goals of the study. The most suitable research method to eke out information for this design was identified as the phenomenological method.

### **3.4.2 The quantitative design**

When employing the quantitative design of the study, the researcher took note of McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 102), that “the goal of a sound research design is to provide results that are judged to be credible, where credibility refers to the extent to which the results approximate reality and are judged to be accurate, trustworthy, and reasonable”. Quantitative research designs emphasize objectivity in measuring and describing phenomena. “As a result, the research designs maximize objectivity by using numbers, statistics, structure, and control” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010: 21).

The quantitative research design allowed the researcher to specify phenomena under study and to quantify the relationships between and within variables of the study such as: Gender (Male versus Female student affairs practitioners), Experience (Senior versus Junior student

affairs practitioners), and Career (Professionally trained versus Non-professionally trained student affairs practitioners) as Independent Variables (IV) and Student Governance as a Dependent Variable (DV). The research method of this research design found relevant to employ is the descriptive method.

### **3.5 RESEARCH METHODS**

McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 8) define research as “the systematic process of collecting and logically analysing data (i.e. evidence based data) for some purpose”. Research methods are the ways in which one collects data for analyses. In this study, the *phenomenological method* was used for the qualitative design and the *descriptive method* was used for the quantitative design.

#### **3.5.1 Phenomenological Method**

For the qualitative section of the study, the researcher employed the phenomenological method using interviews as data collection instruments. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:24), the aim of the phenomenological method is “to transform lived experience into a description of its “essence” allowing for reflection and analysis. As explained” by Leedy and Ormrod (2010:145), “the phenomenological method attempts to understand people’s perceptions, perspectives, and understanding of a particular situation”.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:24) further state that “the typical technique when using the method is for the researcher to conduct long interviews with the participants directed toward understanding their perspectives on their everyday lived experience with the phenomenon”.

In the context of this study, the researcher's option to employ the phenomenological method was ideal for eliciting responses from participants which sought their perspectives on the need to professionalize student affairs practice, based on their lived experiences as student affairs practitioners. The study further lent itself to this approach because the phenomenological interviews that were used as data collection instruments elicited responses that laid the basis for construction of the questionnaire that was used to collect data for the quantitative section of the study, and thus enabled the utility of the mixed method research design, with special reference to *sequential exploratory triangulation*, as contemplated for this study,

### **3.5.2 Descriptive Method**

For quantitative design, a descriptive method was employed using questionnaires as data collection instruments. The descriptive research, also referred to as survey research, is done to depict people, situations, events, and conditions as they currently exist. "It is primarily concerned with finding out 'what is' for the purpose of describing current conditions, the investigation of relationships, and the study of cause-effect phenomena" (Gay and Airasian, 2009:8).

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:22) postulate that "research using descriptive design simply provides a summary of an existing phenomenon by using numbers to characterize individuals or groups". It assesses the nature of existing conditions and its purpose is limited to characterizing something as it is. This study lent itself to this approach as it was conceived to address the current lack of professional capacity and competence among student affairs practitioners.

### **3.6 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSES**

According to Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011), data collection or fieldwork for the qualitative study involves spending considerable time in the setting, under study, immersing oneself in this setting, and collecting as much relevant information as possible and as unobtrusively as possible. While there is no one recipe on how to proceed with data collection, the researcher must collect the appropriate data to contribute to the understanding and resolution of a given problem. Qualitative data for this study was collected through the use of semi-structured interviews, where according to Leedy and Ormrod (2013) the research may follow the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification or probe understanding. The quantitative data was collected through the use of questionnaires, which according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) refer to a written set of questions or statements that is used to assess attitudes, opinions, beliefs, and biographical information. What follows is the exposition of the data collection procedures used.

#### **3.6.1 Phenomenological Interviews**

According to Creswell (2012), a qualitative interview occurs when researchers ask one or more participants general questions. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) further state that interviews in a qualitative study are rarely structured as are the interviews conducted in a quantitative study. Instead they are either open-ended or semi-structured, in the latter case revolving around a few central questions.

A pilot testing of the study was undertaken at the resident university of the researcher to capture the views and opinions of the various categories of student affairs practitioners

regarding the study. The interviewees' responses were captured through tape recording and note taking. The results were transcribed and some questions were restructured or omitted. Six (6) interview questions were included in the final interview schedule.

In this study, the researcher designed a semi-structured interview schedule. Every interview was tape recorded, while simultaneously, the researcher took notes of the views and perceptions of the participants. Prior to the interviews, permission to conduct the study was sought and obtained through the researcher's Promoter and Dean of Humanities at the Central University of Technology. The authorised letter (Appendix 1) was submitted to the leadership of the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) and the National Association of Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV), whose constituencies were the target population for this study.

The final phase of consultation with gate keepers in Student Affairs Divisions at conveniently sampled higher education institutions, was obtaining permission from departmental managers/directors/ supervisors of participants to conduct interviews in their departments. The selected participants (nine (9) student affairs practitioners) were formally contacted and provided with comprehensive explanations regarding the researcher's intent to interview them. On the day of the interview, the purpose of the study was further clarified after the introductory formalities between the researcher and interviewees were completed. The interviewees were given an opportunity to ask clarity seeking questions. Upon agreement, interviewees were further assured of the confidentiality of their participation and responses.

The verbatim transcriptions were later analysed to determine the views and perspectives of student affairs practitioners on the need for capacity building and thereby professionalizing student affairs practice. Detailed reporting about data analysis is provided in Chapter IV.

### **3.6.2 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire was used to collect data for the quantitative design of the study. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011) describe a questionnaire as a written collection of self-report questions to be answered by a selected group of research participants. Questionnaires allow the researcher to collect large amounts of data in a relatively short amount of time. Creswell (2012) further states that a questionnaire is a form used in a survey design that participants in a study complete and return to the researcher.

The questionnaire was adapted from previous studies' survey completed by Woodard (2009) and Haynes (2010), along with the addition of information presented in the ACPA and NASPA (2010) joint report on the professional competency areas for student affairs practitioners. The surveys used in Woodard (2009) and Haynes's (2010) studies provided valuable information for the creation of this instrument. The information in the ACPA and NASPA (2010) joint report on professional competency areas for student affairs practitioners provided this instrument with a more well-rounded approach to the assessment of the profession of student affairs and its practitioners.

For this study the researcher used a *mailed questionnaire*. Creswell (2012) describes a mailed questionnaire as a form of data collection in which the researcher mails a questionnaire to members of the sample. Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011), further state that a

mailed questionnaire is a convenient way and is relatively inexpensive to reach a geographically dispersed and much larger sample of a population.

Prior to the distribution of the questionnaires, (Appendix 3), a letter of authorisation to conduct the study was sought and obtained from the researcher's Promoter and Dean of Humanities at the Central University of Technology. The authorised letter (Appendix 1) was submitted to the leadership of the main student affairs associations in South Africa, namely, South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP) and National Association for Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV). A letter to participants (Appendix 2), accompanied the questionnaire.

#### 3.6.2.1 Reliability and Validity

According to Creswell (2012), **reliability** means that scores from an instrument are stable and consistent. Scores should be nearly the same when researchers administer the instrument multiple times at different times. Also, scores need to be consistent. **Validity** is described as the development of sound evidence to demonstrate that the test interpretation (of scores about the concept or construct that the test is assumed to measure) matches its proposed use.

The initial instrument containing Forty Two (42) items was subjected to initial scrutiny by fellow student affairs practitioners for content validity and quality assurance purposes. Feedback consisted on identifying typos, improving the readability of items, and suggestions about the structure. The researcher implemented recommendations and developed a refined draft of the questionnaire, comprising of the initial forty two (42) items. A pilot study was then conducted among twelve (12) student affairs practitioners at the researcher's resident

university and the results were computed for factor analysis, which according to Leedy and Ormrod (2013) is to examine the correlations among a number of variables and identify clusters of highly interrelated variables that reflect underlying themes, or factors within the data.

### 3.6.2.2 Factor Analysis

A rotated component matrix (Appendix 6) was run and it pulled out two components/factors. The factors were subjected to principal component analyses using a varimax rotation of one criterion for factor/component extraction. Thirty one (31) items yielded an Eigen value of 0.5 to 0, 7 or greater. To eliminate sources of redundant and error variance, eleven (11) factors that yielded an Eigen value of 0, 4 were discarded from the final instrument of thirty one (31) items. After factor analysis Factor 1 comprised 18 items and Factor 2 comprised 13 items. The final instrument, named the Student Affairs Professional Competency Scale (SAPCS) thus comprised of Thirty One (31) items as well as Eight (8) biographical data items, and its Cronbach's Alpha is 90.56%.

### 3.6.2.3 The Administered Questionnaire

The SAPCS which comprised a total of Thirty Nine (39) items was used to examine the following variables: **Gender, Experience, and Professional Training**, and it was self-administered by the participants. Although in the early drafts of the questionnaire the items were grouped into three factors/ components, in the final questionnaire, the items were randomized. Lavrakas (2008) explained that randomization of items stops respondents from overthinking answers and producing quality results. This also prevents responses from one

item influencing another (Amedeo, Golledge, & Stimson, 2008). Thus these approaches add to the quality of the questionnaire. All of the items were responded to in accordance with the respondents' range of agreement or disagreement on a four-point Likert scale: SA- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; D- Disagree; SD- Strongly Disagree.

The researcher did not add a fifth or middle/neutral category, and this was mainly due to the researcher's desire to elicit responses depicting a range of agreement or disagreement with questionnaire items. The range and interpretation of the four-point Likert scale are shown in table 1 below:

**Table 3.1: Likert Scale for the Questionnaire**

<b>Strongly Disagree</b> <b>1</b>	<b>Disagree</b> <b>2</b>	<b>Agree</b> <b>3</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b> <b>4</b>
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#### 3.6.2.4 Data analyses

A three-way analysis of variance (three-way ANOVA) was employed to determine an understanding of the relationship amongst the various categories of student affairs practitioners as independent variables. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to generate statistical analysis from responses as per the above-mentioned four-point Likert scale. The *independent variables* were *gender* (male vs. female), *experience* (senior vs. junior), and *professional training* (trained vs. Non-trained practitioners). Their relationships and interactions were determined from the theoretical framework of *student governance* as a *dependent variable*. It was expected that when using the three-way

ANOVA, the researcher would accept or fail to accept the stipulated null hypotheses. The results of the analysis are provided in Chapter IV.

