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- •IASAS Executive Board
- •18.6.2025

Professionalization of Student Affairs: Navigating Contexts and Models



- Introductions
- Context
- The Why, What, and Who of professionalisation
- What did we learn from the NDSS Monograph?
- Some typologies and models across the globe
- Critiques
- Plenty of discussions
- Questions to consider in our contexts

INTRODUCTIONS



What shapes our professional identity and what are we bringing that is unique?

Example – Birgit

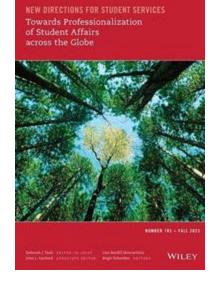


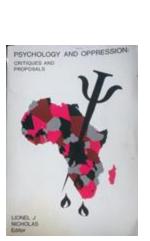










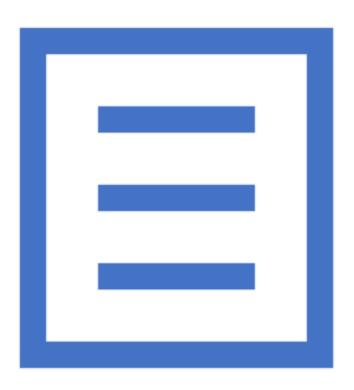








CONTEXT



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ABOUT

ROGRAMMES

ESOURCES

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CONTAC

ENGAGE 19 - Higher Education Professionalisation

Cotaber 2006 | ENGADE, Foundation Programme in Leadership and Hanagement



Higher education professionalisation refers to the systematic efforts to develop and enhance the risilla, knowledge, and competencies of all staff in higher education, from academic staff involved in teaching and learning [TAL], to serior and esecutive leadership, as well as support, management and professionals in student affairs and services [SAS] and allied domains. The professionalisation of these soles is critical for ensuring that universities and other higher education institutions meet the demands of an increasingly complex and globalised educational landscape.

The concept of professionalisation in higher education is not limited to South Africa but extends across the African continent and beyond. This ENGAGE discussed the challenges and achievements of various efforts and diverse programmes aimed at professionalising HE leadership, T&L and SAS staff, focusing on enhancing their capabilities to better impact the context to promote student and institutional success.

The goals of professionalisation programmes in higher education are multi-faceted. They aim to improve the quality of education by equipping staff with pedagogical competencies, betering a culture of continuous improvement and ensuring that staff are well-prepared to engage with the complexities of advancing student and institutional success. However, the professionalisation frigher education staff is not without its challenges. There are often ambiguities and confusion about what professionalisation entails, particularly given the diverse roles and responsibilities within the sector, indeed, the key question is have does one, even should one, professionalise a domain that is as diverse, testured and varied as HE staff, indeed, which profession are well-as even tailing about?

Prof Kasturi Behari-Leak from the University of Cape Town leads DHET-funded efforts to support the professional development of T&L staff. She will be joined by Prof Birgit Schreiber (University of the Vestern Cape) who has led and researched a number of professionalisation programmes in higher education.



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Professionalisation in Higher Ed — which profession is that?



Why, who, how?









... context matters ...





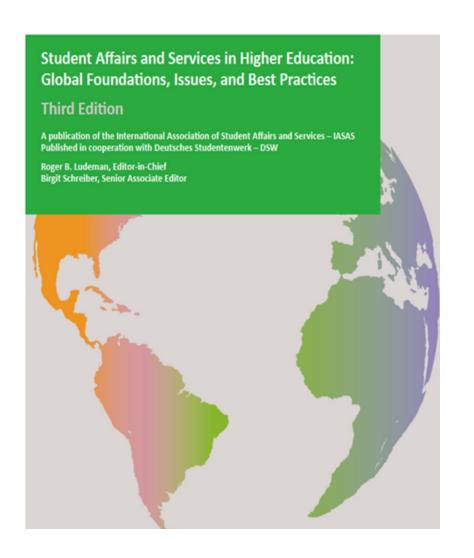


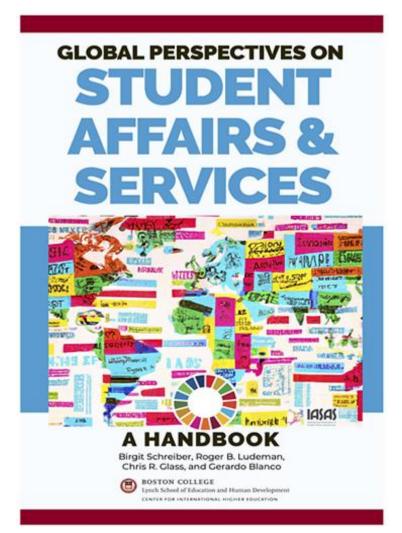




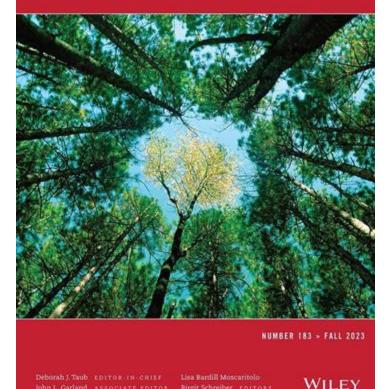


What is Student Affairs?

