

SOME ISSUES THAT PERMEATE HIGHER EDUCATION DISCOURSE IN SOUTH AFRICA THAT REQUIRE ATTENTION BY TRADITIONAL UNIVERSITIES AND BUSINESS SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores an array of higher education issues that require careful consideration by traditional universities, distance education colleges and universities, academics and indeed government and its bureaucracy in terms of how higher education is approached generally in respect of the formulation of some education policy imperatives within higher education in South Africa. In reality the paper explores or takes the approach of delineating a compact of issues that will require serious understanding and discussion in respect of the issues being raised. In approaching this paper, the writer will for all intents and purposes summarize some of the articles and issues discussed in the supplement of the Mail and Guardian - Getting Ahead, August 3 to 9: 2012. Where applicable other issues will be raised that go beyond the issues raised in the series of articles discussed in the supplement. In addition, the writer will also project on the issues discussed by generating some of his own opinions within the narrative. In so doing the following issues will be nuanced and discussed:

- Matching policy with reality for young people in South Africa.
- The free market for students.
- Research at the cost of teaching.
- Research is at the mercy of plutocracy.
- Former Technikons have an identity crisis.
- Social cohesion by promoting the teaching of African languages.
- The need for multifaceted leaders to meet the challenges of globalized higher education and for purposes of development.
- Postgraduates need a better deal

It is hoped that the discussion of the above issues will stimulate reasoned debate and that both traditional and distance higher education institutions and South African Business Schools, and higher education policy makers will incorporate some of these issues within the ambit of their policy formulation, and the vision and mission of their institutions.

The paper in no way pretends to capture the issues discussed, in terms of any finality, nor does it pretend to have captured or for that matter exhausted the issues to any degree of finality.

1.

INTRODUCTION

It was Edward Everett who stated in the great Gettysburg speech when he ran against Abraham Lincoln for the presidency of the United States of America, “That education is a better safeguard to liberty than a standing army.” The reality of this statement is relevant to South Africa, even today and more importantly to the discourse of education and indeed to the development of South Africa’s basic and higher education systems in general, after nearly 20 years of democracy and freedom. The significance of Everett’s statement encapsulates and underscores the importance of education in respect of avoiding mass action and turmoil by the youth, as was experienced in South Africa, in 1976, and thus giving the impetus for the overthrow of the apartheid state. The reality of the situation is the all embracing fact that after nearly 20 years of being in power, the South African democratic government finds itself in the quagmire of education being a highly contested arena and that the education landscape is fraught with immense problems and challenges, in terms of policy formulation, implementation, relevance, scarce funding, the lack of quality improvement, the lack of infrastructure, its lack in making a dent to high unemployment in the country, coupled with poor quality of matriculation results, which has a direct negative impact upon higher education. It is against this background and reality that this paper explores certain issues and themes that might require urgent consideration by higher education institutions and the relevant authorities that are in charge of higher education. This is exemplified by the reality and the all embracing fact that the World Economic Forum in 2010 ranked South Africa’s education system as 133rd in the world out of 142 countries surveyed. (<http://news24.com>: 2010). It is obvious therefore that urgent action and intervention is required in both the basic and higher education systems, and to this end, all education role – players and particularly the state and the government must take cognizance of this situation and set into motion intervention strategies to revive this pathetic, woeful and damaging education situation.

MATCHING POLICY WITH REALITY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Cloete and Butler Adam (2012: 6) state “that ill – conceived, fanciful proposals will not improve South Africa’s education system.” They cite the widely quoted reports of the Centre for Higher Education Transformation, in respect to Educational needs of Post – School Youth. The report shocked the education community and the Ministry of Education with the finding that almost three million youth between the ages 18 and 24 were so – called Neets. This startling information spurred

the education ministry to focus on the further Education and training (FET) college sector. The study drew attention to the potential social disruption that 2.8 million young people not in education, employment or training could cause (“Idle minds, social time bomb,” Mail and Guardian. July – August, 2009: 6 - 9).

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Crime statistics at that time showed that the average age of a house robber was 19 and 25 years and 90 percent of the robbers arrested did not have matriculation and were unemployed or both. Last year’s North African “spring” which continues unabated and is spreading relentlessly, highlighted the prominent role of young people in those uprisings. Unemployment amongst youth worldwide is increasing. Statistics South Africa has revealed that 52 percent of youth were estimated to be younger than 25, out of a South African population of 50 million in 2010.