### **3.7 POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

#### **3.7.1 Population**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) a **population** is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research. This group is also referred to as the *target population or universe*. The target population is different from the list of elements from which the sample is actually selected, which is termed the *survey population or sampling frame*. For this study the population comprised all student affairs practitioners in all academic universities, comprehensive universities, and universities of technology in South Africa.

#### **3.7.2 Sample**

Creswell (2012) defines a **sample** as a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population. Cluster sampling was used to determine the sample group from all twenty three (23) higher education institutions. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) state that in cluster sampling, the researcher identifies convenient, naturally occurring groups, such as neighbourhoods, schools, districts, and regions, not individual subjects, and then randomly selects some of these units for the study. Once the units have been selected, individuals are selected from each one. The universities

were clustered into three clusters according to university type i.e. whether they were academic, comprehensive or universities of technology.

Twelve (12) universities were sampled from the three clusters of universities in South Africa i.e., four universities were sampled from the academic universities; four were sampled from the comprehensive universities; and, four were also sampled from the universities of technology.

Systematic sampling was, furthermore, undertaken to select the participants of the study within the sampled institutions. Leedy and Ormrod (2013) describe systematic sampling as selecting individuals according to a pre-determined sequence. According to Gay and Airasian (2009) in systematic sampling, every *k*th individual is selected from a list. The *k*th number varied in accordance with the staff compliment of student practitioners at the sampled universities.

As indicated earlier, this study used *triangulation* (often referred to as mixed method research design) with the purpose of applying and combining both qualitative and quantitative research designs. The researcher used *sequential exploratory triangulation*, where interviews (qualitative) were administered first, followed by the questionnaire (quantitative). The qualitative sample comprised nine (9) student affairs practitioners drawn from each university type, while the larger quantitative sample of hundred and fifty (150) student affairs practitioners was drawn from the rest of the target population with at least fifty (50) per each university type.

### **3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES**

During the course of this study, a number of legal and ethical issues were considered to ensure credibility of the data collection phase by adhering to a general research protocol. Permission was timeously sought from relevant University officials and gatekeepers. Presidents of Student Affairs Associations, of whom, the participants (student affairs practitioners), constitute their constituency, were also notified about this study, and the necessary permission was sought (Appendices 1,2, & 8). During both qualitative and quantitative data collection phases, participants were assured of confidentiality of their participation and responses. The researcher also consciously undertook to report the findings as authentically as possible without any undue influence to specifically confirm or negate the hypotheses of the study.

### **3.9 SUMMARY**

The purpose of this chapter was to explain the research design used in this study as well as elaborating on the methods used for data collection, including data collection instruments used. Reference was also made to legal and ethical considerations adhered to. The results in Chapter IV and Discussions and Recommendations in Chapter V will follow for further research and contribution to the body of knowledge.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of the study regarding the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners in higher education institutions as measured by the Student Affairs Professional Competency Scale (*SAPCS*). The *SAPCS* was adapted by the researcher from Examination of Chief Student Affairs Officers (CSAOs) Perceptions of Professional Competencies scale, developed by Woodard (2009); as explained in the preceding chapter. The independent variables examined were Gender, Experience, and Professional Training.

This study used *Sequential Exploratory Triangulation*, where interviews were conducted first with a sample of convenience; and the adapted questionnaire was then administered to a wider pool of a hundred and fifty (150) student affairs practitioners conveniently sampled from the membership databases of both SAASSAP and NASDEV.

The response rate by the deadline set by the researcher was one hundred and twelve (112), which constitutes 75% of the total sample of a hundred and fifty (150). This response rate is attributed to the researcher's active membership of these associations, and the willingness of fellow practitioners to participate in research contributing to the advancement of their field.

The results of this study are organized and presented in section A and section B for the qualitative and quantitative designs respectively:

## 4.2 SECTION A

Section A entails a *qualitative design section*, in which the interview schedule is explained and the verbatim results (Appendix 7) are presented in relation to the study objectives as explained in Chapter 1.

### 4.2.1 Interview schedule

The interview schedule (Appendix 4) entailed the following six questions which were extrapolated from the main research questions and objectives of the study. The questions are:

*Interview Question 1: To what extent are student affairs practitioners professionally prepared to effect sound student governance practice?*

*Interview Question 2: How can student affairs professionals be better equipped to enhance student governance in higher education institutions?*

*Interview Question 3: What are your views regarding an establishment of professional competencies in student affairs?*

*Interview Question 4: What are your perceptions of the relevance of participation in continuing professional development system?*

*Interview Question 5: What are your views regarding the current employment practices of student affairs practitioners in South African higher education institutions, especially with regard to student governance?*

*Interview Question 6: What is the nature of discourse on the need to professionalize student affairs practice, especially in NASDEV/SAASSAP?*

The following grid depicts the themes that emerged from the interviewees' verbatim responses as transcribed from the recorded interviews (Appendix 7):

**Table 4.1: Interviews Response Themes**

Interview Questions	Emerging Themes From Interviewees' Responses
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ All nine interviewees confirmed that there is currently no formal preparation programme for student affairs practitioners responsible for student governance at higher education institutions in South Africa.</li> <li>❖ However, there was further concurrence among all the interviewees that professional preparation for student affairs practitioners is placed in the areas of student counselling, student health services, judiciary services, and social work, where it is also mandatory to register with professional or regulatory bodies.</li> <li>❖ However, all interviewees concurred that the aspect of being trained as a professional student affairs practitioner <i>per se</i> is non-existent.</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ There was concurrence among all interviewees that a more formal professional preparation programme needs to be developed</li> <li>❖ However, institutions need to inject more financial resources into student affairs to enhance student development programmes carried out by student affairs practitioners.</li> <li>❖ All interviewees were of the view that student affairs practice plays an equally significant role in ensuring that students attain their academic goals, and thereby play an important supportive role in the enhancement of the academic project</li> </ul>

3	❖ All interviewees endorsed the idea of instituting professional competencies in student affairs for the purpose of enhancing professional practice.
4	❖ Interviewees concurred with the interviewer that a continuing professional development programme should be designed and applied in the institutions of Higher Education. Nevertheless, the interviewees <i>maintained</i> that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Such programme should be mandatory for enrolment by all practicing student affairs practitioners; and,</li> <li>✓ That such enrolment and success in the programme; should be amongst criteria for renewal of tenure and promotion.</li> </ul>
5	❖ All interviewees felt that a more rigorous approach to talent management should be adopted, with a specific focus on appropriate development plans for entry-level student affairs practitioners and thereby enhancing performance management processes.  ❖ Competency-based selection processes should also be adopted in order to ensure the balance between the twin challenges of equity and excellence.
6	❖ All interviewees were emphatic about the importance of NASDEV and SAASSAP organisations being in collaboration with organisations such as ACPA and NASPA which have made enormous strides in the field of student affairs practice.

*In summation*, it could be deduced from the table above that the interviewees were unanimously in concert with the view that a formal preparation programme for training student affairs practitioners is of utmost importance.

#### 4.3 SECTION B

The results of the *quantitative design section*, which provides the analysis and results in relation to the seven hypotheses are based on: the validity of the study, the reliability of the study, and data analyses.

### 4.3.1 Validity of the study

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013) the **validity** of a measurement instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. Creswell (2012: 303) further identifies the following four types of validity:

- ❖ *Statistical conclusion validity* means the appropriate use of statistics to infer whether the presumed independent and dependent variables co-vary in the experiment.
- ❖ *Construct validity* means the validity of inferences about constructs (variables) in the study.
- ❖ *Internal validity* means the validity of inferences drawn about the cause and effect relationship between the independent and dependent variables.
- ❖ *External validity* means the validity of the cause-and-effect relationship being generalizable to other persons, settings, treatment variables, and measures.

The purpose of this study was to establish the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners, and thereby promote the findings of the study as imperative in enhancing professional competence of practitioners. In the light of the foregoing, *internal validity* is the *sine qua non* of studies where causal conclusions are the focus, as is the case in this study.

This study, using *sequential exploratory* triangulation; commenced with tests of validity by subjecting the initial *interview schedule* of nine (9) items to colleagues as judges to determine items that could have been ambiguous or double-barrelled. Three questions were eliminated and six items constituted the final interview schedule.

The second test of validity pertains to subjecting a tentative questionnaire of forty two (42) items to a pilot survey using ten student affairs practitioners from the researcher's resident university to serve as judges in justifying whether the questionnaire appropriately addressed the field of student affairs practice as intended. All forty two items were approved.

The approved questionnaire was further subjected to tests of statistical validity. In this manner *factor analyses* was conducted by subjecting the forty two items of the questionnaire to principal component analyses using varimax rotation of one (1) criterion to extract the categories or components of the questionnaire. Twenty seven (27) items which were of the Eigenvalue above .50 were extracted and dispersed into two factors the researcher named *Personal Capability* and *Professional Competence*. Fifteen items below the Eigenvalue of .50 were, therefore, discarded from the final questionnaire which the researcher named the *Student Affairs Professional Competency Scale (SAPCS)*. It is the *SAPCS* that was administered to the sample of a hundred and fifty (150) participants; yielding a response rate of 75% (112 responses out of 150) for analysis.

The pilot survey eliminated three questions of the interview schedule and the remaining items of the questionnaire were then further subjected to *factor analyses* as a second test of validity.

#### **4.3.2 Reliability of the study**

Leedy and Ormrod (2013) describe **reliability** as the consistency with which a measuring instrument yields a certain, consistent result when the entity being measured has not changed.