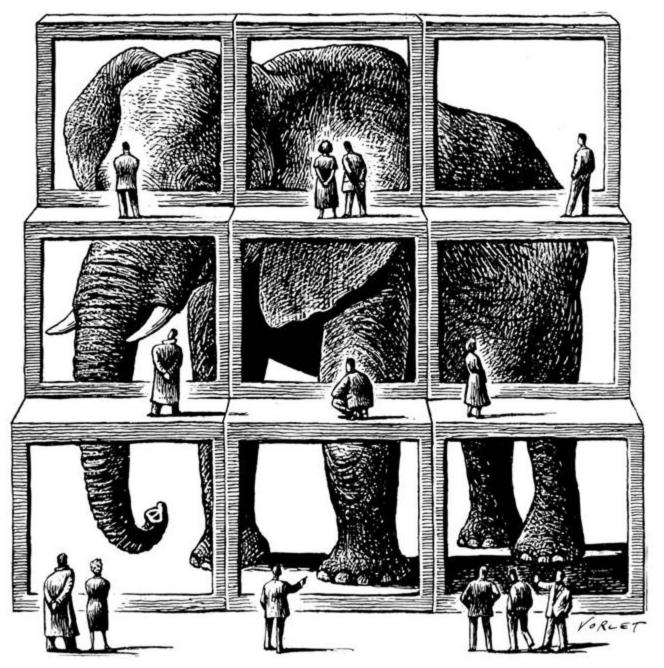




NEW DIRECTIONS FOR STUDENT SERVICES
Towards Professionalization
of Student Affairs
across the Globe



Student Affairs and Services



Professionalisation







"Professionalization" implies the development in various stages of progress or finality of professional competencies, epistemologies, and bodies of disciplinary and scholarly knowledge, sets of criteria that delineate the process of maturation and/or the assertion of an epistemic community to the claim of a profession (Ludeman & Schreiber, 2020).



Professionalization, according to Dean (2006) "is the process of transformation from a loosely connected group to a group that is described as qualified, as opposed to unqualified, is grounded in a set of principles or framework, is bound by norms and conduct (ethics code), and has perhaps an association that accredits the members, using standards that are explicitly developed."



Perozzi (2015) states that "Professions are regulated by a volunteer organization, maintain autonomy to set their own standards and guidelines."

Professionalisation



'Professionalisation' implies **development** – in various stages of progress or finality



professional competencies, epistemologies, and bodies of disciplinary and scholarly knowledge



sets of **criteria** that delineate the process of maturation



assertion of an **epistemic community** to the claim of a profession

Student Affairs conceptual map

(Schreiber, Luescher, Perozzi, Bardill Moscaritolo, 2021)

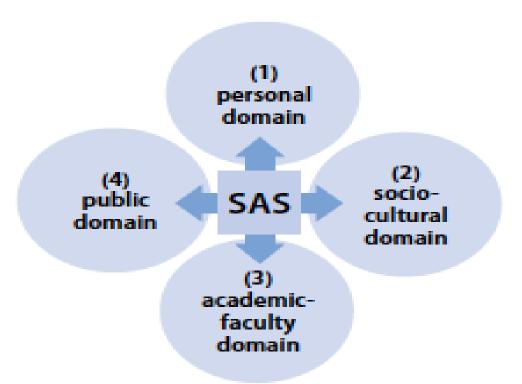
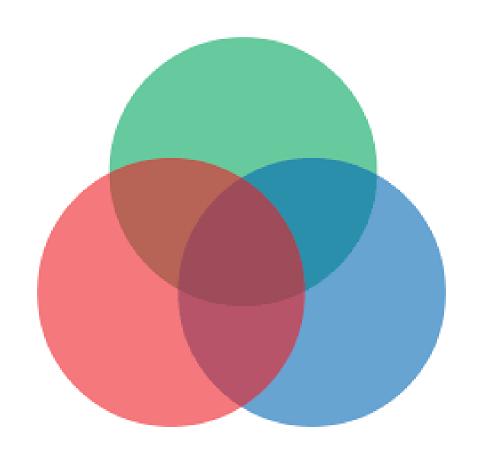


Figure 7: SAS' Systemic-contextual Model for Student Success: The four systems/domains which SAS mediates and engages, in order to support students' success

