



International Symposium

AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES IN THE 21st CENTURY

*April 25-27, 2002, Campus Numérique de la Francophonie de Dakar
Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie, Dakar - SENEGAL*

AFRICAN STUDENT MOBILITY TO SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

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Abstract

Since South Africa re-joined the international community as a democratic nation, there has been a steady increase in the number of international students seeking access to its higher educational institutions, in particular, from the African continent. This paper outlines a multiple case-study undertaken to investigate the responses of selected South African universities to international student influx. Statistical data is presented regarding international student trends at South African universities. A comparison is made between institutions which are examples of Historically White (HWU) and Historically Black Universities (HBU). Recent data indicate that over 2/3 of international student at South African universities, originate from the African continent. A number of factors attracting African international students to South African universities are highlighted. The paper concludes with future prospects regarding student mobility to South African universities.

LA MOBILITE DES ETUDIANTS AFRICAINS VERS LES UNIVERSITES SUDAFRICAINES

Résumé

Depuis que l'Afrique du Sud a rejoint la communauté des nations démocratiques, le nombre des étudiants internationaux –et en particulier des étudiants venant du continent africain— qui cherchent à venir dans ses universités ne fait qu'augmenter. Cette communication résume les résultats d'une étude de cas multiples qui a été entreprise afin d'enquêter sur la réaction de certaines universités sudafricaines à l'afflux d'étudiants internationaux. L'auteur présente des statistiques révélant les tendances, en ce qui concerne l'afflux d'étudiants internationaux, dans des universités d'Afrique du Sud. Une comparaison est faite entre des universités historiquement blanches (HWU: Historically White Universities) et des universités historiquement noires (HBU: Historically Black Universities). Des statistiques récentes montrent que plus des deux tiers des étudiants internationaux dans les universités sudafricaines sont d'origine africaine. Un nombre de facteurs qui attirent ces étudiants africains sont mis en valeur. La conclusion de la communication discute de directions futures possibles concernant la mobilité d'étudiants internationaux vers les universités sudafricaines.

This paper investigates the responses of selected South African universities to international student influx over the decade 1992-2002. This is attempted from

two perspectives, using quantitative as well as qualitative data. Five universities constitute the institutional basis for this multi-site case study. These are the Universities of Port Elizabeth, Rhodes, Fort Hare, Cape Town and Stellenbosch.

The paper is divided into 4 sections. The first part of the paper provides a review of the literature, the global context, and current trends in international student mobility. Part two focuses on international students within the South African higher education context by highlighting two sets of statistical data. The first set is national data on international students registered at South African universities between 1992 and 2001. These include total international student enrolments, region of origin, and distribution of international students among South African universities. The second set of data is more focused on African students registered at the 5 universities which comprise the multi-site case study.

Part three presents international student perspectives from a qualitative perspective. This section outlines a number of push and pull factors which facilitate or hinder student flows to South Africa and its universities. In addition, it identifies some problems experienced by African international students in South Africa.

Part four examines the responses of these 5 institutions to the international student influx, and raises some critical questions. The paper concludes with some challenges for future research in the area of international student mobility.

Although the specific focus of the paper is on international students from Africa, many of the issues discussed pertain equally to international students from other parts of the world. Since the picture would have been incomplete without the latter group, much of the data is not exclusive to African international students.

PART I

With the opening of South Africa to the outside world, there has been an increasing influx of international students to South African higher education institutions. These inflows are mainly from neighboring African countries and the rest of the continent, with a relatively small proportion from Europe and North America.

This is not surprising: the South African higher education sector is better resourced and more diversified than many other African countries. However, for South Africa to become a major player in the global arena, a major change is needed in the way many South African institutions deal with the challenge posed by international students.

The responses of higher education institutions to the influx of international students have been varied. Some embrace the development, while others try to ignore it. The former have adopted a pragmatic approach and have or are in a

process of developing foreign students policy, the necessary infrastructure and try to address related curriculum issues. The latter do not perceive internationalization as a priority, and appear ill-equipped to face its challenges. For South Africa to become a major player in international education like other nations its higher education institutions need to approach internationalization as part of their mission and strategic focus. At a national level, the present reality is that, generally speaking, internationalization is not yet perceived as a mainstream issue in higher education and with few exceptions has been dealt with through ad hoc measures.