Gay, Mills and Airasian (2011:165-167) identified the following forms of reliability:

- ❖ ***The test-retest reliability:*** the degree to which scores on the same test are consistent over time. In other words, this type of reliability provides evidence that scores obtained on a test at one time (test) are the same or close to the same when the test is re-administered some other time (re-test).
- ❖ ***Equivalent-forms of reliability:*** the degree to which two similar forms of a test produce similar scores from a single group of test takers. The two forms measure the same variable; have the same number of items, the same structure, the same difficulty level, and the same directions for administration, scoring, and interpretation.
- ❖ ***The equivalent-forms and test-retest reliability:*** If the two forms of the test are administered at two different times, the resulting coefficient is referred to as the *coefficient of stability and equivalence*. In essence this approach assesses stability of scores over time, as well as the equivalence of the two sets of items.
- ❖ ***Internal consistency reliability:*** the extent to which items in a single test are consistent among themselves and with the test as a whole.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher focused on internal consistency reliability, which was measured through the Cronbach’s Alpha as illustrated in **Table 4.2** below:

**Table 4.2: Cronbach’s Alpha**

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.9056	0.9345	31.0000

From the table, the Cronbach's Alpha (Appendix 5) reported is 0.9056. This value is indicative of a high level of internal consistency at 90.56% for the scale (questionnaire).

### 4.3.3 Results

Discussion of this section will include the following: a report on the demographics of the participants and data analyses.

#### 4.3.3.1 Demographics

The three major demographics that constitute the independent variables are *Gender, Experience, and Level of Training*. Other demographics that appealed to the researcher for the contribution they might render are: *University type, University Location, Student Enrolment*.

##### (a) Gender

The frequency table below depicts the gender variable.

**Table 4.3: Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	63	56.3	56.3	56.3
Male	49	43.8	43.8	100.0
Total	112	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.3 indicates that of the one hundred and twelve (112) participants, sixty three participants (63) were female and forty nine (49) participants were male indicating an involvement of 56% and 44% ratio respectively.

**(b) Experience**

The two frequency tables (4.4a & 4.4b) presented below encapsulate the aspects of experience called *designation and employment duration*.

**Table 4.4(a): Work designation**

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Dean of Students	12	10.7	10.7	10.7
Director	23	20.5	20.5	31.3
Assistant Director	9	8.0	8.0	39.3
Student Development Officer	50	44.6	44.6	83.9
Other	18	16.1	16.1	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

According to Table 4.4 (a) above, fifty (50) participants comprised entry-level student affairs practitioners and eighteen (18) were *other junior* student affairs practitioners responsible for residences. Effectively a total of sixty-eight (68) participants constituting 61% of the total sample took part in the study. The rest of the participants comprised of forty-four (44) student affairs practitioners designated as *senior* and thereby constituting 39% of the total sample.

**Table 4.4(b): Employment duration**

Employment Duration	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
A year or less	19	17.0	17.0	17.0
2 to 3 years	19	17.0	17.0	33.9
3 to 5 years	21	18.8	18.8	52.7
More than 5 years	53	47.3	47.3	100.0
Total	112	100.0	100.0	

For the purpose of this study, experience of more than five (5) years denotes **expert** student affairs practice and five years and less denotes **novice** student affairs practice. As per Table 4.4(b) above, a total of fifty-three (53) student affairs practitioners were drawn from experts and represented 47% of the sample. Fifty-nine (59) student affairs practitioners who were drawn from the novices represented 53% of the sample.

(c) *Level of Training*

**Table 4.5: Training**

Highest Qualification	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Certificate	2	1.8	1.8	1.8
Diploma	9	8.0	8.0	9.8
Bachelor's Degree	26	23.2	23.2	33.0
Hons	35	31.3	31.3	64.3
Masters/Doctorate	40	35.7	35.7	100.0
Total	112	100.0	100.0	

For the purpose of this study, post-graduate studies/qualifications represent a higher and relatively advanced level of professional training and specialization. Undergraduate studies are more generic and introductory to more specialized and advanced post-graduate studies, and thus holders of such qualifications are generally not sufficiently professionally trained, and may be required to enrol for advanced post-graduate studies.

In the light of the foregoing and as per Table 4.5 above, thirty seven (37) participants hold undergraduate qualifications, and therefore, are *non-professionally trained student affairs practitioners*. They represent 33% of the sample. Seventy-five (75) participants hold post-graduate qualifications and are *professionally trained student affairs practitioners*. This group represents 67% of the sample.

#### 4.3.3.2 Statistical Data Analysis

Data was analysed by using an SPSS software package (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to generate statistical analysis from responses provided using a 4-point Likert scale. The SPSS package used the responses to perform appropriate descriptive data and appropriate Three-Way ANOVA for analyses to determine levels of significance and interactions.

Data was analysed using an independent samples t-test, which according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010) is an inferential statistics procedure for determining the probability level of rejecting the null hypothesis that two means are the same; the Levene's test for equality of variances was also employed.

#### 4.3.4 Sample Mean Differences

This section focused on the *t-test* analyses to test hypotheses one to three. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the purpose of this procedure, usually referred to as **independent samples t-test**, is to determine if there is a statistically significant difference between two independent variables. Thus, the objective of using the **t-test** was to explore whether the mean scores of the two samples are meaningfully different at the 0.05 level of

significance. The strategy of the **t-test** is to compare the actually recorded mean scores with the difference expected by chance in order to *accept or fail to accept* the null hypothesis.

#### 4.3.4.1 Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 states that, “*There is no significant difference between male and female student affairs practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance*”.

Table 4.6 (a) below shows descriptive information relating to Gender Group Statistics.

**Table 4.6(a): Student Affairs Professional Competencies**

	Gender	N	Mean ( <i>M</i> )	Std. Deviation ( <i>SD</i> )	Std. Error Mean ( <i>SE of M</i> )
Professional	Female	63	38.73	2.55	0.32
	Male	49	38.59	2.52	0.36

It can be deduced from the group statistics that more female student affairs practitioners, completed the *SAPCS* than for male student affairs practitioners. The mean (*M*) and the standard deviation (*SD*) scores for females are slightly higher than males. However, the standard error of mean (*SE of M*) score for males is higher than females. **Table 4.6(b)** presents the Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance and the Independent Samples *t*-Test for Equality of Means Gender

**Table 4.6 (b) Independent Samples Test: Gender**

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	df.	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
<b>Professional Competencies</b>	Equal variances assumed	0.0915	0.7628	0.2862	110.0000	0.7753	0.1383	0.4833	-0.8195	1.0962
	Equal variances not assumed			0.2865	103.7638	0.7750	0.1383	0.4828	-0.8190	1.0957

The *Levene's F test for equality of Variance* equals 0.0915 and is statistically significant at the p-value of 0.7628. Since the probability p-value of 0.7628 is above the chosen alpha ( $\alpha$ ) level of 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ), equal variances between samples are assumed.

This *Independent samples t-Test is of a two-tailed* significance. The two-tailed significance is the probability of these results occurring by chance, given that the null hypothesis is true. Since the p-value = 0.7753 is more than the significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded at 5% level of significance that there is insufficient evidence that there is significant difference between male and female student affairs practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance. This conclusion implies that the professional competencies for male and female students' affairs practitioners are likely to be the same. This is in support of the stated null hypothesis. Null hypothesis 1 is therefore *not rejected*.

4.3.4.2 Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 states that: “*There is no significant difference between senior and junior student affairs practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance.*” Table 4.7(a) shows descriptive information relating to: Group Statistics: Experience.

**Table 4.7(a) Group Statistics- Experience - Student Affairs Professional Competencies**

	Seniority of Designation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Professional Competencies	Senior Student Practitioner	44	39.0909	1.9508	0.2941
	Junior Student Practitioner	68	38.3971	2.8186	0.3418

For the testing, analysis, and interpretation of hypothesis two, the group statistics, Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance and an independent sample t-test for equality of means were conducted. As can be inferred more novice/junior student affairs practitioners (sixty eight (68) with less than 5 years’ experience) completed the *SAPCS* than expert/senior student affairs practitioners (forty four (44) with 5 years and more experience). The mean (*M*) score of senior student affairs practitioners is higher than that of junior student affairs practitioners. However, the standard deviation (*SD*) and the standard error of mean (*SE of M*) scores of juniors are higher than those for seniors. **Table 4.7(b)** presents the Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance and the Independent Samples *t*- Test for equality of means: Experience.

**Table 4.7(b): Independent Samples Test: Experience**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Professional Competencies	Equal variances assumed	4.6319	0.0336	1.4258	110.0000	0.1568	0.6939	0.4866	-0.2706	1.6583
	Equal variances not assumed			1.5388	109.4537	0.1267	0.6939	0.4509	-0.1998	1.5875

The *Levene's F test for Equality of Variance* equals 4.6319 and is significant at the p value of 0.0336. Since the probability p value of 0.0336 is less than the chosen alpha ( $\alpha$ ) level of 0.05, equal variances between the two samples are not assumed.

This *Independent samples t-Test is of a two-tailed* significance. The two-tailed significance is the probability of these results occurring by chance, given the null hypothesis true. Since the p-value = 0.1267 is more than the significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded at 5% level of significance that there is insufficient evidence to suggest a statistically significant difference between senior and junior student affairs practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance. The null hypothesis is therefore *not rejected*

#### 4.3.4.3 Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 states that: *“There is no significant difference between professionally trained and non-professionally trained practitioners with regard to professional competencies*

*pertaining to student governance*”. Two primary sets of statistical analyses were used to test the hypothesis; namely, the Group Statistics, and the Independent Samples *t*-test. **Table 4.8 (a)**, presents descriptive information relating to Group Statistics – Professional Training.

**Table 4.8(a): Group Statistics- Level of Professional Training - Student Affairs Professional Competencies**

	Level of professional training	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Professional Competencies	Non-professionally trained practitioner	37	38.4595	2.9401	0.4833
	Professionally trained practitioner	75	38.7733	2.3108	0.2668

For the purpose of this study, student affairs practitioners who held an Honours degree or higher were classified as professionally trained and those who held an undergraduate Bachelor’s degree or lower, were classified as non-professionally trained. As can be inferred more professionally trained student affairs practitioners (75= Honours degree and higher) completed the *SAPCS* than non-professionally trained student affairs practitioners (37= Undergraduate Bachelor’s degree or lower). The mean (*M*) score of professionally trained student affairs practitioners is higher than the mean score of non-professionally trained student affairs practitioners. However, the standard deviation (*SD*) and the standard error of means (*SE of M*) scores of non-professionally trained student affairs practitioners are higher than those of professionally trained student affairs practitioners. **Table 4.8(b)** presents the Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance and the Independent Samples *t*-Test: Experience.