Student Affairs, Support and Development



Student Affairs is located in the intersection of management, students, academics, research and the public – the 3rd space in HE

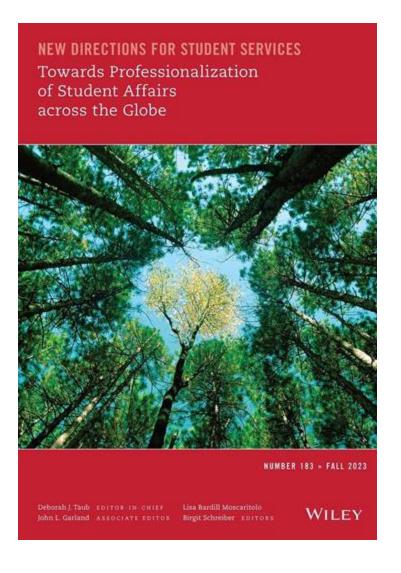
(Celia Whitchurch, Homi Bhabha)



Sharing Time

Discuss the contextual factors that impact your SAS work, the model that you are familiar with, and discuss the influences, direct and indirect that shape your SAS work.

New Directions for Student Services - Towards Professionalization



The focus of this issue of Wiley's New Directions in Student Services is on the various ways this domain is professionalizing, its roots, trajectories, and current opportunities as well as concerns and critiques, with a view to the future

The Student Affairs associations in the various regions across the world contribute significantly to the dynamic and continuously evolving and progressing process of professionalization.

This New Directions for Student Services is a mustread for all faculty, leaders, managers, and students who seek to not only professionalize themselves, their programmes, and students, but also seek to do this for a globalized world, for a more impactful and socially just Student Affairs and Services across our world.



BOLDLY TRANSFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION













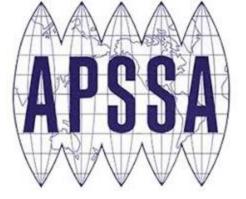




















Senior Student Affairs Professionals

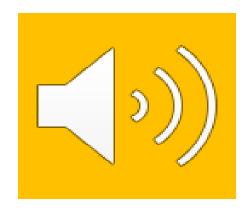
Terminology, interdisciplinary roots

SAS Terminology

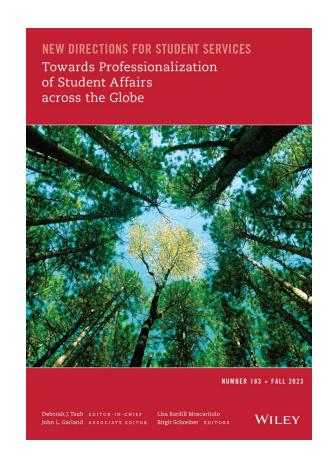
 Terms vary globally – includes student welfare, student life, student development, student personnel, and student services.

Interdisciplinary roots

- Draws on psychology, sociology, human biology, health sciences, management, HR, and leadership studies.
- Reflects a blend of theory and practice from multiple fields.
- It's through increased student success and societal contribution.



Al-generated podcast using Studio LM, Summary of the associations in the IASAS 7 regions



Examples of Regions – context, history, mission

Europe – Gian Luca Giovanucci

North America, the Caribbean and the South American regions – David Newman

Perspectives from reports

In parts of Asia and Afirca there are more emerging associations. Research was an area that most regions felt was a weakness.

Most association members paid an institutional membership or an individual fee.

Some ministries in Oceania and Asia were highly connected with ministries and governments

Europe had the most diverse models of how they were serving students.

Communities of practice could include webinars, virtual conferences, summits, and standards

North America has over 100 master's programs in student affairs closely related to the field. Others were offering training institutions and conferences.

Concerns raised about the power dynamics of larger associations dominating

Some typologies

- 1. Professional Association-Led Models
- 2. Academic and Credentialing Pathways
- 3. Institutional Models
- 4. Government-Driven Models
- 5. Developing Models in Emerging Regions

1. Professional Association-Led Models

- Characteristics:
 - Driven by national or regional associations
 - o Focus on establishing standards, certification, and training
 - Emphasis on networking, conferences, and continuing education
- **Examples:**
 - United States and Canada: Organizations like NASPA (Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education) and ACPA (College Student Educators International) shape professional development
 - o Australia and New Zealand: ANZSSA (Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association) plays a similar role
- Impact: Promotes the unification of practices, professional ethics, and ongoing learning

2. Academic and Credentialing Pathways

- Characteristics:
 - Relies on academic preparation programs (e.g., master's or doctoral degrees in Student Affairs or Higher Education)
 - Establishes the field as a distinct academic discipline
- **Examples:**
 - United States: Specialized degrees in higher education administration or student affairs
 - South Africa: Programs align with transformative post-apartheid educational goals
- Impact: Elevates the status of Student Affairs professionals by formalizing expertise through education