In the specialised literature in the field, one area concentrates on “globalisation” and/or “internationalisation”, examining the response of selected higher education institutions or national systems of higher education to these developments. In this paper, I direct my attention to internationalisation and selected universities’ responses to it, with a particular focus on African students.

Current trends in student mobility: the global context

Although international student mobility is not new, it has gained momentum with the process of globalization. Since the 1970’s, the number of students seeking training outside their home country has increased. In the 1980’s there were at least one million students worldwide enrolled at tertiary institutions outside their home country (Altbach, 1991:305). In 2000, this was closer to two million (Bowles & Funk, 1996:35).

With respect to countries of origin and destination, it is no surprise that traditionally the majority (70%) of these students originated in the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) of the so called South and 80% studied in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) group of ‘Northern’ nations (Wagner & Schnitzer, 1991:277).

More recently, other directions of student flow are emerging. Some have noted mobility within the Commonwealth (e.g. Bown 1994, Maxey 2000, CEC & UKCOSA 2000) while South-South flows and North-South flows have also been on the increase. Within the African continent South Africa is a case in point in this respect.

One suggested definition of internationalisation points to “the process of integrating an international dimension into the teaching/training, research and service functions” of higher education institutions. (Knight, 1997: 29). Increasingly, higher education institutions and countries have understood the need to adopt a holistic framework with respect to internationalisation, as opposed to focusing solely on the student mobility dimension. Other aspects of this process include staff development, curriculum innovation and organizational change (Rudzki, 1995), but will not be dealt with in this paper.

Many colleges and universities in countries such as the USA, Britain, Australia and Canada have embraced internationalization as a key priority in their overall mission. Though income generation has been the primary motivation in the case of some countries, such as the UK and Australia, it is by no means the only one.

PART II

The South African context:

The South African public higher education system comprises 21 universities and 15 technikons or universities of science and technology. Three of these 36 institutions use distance education while the rest use primarily contact tuition. During the apartheid era, education in South Africa reflected a closed, inbred society. This inward focus became even more pronounced during the academic boycott. With the change to a democratic government, the number of international students increased steadily (Table 1). However, by and large institutional responses at the national and local levels have not kept pace with the increasing demand from international students.

International student trends

This analysis has used two sets of data: national data for 1999 and institutional data. The 1999 national data were obtained from the Department of Education in March 2001. Several institutions, such as the historically Black universities (HBUs), have provided no data, and therefore are under-represented in terms of their international student numbers. The validity of these data is therefore questionable and as such needs to be viewed with caution. Further, the data were not broken down by level of study and therefore no information could be derived for post-graduate programs. Institutional data for 2001 were obtained directly from the 5 universities comprising the multi-site case study and are therefore more reliable.

Numbers

In 1999, there were 11 961 international students enrolled at South African public universities [Table 1]. This constituted 3.4% of the 351 987 students registered at South African Universities. This proportion has grown from about 2% (4 603) in 1992.

Table 1: Growth in International Students Enrolments at South African Universities, 1992 – 1999

	1992	1996	1999
International student numbers	4 603	5 589	11 961
Total university	222 675	361 232	351 987

enrolments			
IS as a % of total enrolments	2.1%	1.5%	3.4%

(Source 1999: Dept of Education, March 2001, headcount figures
1996: Rouhani, 1999.
1992: Rouhani & Paterson, 1996)

The above figure of 11 961 excludes international students registered at the distance education universities (DEUs), i.e. UNISA and VISTA¹.

Geographic Origin

In terms of geographic origin (Table 2), in 1998 two-thirds (67%) of international students at South African universities originate from the African continent, with the majority 62% from the neighbouring SADC region. The second largest group (15%) is from Europe, followed by 11% from Asia and about 4% from the Americas. Students from Australasia, Oceania and South America constitute much smaller proportions. These trends are in agreement with international trends regarding the distribution of international students by region of origin (EPU, 1999).