**Table 4.8(b): The Levene’s Test for Equality of Variance and The Independent *t* Test –  
Level of Professional Training**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Professional Competencies	Equal variances assumed	0.6763	0.4127	-0.6166	110.0000	0.5388	-0.3139	0.5091	-1.3228	0.6950
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.5685	58.6362	0.5719	-0.3139	0.5521	-1.4188	0.7910

The Levene’s Test for equality of variances found an F ratio of 0.6763 for the two samples’ dependent variable with a probability (p-value) of 0.4127 for hypothesis three. Since the probability p-value of 0.4127 is larger than the chosen alpha ( $\alpha$ ) level of 0.05; equal variances between the two samples are assumed.

This *Independent samples t-Test is of a two-tailed* significance. The two-tailed significance is the probability of these results occurring by chance, given the null hypothesis is true. Since the p-value = 0.5388 is greater than the significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded at 5% level of significance that there is insufficient evidence to suggest a significant difference between professionally trained and non-professionally trained student affairs practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance. The null hypothesis is therefore *not rejected*.

### 4.3.5 Three-Way ANOVA

A *three-way* ANOVA was conducted to examine the main effects and interactions relating to gender, experience, and professional training with regards to student affairs practice pertaining to student governance. The three-way ANOVA tested all seven hypotheses

Hypothesis 4 states that: *“There is no significant interaction between gender and experience with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance”*.

Tables 4.9(a) and 4.10(b) present results for Between Subjects Factors for **Gender and Experience**.

**Table 4.9(a): Between Subjects Factors**

		Value Label	N
Gender	1	Female	63
	2	Male	49
Level of experience	1	Novice Practitioners	59
	2	Experienced Practitioners	53

**Table 4.9(b): Dependent Variable: Professional Competencies**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	30.830 <sup>a</sup>	3	10.2767	1.6371	0.1851
Intercept	161962.960	1	161962.9605	25801.4372	0.0000
Gender	2.154	1	2.1542	0.3432	0.5592
Experience	24.137	1	24.1374	3.8452	0.0525
Gender* Experience	3.618	1	3.6178	0.5763	0.4494
Error	677.947	108	6.2773		
Total	168187.000	112			
Corrected Total	708.777	111			

In testing the level of significance of interaction between gender and experience, the ANOVA results yielded a p-value of 0.4494, which is larger than the significance level of 0.05. Hence we can conclude at 5% level of significance that there is no significant interaction between gender and experience with regards to professional competencies pertaining to student governance. The null hypothesis is therefore *not rejected*.

Hypothesis 5 states that: *“There is no significant interaction between gender and career practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance”*.

**Tables 4.10(a) and 4.10(b)** present results for Between Subjects Factors for **Gender and Level of Professional Training**.

**Table 4.10(a): Between Subjects Factors**

Gender	1	Female	63
Gender Level of professional training	2	Male	49
	1	Non- professionally trained practitioner	37
Level of professional training	2	Professionally trained practitioner	75

**Table 4.10(b): Dependent variable: professional competencies**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	3.341 <sup>a</sup>	3	1.1136	0.1705	0.9161
Intercept	138635.4754	1	138635.4754	21224.6519	0.0000
Gender	0.5972	1	0.5972	0.0914	0.7629
Professional Training	2.4854	1	2.4854	0.3805	0.5386
Gender * Professional Training	0.0468	1	0.0468	0.0072	0.9327
Error	705.4359	108	6.5318		
Total	168187.0000	112			
Corrected Total	708.7768	111			

In testing the level of significance of interaction between gender and professional training, the ANOVA results yielded a p-value of 0.9327, which is greater than the significance level of 0.05. Hence we can conclude at a 5% level of significance that there is no significant interaction between gender and professional training with regards to professional competencies pertaining to student governance. The null hypothesis is therefore *not rejected*.

Hypothesis 6 states that: *“There is no significant interaction between experience and level of professional training with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance”*

Tables 4.11(a) and 4.11(b) present results for Between Subjects Factors for **Experience and Level of Professional Training.**

**Table 4.11(a): Between Subjects Factors**

		Value Label	N
Level of experience	1	Novice Practitioners	59
	2	Experienced Practitioners	53
Level of professional training	1	Non-professionally trained practitioner	37
	2	Professionally trained practitioner	75

**Table 4.11(b): Dependent Variable: Professional Competencies**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	36.247 <sup>a</sup>	3	12.082	1.9403	0.1274
Intercept	102070.723	1	102070.7232	16391.3013	0.0000
Experience	5.780	1	5.7800	0.9282	0.3375
Professional Training	0.870	1	0.8700	0.1397	0.7093
Experience* Professional Training	10.845	1	10.8448	1.7415	0.1897
Error	672.530	108	6.2271		
Total	168187.000	112			
Corrected Total	708.777	111			

In testing the level of significance of interaction between experience and professional training, the ANOVA results yielded a p-value of 0.1897, which is greater than the

significance level of 0.05. Hence we can conclude at 5% level of significance that there is no significant interaction between experience and professional training with regards to professional competencies pertaining to student governance. The null hypothesis is therefore *not rejected*.

Hypothesis 7 states that: “*There is no significant interaction amongst gender, experience, and career practitioners with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance*”. Tables 4.12(a) and 4.12(b) present results for Between Subjects Factors for **Gender, Experience and Level of Professional Training**.

**Table 4.12(a): Between Subjects Factors**

		Value Label	N
Gender	1	Female	63
	2	Male	49
Level of experience	1	Novice Practitioners	59
	2	Experienced Practitioners	53
Level of professional training	1	Non-professionally trained practitioner	37
	2	Professionally trained practitioner	75

**Table 4.12(b): Tests of between subjects effects**

Dependent Variable: Professional Competencies					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	47.674 <sup>a</sup>	7.0000	6.8106	1.0714	0.3871
Intercept	88197.4996	1.0000	88197.4996	13874.6087	0.0000
Gender	0.1803	1.0000	0.1803	0.0284	0.8666
Experience	5.7412	1.0000	5.7412	0.9032	0.3441
Professional Training	0.9401	1.0000	0.9401	0.1479	0.7013
Gender* Experience	0.6213	1.0000	0.6213	0.0977	0.7552
Gender * Professional Training	0.3455	1.0000	0.3455	0.0544	0.8161
Experience* Professional Training	8.1994	1.0000	8.1994	1.2899	0.2587
Gender* Experience* Professional Training	3.1721	1.0000	3.1721	0.4990	0.4815
Error	661.1026	104.0000	6.3568		
Total	168187.0000	112.0000			
Corrected Total	708.7768	111.0000			

In testing the level of significance of interaction amongst gender, experience and professional training, the ANOVA results yielded a p-value of 0.4815, which is more than the significance level of 0.05. Hence we can conclude at 5% level of significance that there is no significant interaction amongst gender, experience and professional training with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance. The null hypothesis is therefore *not rejected*.

#### 4.4 SUMMARY

This chapter reported the analysis, interpretation, and findings of the study. The qualitative section of the chapter focused on the analysis of data gathered through phenomenological interviews, where views and opinions of the interviewees were explicitly stated, interpreted, and reported.

The quantitative section of the chapter focused on analysis of data gathered through the questionnaire. Data gathered through one hundred and twelve (112) questionnaires were subjected to factor analysis for factor extraction, Levene's Test for Equality of variance and *t-tests* to determine the main effects of the first three hypotheses. The final test entailed a three-way ANOVA to determine the primary and secondary *interaction effects* of hypotheses four to seven. Specific decisions were reported on all hypotheses of the study. The findings are further discussed in Chapter V in order to provide an elaboration for conclusions and recommendations for future research on student affairs practice.

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapter presented an analysis of data collected and the results of the study. The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss results presented in Chapter IV, draw conclusions, and make recommendations for future research as well as contributing to the body of knowledge on student affairs practice by presenting a model for capacity building among student affairs practitioners in South African Higher Education Institutions. Further consideration is given to the theoretical rationale and related research on student affairs practice, with special focus on requisite competencies for entry-level student affairs practitioners as discussed in Chapter II. Generalisations of this study sample to the wider population of student affairs practitioners is done with caution in the light of delimitations noted in Chapter I.

#### 5.2 DISCUSSION

As specified in Chapter I, the main purpose of this study was to establish the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners in South African Higher Education Institutions, with special focus on student governance. The express purpose and intent of the study was to determine the current status of Student Affairs Practice; and, consequently suggest possible ways to review it for the betterment of the practice. The mixed method research design, known as *Sequential Exploratory Triangulation*, was employed to collect

qualitative and quantitative data in order to respond to the main research questions and test hypotheses respectively.

The qualitative results of data collection and analysis presented in Chapter IV confirmed the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners; while on the other hand the quantitative results either confirmed or rejected null hypotheses regarding significant differences and interactions between and amongst independent variables of the study.

The discussion of the results of this study is organized and presented in section A and section B for the qualitative and quantitative designs respectively. What follows is the discussion of qualitative results.

### **5.2.1 Section A**

As captured in chapter three on methodology, nine (9) student affairs practitioners were conveniently sampled to participate and respond to semi-structured interviews. The purpose of the interviews was to elicit responses to the main research questions of the study and thereby obtain information about the interviewees' views and opinions about the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners.

#### **5.2.1.1 Findings of the Interviews**

The interview schedule and the responses related to each interview question are discussed below.

***Interview Question 1: To what extent are student affairs practitioners professionally prepared to effect sound student governance practice?***

Awareness of and compliance with institutional policies on student governance play a very significant role in ensuring that student affairs practitioners effect relatively sound student governance practice. Although not mandatory, attendance of annual conferences of student affairs organizations provides a platform for shared best practices. Gansemer-Topf (JSAA 1 [1&2] 2013, 11-22) argues that “ the World Higher Education Declaration (1998), creation of IASAS, and annual conferences of SAASSAP and African Student Affairs Conference suggest an interest by student affairs professionals in becoming more recognised and valued within African higher education”.