It was also shown that the youth in the 15 to 24 cohort, 32 percent or 3.3 million were neither employed nor attending an educational institution. According to Cloete and Butler Adam (2012: 6) “The OECD released a survey in July 2010 that revealed South Africa had the worst rate of unemployment for youth between the ages 15 and 24 among 36 countries surveyed two years before (Cloete and Butler Adam, 2012: 6). The Centre for Higher Education Transformation Report (2009) described the post – school education and work environment as being characterized by the following:

- “A large annual outflow of students from schooling without meaningful further educational opportunities;
- Post – school institutional architecture that limits further educational opportunities for young people;
- A lack of integrated and systematic data about the “excluded youth;
- A recapitalized FET colleges sector that needs to build capacity.

The issues raised above exemplifies the drastic state the country is confronted with in respect of access to higher education including a host of other variables that affect the youth, exemplified by the all embracing fact that there is an unknown number of young people who left school having completed grades nine, ten or eleven, who have fewer options for continuing education or the possibility of employment. Cloete and Butler Adam (2012: 6), point out that given this reality and scenario, “The accumulated effect of this situation is that in 2010 there were 3.2 million young people in the 18 to 25 age group who were not in education, employment or training.” The situation for South Africa is bleak and this state of affairs requires state intervention and intervention by government as a whole, including the ministry of education, traditional and distance education providers, because South Africa sits on a time bomb, ready to explode and tear the nation apart, with increased demonstrations, youth anger, increased unemployment and increased crime. The only way out of this trap is better

educational opportunities and the creation of sustainable and appropriate educational and development policies.

Cloete and Butler Adam 2012: 6) state that, “the government only last year released three important policy plans encompassing the post – school sector, the strategic plan for higher education and training, the new growth path and the national development plan. All of these plans spoke to and highlighted the importance of education and training and how changes in the education systems should be effected.

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Early last year, the department of higher education and training released a fourth policy document, the green paper for post - school education and training. In addition Higher Education South Africa, the association of university vice – chancellors produced a paper on the non – university post – school sector.” In fact other policy papers have been produced and the South African Higher Education System is inundated with a plethora of policy papers and options. The question therefore arises of what significance will these policies be to implementation within the higher education sector of South Africa?

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Will they have any major impact on what needs to be done? Will they provide the best educational opportunities to and for young people? The nub of the issue is will these policy proposals provide access to post - school education, for young South Africans, the majority of whom are women and black. However, the government needs to be commended in respect to its efforts and once the green paper inputs are collated, it will become an Act of Parliament.

All the documents speak to development, poverty issues and human resources strategies. This is a move in the right direction and therefore it becomes imperative also for traditional universities, distance education providers and South African Business Schools to seize this opportunity and moment to make a significant contribution to higher education proposals and its discourse. The four documents carry similar, although not identical, messages. Cloete and Butler Adam (2012: 6 – 7) point out the main designs for the future of the post – school education sector as follows:

- The university sector must be expanded. Academics must be trained and more students must be enrolled in masters and doctoral programmes that should emphasize quality. A PhD production rate from 28 graduates per million per year to 100 graduates per million by 2030. However, in this regard and with particular reference to distance Business Schools, it is imperative that government and the higher education ministry supports their quest for registration of PhD programmes, in order to meet the imperatives of government targets, rather than placing obstacles to them registering PhD programmes, particularly in the field of management, which is their forte. Many of these institutions, against all odds and receiving no financial aid from government, have made huge and mammoth financial investments towards sound

infrastructure, for purposes of delivering quality educational programmes. These institutions allow for access are more than competitive in respect of tuition fees when benchmarked against traditional government supported universities. Government and the higher education ministry together with the regulatory authorities should remove their blinkers when assessing the positive contribution that distance universities and colleges can make to the development of South Africa at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels within the higher education landscape of the Republic.

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- The role of universities in the generation of the knowledge economy and to this end and in terms of business initiatives, Business Schools have a major role to play and are engaging the knowledge economy in terms of social and economic development, entrepreneurial development and, creating employment opportunities.
- Universities should become the core of a national system of innovation and to create a faster momentum towards the growth of a “green economy.”
- Grow the cohort enrolment rate at universities to 30 percent from the present 17 percent by 2030.
- The FET sub - sector must be expanded, in terms of capacity, quality, curriculum development and in terms of quality and throughput rates, because in some of these institutions currently the throughput rates are as low as 4 percent.
- Greater interaction of the FET institutions with the universities is essential and this relationship must be strengthened. It can only be done if the ministry of higher education intervenes in this direction more meaningfully.
- Enrolment within higher education must grow from the current level of 400, 000 to 1000 000 by 2014. This will become a utopian ideal, if government does not support distance education institutions and particularly Business Schools to fill the gaping gaps in respect of access as concerns the numbers in enrolment that it desires to achieve. Distance learning colleges, distance universities and Business Schools can play a major role in this direction in terms of supporting students to navigate the post – school sector.