Table 2: Geographic Origin of International Students registered at South African Universities, 1998

Origin	Proportion
SADC	62%
Other Africa	6%
Europe	15%
Asia	11%
North & South America	4%
Australasia/ Oceania	2%
Total	100%

Source: EPU, 1999, based on data obtained directly from 10 universities.

¹ If one includes this cohort of 8 872, the total number of international students is then 20 833. This constitutes 6% of the total university enrolments.

Distribution among South African Universities

Approximately half (52%) of these students were registered at the Historically White Universities (HWUs), 43% at the Distance Education Universities (DEUs) ie UNISA and Vista, and a small proportion of 5% were at the HBUs [Table3].

Table 3: Distribution of International Students among South African Contact and Distance Education Universities in 1999

	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL
HEUs	5 507	26%
HAUs	5 484	26%
HWUs – subtotal	10 991	52%
HBUs	970	5%
DEUs	8 872	43%
TOTAL	20 833	100%

Source: Dept Of Education, 2001.

These data are in contrast to the national enrolment proportions. In 1999, of the total SA higher education enrolments (564 000), 46% were at contact universities and only 19% were at distance universities (CHE 98/99). It would seem obvious that distance education should be pursued as an option if universities want to recruit more international students without reducing access for local students.

A distinct pattern of international student enrolment may be observed at South African Universities, first with respect to the historical division of universities according to race, and second with respect to language.

Table 4: Distribution of International Students among South African Contact Universities in 1999

	NUMBER	% OF TOTAL
HEUs	5 507	46%
HAUs	5 484	46%
HWUs – subtotal	10 991	92%
HBUs - subtotal	970	8%
TOTAL	11 961	100%

Source: Dept Of Education, 2001.

First, the broad profile of distribution which emerges is that the majority of international students, are enrolled at the HWUs. In 1999, 10 991 or 92% of international students were registered at these institutions, compared to 970 or 8% at the HBUs. This is in line with previous trends of 69% in 1992 (Rouhani & Paterson, 1996) and 88% in 1998 (Rouhani, 1999) at the HWUs. It is therefore

evident that the international student influx has been on the increase at the HWUs. Conversely, the HBUs have become further marginalized as a result of globalization. It must be noted, however, that at HBUs the same downward trend occurs with respect to local student enrolments. The HBUs have experienced a sharp and severe decline in student enrolments of 20% between 1995 and 1999. In the same period, the historically white Afrikaans universities experienced the highest growth of 39%, while UNISA also experienced a negative growth rate of 16% (CHE 98/99).

Second, there is an almost equal proportion (46%) of international students divided between the Historically English (HEU) and Afrikaans universities (HAU), however this has not been the case in the past. Previous studies indicate an HEU:HAU distribution of international students was in the region of 3:1 in 1992 (Rouhani & Paterson, 1996) and about 2:1 in 1998 (Rouhani, 1999). Therefore, it may be concluded that the international student enrolment trends among the Historically English and Afrikaans universities has been equalizing.

From the above discussion, the following conclusions may be inferred. First, that the number of international students at South African public universities (contact mode) has increased steadily from about 4000 in 1992 to 12 000 in 1999. Thus, the numbers have increased threefold over the last decade. Second, contact tuition is still the preferred mode of study by about 60% of international students. Third, the majority of international students, 97%, prefer to study at the HWUs. Within these institutions, the international student distribution is almost equal. Fourth, that distance education should be pursued as an option if universities want to recruit more international students without reducing access for local students.

The multi-site case study

The data below are representative of international students at 5 institutions² comprising the case study. These are the Universities of Fort Hare, Port Elizabeth, Rhodes, Cape Town and Stellenbosch. The first three are in the Eastern Cape Province, whereas the last two are situated in the Western Cape Province. With the exception of Fort Hare (UFH) which is an Historically Black University (HBU), the other four are Historically White institutions (HWUs). At the University of Stellenbosch (US), Afrikaans is the medium of instruction for most programmes, and the University of Port Elizabeth (UPE) has been a dual medium institution, using English and Afrikaans. In terms of institutional culture, UPE and US are regarded as being more conservative. Rhodes University (RU) and the University of Cape Town (UCT) have traditionally been among the so called liberal universities. UFH, designated as a 'crucible of African leadership' is very much associated with the struggle against apartheid.