The National Association for Student Development Practitioners (NASDEV), whose membership is largely entry-level and junior student affairs practitioners as well as serving SRC members, continues to provide a platform for shared best practices through the Winter School programme of seminars and an empowerment programme for young women practitioners. On the other hand, the South African Association of Senior Student Affairs Professionals (SAASSAP), whose membership is largely senior student affairs practitioners, focuses on empowering senior managers and Deans of Students with overall strategic management and administration of student affairs divisions.

The need for a more structured and professional preparation programme to enhance capacity among all student affairs practitioners has been unanimously confirmed by all nine interviewees. Thus the need to professionalise student affairs practice in South Africa is a

tacitly shared and dormant view among student affairs practitioners as per the following verbatim example:

*Participant A: “There are no formal training programmes. We rely on prior experience as former student leaders. There is a need for a qualification”..*

***Interview Question 2: How can student affairs professionals be better equipped to enhance student governance in higher education institutions?***

The interviewees also concurred that a more formal professional preparation programme needs to be developed; and institutions needed to inject more financial resources into student affairs practice so as to enhance the student development programmes carried out by student affairs practitioners as evidenced by the following response:.

*Participant C: “More financial support is required from institutions to enable Student development officers to pursue formal in-service training leading to a qualification”*

While it is generally accepted that the core business of universities as learning centres is the **“academic project”**, interviewees felt that student affairs practice plays an equally significant role in ensuring that students attain their academic goals, and thereby an important supportive role to the enhancement of the academic project. In the light of the foregoing, interviewees concurred that universities need to adopt a Resource Allocation Model (RAM) from which to

ascertain that student affairs divisions are adequately provided to develop and sustain development programmes.

***Interview Question 3: What are your views regarding an establishment of professional competencies in student affairs?***

The idea of professional competencies in student affairs was endorsed by all interviewees for the purpose of elevating the quality of professional practice, such as:

*Participant I: “Exposure to a formal qualification will result in more professionally competent student affairs practitioners, especially in the area of student governance”*

Senior student affairs practitioners among the interviewees also felt that the prescribed professional competencies could inform Key Performance Areas (KPA) of student affairs job descriptions and would also provide the basis for performance measurement and management. Such competencies could also enhance competency based selection processes of entry level student affairs practitioners as indicated below.

*Participant E: “Possession of a formal qualification will ensure that practitioners are professionally competent. I support the idea of introducing professional competencies for student affairs practitioners. These should be developed by a Professional Body regulating the practice”.*

***Interview Question 4: What are your views or opinion about the relevance of participation in continuing professional development system?***

The entire cohort of student affairs practitioners responsible for student governance at higher education institutions in South Africa, have not been professionally prepared for the functions that they are performing. For instance, there is a notion, as a result of recent developments at some universities, of “**growing own timber**,” where student affairs personnel responsible for student governance are drawn from alumni who are themselves former SRC members as evidenced in the following response:

*Participant E: “As part of succession planning in student affairs departments, junior student affairs practitioners are drawn from among former student leaders. This is in line with the “growing own timber” concept”*

Continuing professional development is, therefore, seen as a measure of redress of this deficiency. Interviewees also felt that once such a programme is formally developed, it should be mandatory for all practicing student affairs practitioners to enrol, and that such enrolment could also be part of the conditions of tenure in the field of student affairs practice. This is confirmed by:

*Participant I: “Exposure to Continuous Professional Development should go a long way in addressing the current shortcomings of student affairs practitioners who do not possess formal qualifications in the field”*

*Interview Question 5: What are your views regarding the current employment practices of student affairs practitioners in South African higher education institutions, especially with regard to student governance?*

While it is acknowledged that the current employment practices are heavily reliant on the notion of “*growing own timber*”, all interviewees mentioned that a more rigorous approach to talent management should be adopted, with specific focus on appropriate development plans for entry-level of student affairs practitioners so as to enhance the performance management processes. Competency-based selection processes should also be adopted in order to ensure the balance between the twin challenges of equity and excellence.

*Participant I: “Current employment practices at some institutions of higher learning are devoid of competency based selection strategies. This anomaly can only be mitigated by continuous professional support for entry-level student affairs practitioners”.*

A primary *distinction* between senior and junior student affairs practitioners regarding question 5 is that that senior practitioners tenaciously held on to the importance of prescribed professional competencies being ideal to inform Key Performance Areas (KPA) of student affairs job descriptions and would also provide the basis for performance measurement and management. The junior student affairs practitioners, however, lamented the probable utilisation of professional competencies as potentially deleterious to the aspirations of would-be practitioners at entry level.

***Interview Question 6: What is the nature of discourse on the need to professionalize student affairs practice, especially in NASDEV/SAASSAP?***

Professionalization of student affairs practice remains part of the discourse within NASDEV and SAASSAP, in addition to the creation of platforms for shared best practices. However, more collaboration with similar international organizations such as ACPA and NASPA, who have made strides in the field, is required. It has also been established among these organizations that there is also a strong need to develop research capacity and output on pertinent issues affecting student affairs practice, as confirmed by:

*Participant F: Conference proceedings of these organizations should result in research publications to enhance on-going discourse on the professionalization of student affairs practice.*

This has since been confirmed by the results of the 2010 National Survey of South African Student Affairs Practitioners as asserted by Lunceford (2010:14) citing from Mandew (2003:122) that :” The *Effective Governance Project* also emphasized the need emerging amongst (*sic*) student services researchers to be supported and mentored by more experienced researchers, whether they be local or from abroad” Lunceford (2010:13) further argues that “it is imperative that members of the profession work to create culturally relevant frameworks , and that researchers disseminate data that will help lead to the useful theories specific to South Africa”.

## 5.2.2 Section B

The *t-tests* and *Three-Way ANOVA* were computed to determine the significant difference between and within the independent variables.

### 5.2.2.1 Findings of Statistical Significance

The results of the ANOVAs revealed a statistically significant difference between junior and senior student affairs practitioners with regard to student governance. These findings could be attributed to the fact that entry-level student affairs practitioners responsible for student governance are generally drawn from academic departments as well as former Student Representative Council's members who have diverse academic backgrounds, but lack the requisite professional competencies. On the other hand, senior student affairs practitioners, who essentially play managerial and leadership roles, rely mostly on work experience and having '*grown through the ranks*' over time, to execute their tasks, without the necessary professional training in student affairs practice.

In the light of the foregoing, it is the researcher's fervently held view, that the professionalization of student affairs practice for entry-level student affairs practitioners will enable this cohort of practitioners to effectively navigate the rigors of the practice. The need for continuing professional development is also critical for both junior and senior student affairs staff to enable *them to adapt to a spiral of change in which they are constantly caught*, as asserted by Bodibe (1998).

### 5.2.3 Findings of Mean Difference Significance

As previously indicated the study began with the understanding that there are no identifiable differences between student affairs practitioners among the three independent variables with two levels each (2X2X2) as identified in the seven hypotheses. The SPSS statistical package was used to perform appropriate *t-tests* for the independent samples (Gender, Experience, and Level of Professional Training) and a *Three-Way ANOVA* was computed to determine primary and secondary interaction effects between and amongst the independent samples. The results and a discussion are presented in the section below.

#### 5.2.3.1 Gender

A *t-test* was conducted to examine whether there were statistically significant differences between male and female student affairs practitioners. No significant difference was found and the null hypothesis was *not rejected*. Despite the decision not to reject the null hypothesis a comparison of the mean differences for males and females warrants the following cautious interpretation:

The reported mean differences between males (38.59) and females (38.73) suggest that female student affairs practitioners are more inclined to be professionally competent with regard to student affairs practice compared to their male counterparts. However, it is further noted that the mean difference could also be attributed to the fact that more females than males participated in the study. Although the sample sizes are probably not large enough to draw even preliminary conclusions, the results could indicate an area to be further investigated.

### 5.2.3.2 Experience

The *t-test* was conducted to examine whether there were statistically significant differences between senior and junior student affairs practitioners. The reported result found no significant difference between junior and senior student affairs practitioners and the null hypothesis was *not rejected*. The mean differences between senior (39.09) and junior (38.39) student affairs practitioners reveal that senior student affairs practitioners are likely to be more competent than junior student affairs practitioners due to experience in the field and the seniority of their designations in institutions of higher learning.

These results can be expected due to the fact that senior student affairs practitioners tend to be more competent than junior student affairs practitioners due to the fact that they are also expected to play a managerial and leadership role over junior student affairs practitioners and are also expected to hold advanced academic qualifications at least at Master's or Doctoral level. This is further confirmed by the results of the next independent variable below.

### 5.2.3.3 Level of Professional Training

The *t-test* was conducted to examine whether there were statistically significant differences between professionally trained and non-professionally trained student affairs practitioners. No significant difference was found and the null hypothesis was *not rejected*. Despite the decision not to reject the null hypothesis; a comparison of the mean differences for professionally trained (38.77) and non-professionally trained (38.45) student affairs practitioners warrants the following cautious interpretation:

- ❖ Professionally trained student affairs practitioners refer to those who hold post-graduate qualifications and non-professionally trained student affairs practitioners would be those who hold undergraduate qualifications.
- ❖ These results can also be expected due to the fact that both samples have not been professionally trained in student affairs practice.

This is further confirmed by the results of the qualitative study as per responses to *Interview Question 1*, which indicate that there is currently no formal preparation programme for student affairs practice. Student affairs researchers and practitioners continue to recognize the need for professional development of staff (Barr & Upcraft, 1990; Komives & Woodard, 2003; Ludeman, 2001). The results of the 2010 National Survey of South African Student Affairs Practitioners which was commissioned by SAASSAP confirmed the need for formal preparation programmes. Lunceford (2010) further indicates that the student affairs community in South African higher education has many opportunities ahead. Practitioners have a very high interest in completing formal degree programmes and participating in meaningful and specific professional training opportunities.

#### **5.2.4 Findings of the Three-Way ANOVA**

A three-way ANOVA was conducted to examine the main effects and interactions relating to gender, experience, and level of professional training with regards to student governance.