There are indeed a number of issues within the plethora of documents produced to deal with the complexities within higher education and to this end, if management is not improved and if sizeable investments are not made to improve management as well as teaching and learning, Cloete and Butler Adam (2012: 7) that “it is unlikely to be achieved, if recommendations made by a host of individuals and organizations are not heeded by the ministry of higher education.”

FREE MARKET FOR THE BEST STUDENTS

Anna Fazackerley (2012: 9) states that “Even elite, research – intensive universities find themselves touting for candidates, but this won’t help applicants whose grades fall short.” This is the reality in South Africa and therefore, it is a fact that more modern universities in the form of distance education providers seemingly open their doors more readily to such students than the traditional universities who come to the table with some erroneous understanding of the preservation of tradition at all costs, even in the wake of denying access to the historically marginalized due to the quagmire that we are confronted with in terms of apartheid education. Universities in both the United Kingdom and South Africa in particular are saddled with the complicated game of admissions to university which is high for South Africa in terms of access compounded by high unemployment.

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This must open the debate of allowing the market to dictate and in so doing government must seriously consider entering into a compact with distance higher education universities and colleges, in order to deal with those students who cannot gain access to the traditional universities. In so doing such students need to be subsidized by government in respect to full tuition and books, thus allowing them access to higher education through the auspices of distance learning, which will cost much less in terms of monetary inputs required to train at these institutions. Technically, there should be no problem because government could pay the tuition fees upfront to these institutions, for the students that they will support.

This approach warrants further investigation owing to its merit. It will also reduce the pressure upon traditional universities because many of them do not have the capacity to absorb all applicants, nor do they have the requisite staff numbers to deal with increased admissions of students. On the other hand many traditional universities are plagued with cash flow problems, increased strikes, and a lack of accommodation and so on. There is therefore plausibility to pursue alternative options to deal with these challenges. Fluctuations in the market will bring about a boom and a boon.

There is no doubt that in South Africa, year after year application levels to universities are beating the national trend. Government should follow this option and its merits and simultaneously look at its neighbour Botswana that has opted for this option, in order to allow students access to higher learning. In short or other words government should not regulate, but allow the market to dictate and support distance universities and colleges to also address the challenges that government is confronted with in respect to admissions and access to higher learning institutions.

RESEARCH AT THE COST OF TEACHING

Following from the expose and discussion undertaken thus far, the paper turns to an important issue that has been debated and discussed for protracted periods of time within the media and by academics. In this regard Lagardien (2012:1), states that “An unhealthy emphasis on academic publishing means

that there is less time for lecturing.” This might be a controversial statement and has the likelihood to stimulate controversial debate, conversation and discussion. An attempt is therefore made in this article to unpack the arguments of Lagardien and show some relevance to the context of higher education and to Business Schools. According to Lagardien, “The blame for this sad situation lies with people who have imposed a culture of publish or perish.” He further states that universities spend so much of their energy and resources on research that they neglect undergraduate teaching, on the basis that universities are fundamentally educational institutions and teaching is as essential to knowledge production (research) to the role that these institutions play in society.

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It appears if this argument is taken to its logical conclusion, is that, those that pay to get their education and who will be tomorrow’s leaders, is being relegated to the periphery of the academic institution. The question arises should we then focus on changing our priorities?

There is no doubt that research is vital for the advancement of knowledge, but Lagardien believes and states that it has become a ruse, and states that this must not be misunderstood on the basis that “The production of knowledge and innovation are vital for an array of reasons, many of which are well known and generally incontestable, but adds that what can be contested in South Africa today, is the prioritization of research over education among academics at a time when:

- Education has been arguably, the greatest failure of the post – apartheid period;
- South Africa desperately needs skilled people to fill important gaps in the job market and education can, and should, serve a broader human emancipatory purpose.
- South African academics, in obeisance to the dictum of publish – or perish tradition, are not producing nearly enough original research. This view is strengthened by the fact that Lagardien points out that “South African researchers produced about 0.6 percent of world academic literature. By an estimate there were 1.3 million articles published in peer – reviewed journals in 2006. These peer reviewed articles highlight the problem faced by academics who, are under pressure to publish or lose their jobs. Bad research often leads to the refusing of full – time tenured positions.