Table 5: International Students as a proportion of Total

² Data from UPE was not yet available at time of going to press.

Student Enrolment at 4 South African Universities in 2001

	UFH	RU	US	UCT
Total enrolment	5282	6008	18731	17837
International Students (IS)	418	1101	1165	2260
IS as proportion of Total enrolment	8%	18%	6.2%	12.7%

With respect to total enrolments in 2001, UFH had the lowest number (5282) and US the highest (18 731) among the 5 institutions. In terms of size and geographic location, all 5 institutions are very different. At one end of the spectrum is UFH which is very much a rural, provincial university located in Alice. This is followed by RU which is not as rural, but is still provincial and about 150km from the nearest urban center, Port Elizabeth. One of the advantages of Rhodes is that it is located in Grahamstown which is regarded to be a university town, in which everything is very accessible to students, and within walking distance of the university. UPE has the advantage of being located in Port Elizabeth, South Africa's fourth largest city. This coastal city, has the obvious attraction of scenery and a mild climate all year round. US, although a large university, is actually a university-in-a-town located in the small town of Stellenbosch in the idyllic wine lands of the Western Cape. At the other extreme is UCT, which is a very large city university, spread over the mountain slopes in Cape Town, South Africa's 'mother city' and one of the tenth most popular tourist attractions in the world. This information is summarized in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Characteristics of 5 universities in the case study

	UNIVERSITY				
	UFH	UPE	RU	US	UCT
Town/ city	Alice	Port Elizabeth	Grahamstown	Stellenbosch	Cape Town
Province	Eastern Cape	Eastern Cape	Eastern Cape	Western Cape	Western Cape
Location	Rural, agricultural, provincial	Urban provincial	Rural provincial	Urban national	Urban National international
Attractions	Remote No distractions	Coastal town Very accessible Low crime rate	Small town Fairly safe	Small town Fairly safe	Large, Coastal city
Possible problems	Remote Not easily accessible No 'night			Afrikaans language	More expensive Higher crime

	life'				
Historical legacy	HBU	HWU	HWU	HWU	HWU - English
language	English	English - Afrikaans	English	Afrikaans	English
Institutional culture	Struggle against apartheid	Conservative	Liberal	Conservative	Liberal

These institutions were selected for the case study on the basis of the following criteria:

- Representation in terms of historical grouping ie HBU, HWU.
- Representation in terms of language grouping ie English or Afrikaans.
- Size of international student population.
- Diversity of the international student population.
- Unique nature of the institution – size, location, curricular diversity, international reputation etc.

In addition to the above, the 5 institutions were selected because of their unique circumstances rather than being representative of the national picture. For example, the University of Cape Town has the second largest number of international students (2260 in 2001) in comparison to all private, residential higher education institutions in South Africa. Rhodes University has one of the highest proportions (18% in 2001) of international students for residential universities in the world and is the first university on the continent to have conducted an Internationalisation Quality Review in 2001. The University of Fort Hare, has one of the highest number of international students (418) among HBUs. Both the universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch have a diverse international student population, judging by the fact that their international students represented 74 and 72 countries respectively in 2001 (Table 7).

Table 7: Number of Countries represented by International Students at 4 South African Universities in 2001

COUNTRIES	UNIVERSITY				
	UFH	UPE	RU	US	UCT
SADC	7		10	13	12
Other African countries	+/- 5		5	15	18
Outside Africa	4		+/- 25	44	44
Total	+/-16		+/- 40	72	74

Further, in terms of providing administrative support structures for international students, all the above 5 universities have an administrative structure, though in different forms. UCT has the most highly staffed international academic programmes office, followed by US. Both of these universities were among the

first to establish an international office among South African universities. UPE established its international office in 2000 and is more market driven. Rhodes has an international student Officer, but international students are handled along with other students. UFH does not have a separate international office, but international students are under the portfolio of the TELP Office for the time being.