#### 5.2.4.1 Gender versus Experience

The results of the three-way ANOVA indicate no significant primary interaction between gender and experience with regard to professional competencies pertaining to student governance. The null hypothesis was therefore *not rejected*.

#### 5.2.4.2 Gender versus Professional Training

The reported results of the three-way ANOVA indicated no significant interaction between gender and professional training with regard to professional competence pertaining to student governance. The null hypothesis was therefore *not rejected*.

#### 5.2.4.3 Experience versus Professional Training

The results of the three-way ANOVA indicated a significant interaction between experience and level of professional training with regard to professional competence pertaining to student governance. The null hypothesis was therefore *not rejected*.

#### 5.2.4.4 Gender versus Experience versus Professional Training

The results of the three-way ANOVA indicated significant interaction amongst gender, experience, and level of professional training with regard to professional competence pertaining to student governance. The null hypothesis was therefore *not rejected*.

### 5.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study reveals a general support by student affairs practitioners for the establishment of professional competencies in the field of student affairs. The study further reveals general support for capacity building among student affairs practitioners with regard to student governance, and thereby implying the need for the professionalization of student affairs practice in South African Higher Education Institutions. Although the student affairs practitioners do not advocate for the exclusive employment of graduates of student affairs studies, they maintain that possession of a formal qualification in student affairs would have a positive impact on the student affairs practitioners' work performance and that continuing professional development for in-service student affairs practitioners would be desirable.

This study also utilizes information presented by Woodard (2009), information inferred by the ACPA's Task Force on Certification (Janosik, Carpenter & Creamer, 2006), and a research study performed by Dean, Woodard, and Cooper (2008) titled "*Professional Development of Credits in Student Affairs Practice: A Method to Enhance Professionalism*". Results presented by these documents and the literature review reveal consistent support for a more systematic professional development method and the implementation of *Continuing Professional Development (CPD)* in the profession.

According to Woodard (2009) the idea of CPD finds its relevance in the student affairs profession due to the fact that student affairs units are responsible for a broad spectrum of ideas and functional areas. The diversity of skills necessary for practitioners to continue to be effective in their positions supports a requirement that encourages professionals to further

update their skills; this process would also give hiring officials a history of the individuals' competencies (Miller & Sandeen, 2003).

Janosik, Carpenter, and Creamer (2006) recommended that the major national student affairs associations should work collaboratively to develop criteria for continuing professional education program for professional development. If the national associations in student affairs do not do this (developing criteria for continuing professional development) soon, they will find themselves irrelevant, because some organizations outside student affairs formations will, perhaps for profit. It is equally essential that no one association come to "own" professional credentialing and professional development.

This "owning" has to be a profession wide function. Hence the joint publication of *ACPA and NASPA Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners (2010)* to lay the foundation for a shared understanding of professionalizing student affairs practice. The current discourse in SAASSAP and NASDEV as revealed by responses to *Interview Question 6* bears testimony to this assertion and the need for closer collaboration among student affairs formations both at national and international levels. In the final analysis the results of this study confirm the need for "*Capacity building among student affairs practitioners in South African higher education institutions with regard to student governance*".

#### **5.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTICE**

Having a set of competencies and an organized plan for professional development would assist the field of student affairs in staff recruitment and competency based selection

processes of qualified professionals. The researcher concurs with Woodard (2009) that once there is an agreed-upon standard of professional development “a lack of consensus about what constitutes appropriate professional practice, the question of controlling or prescribing practices on individual campuses, the proper roles of professional associations, jurisdictional disputes among professions and professional organizations, and diversity, among others will be alleviated” (Woodard,2009:108). Finally an agreed-upon set of professional competencies and the establishment of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) would create a strong foundation on which to manage and measure performance of student affairs practitioners.

Woodard (2009) suggested that a system for the assessment of professional competencies and needs, continuing professional education, and a recognition and reporting system is a must for practitioners. A proposed professional development curriculum by Janosik (2002) included a variety of techniques for professional competencies in student affairs. Professional competencies in conjunction with CPD would aid the profession in credentialing practitioners. Drawing from this and the joint publication of *ACPA and NASPA Professional Competency Areas for Student affairs Practitioners*, an adapted model for the professional development of student affairs practitioners in South Africa is proposed for consideration and further refinement as part of recommendations for future research below.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Both qualitative and quantitative results of this study supported the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners in higher education institutions. The need for further research exists on the topics of professional competencies and continuing professional

development for student affairs practitioners. A few of the areas that need to be researched more in depth are:

- ❖ Other demographics that appealed to the researcher for the contribution they might render such as: *University type, University Location, Student Enrolment,*
- ❖ The leadership of different student affairs professional organizations or associations
- ❖ Building research capacity and output among student affairs practitioners
- ❖ One important factor to note is that a large volume of the literature that has been published about a certification system has been authored by academic faculty members and not practitioners in the field. As further research completed on this topic, researchers should pay more attention to the practitioner's point of view and relay that to the profession as a whole.
- ❖ Another avenue for additional research would be the "class" system between small and large institutions, university type and university location. The researcher is of the view that practitioners from smaller and "rural" institutions are more apprehensive, have fewer resources and the fear that they may not be able to attract qualified practitioners to their institutions, which may also be located in areas that are not desirable for the most qualified practitioners.
- ❖ Research should also be conducted by gathering input from the leadership of student affairs organizations such as SAASSAP and NASDEV. According to Lunceford (2010) the 2010 National Survey of South African Student Affairs Practitioners which was commissioned by SAASSAP confirmed the need for formal preparation programmes for student affairs practitioners. Student affairs modules have been offered as a specialization in the higher education programmes at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) and in the former Policy Analysis, Leadership and

Management (PALM) program at the University of Western Cape (UWC) (CHET, June 2006). In January 2011, the UWC and California State University, Fullerton (CSUF) began their first cohort in a Ph. D program in Student Affairs at UWC.

- ❖ Lunceford (2010) argues that creating a Ph.D. program as a first step in developing academic programmes will help to create a base of student affairs researchers and South African experts who may then help define student affairs in a South African context. The curriculum for student affairs preparation programmes has much breadth and depth; a program that consists of short courses or modules as an emphasis area of study would include a minimal portion of history and philosophical foundations, research and assessment, and knowledge, skills, and competencies of student affairs.

The proposed model of professionalization of student affairs practice in South Africa below draws heavily from the joint publication of ACPA and NASPA Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners (2010).

**Table 5.1: Proposed Capacity Building Model for Student Affairs Professional Practice**

Student Affairs Competency Areas	Curriculum	Expected Outcomes
1. Advising and Helping	➤ Educational Psychology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ability to facilitate problem-solving</li> <li>➤ Provide effective counselling services to individuals and groups</li> </ul>
2. Assessment, Evaluation and Research (AER)	➤ Research Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ability to effectively interpret and use AER studies and professional literature</li> <li>➤ Construct basic surveys through appropriate data collection instruments</li> <li>➤ AER informed resource management</li> </ul>

3. Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)	➤ Inclusive Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Ensure just, fair, and impartial treatment of diverse individuals</li> <li>➤ Facilitate learning and practice of social justice concepts</li> <li>➤ Develop effective multicultural training</li> </ul>
4. Ethical Professional Practice	➤ Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Demonstrate ethical commitment to just and sustainable practices</li> <li>➤ Address and resolve lapses in ethical behaviour among students</li> </ul>
5. History, Philosophy, and Values	➤ Student Development Services in Higher Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Explain how today's practice is informed by historical context</li> <li>➤ Articulate the principles of professional practice</li> <li>➤ Contribute to the research and scholarship of the profession</li> </ul>
6. Human and Organizational Resources	➤ Higher Education Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Implement appropriate and effective recruitment strategies</li> <li>➤ Develop and lead professional development initiatives</li> <li>➤ Engage in policy and procedure development</li> </ul>
7. Law, Policy, and Governance	➤ Foundations of Higher Education and Educational Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Effective participation in institutional governance structures</li> <li>➤ Develop policies that are consistent with trends in higher education law</li> <li>➤ Ensure compliance with institutional statutes</li> </ul>
8. Leadership	➤ Higher Education Leadership and Management Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Articulate the mission and vision of the institution</li> <li>➤ Lead, motivate and inspire others to contribute towards the success of the organization</li> </ul>
9. Personal Foundations	➤ Philosophical Foundations of Student Affairs Practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recognize needs and opportunities for continued growth</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Mediate incongruencies between one’s professional life and one’s personal life</li> <li>➤ Serve as a role model and mentor</li> </ul>
10. Student Learning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Theories of Student development in Higher Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Articulate theories and models that describe student learning and development</li> <li>➤ Utilize theory to inform divisional policy and practice</li> <li>➤ Assess teaching and learning and incorporate the results into practice</li> </ul>

The preceding table depicts the student affairs competencies and corresponding applicable modules to be studied, as well as the expected outcomes to be demonstrated. The qualitative results of this study as per the verbatim responses from participants (Appendix 7) provided the rationale for the development of this proposed capacity building model. As stated in the foregoing paragraph, the model draws heavily from ACPA-NASPA Professional Competency Areas for Student Affairs Practitioners (2010). Although the document was mainly intended for an American audience, the researcher shares the authors’ view regarding the adaptability and utility of these competency areas to a wider international audience of student affairs practitioners. The dearth of preparation programmes for entry level student affairs practitioners as per the above-mentioned qualitative results of this study has prompted the researcher to propose the above-mentioned capacity building model.

From the list above, a four-year foundational study programme could be structured at undergraduate level for the preparation of entry-level student affairs practitioners. Consideration could also be given to the need for capacity building of in-service student affairs practitioners in the form of short courses or advanced certificate or diploma programmes with a view towards advancement into more specialized masters and doctoral programmes. Such capacity building programmes will go a long way in expanding the pool

of appropriately qualified and competent student affairs professionals, who will also contribute towards the advancement of the field through research.