Lagardien (2012: 1) further points out that discussion with influential scholars in South Africa and abroad over the last several months, was explained as follows:

- Most of which is published in peer – reviewed journals is rehashed arguments or recycled ideas.
- In many cases if you can not find a “high impact” journal to publish your essay, one is forced to publish in any journal. As long as it is peer – reviewed it counts.

- In the social sciences, once in perhaps ten years an article comes along that makes an original contribution to a discipline that affects its direction.

He found that much is focused on the orthodoxy that underpins neoclassical economics and that there is a type of comradely back – slapping and willful obscurantism among academic economists and what one scholar described as “a journal game, in which scholars “hide behind thickets of algebra.”

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Career success in most institutions is usually based on producing publications, not on teaching excellence. Peer reviewed research therefore, in the main serves the narrow interests of a band of scholars in particular disciplines. According to the British journalist Monbiot, the publish - or perish machine is increasingly driven “to maintain a status hierarchy of journals” (Monbiot in Lagardien, 2012: 1). Monbiot further said that “Any paper, however bad, can now get published in a journal that claims to be peer – reviewed. The blame for this sad situation according to Monbiot lies in the fact that people who have imposed a publish – or perish culture, namely research funders and senior people in universities. The only people who benefit from the intense pressure to publish are those in the publishing industry. The cost of publishing is also very high and excludes a host of institutions and fellow academics. According to Lagardien (2012: 2) “What we are seeing is pure renter capitalism monopolizing a public resource, then charging exorbitant fees to use it. “Another term for it is economic parasitism. According to Lagardien (2012: 2) “This is a tax on education. It appears to contravene the universal declaration of human rights, which states that ‘everyone has the right freely to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”

The article by Lagardien may be controversial in some ways but he opens up a host of issues that require discussion and conversation by government and academics. This becomes essential and necessary given their importance to higher education and the developmental state. The nub of the issue is, will academics ensure that new knowledge is produced and, it is not the sole purview of a few and the academic elite. How do we ensure that our higher education system in South Africa opens the minds of students and prepares them for re – entry into society?

RESEARCH AT THE MERCY OF PLUTOCRACY

The article continues to unpack an important issue in respect of research and continuing from the above Mathew Blatchford (2012: 8) points out that “When corporate entities fund think – tanks it puts paid to intellectual integrity or political engagement. The all embracing fact is that the funder can control the research performed and that flexibility by the funder is rare. Blatchford, further points out that “The trend is towards ever more politicized funding processes, and that South African academic

research institutions is funded lavishly by corporate entities. This he says has not led to a surge in intellectual integrity or in political engagement of any particularly effectual kind. On the contrary, the bulk of this research appears to consist of crass propaganda for right wing causes of dubious merit, whereas a small amount constitutes left – wing propaganda for special interest groups, usually ones with scant political efficacy or significance. He further asks how much of money and academic time has been devoted to the shack dwellers movement and, what has the outcome of all this been, intellectually or politically? (Blatchford, 2012: 8).

8.

It is a known fact that that universities were dominated by conservative administrations in the 1970's and 1980's and yet managed to generate an intellectual climate that was of modest use to the anti – apartheid struggle, mainly by promoting political engagement among faculty and students. In a democratic South Africa, this must be intensified more than ever before, but today universities are dominated by corporate ideologies and aspirations and far less intellectual activity is evident. Today, there are powerful ideological tools, their use heavily funded by the corporate sector, allowing neoliberals to appropriate and neutralize intellectuals and make them subordinate to an essentially repressive system. Blatchford (2012: 8) states in this regard that, “The voice of the individual has been replaced by that of the corporate “thought leader.” All of this has come from the desire of the ruling class to gain more political power by eliminating all other centers of political power and thus secure greater affluence.