African international students

About 2/3 of the international students at South African universities are from the African continent. The next table (Table 8) provides a breakdown in terms of individual countries of origin from the African continent. It is evident that within SADC, the largest groups of international students come from Zimbabwe and Namibia followed by Botswana and Lesotho. The Namibian connection with Stellenbosch may be due to the fact that Afrikaans is still the language of communication among a large proportion of White Namibians. Rhodes has also had a historical connection with Zimbabwe, formerly Rhodesia. In the case of UFH, Robert Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe is a former student and many Zimbabwean students are on government scholarships. From Other African Countries, the highest numbers are from Kenya and Uganda at UCT and Rhodes, which may be mainly due to the language factor. Stellenbosch has a special programme in lexicography for the Gabonais students and a Masters programme for the Eritrean students.

Table 8: Country of Origin & Number of International Students from Africa registered at 4 South African Universities in 2001

COUNTRY	UNIVERSITY			
	UFH	RU	US	UCT
Angola		2	4	30
Botswana	6	23	19	157
DRC		1	6	26
Lesotho	130	25	15	157
Malawi	5	16	11	44
Mauritius		20	7	131
Mozambique		5	3	52
Namibia	3	77	257	154
Seychelles			1	
Swaziland	7	20	15	96
Tanzania		16	5	43
Zambia	1	20	26	92
Zimbabwe	237	631	68	621
SADC subtotal	389	856	437	1603
Burkina Faso			1	5
Cameroon		5	2	10

Congo		1		
Egypt			1	
Eritrea			40	15
Ethiopia			6	10
Gabon			30	
Ghana		12	7	13
Ivory Coast				3
Kenya		43	16	77
Libya				2
Liberia			1	3
Madagascar			1	1
Nigeria			11	14
Reunion				2
Rwanda			14	2
Sierra Leone				2
Somalia			1	1
Sudan			5	5
Uganda		29	15	26
Other African countries		4		
Other Africa Subtotal	25	94	151	191
Total Africa	414	950	588	1794

Table 9: African Students as a proportion of International Students at 4 South African Universities in 2001

ORIGIN OF I.S.	UNIVERSITY			
	UFH	RU	US	UCT
Total International Students (IS)	418	1106	1165	2260
SADC	389	856	437	1603
SADC students as Proportion of IS	93%	73%	38%	71%
Other African countries	25	94	151	191
OA students as Proportion of IS	6%	8%	13%	8.5%
SADC + Other Africa	414	950	588	1794
All African IS as Proportion of total IS	99%	81%	51%	79%

PART III

Reasons given by International Students for selecting South Africa as a Destination for higher education:

Push factors

1. Systemic problems of higher education in many African countries:
 - Higher education institutions in disarray due to political unrest, financial crises, lack of facilities and resources, shortage of academic personnel, lack of access to academic literature, at times “uncertainty and poor image of supervision”.
 - Limited access due to high demand for higher education and limited number of institutions
2. Unavailability of financial support for students
3. General socio-political instability, civil unrest/war, famine, etc

Pull factors

1. Current climate of political change, liberation from apartheid, challenge to colonialism:
2. South Africa's position of leadership on the continent and beyond e.g. chairman of Non-Aligned Movement, international peace negotiator.
3. The challenges of living in a multi-cultural society.
4. Higher education system:
 - Relatively well-established and resourced
 - internationally competitive
 - with the two tiers of universities and technikons which allows for diversity of career paths
 - Relevance value of SA qualifications: Curriculum options on offer in SA are more relevant to situations and conditions back home.
 - Marketing of SA universities eg “UCT marketing strategy as World Class African university”.
5. Relatively cheaper fees compared to that in the UK, Europe of the USA
6. For SADC and African students, proximity to home country and African culture. Availability of financial support from international donors and governments.
7. SA is a land of “adventure, with lots to see and do”. This is an attraction especially for overseas students who combine studying with sightseeing as academic tourists: “The beauty of the university (UCT) setting”.