## 5.6 CONCLUSION

This study sought to establish the need for capacity building among student affairs practitioners responsible for student governance in South African higher education institutions. In the light of the foregoing the researcher pursued the following **objectives**:

- (1) Analysing the current preparation programmes for student affairs practitioners.
- (2) Evaluating current student governance models in higher education institutions of South Africa.
- (3) Analysing international best practices in student affairs capacity-building programmes.
- (4) Developing a capacity building programme or model in line with the required competencies of student affairs practitioners

Relevant literature was consulted to unpack the foundations and evolution of student affairs practice and theoretical underpinnings of the field of student affairs. The mixed method approach of sequential exploratory triangulation was used for the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. The results of the study supported the on-going research that there is a need for capacity building for student affairs practitioners responsible for student governance.

The main limitation of this study, however, is that the findings and results are not generalizable to the Further Education and Training (FET) sector, who have since become part of higher education administration, and consequently student affairs practitioners from this sector have recently been accepted as members of NASDEV. Their exclusion from this study is mainly due to the fact that the conception of this study preceded these recent developments in the sector.

More inclusive research needs to be pursued in future and it is envisaged that future research in the field of student affairs practice in South Africa would be more representative by encapsulating both qualitative and quantitative research investigations.

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Central University of  
Technology, Free State



RESOURCES AND OPERATIONS



## APPENDIX 1

**Date: 18 September 2013**

**To: The President & Secretary  
NASDEV & SAASSAP**

**From: MJ Nkonoane**

**Re: Request for Permission to conduct a survey**

Dear Colleagues,

I hereby would like to request permission to conduct a survey by distributing a questionnaire electronically among NASDEV members, towards a Ph D study entitled:

***“Capacity Building Among Student Affairs Practitioners In South African Higher Education Institutions with regard o Student Governance”***

It is envisaged that the results of this study will contribute towards body of knowledge and further research on professionalizing student affairs practice in South Africa.

I hope that my request will meet with your favourable consideration and would like to thank you in anticipation.

Kind regards  
MJ Nkonoane



Central University of  
Technology, Free State



■ RESOURCES AND OPERATIONS

## APPENDIX 2

25 September 2013

Dear Student Affairs Practitioner

I am writing to ask for your assistance with my research study. You have been selected based on your work in the field of Student Affairs. Your experience, insight, and perceptions are very important for my Ph D study entitled:

**“ Capacity Building Among Student Affairs Practitioners In South African Higher Education Institutions with regard to Student Governance”**

The attached questionnaire should take no more than 15-20 minutes to complete. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your responses will be kept anonymous and cannot be connected with your name or e-mail address.

It is envisaged that this study will contribute towards discourse and further research towards professionalizing student affairs practice in South Africa.

I would like to thank you in advance for your assistance with my study. If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me at [jnkonoan@cut.ac.za](mailto:jnkonoan@cut.ac.za)

Best regards

MJ Nkonoane  
Ph D Candidate  
Central University of Technology, Free State

## APPENDIX 3

### QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Respondent Number	
Institution Number	

The aim of this questionnaire is to identify the factors that influence the effecting of **Capacity Building Among Student Affairs Practitioners In South African Higher Education Institutions with regard to Student Governance**. Please indicate your response by writing the relevant number in the shaded square provided for in Sections: A – C.

### SECTION A                      BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

	Your response	OFFICIAL use only
Q1. What is your designation in the Student Affairs unit? 1. Dean of students 2. Director 3. Assistant Director 4. Student Development Officer 5 Other <i>(please specify.....)</i>	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	1
Q2. What is your gender? 1. Female 2. Male	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	2
Q 3. What is your race? 1. Black 2. Coloured 3. Indian 4. White 5. Chinese	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	3
Q4. How long have you been employed in the unit? 1. A year or less 2 Two to 3 years 3. Three to 5 years 4. More than 5 years	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	4
Q5. What is the type of your institution? 1. University of Technology 2. Comprehensive 3. Traditional	<div style="background-color: #cccccc; width: 40px; height: 20px; margin: 0 auto;"></div>	5

<p>Q6. Highest Qualification Earned?</p> <p>1.Certificate 2.Diploma 3.Bachelor’s Degree 4.Hons 5. Masters/Doctorate</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	6
<p>Q7.Where is your institution situated?</p> <p>1. Rural area 2. Urban area 3. Township 4. Town 5. City</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	7
<p>Q8.Number of students in my institution</p> <p>1 Less than 13000 2 Between 13000 and 16000 3 Between 16000 and 20000 4 Between 20000 and 25000 5 Between 25000 and 30000 6 More than 30 000</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	8

**SECTION B**

**STUDENT AFFAIRS AS A PROFESSION**

Below you are required to indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement. Please respond by writing the number in the appropriate shaded block. Rate your response according to a four point Likert Scale where **the rating scale implies the following:**

<p><b>Strongly Disagree</b> 1</p>	<p><b>Disagree</b> 2</p>	<p><b>Agree</b> 3</p>	<p><b>Strongly Agree</b> 4</p>
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<p>Q9.My professional development is my own responsibility, not to be imposed by the institution</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	9
<p>Q.10. The profession has and is likely to continue to attract individuals whose backgrounds do not include completion of formal study in this field</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	10
<p>Q11. The student affairs profession should endorse employment of only practitioners who have completed graduate-level preparation in student affairs or higher education</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	11

<b>Strongly Disagree</b> 1	<b>Disagree</b> 2	<b>Agree</b> 3	<b>Strongly Agree</b> 4
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Q.12. The outcomes from graduate preparation programmes can aid in the development of professional competencies	<input type="checkbox"/>	12
Q.13. Professional competencies should serve as a foundation upon which professional development activities can be shaped	<input type="checkbox"/>	13

## SECTION C

### COMPETENCIES FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS PRACTITIONERS

Below you are required to indicate the degree to which the following competencies are important or not important to you in your current position. Please respond by writing the number in the appropriate shaded block. Rate your response according to a four point Likert Scale where **the rating scale implies the following:**

<b>Not Important</b> 1	<b>Somewhat Important</b> 2	<b>Very Important</b> 3	<b>Extremely Important</b> 4
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Q14. Ability to listen actively to students and colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	14
Q.15. Ability to help an individual set goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	15
Q16. Ability to facilitate problem-solving	<input type="checkbox"/>	16
Q.17. Ability to work with students on multiple issues (e.g academic, personal) simultaneously	<input type="checkbox"/>	17
Q18. Ability to refer others to on- or off-campus resources (e.g offices, outside agencies) when needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	18
Q.19. Knowledge of my own development and how that influences my view of the development of others	<input type="checkbox"/>	19

<b>Not Important 1</b>	<b>Somewhat Important 2</b>	<b>Very Important 3</b>	<b>Extremely Important 4</b>
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Q. 20. Knowledge of how to use formal and informal student development theories to enhance my work with students		20
Q.21. Ability to assess my level of multicultural awareness		21
Q22. Ability to expand my cultural skills and knowledge, especially related to specific cultural issues on my campus		22
Q23. Ability to facilitate dialogue between groups of different cultures, perspectives and/or world views		23
Q 24. Ability to act in accordance with ethical statements of the profession		24
Q25. Ability to recognize ethical issues in the course of my job		25
Q26. Ability to use institutional resources (e.g, human resources, supervisor, institutional policies/procedures) to resolve ethical issues		26
Q27 Ability to utilize facilities management procedures to operate a facility		27
Q28. Knowledge of basic techniques for budget management/monitoring		28
Q29. Understanding of the basic principles that underlie conflict in organizations and student life		29

Not Important 1	Somewhat Important 2	Very Important 3	Extremely Important 4
--------------------	----------------------------	---------------------	--------------------------

Q30. Understanding of how to facilitate conflict resolution	<input type="checkbox"/>	30
Q31. Knowledge of the fundamentals of teamwork and teambuilding	<input type="checkbox"/>	31
Q32. Ability to organize and plan my work tasks within the context of institutional priorities	<input type="checkbox"/>	32
Q33 Understanding of how my institution is governed (i.e. institutional governance)	<input type="checkbox"/>	33
Q34. Understanding of Higher Education Legislative framework	<input type="checkbox"/>	34
Q35. Understanding of a variety of leadership styles	<input type="checkbox"/>	35
Q36. Knowledge of major policy issues and decisions on my campus	<input type="checkbox"/>	36
Q37 Understanding of how the RSA Constitution influences the rights of students and staff at public institutions	<input type="checkbox"/>	37
Q38 Ability to use professional literature to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of programmes and other initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	38
Q39 Ability to incorporate the results of teaching, training, and learning assessment into my work	<input type="checkbox"/>	39

**APPENDIX 4**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

**IQ 1. To what extent are student affairs practitioners professionally prepared to effect sound student governance practice?**

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**IQ 2. How can student affairs professionals be better equipped to enhance student governance in higher education institutions?**

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**IQ 3. What are your views on the establishment of professional competencies in student affairs?**

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**IQ 4. What are your perceptions of the relevance of participation in continuing professional development system?**

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**IQ 5. What are your views regarding the current employment practices of student affairs practitioners in South African higher education institutions, especially with regard to student governance?**

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**IQ 6. What is the nature of the discourse on the need to professionalize student affairs practice, especially in NASDEV/SAASSAP?**

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## APPENDIX 5

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.9056	0.9345	31.0000

### Comment:

The Cronbach's alpha is 0.9056, which indicates a high level of internal consistency of 90.56% for the scale (questionnaire) used with this specific sample.