3. Institutional Models

- **Characteristics:**
 - o Professionalization efforts are led by individual universities or consortia of institutions
 - May include in-house training programs, leadership development, or standardized protocols
- Examples:
 - o China: Universities focus on incorporating Student Affairs into traditional administrative systems
- Impact: Tailored professional growth opportunities and alignment with institutional missions

4. Government-Driven Models

- Characteristics:
 - o Standardization and professionalization are guided by government policies or educational ministries
 - o Often aligned with national education goals
- Examples:
 - Germany: The Ministry of Education emphasizes student support, influencing Student Affairs training, as Studentenwerk, aligned to state welfare and social service provision
 - Nordic Countries: Strong welfare state models integrate Student Affairs into national educational strategies
- · Impact: Ensures consistent quality and accessibility across institutions

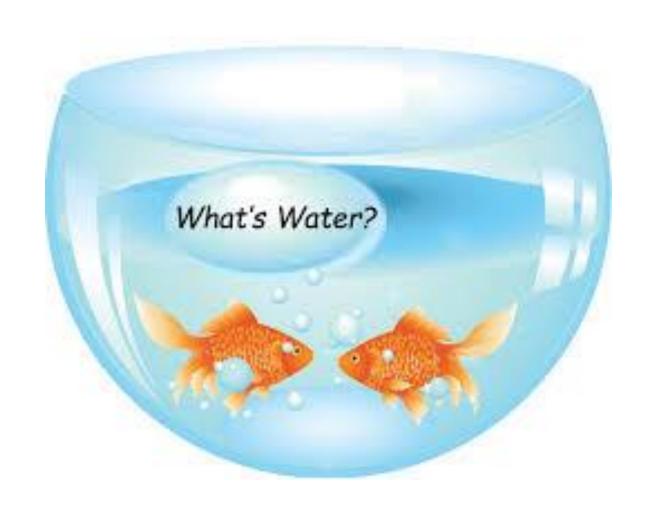
5. Developing Models in Emerging Regions

- **Characteristics:**
 - Student Affairs as a profession is still evolving, often influenced by global practices
 - Heavy reliance on international partnerships and consultants
- **Examples:**
 - Africa: Emerging practices shaped hegemonic practices
 - India: Student Affairs is often subsumed under broader administrative or counseling roles, with limited distinct professionalization, discursive and conceptual variance
 - Mongolia: Example
- Impact: Slow development, but contextually relevant

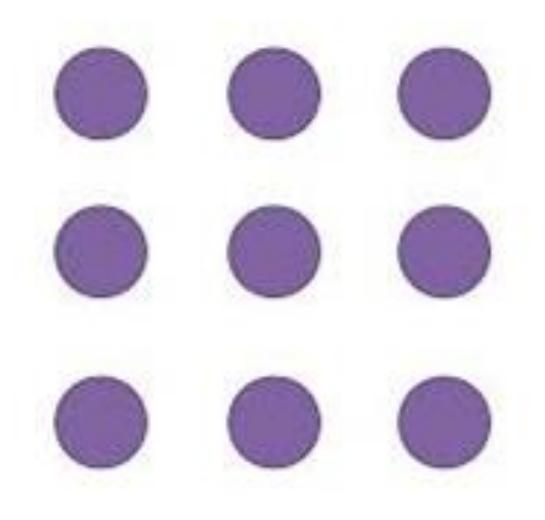


Discuss your country's professionalisation model.

CRITIQUES



Connect all dots with 4 non-intersecting lines.





Critical Pedagogy: Freire and Gramsci





Blind to the limits of our paradigms

Competencies should include critique of the paradigm



Integrating Critical Theories into Curriculum Fostering Critical Reflection and Praxis and Research



Emphasizing Social Justice and Equity Promoting Collaborative and Participatory Approaches Advocacy and Agency

Take head ...



"The dominance of Global North scholarship, with its inherent imbalance of power and hegemonic presence, discourages the emergence of knowledge from diverse cultural contexts and regions." (Introduction, Bardill Moscaritolo & Schreiber, pg. 8)

- Listening and questioning > talking and knowing
- Focus on your context, find your voice!
- Move beyond management towards visioning and leading

Discuss the critiques and their relevance in your context.





- Elevate the field overall
- Promotes and encourages a level playing field
- Assists practitioners (or groups) in professionalizing the best way that works for them
- Partners with UNESCO

IASAS' aim is to achieve socially just Student Affairs and Services across our world.

- Serve as the voice for countries or regions unable to fulfill their missions due to geopolitics and war.
- Work with the UN SDGs as a model or guide for our global efforts.
- Collaborate where solidarity is necessary.

Refer to these:

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- https://onlinelibrary .wiley.com/doi/10.1 002/ss.20487