The above factors are best crystallized in the words of a PhD student from Kenya giving reasons for studying at UCT:

“African patriotism, I had received admission to Netherlands and Canada as well, but decided to stick to the Mother Continent... Being an African romantic patriot! The historic nostalgia and perverse romanticism – ie Cape of Storms, to experience that history, the unique Table Mountain and of course Legendary Robben Island. I have since fallen in love with Cape Town – wherever I go, I will always visit Cape Town and God willing retire there!”.

Reasons given by international students for selecting specific SA universities for higher education:

Among the sample of 5 universities under investigation as my case studies, the following responses are noteworthy:

An institution may be selected for any of the following factors, in no particular order of preference. One needs to distinguish between students who seek long term and short term study, as well as those who originate from the African continent and others from Europe and the USA. Students who register for degree programmes tend to be in the first category. Usually they also tend to be from the African continent. Most overseas students, especially if they are here for a year or as exchange students, tend to fall within the last two categories.

1. Its reputation as a seat of learning and academic excellence
2. perceived reputation as a 'world class' institution ie globally competitive
3. using English as a medium of instruction
4. The caliber of its alumni e.g. UFH is known for its contribution to African leadership.
5. The curriculum options e.g. UFH has certain programmes with an African focus.
6. The institutional culture. In this regard, African students feel more at home in Afrocentric institutions e.g. UFH whereas European students may prefer UCT or Stellenbosch due to a combination of language, culture and pedagogical premises.
7. availability of sponsorships by the institution or earmarked for specific institutions e.g. bursaries from the Zimbabwe government for study at UFH, due to historical ties.
8. Geographical location of institution: some students prefer large city universities e.g. UCT. This provides plenty of avenues for recreation. Others prefer small rural universities because they feel lack of recreational opportunities provides less distractions and is therefore more conducive to study e.g. UFH. Yet others prefer the safety of a university town such as Stellenbosch, with its unique setup. Others still prefer to combine sightseeing and 'fun in the sun' with their academic life. For this group, the choice of university is determined by the universities proximity to natural attractions such as the sea e.g. UCT or UPE.
9. Cost of living and fees which is generally lower in smaller institutions and towns e.g. UPE as opposed to UCT.
10. level of crime e.g. Rhodes is preferred to WITS due to the minimal crime in Grahamstown.
11. Availability of public transport to and from the institution e.g. UFH is less accessible than UPE or Rhodes.

Some Problems Typically Experienced by African Students at SA Universities

1. Fear of crime or being victims of crime
2. Xenophobia as expressed through:
 - local students and sometimes staff speaking to non South African Black students in the local languages .e.g. Zulu, Xhosa;
 - Being called names e.g. 'Makwerekwere';
 - Being accused that they have "Come to take our jobs";
 - Being accused of receiving preferential treatment from lecturers. This is due to the fact that the majority of international students have to perform well if they are to retain their bursaries. This does not undermine the fact that many of them are probably outstanding students to begin with, in order for them to qualify for financial assistance to begin with.
 - Experiencing ethnic/ national rivalries e.g. "Zulu culture is superior to Tswana culture"
3. SADC students and other African students not being recognized as fully-fledged international students, in comparison to overseas students, even though they are in need of additional guidance and services.
4. Lack of language courses for students whose mother-tongue or second language is not English eg from Francophone Africa.
5. Financial difficulties for some and the lack of work-study opportunities on campus.

PART IV

Institutional responses to international student influx

Given the above picture of increasing international students, what has been the response of South African institutions to this influx?

Although there is a great diversity in terms of individual initiative, the responses of most South African universities may be grouped into four broad categories. These are the pro-active approach, the reactive approach, the passive approach and the 'unable-to-cope' approach.

The proactive universities are those which view the international student influx as a positive development. They have tried to exploit this not only as a source of additional income, but as a means of increasing student diversity on campus. Further, other dimensions of internationalisation, such as inter-institutional linkages and partnerships, and staff development have been encouraged. Their responses are characterized by a more planned, long-term, aggressive drive towards internationalisation. For these institutions then, internationalisation is a means of becoming more globally competitive or 'world class' institutions. A few institutions, such as the Universities of Cape Town, Stellenbosch, Natal, Wits, Rhodes and Pretoria are examples in case.