### Item-Total Statistics

The **Item-Total Statistics** table presents the **Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted** in the final column, as shown below:

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q9	0.1674	0.9152
Q10	0.2231	0.9184
Q11	0.4632	0.9055
Q12	0.4824	0.9025
Q13	0.5861	0.9014
Q14	0.2318	0.9057
Q15	0.5631	0.9014
Q16	0.5058	0.9022
Q17	0.3696	0.9044
Q18	0.4712	0.9027
Q19	0.4738	0.9026
Q20	0.4511	0.9031
Q21	0.6698	0.8993
Q22	0.6176	0.9002
Q23	0.5408	0.9021
Q24	0.4812	0.9025
Q25	0.4265	0.9036
Q26	0.6031	0.9011
Q27	0.7238	0.8990

Q28	0.5890	0.9018
Q29	0.6681	0.9007
Q30	0.4933	0.9030
Q31	0.6237	0.9023
Q32	0.5635	0.9013
Q33	0.6373	0.9004
Q34	0.6350	0.9018
Q35	0.6219	0.9004
Q36	0.7525	0.8997
Q37	0.6364	0.9012
Q38	0.6317	0.9007
Q39	0.6002	0.9009

**Comment:**

This column presents the value that Cronbach's alpha would be if that particular item was deleted from the scale. We can see that removal of any question except questions 9, 10 and 14 would result in a lower Cronbach's alpha when compared to the Cronbach's alpha (0.9056). Therefore, we would not want to remove these questions. Removal of questions 9, 10 and 14 would lead to a small improvement in Cronbach's alpha (0.9056) and we can also see that the **Corrected Item-Total Correlation** values for questions 9, 10 and 14 are 0.1674, 0.2231 and 0.2318 respectively which are very low. This might lead us to consider whether we should remove these items or not.

## APPENDIX 6

		Component	
		1	2
Q9	My professional development is my own responsibility, not to be imposed by the institution	.258	-.119
Q10	The profession has and is likely to continue to attract individuals whose backgrounds do not include completion of formal study in this field	.047	.232
Q11	The student affairs profession should endorse employment of only practitioners who have completed graduate-level preparation in student affairs or higher education	.406	.298
Q12	The outcomes from graduate preparation programmes can aid in the development of professional competencies	.398	.271
Q13	Professional competencies should serve as a foundation upon which professional development activities can be shaped	.303	.597
Q14	Ability to listen actively to students and colleagues	-.100	.540
Q15	Ability to help an individual set goals	.236	.700
Q16	Ability to facilitate problem-solving	.180	.701
Q17	Ability to work with students on multiple issues (e.g academic, personal) simultaneously	.028	.637
Q18	Ability to refer others to on- or off-campus resources (e.g offices, outside agencies) when needed	.124	.656
Q19	Knowledge of my own development and how that influences my view of the development of others	.462	.186
Q20	Knowledge of how to use formal and informal student development theories to enhance my work with students	.683	-.046
Q21	Ability to assess my level of multicultural awareness	.741	.230
Q22	Ability to expand my cultural skills and knowledge, especially related to specific cultural issues on my campus	.511	.460
Q23	Ability to facilitate dialogue between groups of different cultures, perspectives and/or world views	.559	.269
Q24	Ability to act in accordance with ethical statements of the profession	.560	.168
Q25	Ability to recognize ethical issues in the course of my job	.571	.070
Q26	Ability to use institutional resources (e.g, human resources, supervisor, institutional policies/procedures) to resolve ethical issues	.515	.393
Q27	Ability to utilize facilities management procedures to operate a facility	.699	.380
Q28	Knowledge of basic techniques for budget management/monitoring	.432	.505
Q29	Understanding of the basic principles that underlie conflict in organizations and student life	.352	.726
Q30	Understanding of how to facilitate conflict resolution	.417	.377
Q31	Knowledge of the fundamentals of teamwork and teambuilding	.431	.570
Q32	Ability to organize and plan my work tasks within the context of institutional priorities	.240	.700
Q33	Understanding of how my institution is governed (i.e. institutional governance)	.666	.288
Q34	Understanding of Higher Education Legislative framework	.811	.106
Q35	Understanding of a variety of leadership styles	.682	.263
Q36	Knowledge of major policy issues and decisions on my campus	.716	.424
Q37	Understanding of how the RSA Constitution influences the rights of students and staff at public institutions	.769	.157
Q38	Ability to use professional literature to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of programmes and other initiatives	.527	.414
Q39	Ability to incorporate the results of teaching, training, and learning assessment into my work	.723	.126

## APPENDIX 7

### TRANSCRIPT OF VERBATIM RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (IQs)

PARTICIPANTS	IQ 1	IQ 2	IQ 3	IQ 4	IQ 5	IQ6
<b>Participant A</b>	‘There are no formal training programmes. We rely on prior experience as former student leaders’. There is a need for a qualification	Formal training programmes leading to a qualification will enable practitioners to perform their duties more efficiently	Formal training programmes should lead to the attainment of professional competencies. I agree with the idea of professional competencies for student affairs practitioners	Over and above annual conferences, in-service training opportunities can improve the standard of the practice of student affairs. Practitioners in service should be supported by their institutions	Currently, student affairs practitioners are drawn from academic departments and in a number of cases from among former student leaders.	The subject remains topical at NASDEV and SAASSAP Conferences.
<b>Participant B</b>	There are no undergraduate qualifications to pursue a career in student affairs. We are only exposed to ad hoc seminars and conference proceedings	An undergraduate diploma or degree is the way to begin with. Conference proceedings can then contribute towards continuous professional development	I fully support the idea of developing professional competencies for student affairs professionals.	It should be mandatory for student affairs practitioners to attend and deliver papers at conferences, as part of their performance management	There is a need for proper development plans for newly appointed student affairs practitioners. This will ensure relevant career-pathing in the field	Beyond conference proceedings, there is a need for these organizations to collaborate with other internal organizations such as NASPA and ACPA. Such collaborations could result in exchange programmes for capacity building
<b>Participant C</b>	I am not aware of a degree or diploma in student affairs to enable me to do my work as the Student Development Officer. I rely on knowledge shared at conferences	More financial support is required from institutions to enable Student development officers to pursue formal in-service training leading to a qualification	I agree with the idea as this will ensure uniformity of practice.	In-service training opportunities can improve the skills of student affairs practitioners .	Competency-based selection process should be adopted to improve the quality of newly appointed practitioners. Recruitment should not be skewed towards a particular race at the expense of excellence	While there is constant discourse on professionalizing student affairs practice at NASDEV and SAASSAP annual conference, there is a dire need for relevant research output by way of a dedicated journal.
	There is no	Possession of	Professional	Continuous	Universities	Currently the

<b>Participant D</b>	formal training programme in student affairs to equip practitioners	an undergraduate degree in the field of student affairs will enable practitioners to more efficient	competencies should be the outcome of the formal qualifications	Professional Development should be a requirement for possible promotion of student affairs practitioners .	need to adopt more rigorous talent management strategies and ensure that capable practitioners are employed and supported for further growth.	emphasis is on shared best practices among members of these organizations at annual conferences.
<b>Participant E</b>	Except for social work and counseling, many student affairs practitioners have not been trained for the work they do.	There is a need for an accredited qualification in the field with a clear regulatory framework such as a Professional Body like in other professions	Possession of a formal qualification will ensure that practitioners are professionally competent. I support the idea of introducing professional competencies for student affairs practitioners. These should be developed by a Professional Body regulating the practice.	As part of succession planning in student affairs departments , junior student affairs practitioners are drawn from among former student leaders. This is in line with the “growing own timber” concept.	At managerial level, universities need to appoint practitioners who will be able to contribute towards the professional development of entry-level practitioners. Registration with a Professional Body, once established, should be a requirement for appointment	The launch of the Umbrella body led by NASDEV and SAASSAP in 2012 is a step in the right direction towards bridging the collegial gap between junior student affairs practitioners who are mainly members of NASDEV and senior student affairs practitioners who are members of SAASSAP. This should strengthen the idea of professionalizing student affairs practice.
<b>Participant F</b>	There is currently no qualification for entry level student affairs practitioners. Most practitioners hold qualifications that are not relevant to the practice, hence they rely on their experience either as former student leaders or lecturers	Relevant post-graduate or higher professional diplomas in the field will assist towards the professionalization of practitioners who already hold undergraduate qualifications that are not necessarily relevant to the field. This will put the practice on par with the teaching and other professions	A qualification in student affairs will ensure that practitioners acquire relevant competencies to be more effective, especially in student governance	There is no doubt that continuous professional development will expose practicing student affairs practitioners to best practice in the field.	Possession of a qualification in the field should be a requirement in future.	Conference proceedings of these organizations should result in research publications to enhance ongoing discourse on the professionalization of student affairs practice.

<b>Participant G</b>	There is no formal preparation programme for student affairs practitioners in South Africa, especially for student governance. We only attend conferences	A formal preparation programme needs to be developed to capacitate practitioners responsible for student governance	A set of professional competencies for practitioners should be part of a formal preparation programme.	Participation in continuous professional development opportunities will augment the skills of those who do not possess relevant qualifications. However, such CPD programmes should lead to certification	Only practitioners with appropriate qualifications in the field of student affairs should be appointed once the qualification is developed. This will ensure quality and efficient delivery of student governance programmes	There is a need for more research output by these organizations on the subject of professionalizing student affairs practice.
<b>Participant H</b>	Student affairs practitioners have not been trained for the work they do, and end up being “clerical” and simply implementing policies of the institution on student governance	A qualification in student affairs with a specialization in student governance needs to be developed.	Professional competencies will assist student affairs practitioners to have a better understanding of student governance	Relevant continuous professional development in student affairs practice is supported.	Most student affairs practitioners responsible for student governance at South African higher institutions are either former academics or former student leaders who are mainly appointed because of their familiarity with institutional environments. In the absence of appropriate in-service training opportunities, some former student leaders struggle to navigate the transition from being in the SRC and becoming responsible institutional employees	Discourse on the professionalizing student affairs practice remains a regular feature at conferences of these organizations. This is evidenced by the annual call of papers that usually has topics on the subject as conference sub-themes

<p><b>Participant I</b></p>	<p>We have not been properly capacitated for the work we do as Student Development Officers</p>	<p>There is a dire need for capacity building through a formal qualification</p>	<p>Exposure to a formal qualification will result in more professionally competent student affairs practitioners, especially in the area of student governance</p>	<p>Exposure to Continuous Professional Development should go a long way in addressing the current shortcomings of student affairs practitioners who do not possess formal qualifications in the field</p>	<p>Current employment practices at some institutions of higher learning are devoid of competency based selection strategies. This anomaly can only be mitigated by continuous professional support for entry-level student affairs practitioners.</p>	<p>The annual NASDEV Winter school provides an opportunity for student affairs practitioners to share best practices to make up for the lack of formal qualifications in the field of student affairs</p>
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## APPENDIX 8