

2nd IAU Global Meeting

Role of Associations in Enhancing Quality of HE at Home and Abroad

THE VOICE OF HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP



South Africa HE System

- Strong public system: 23 institutions, 730 000 students
 - 378 000 students at Further Education and Training colleges
 - 30 000 at private higher education institutions
- 17% participation rate
 - Low compared with developed countries, e.g. 40% in the UK.
 - Strong compared to Africa as a whole (1-2%)
- About 7% of students are international
 - Most from Sub-Saharan Africa
 - 2006 GED report: Sub-Saharan Africa has most mobile student body, 1 in 16 studying outside their own countries

South Africa HE System (cont.)

- Cross border provision: influenced by the political history of South Africa
 - Political isolation before 1994
 - A strong public system largely focused at home
 - Only one open distance learning institution (UNISA) has learning sites outside the borders of South Africa
 - Only 1 campus of a foreign based university: Monash University of Australia
- Quality debates largely centre around issues of:
 - Accountability
 - Efficiency and effectiveness
 - Equity and expansion of access: 100 000 students (mostly Black) on national student loan system

Statutory Structures for Quality Assurance

- Role of Higher Education South Africa shaped by statutory arrangements:
- National Department of Education: statutory role for **planning** and **funding** of the higher education system;
- Council of Higher Education: statutory responsibility for **assuring quality** in higher education provision;
- South African Qualifications Authority: statutory responsibility for maintaining the national qualifications framework, **setting of standards** and **registrations of higher education qualifications** in the framework.
- Anomalies:
 - Separation of planning and quality assurance; and
 - Separation of quality assurance and standard setting.

Role of HESA in Quality Assurance

- HESA has no statutory powers
- Key role in in shaping the national quality system as part of “self-regulation”, through:
 - Capacity development in the area of quality assurance
 - Convening a Forum of Quality Managers from institutions to share experience and develop codes of good practice for the higher education sector as a whole
- HESA is playing a key role in the evolution of the key instruments for assuring quality in higher education:
 - 6-year cycle of institutional audits, which are criterion-based. Evidence-based peer driven processes.
 - Programme accreditation processes for accreditation of learning programmes of higher education institutions.

Role of HESA in Quality Assurance

- Participating on a national study on the impact of state regulatory function (including QA arrangements) on Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom:
 - Advice to the Minister of Education towards the end of 2007
- HESA has leadership and management training programme for the whole higher education sector:
 - The Higher Education Leadership and Management programme providing quality management training to senior and middle management levels

Ensuring Quality Across Borders

- Learning centres of open distance institution (UNISA) in African foreign countries are subject to the national institutional audit and programme accreditation processes
- CHE has Memorandum of Agreement with the Australian Quality Agency in order to rationalise the South African processes with regard to the South African campus of Monash University
- The Namibia Polytechnic has joined the South African system of institutional audits;
- The National University of Lesotho is in the process of applying to join the South African system of institutional audits

Regional priorities

- The creation of a streamlined **regional qualifications framework** for the SADC region will increase access to higher education and enhance the quality of provision of all the higher education institutions in the region.
- The boosting of **ICT infrastructure** in the regional is central to speeding up quality-related reform processes, such as challenges associated with increased access to higher education. The impact is likely to be much greater through the adoption of more innovative teaching methods that will facilitate trans-border education between countries.
- The role of **private higher education providers** needs to be more formalized and regulated through national quality assurance systems.