The reactive institutions, on the other hand, appear to have no long term plans in place. They do not have a concerted plan or a vision of how they want to benefit from internationalisation. Their responses are usually arrived at in reaction to a situation such as the arrival of a group of students or delegation of faculty from universities abroad.

A third group are those who have adopted a passive or laissez-faire approach. For them, internationalisation is a distant reality, one which they would rather not be a part of. However, they are happy to make use of any opportunities, if these are not too taxing on their system.

The last group of institutions are those which see internationalisation as an added burden. Overwhelmed by national and institutional agendas for transformation and redress, and a lack of capacity to deliver, they are unable to cope with additional demands. A large group of HBUs fall into this category.

It therefore appears that there is a host of institutional responses to internationalisation. These would be more aptly perceived of as being on a continuum from those just beginning to internationalise to those somewhere on the middle of the road, to those which have been highly successful in their responses to internationalisation.

In the next section, we shall discuss some strategies adopted by the proactive institutions in response to the international student influx.

Internationalisation in South Africa: future prospects

If one scans the South African university landscape, it is evident that most of the proactive institutions have framed enabling institutional policies with respect to international student access. To begin with, internationalisation forms part and parcel of the strategic plans of the institution. Secondly, the formation of an International Office has facilitated the processing of international students. Thirdly, these institutions have structures in place which can address campus socialization issues such as integrated or separate residence facilities for international students. Among the more progressive, attention is being paid to aligning the curriculum to the needs of students, local and international, and meeting the challenges of a globalizing world.

It is worth noting that despite the fact that some of these institutions, such as UCT and UPE, charge international students higher fees, this move has not prevented the increase in international student enrolments at these institutions. This is mainly due to the fact that on a global scale, these fees are still lower than those in the UK, Australia or the USA. In addition to catering for the normal international student, UCT and UPE for example have a 'Study Abroad' group of US students, who are an excellent source of income.

Way forward with respect to international students in SA

1. Our higher education institutions are capable of absorbing more international students. In fact, for some, fiscal austerity makes it an imperative to attract and recruit more students. Given the national trend of student flow towards HWUs and technikons, most HBUs would do well to investigate international student recruitment as an additional means of supplementing their income.
2. SA needs to honour its commitment to the SADC Protocol on Education as well as to the African Ministers Conference for human resource development on the continent. What are the implications of this for SA higher education institutions?
3. At present there is no national policy on international student mobility or internationalisation. Higher education institutions are going it alone without having an overall national policy to guide the system as a whole eg charging differential fees to international students. This issue needs to be receive the attention of all stakeholders such as the Departments of Education – higher education and International Relations Directorates - Home Affairs and Foreign Affairs; SAUVCA, CTP, donors and sponsors, and research agencies such as the NRF and IEASA, the International Education Association of SA.
4. Our country as a whole and our universities in particular, need to be made more user friendly to international students so that they do not feel like ‘illegal aliens’. Our higher education institutions have a lot to offer their student clients. But in turn the clients have other institutions as destinations for higher education. How can we convince them that SA is the number one destination for higher education on the continent? Time is of the essence and we must not lose this opportunity now.
5. Towards the goal of marketing SA as a destination for higher education, what is conspicuous by its absence is an organization such as the British Council or DAAD. At present, IEASA is to some extent fulfilling this role. However, a lot more could be attained if IEASA were to be given greater powers and recognition e.g. as a SAUVCA structure.

CONCLUSION

While the historical advantage of some institutions initially gave them an edge over their historically disadvantaged counterparts in attracting international students, over and above that historical advantage, institutions which saw the advantage of internationalisation and decided to exploit it in a systematic manner, have advantaged themselves even further.

Institutions such as Fort Hare, which have a rich legacy as a site of production of intellectuals of the struggle against apartheid, could have marketed themselves more effectively, and thus turned around their historically disadvantaged legacy to their advantage. In the same vein, UWC, which is by no means short of partnership agreements with overseas institutions, and in 1999 had more international students than some HWUs, has not managed to exploit this advantage more effectively.

For South African universities to become significant global players, it is vital that plans for internationalisation be part of a coherent, long-term strategic planning process.

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