In many ways universities, Business Schools must enter a debate in respect of limiting the dominance of the corporate elite. It will be useful to engage the ministry of higher education and government to redress this imbalance, thus allowing for greater intellectual freedom at South African universities in general, which is not the same as academic freedom. According to Blatchford (2012: 8)

“There does not seem any effective struggle against the oligarchic plutocracy under which we live. There has to be a concerted effort by universities to undermine positively corporate dominance. This will make universities better teaching and learning establishments and, also better suited to serve society as a whole. Universities, colleges and Business Schools have a moral responsibility to speak out in support of ruling – class hegemony and not pretend to be taking a radical stand. The country requires room for individual academics to voice their opinions in the public arena without any let or hindrance, fear or favour. The time has arrived to challenge the status quo in order to enhance quality learning and teaching at higher centers of learning, not compromising essential research. The time has also arrived for universities, colleges and Business Schools to be very closely involved in setting the research agenda, in order to promote sustained intellectual debate, order the relevance of research and set the development momentum of South Africa.

THE IDENTITY CRISIS OF FORMER TECHNIKONS

The above issue needs some unpacking for obvious purposes. Thathiah (2012: 8) states that “In the short history of universities of technology, many have been subjected to ministerial assessment and some placed under administration. Is it because they were poorly conceptualized as part of the higher education landscape and are therefore in many instances unstable? In the new configuration of universities in South Africa, the predominantly White universities were left intact and unscathed, whilst the majority of universities saw the amalgamation with Technikons.

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It was therefore nothing but the gazeting of change for the sake of expediency and so – called university status. The process was haphazard and not a well thought out strategy for the transformation of the higher education system in South Africa. Given this scenario, Thathiah makes the point that “These institutions are going through a crisis of identity, which shows itself in their poor performances.” It is therefore not unfair to state that in spite of the different histories of traditional universities and the new universities of technology, that they do not have any culture of their own. How was it possible for Technikon lecturers by the sweep of a pen to become professors and university lecturers? Was it really necessary to change Technikons to universities of technology? Has this move actually frustrated the national skills agenda, asks Thathiah. The benchmarks set by the department in order to retain university status by these institutions were not adhered to nor monitored.

Thathiah (2012: 8) poses the central questions, “Are universities of technology really adding the kind of value required in a developmental state? Would they be better off with a narrower skills and training agenda? Are their graduates as industry – ready as they ought y to be? Do they have the capacity to deal with current debates on the future of the humanities and the social sciences? These questions irrespective have to be honestly answered by the government and academics, if we are to refigure the higher education landscape and for purposes of securing the developmental state.

Narrow and parochial interests must be set aside in the envisaged ten year review. At a glance, South African universities of technology may be better off as Technikons or technical colleges, because as Thathiah indicates, they will be released from the pressure of competing with universities on all levels. They must become relevant to economic development and therefore a fundamental reassessment is not only in order, but overdue.

SOCIAL COHESION BY TEACHING OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Another very serious issue that the higher education sector must address itself to is the implementation of a coherent language intervention strategy. This has been a vexing and contested issue among a host of academics post 1994. Kaschula (2012: 4) states that “Universities must help to create social cohesion by promoting the teaching of African languages, because language is the key to social cohesion, and only the elite have been touched by the magic tongue of English.” Kaschula argues that that by teaching and learning of African languages widely that social cohesion will occur. Underpinning a language is a culture. The cultural consciousness that comes with learning a new language according to one student at Rhodes University, learning isiXhosa, is hugely enriching. The government has undertaken to spearhead social cohesion initiatives in a reactive manner and, we do not score highly with regard to the implementation of the national language policy. It has not successfully implemented the language in education policy, which sits at the heart of social cohesion. According to Kaschula (2012:4),

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“The reported initiative, led by Naledi Mbude – Shale in the Eastern Cape education department, to make isiXhosa the medium of teaching is so revolutionary and visionary.” The initiative involves teaching English as a subject, thereby creating a greater chance of improved cognition and understanding among pupils in the mother tongue without prejudicing their acquisition of English.

Multilingual citizens make for sustainable unity and for better South African and global citizens with a clear sense of belonging. Literacy does not relate to being literate in English alone. It is therefore imperative that the teaching and learning of African languages according to Kaschula must be “Both a bottom – up and a top – down initiative. In order to achieve this imperative both the basic and higher education departments need to cooperate. This will provide for social cohesion and development in South Africa. In this regard stringent policy imperatives have to be developed and implemented by government. This will result in unifying South Africa as a nation.

MULTIFACETED LEADERS REQUIRED TO MEET THE DIVERSE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALIZED HIGHER EDUCATION

In a paper of this nature, it is impossible to capture all the issues that affect higher education. The themes discussed thus far are not all encompassing. It is hoped that the issues raised thus far will stimulate discussion on these and other issues that drastically affect higher education, in South Africa and the continent. It is therefore imperative that traditional universities, distance learning institutions and South African Business schools understand that “multifaceted leaders are required within these institutions to meet the challenges of globalized higher education.” (Muthoo, 2012: 5).

He further states that, institutions of higher learning are being challenged by many forces: the tough and uncertain economic climate, profound changes in funding and unprecedented global competition

for the best and the brightest students and faculty. By the same token must be added civil unrest, unqualified academics with little or no experience in terms of the rigour required in research, teaching and learning at higher academic institutions in many of the universities and Business Schools in South Africa, Africa and the world over. In the quest for development throughout the continent, higher education must be in the pursuit of excellence in both teaching and research, and as Muthoo points out that universities, “must be redefined as levers of social mobility, engines of local economic growth and of technological advances.” To this end universities require academic leaders, innovators and managers who must lead from the front, direct and enhance universities to become global leaders. This is all fundamental and necessary for success and movement into a trajectory of acceptable economic development and for purposes of dealing with the unemployment crisis in South Africa in order to become a winning nation and a leader in the continent of Africa.

11.

The issues raised basically talk to academic excellence and necessary academic trends that need to be dealt with cogently and decisively, for purposes of raising the bar and therefore strive for academic excellence for purposes of forging international partnerships. It also raises the issue that academic leaders must become entrepreneurs, able to make and take decisive action, business decisions and place universities at the forefront of development debates, and to prepare students to become entrepreneurs and critical thinkers. They must understand politics which is crucial to policymaking. These and other crucial issues require the immediate attention of the ministry of higher education and the government. To this end, Business Schools have a crucial role to play in preparing future leaders and sound academics, in order to meet the requirements of development, and thus playing a vital and cardinal role, in making South Africa and countries in the continent visionary universities in meeting the challenges that confront globalized higher education.

POSTGRADUATES NEED A BETTER DEAL

In concluding this article Swain (2012: 12) states that in Great Britain “Policymakers have finally woken up to the plight of British postgraduates, with decisions on funding and fees on the horizon. It is therefore imperative and vitally important that South African politicians should also wake – up and afford opportunities of funding postgraduate students and in Britain it has been found that about “six in ten taught postgraduates receive no support for their studies other than from family or commercial loans.” Swain, 2012: 12). It would be useful to undertake research of this nature in South Africa and depending on the results of the research, put the government and the Ministry of Education under pressure to deal with this issue, if the findings are significant. This warrants attention by universities and Business Schools. The article alludes to the following consequences:

- The dire warning that universities would go for bust.

- Drastic impact on both undergraduate and postgraduate studies and training.
- The contribution to the knowledge economy will slow down.
- The strategic and structural thinking of what do we do with postgraduates has not been carefully unpacked.
- No one in government and universities has determined the value of postgraduate education to the economy and the competition within emerging economies that it presents.
- Access and funding must also be determined.
- Postgraduate fees are too high.
- The current situation has seen part time postgraduate studies rise because postgraduate students have to work in order to pay tuition fees.
- Those capable of postgraduate studies will choose to go straight into job markets.
- Growth is seen among international students.

12.

- Overseas recruitment at the expense of local recruitment is the order of the day.
- A new loan system for postgraduate studies must be introduced.
- A host of other issues.

The issues raised above are crucial also to the South African higher education landscape. It requires urgent action by the authorities concerned. Swain (2012: 12) points out that “Countries with the highest levels of educational qualifications tend to be the most successful, and therefore vital to increase the number of students studying at postgraduate level and to ensure this level of education is open to disadvantaged groups. Postgraduates will be the key not only to Britain but to South Africa also. He further states that “As the world becomes more competitive, there is evidence to show that where formerly a first degree was what was required, people are looking for higher qualifications.”

The paper attempted to delineate a few crucial issues that must further permeate the higher education debate within South Africa and the continent as a whole. Professor Tawane points out that higher education universities and Business Schools must nourish a new generation of diverse South African – based scholars. Its principal aims must be:

- To attract the most motivated and creative and talented students to the academic vocation.
- Provide an intellectually, enriching professionally enabling and socially supportive environment in which these students can flourish, gain confidence and begin to craft a unique scholarly identity.

CONCLUSION

The paper has attempted to place some vexing issues on the table for further discussion and enquiry. It is hoped that these issues will be given some attention by universities and Business Schools in the near future, in terms of broadening the conversation amidst other important issues in the context of developing higher education in South Africa and the continent, for purposes of economic development and scholarship.

References Acknowledgements

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